

# Jesus Is First and Most Important in Everything



## SABBATH—FEBRUARY 14

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Genesis 1:26, 27; Colossians 1:15–17; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Christ [Jesus] is as God is. God cannot be seen. Christ lived before anything was made. Christ made everything in the heavens and on the earth. He made everything that is seen and things that are not seen. He made all the powers [angels] of [in] heaven. Everything was made by [with] Him and for Him. Christ was before all things. All things are held together [continue] by [because of] Him” (Colossians 1:15–17, NLV).



**God's kingdom is compared to light. Satan's kingdom is compared to the dark.**

**THIS WEEK,** we will start our study again of Paul's letter to the Colossians. We already talked a little about Colossians in Lessons 1 and 2. In Lesson 2, Thursday's study, we saw that Paul prays for Christians in the city of Colossae (Colossians 1:9–12). In Colossians 1 verses 12 and 13, Paul compares God's kingdom with Satan's kingdom. God's kingdom is compared to light. Satan's kingdom is compared to the dark. God saved us from Satan's power. God made us members of His kingdom. Because of Jesus, God the Father also forgives our sins (Colossians 1:13, 14).

Jesus is our God. He made us. This same God saves us. When we believe in Jesus, God removes us from the kingdom of Satan. God makes us members of His family in heaven. God does these things because of everything Jesus did to save us.

This week, we will look at some things in Colossians that Paul says about Jesus. These verses are some of the most beautiful words about Jesus in the whole Bible.

**JESUS SHOWS US COMPLETELY WHO GOD IS  
(Genesis 1:26, 27)**

When we look in the mirror or at a photo of ourselves, we see a copy of who we are. But a picture is flat. A statue is a better example. An artist can carve a statue of a person out of wood or stone. The statue can give us a better idea than a picture can of how a person looks. But a statue isn't the same as a living, breathing person. The Bible says that Jesus is a living, breathing copy of God. So, Jesus shows us exactly who God is.

**Read Genesis 1:26, 27; Genesis 5:3; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Hebrews 10:1. What do each of these verses talk about? What is a copy? How is a copy very much the same as the thing it is made from? How is Jesus an exact copy of God? At the same time, why is Jesus more than just a copy?**

God made people to be very much the same as He is. We have bodies. We think, feel, and love. We need relationships. God made us this way because we are a copy of Him. At the same time, we are not exactly the same as God. So, we are not a perfect copy of Him. We can show only parts of God. But Jesus helps us to “see” the invisible God. Jesus says, “ ‘Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father too’ ” (John 14:9, ERV). Jesus “is a perfect copy of God’s nature [mind, heart, and spirit]” (Hebrews 1:3, ERV). Jesus says what God thinks. Jesus shows us who God is.

**Why can Jesus show us who the Father is? Read Matthew 11:27 and John 1:1, 2, 14, 18 for the answer.**

Notice other ways that Jesus talks about His relationship with the Father:

- “ ‘My Father never stops working, and so I work too’ ” (John 5:17, ERV).
- “ ‘My Father and I are one’ ” (John 10:30, EASY).
- “ ‘No one can come to my Father unless I take him there’ ” (John 14:6, WE).

Again and again, Jesus also uses God’s name to talk about Himself. God is the “I AM” (read Exodus 3:14, ERV). Jesus says, “ ‘I am the light’ ” of the earth (John 8:12, ERV). “ ‘I am the good shepherd’ ” (John 10:11, ERV). (Also read John 10:14; John 11:25; John 14:11; and John 8:58.)



**Jesus helps us to “see”  
the invisible God.**

**THE SON WHO IS BORN FIRST (Colossians 1:15–17)**

**Jesus made everything  
we can see and can't see.**

In the New Testament, the word “firstborn” almost always is used to talk about Jesus (read Luke 2:7; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 1:6; and Revelation 1:5). Today, we use the word “firstborn” to mean a son who is born first. But in the Bible, the word may not mean a son who was born before his other brothers and sisters. That’s because the Bible also uses the word to explain the special relationship a son has with his father. The Bible gives us many examples of young sons who became more powerful than their older brothers. Some examples include Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

David is another example of a younger son who became more powerful than his brothers. David had seven brothers. All of David’s brothers were older than he was. But God chose David to be king (1 Samuel 16:10–13). So, God made David the same as His firstborn son. God made David more powerful than any king on the earth (Psalm 89:27). God also tells Moses that Israel is His firstborn son (Exodus 4:22). These verses show us that the word “firstborn” means someone who is more important and powerful than everyone else.

**Read Colossians 1:15–17. What reasons does Paul give for saying that Jesus is the firstborn who is in control of everything in heaven and on earth?**

Paul isn’t saying that God made Jesus before He made anything else. Paul says that Jesus made everything for Himself and with His own power (Colossians 1:16). So, God made the heavens and the earth with Jesus (also read Ephesians 3:9; John 1:1–3; and Revelation 4:11).

When Paul says that Jesus made everything, he means that God made heaven and earth. Jesus made everything we can see and can’t see. Jesus keeps everything alive and working. Jesus has power over everything, including angels (Ephesians 3:10; Ephesians 6:12). Paul says that Jesus was alive before He made everything (Colossians 1:17).

Paul gives another reason for saying that Jesus is the firstborn. Paul says that Jesus joins everything together. Jesus can do this work because He made us and saves us.

**God made us and died for us. Can our good behavior add to this gift? Can our works add to what Jesus already did for us on the cross? Why is this idea so wrong?**

## **JESUS, THE LEADER OF THE WHOLE CHURCH (Ephesians 1:22)**

**Read Ephesians 1:22 and Colossians 2:10. In these verses, Paul says that Jesus is the “head.” What does this symbol mean? What does Paul mean when he says that Jesus “is the head of the church” (Ephesians 5:23)?**

The word “head” is often used as a symbol for the top leader. Both the Old and New Testaments use this symbol many times. Notice the words “head” and “leaders” in the following examples:

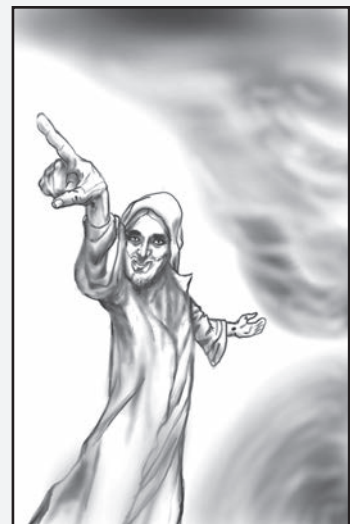
- 1. Exodus 18:25:** Moses “chose capable men from all the Israelites. He made them leaders over the people. They were officers over groups of 1,000, 100, 50 and 10 people” (ICB).
- 2. Numbers 31:26:** “Eleazar the religious leader and the heads of the fathers’ houses” (NLV).
- 3. Deuteronomy 28:13:** God will make Israel “leaders, not followers” if they obey Him (NirV).
- 4. Isaiah 7:8:** “The head of Syria is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin” (NLV).
- 5. Hosea 1:11:** “The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together again. They will choose a single [one] leader to rule them” (EASY).
- 6. Micah 3:9:** “Listen to me, you leaders of Jacob’s people!” (NirV).
- 7. 1 Corinthians 11:3:** “The head of every man is Christ” (ERV).

So, Jesus is the head or leader of the church. As the leader, Jesus guides the church. He teaches us and helps us grow. Jesus also gives the church peace. He helps us agree with each other about Bible truth.

**In 1 Corinthians 12:12–27, Paul also talks about the church as a “body.” What does this symbol teach us about the church?**

The body cannot live without the head. In the same way, the church cannot live without Jesus. When part of the body is hurt or lost, life can be hard. Often, we don’t know how important something is until we lose it.

**If you had to lose a leg or an eye, what would you choose? What does your answer tell you about how important each member is to the church?**



**As the leader, Jesus guides the church.**

## JESUS: THE HEAD AND THE BEGINNING (Colossians 1:18)



**When Jesus woke up from the dead (Romans 6:3, 4), He became the Giver of new life.**

Paul tells us that Jesus is our head or leader. Jesus also is the “beginning” of everything, because He made everything in heaven and on earth. How are these two ideas connected in Paul’s letter to the Colossians? Read Colossians 1:18 for the answer.

In the Hebrew language, the words for “head” and “beginning” are connected. The first time the Bible uses the word “beginning” is in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created [made] the sky and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, ICB). Jesus is in control of this earth. He also is the leader of the church.

In the Greek language, the word for “beginning” can mean many things. In Colossians 1:18, “beginning” means that Jesus started the church. That’s why He is its leader. In the same way, all life on earth and in heaven started with Him.

When Jesus woke up from the dead (Romans 6:3, 4), He became the Giver of new life. The penalty for sin is death. But Jesus won the fight against death. So, He has the power to give us new life and new hearts. These ideas help us to understand why Jesus is “the first person who became alive again after death” (Colossians 1:18, EASY). Of course, Jesus wasn’t the first person to wake up from the dead. (Moses was the first. The devil fought with Jesus for Moses’ body [read Jude 9]). But Paul uses the teaching about Jesus’ resurrection to help us understand an important Bible truth. Without Jesus’ resurrection, no one else could wake up from the dead.

Let’s look at all the reasons Paul gives for why Jesus is first and most important in all things:

1. Jesus is a perfect example of the invisible God.
2. Jesus made everything.
3. Jesus was alive before anything was made.
4. Jesus is the leader of the church.
5. Jesus makes us new in Him.
6. Jesus won the fight against sin and death. So, Jesus has the power to wake His people up from the dead.
7. Jesus is in control of the earth.

**What things about yourself must you allow God to change so that Jesus can be in control of your life?**

**LIVING IN PEACE WITH GOD (Colossians 1:19, 20)**

**Read Colossians 1:19, 20. How does the Cross help us to live in peace with God?**

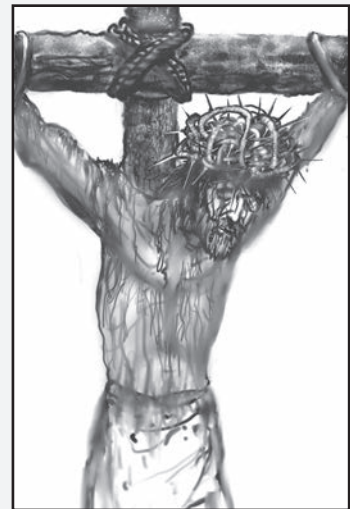
In Colossians 1:19, 20, Paul says, “God chose to put his nature [thoughts, feelings, and behavior] in Christ completely. He decided that Christ would die on the cross as a sacrifice [offering]. In that way, God would bring all things back to Himself. Then everything could live in peace with God. That includes everything on the earth and everything in heaven” (EASY). What exactly is this “nature” that God chose to put in Jesus? John explains. Jesus was filled with “God’s grace [mercy, forgiveness, love, and power over sin] and truth” (John 1:14, EASY).

God’s “nature” or grace includes so much more than His love, forgiveness, and His being patient. God’s nature also includes His power to make new things. God can also make old things new again. Most important, God’s grace includes His wisdom. God solved the problems of sin and death. “God loved the people in the world [on the earth] so much that he gave his one and only Son to save them. As a result [because of God’s gift], everyone who believes in the Son will not die. Instead [but now], they will live for ever with God” (John 3:16, EASY).

Jesus needed to die. That is the only way God could save sinners. God loved us so much that He allowed Jesus to die on the cross. God did this thing for us and for everyone in heaven. When Jesus died on the cross, God gave everyone in heaven and on earth proof of His love for sinners. That’s why Paul says, “Everybody in the world [in heaven and on earth] has come to look at us, both people and angels” (1 Corinthians 4:9, EASY).

“The people in heaven watched Jesus hang on the cross. They were amazed and sad. . . . Satan sinned against God. Everyone who joins Satan sins against God. God is love. But His glory [shining beauty] will destroy sinners. To sinners, God is the same as a fire that burns everything up. When the worldwide war between God and Satan first started, the angels didn’t understand this idea. . . .

“But everyone will understand this Bible truth when the worldwide war between God and Satan ends. Then, God’s plan to save sinners will be finished. At that time, all angels and people will understand God’s love and wisdom.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 760, 764, adapted.



**When Jesus died on the cross, God gave everyone in heaven and on earth proof of His love for sinners.**



**“Jesus Christ was always alive. No one made Jesus.”**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “The Father is God. He is filled with mercy, love, and forgiveness. He is invisible to our eyes.

“Jesus shows us the Father completely. The Bible says that Jesus ‘is a perfect copy of God’s nature [thoughts, feelings, and behavior]’ [Hebrews 1:3, ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, page 614, adapted.

“Jesus Christ was always alive. No one made Jesus. He was always the Son of God. . . . Jesus talks about His always being alive. He tells us that He always was in close fellowship with the everlasting Father. . . .

“Jesus is the same as God in every way. Jesus has no beginning and no end. He is all-powerful. Jesus is the everlasting Son. Jesus always lived, is alive, and will live forever.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, page 615, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ Think some more about Jesus and how He has always been alive. What if Jesus wasn’t God? What if He wasn’t everlasting? What if God the Father made Jesus? How then could Jesus save sinners if He wasn’t always who He is? Why is this Bible truth about Jesus as the Son of God so important?
- ❷ Think about Jesus, the Good News, and God’s plan to save sinners. These topics include us, but they also touch the lives of the angels and all the people in heaven. Why must we always remember that everyone in heaven also is interested in what happens in the worldwide war between God and Satan? Yes, the Cross amazes us. But the angels and all the people in heaven knew Jesus before He came to this earth. They worshiped Him. He made them. What do you think the angels thought and felt when they saw Jesus on the cross?
- ❸ What would you say to someone who doesn’t believe that the Father and Son always were alive? Why is this idea so important? How would you explain to someone that the Father and the Son always were together (except for a short time at the cross)?

## LOSING TWO JOBS BECAUSE OF RELIGION

**R**odel won Rene to Jesus because he took him fishing. Ellen G. White says, “Jesus’ plan is the only plan that will give us real success in touching people’s hearts. The Savior made friends with people. He wanted what was best for them. He showed people that He cared. He helped them and took care of their needs. Jesus won their hearts. Then He invited them to ‘Follow Me.’ ”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 143, adapted.

After Rene gave his heart back to Jesus, Rodel asked if he could stay at Rene’s house. Rene’s parents weren’t too happy about having the young Seventh-day Adventist living in their home in the Philippines. But they didn’t say no. During this time, Rodel encouraged Rene to go back to school. Rene did.

Rodel said, “I’m waiting for you to finish school. Then we can go to Manila to be Bible workers in the 1000 Missionary Movement.” Rodel served as a Bible worker in the 1000 Missionary Movement when he first met Rene about a year and a half earlier.

While Rene studied, Rodel lived with him and helped pay for his studies. They worked together in the rice fields. Rene finished school when he was 23.

Rodel kept his promise. Rodel took Rene to the headquarters of the 1000 Missionary Movement in Silang, near the Philippine capital, Manila. But then Rodel had another idea. He said Rene should continue his education before becoming a Bible worker. The two men studied at the Adventist University of the Philippines in Silang. Rene studied to become an accountant. Rodel studied religion. Rene finished college after six years. His parents didn’t help him pay for his education. During that time, Rene married Love Jhoie.

After Rene finished school, he worked as an accountant for three months. The company fired Rene because he wouldn’t work on Friday nights. Rene trusted God’s promise in Jeremiah 29:11: “‘I know what I have planned for you,’ says the Lord. ‘I have good plans for you. I don’t plan to hurt you. I plan to give you hope and a good future’ ” (Jeremiah 29:11, ICB).

Months passed. Then a hospital gave Rene a job as an accountant. But then Rene learned that he must get baptized in the church that owned the hospital. That church was not the Seventh-day Adventist Church. So, Rene quit his job.

Rene Tucaldo is the accounting manager for the 1000 Missionary Movement, in Silang, Philippines. The headquarters were built with the help of a 13th Sabbath Offering, in 1996. Read more next week.

## INSIDE Story



**Rene and Rodel worked together in the rice fields.**



**Rene Tucaldo**