

In their little book, *Reasoning from the Scriptures* (p408), **JW's** are taught that just as the "firstborn" of Pharaoh refers to the first one born to Pharaoh, so Christ as the "firstborn" is the first one created by Jehovah. But that's totally inaccurate. Paul said Christ is "the firstborn of all creation," not the firstborn of *Jehovah*. A parallel between the firstborn of Pharaoh and the firstborn of all creation would erroneously show that creation "parented" Jesus. But the opposite is the case, Christ "parented" creation—that is, he created all things (v16); he produced the creation, the creation didn't produce him.

What we have here is a classic example of the **WT** lifting a text out of its context for the purpose of defining it according to their doctrine. They totally ignore what Paul says in the entire setting and surrounding passages. A text without a context is a pretext, and their definition of "firstborn" doesn't fit the context at all. Notice the word that immediately follows Paul's statement—Christ is "the firstborn of all creation; **because...**" "**Because!**" Now, that's an important word! **Because of what?** Here comes the context. Paul is about to make his meaning of "firstborn" absolutely clear! He says, "...the firstborn of all creation; **because** by means of him all things were created...All things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all things and by means of him all things were made to exist" (v16,17). That explains everything! That's "**firstborn!**" Christ is preeminent, supreme, first in rank, and heir of "all things," **because** not only was he "**before** all things," but he's **the Maker** of "all things!" Paul says, "all things" were made "by" him and "for" him. He's **firstborn, preeminent** over all creation!

In studying the Bible, words are to be interpreted according to the meaning intended by the writer. Among the ancient Hebrews, the word "firstborn" referred to the son in the family who was in the preeminent position, regardless of whether he was literally born first. He was the preeminent one. This can be seen in Isaac, who was Abraham's "firstborn," although Ishmael was 13 years older; and Jacob, who was Isaac's "firstborn," yet Esau was born first. Then consider Manasseh, the first son born to Joseph (Gen 41:50-52), yet Ephraim is called the "firstborn" (Jer 31:9) because of his preeminent position (Gen 48:13-20). And notice what God says of David, "I myself shall place him as firstborn. The most high of the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:27). Was David the first son born to Jesse? No! He was the youngest (*last born*). How is it then that he's "firstborn"? He's firstborn in that he's **preeminent** or **sovereign** over all the kings of the earth! This is precisely Paul's usage of "firstborn" in Colossians 1:15! Christ is the "firstborn" in that he's **preeminent** or **sovereign** over all creation! It has nothing to do with him being born ("created") first!

Biblical scholar F.F. Bruce³ addressed what the term "firstborn" came to mean to those living in biblical times:

The word firstborn had long since ceased to be used exclusively in the literal sense, just as *prime* (from the Latin word *primus*—"first") with us. The Prime Minister is not the first minister we have had; he is the most

preeminent...Similarly, firstborn came to denote [among the ancients] not *priority in time* but *preeminence in rank*.

Yet the **WT's** interpretation of "firstborn" in Colossians 1:15 has to do merely with **priority in time!** Clearly, this is not Paul's intended meaning. This is simply how the **WT** wants it to be understood. Bruce says that for this text to mean what the **JW's** want it to mean (God's first creation), Paul would not have called Christ the "firstborn" (*prototokos*) but the "first-created" (*protoktisis*)—a term that is never used of Christ in the New Testament.⁴ Indeed, as Greek scholar J.B. Lightfoot notes, "The fathers of the fourth century rightly called attention to the fact that the apostle writes not *protoktisis* ['first-created'], but *prototokos* ['firstborn']."⁵

Now, think about it. Here's what the **WT** wants us to believe—that Paul is saying that Jesus is the first creation of Jehovah ("firstborn") (v15) "**because**" (v16) "**all things**" were made "**by**" him and he is "**before** all things." That's nonsense! It boils down to believing this—"All things" were created by something that was created! "**All things**" were made by something that was made! Credulity has its limit! But now you understand why the **WT** chose to change the Word of God in verses 16 & 17 by adding words that are not in the text. That's right! The reason is so they would not look so ridiculous when they teach such an absurdity! What words did they add so they don't look so silly? Four times in verses 16 & 17 they inserted the word "**other**." Every time God says "**all things**," the **WT** says "**all other things!**" "Other" is no where in the Greek text. The **WT's** own Greek interlinear embarrasses them, for it shows that the Greek word *panta* means "all things," not "all other things." That's why I left it out each time above when I mentioned "all things." It ruins Paul's entire meaning. The **WT** equally perverted Philippians 2:9; they changed "the name above every name" to "the name above every **other** name." Again, their own Greek interlinear exposes their dishonesty. They add to the divine text what simply is not present in order to deny what clearly is taught!⁶

To save face, the **WT** tampered with the Word of God. You see, because they've made their "Jesus" into a "creature," they have to somehow get him into the realm of "created things," and they accomplish this by having him create, not "all things," but "all other things." And by this slight of hand, they succeed in completely changing the meaning of the text! It puts Christ into the realm of "created" things, who himself, then, creates "all other things." In most **JW** Bibles, they have the word "other" in brackets, showing that it's *not* in the text but was added by the **WT**. The **NWT** that I use (1984 revised ed.—2006 printing) has *no* brackets (nor did their 1950 & 1953 editions). What this means is, they are not alerting readers to the fact that this word "other" is *not* in the original text. That's bold and unabashed deception, pure and simple!

"Every saying of God is refined...Add nothing to his words, that he may not reprove you, and that you may not have to be proved a liar" (Proverbs 30:5-6).

All this gets very *amusing* in light of **John 1:3**. That's where the **WT** shoots their own foot! Everything is there—Christ, creation, and *all things*—but something's missing! It reads: "**All things came into existence through him...**" Where's "*other*"? What happened to "all *other* things"? It's the same Greek word, *panta!* Is this not a comedy? The **WT's** gonna make Christ create "**all things**" in John, yet "**all other things**" in Colossians! They're gonna do it right here, yet *try* to deceive us over there! Listen to it carefully: "**All things** came into existence through him, and **apart from him not even one thing** came into existence." "Not even one thing!" If Jesus is a "created" being, as they say, then he is a "thing" that "came into existence." But John says, "**All things** came into existence through him." This excludes him from the realm of "things" and puts him in the class of being *eternal* and *uncreated*—**God himself!**—which is exactly what the Scriptures teach—"God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1); "**God**, who created all things" (Eph 3:9). "I, **Jehovah**, am doing everything, stretching out the heavens **by myself...**" (Isa 44:24).⁷

Micah 5:2 is a prophecy about the birth of Jesus that speaks distinctly about his eternal nature: "...whose origin is from early times, **from the days of time indefinite.**" The Hebrew word for "time indefinite" (*owlam*) means "everlasting" or "eternal." So this prophecy is telling us plainly that Jesus' "origin" is "**from the days of eternity!**" Compare this with what the Psalmist said of "Jehovah" in Psalm 90:2, and the identity of our Lord Jesus Christ becomes unmistakably clear—"Even from **time indefinite** you are God." The very same Hebrew word (*owlam*) is used here twice! Only **God** is eternal!—"from the days of eternity!" □

REVELATION 3:14—Jesus is referred to as "**the beginning of the creation by God.**" The **NWT** incorrectly has "by" to make it appear that Christ was created "**by** God." The **WT's** Greek interlinear does not have "**by** God," but properly renders it: "the creation **of** God," and states on page 5, "the accuracy of any modern translation [the **NWT**] can be determined by it." So, we'll keep it according to the **WT's** own interlinear's "accuracy"—"**of** God." The Greek word for "beginning" is *arche* which can correctly be translated "**origin.**" The **WT** is forced to acknowledge this because in their own **NWT** (1950 ed.), they render *arche* at John 1:1 as "**originally**" in preference to the term "beginning." So they admit that Revelation 3:14 can be translated to mean that Christ is the *arche* or "**origin**" of the creation of God. The reason Jesus is called the "origin" or "beginning" of the creation of God is because *he brought creation forth!* Evangelical scholars agree that *arche* carries the active meaning of "one who begins," "origin," "source," "creator," or "first cause." As the Creator and Originator of "all things" (John 1:3; Col 1:16), Christ naturally is the *beginning* of the creation of God. He who brought creation forth is the *beginning* or *origin* of the creation! How could it be otherwise? And think about this, too. The English word *architect* is derived from the word *arche*. Christ is the *architect* or *designer* of all creation! □

1 CORINTHIANS 11:3—"The head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn **the head of the Christ is God.**" The **WT** uses this verse to deny the deity of Christ. This passage, though, is simply showing the **principle of headship**. It has nothing to do with inferiority or superiority of one person over another; rather, it has to do with *patterns of authority*. Paul says that the man is the head of the woman, even though men and women are perfectly equal in their essential being. Women are not a *lower form of life* than men. Both are *equal* in their humanity. The Bible clearly teaches that men and women are equal in terms of nature. They are both human, and they are both created in God's image (Gen 1:26-28). They are also said to be one in Christ (Gal 3:28). Paul is showing us here that *equality of being* and *social hierarchy* are not mutually exclusive. Even though men and woman are completely equal in terms of nature, there exists a *functional hierarchy* between them. It's simply God's arrangement that someone act as head, and he assigned that role to the man.

In the same way, Christ and the Father are utterly **equal** in their divine being (Jesus said, "I and the Father are one"—John 10:30) even though Jesus is functionally under the Father's headship. There is no contradiction in affirming both an *equality of being* and a *functional subordination* among the persons of the Godhead. Christ in his divine nature is fully equal to the Father, even though *in his relation to the Father*, he is subordinate and submissive, especially since becoming a man. Within the Godhead—the Father acts as head without diminishing the full deity of the Son. This passage does not imply that Jesus is less than God.

These two things must honestly be answered: (1) Are women inferior in nature to men because men exercise headship over women? (2) If the man's headship over the woman does not mean that women are inferior in nature, then why does the **WT** insist that the Father's headship over Christ means that Christ is inferior in nature—that is, that he is a "lesser god"? □

JOHN 20:17 & REVELATION 3:12—Jesus said, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to **my God** and your God." The same expression "**my God**" is used four times by Jesus in the above reference in Revelation. **JW's** assert that Jesus would never have referred to the Father as "my God" if he were in fact God himself. But here again they fail to see that there can be *structured relationships* such as "**headship**" among *equals*. It says in Exodus 4:16 that Moses "will serve as God" to his brother Aaron. Moses serving as "God" to Aaron did not mean that Aaron was in any way *inferior* to Moses, or that as human beings, Moses and Aaron were not perfectly *equal*. It had to do with *patterns of authority*. And the Father serving as "God" to the Son does not change the fact that God the Father and God the Son are *equal* as to their deity. The Father and the Son can be perfectly equal, with the Father serving as "head" or "God" to the Son.

Before the incarnation, Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possessed only a *divine* nature. But in the incarnation, Christ took on him a *human* nature. It is thus in his humanity that Christ acknowledged the Father as “my God.” Jesus in his divine nature could never refer to the Father as “my God,” for Jesus was fully equal to the Father in every way. But since Christ became a man, and since one of the proper duties of man is to worship, pray to, and adore God, it was perfectly proper for Jesus to call the Father “my God” and to address him in prayer. Positionally speaking as a man, as a Jew, and as our high priest, Jesus “became like his brothers in all respects” (*Heb 2:17*), and could address the Father as “my God.” However, the Son did not relate to the Father in this way until he “emptied himself” and became man (*Phil 2:6-8*).

Thomas called Jesus “My Lord and my God!” (*John 20:28*). So Jesus, too, is called “my God.” Even if we can’t completely understand Christ’s relationship to the Father, we can understand enough to know that we are in the same relationship to Christ as Thomas was, so we too can call him, “my God.” □

1 CORINTHIANS 15:28—“But when all things will have been subjected to him, then **the Son himself will also subject himself** to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone.” The key point here for **JW’s** is that the Son becomes “subject” to the Father—as if that implied *inferiority* or being of a *lower form of life* than the Father. But it does not. They cite this as a passage that proves beyond any doubt that Jesus is not equal to the Father and is not God Almighty. If Christ were God Almighty, they argue, he would not be in subjection to anyone. But in their own Bible, Jesus as a young man “*continued subject*” to Joseph and Mary (*Luke 2:51*). Does this imply that he was of a *lower life form* than his human parents? No, the three of them were *equal* in their humanity, but Jesus respected the headship arrangement within the family, an arrangement whereby children are subject to parents, and the husband is head of his wife. So, if Jesus could be subject to his parents yet *equal* to them in his humanity, he can also be subject to his heavenly Father while *equal* to him in his deity.

The word “subject” in this passage has nothing to do with Christ’s essential nature or being. Rather, the word points to Christ’s *functional subjection* to the Father as the God-man and Mediator in the outworking of the plan of salvation. **JW’s** make much of the fact that even now, in the glorified state, Christ is subject to the Father; thus implying that Jesus is not God in the same sense as the Father. But Jesus as a man (today and forever) will always be in subjection to the Father. Of course, **JW’s** are taught that Jesus is *not now a man*, that he was *not raised bodily* from the grave, but as a “spirit creature.” But the Word of God is crystal clear on this point—even *their own Bible*—that Jesus is now and will forever be *a man*. “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; feel me and see,

because a *spirit* does not have flesh and bones just as you behold that I have” (*Luke 24:37-39*); “Break down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...but he was talking about the temple of his *body*” (*John 2:18-22*); “This Jesus who was received up from you into the sky will come thus *in the same manner* as you have beheld him going into the sky” (*Acts 1:11*); “It is in him that all the fullness of the divine quality dwells *bodily*” (*Col 2:9*); “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, *a man*, Christ Jesus” (*1 Tim 2:5*). Because Christ still possesses his human nature, he is still in submission to the Father. But in no way does this make Jesus less than the Father in terms of his divine nature. Christ is the God-man. On the human side, Jesus is a man; on the divine side, Jesus is forever equal to the Father. □

1 CORINTHIANS 8:6—“There is actually to us **one God the Father**, out of whom all things are, and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and we through him.” **JW’s** believe this verse gives iron-clad proof that Jesus is not God. “There is but one God,” they say, “and who is he? The Father! So, Jesus is not God.” But, as you will see, their line of reasoning doesn’t hold up. Don’t let them stop there. Make them apply the same line of reasoning to the rest of the verse! Then they will have to say, “There is but one Lord, and who is he? Jesus Christ! So, the Father is not Lord.” But they won’t go that far! Why? because they always speak of Jehovah as “Lord.” But the same argument that would make *only* the Father “God,” would make *only* Jesus “Lord.” They can’t have the one without the other. They cannot make the first half of the verse exclude Jesus from being “God,” without making the second half exclude the Father from being “Lord.”

The fact is, the Bible uses the terms God and Lord virtually interchangeably. The various false gods are called both “gods” and “lords” (*v/s*). The Father is called both “God” and “Lord,” and the Son is referred to by both terms. Thomas addressed Jesus as “my Lord and my God” (*John 20:28*). The leaders of the **WT** have taught **JW’s** to see in 1 Corinthians 8:6 a *contrast* that does not exist.

The simple question we need an answer for is this—Does the apostle Paul believe that “God” (*Greek—Theos*) and “Lord” (*Kurios*) are *contrasting* titles, or does he use them *interchangeably*? All we need to do is merely look back a few verses to 7:17, where he says, “As Jehovah (*Kurios*) has given each one a portion, let each one so walk as God (*Theos*) has called him.” Do these two Greek terms refer to *one* and the *same* God? Of course they do! And in Romans 14:6, in one verse alone, Paul uses *Kurios* three times and *Theos* twice!—again, referring to the same God. Even so in our text, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Paul uses *Kurios* and *Theos* referring to the same “**one God**” of verse 4. He is simply enlarging upon what he stated there—“There is no God but one.” Otherwise, we must ask: If “the Father” fully encompasses this “one God,” why did the apostle Paul mention Jesus at all in verse 6? □

JOHN 17:3—“This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, **the only true God**, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” This text is one of the all-time favorites of the Watchtower clan! They use it in two different ways.

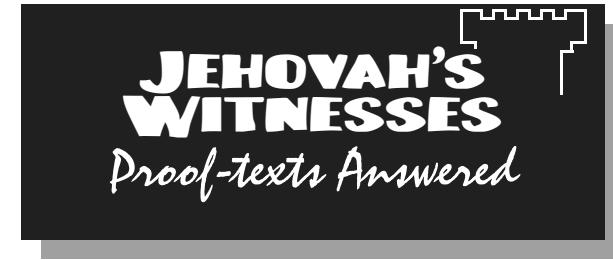
First: While all recognized Bible translations render this “to know” God, the **NWT** has “*taking in knowledge*.” **JW’s** use this verse to offer people a “free home Bible study” in order to “take in” this so-called “knowledge” of God. Those who accept the offer are quickly switched from the Bible to one of the many books published by the **WT**. After that, those studying with the **JW’s** are “always learning and yet never able to come to an accurate knowledge of truth” (*2 Tim 3:7*). Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (*John 14:6*). The “facts” that **JW’s** keep “*taking in*” never make up for the lack of actually *knowing* Jesus, the living Truth (*see John 5:39-40*).

Second: They use this verse to deny the deity of Christ. They point out that Jesus called the Father “**the only true God**” and made a *distinction* between “you, the only true God” and “the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” But if Jesus’ reference to the Father as “the only true God” were meant to *exclude* the Son from being God, then the same principle of interpretation would have to apply to 1 Corinthians 8:6, where it says, “*there is one Lord*, Jesus Christ,” and also to Jude 4, where Jesus is called “*our only Owner and Lord*.” If **JW’s** were consistent, these verses would have to *exclude* the Father from “Lordship” and “Ownership.” Yet all **JW’s** speak of the Father as “the Lord Jehovah.” Jesus being referred to as the “one” and “only” Lord does not rule out the Lordship of the Father; and the Father being called the “only” true God does not exclude the Son from being God. We know that the Father is “Lord” by comparing other Scriptures; and we know that the Son is “God” by comparing other Scriptures. Also, **JW’s** are caught by their own confusion here. By adamantly teaching that the Father is the “only” true God, and by calling Jesus “*a god*” (*John 1:1*), they inescapably are calling Jesus a “false god.” □

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End-Notes:

[1] For a study of **John 14:28** “**the Father is greater than I am**” see our tract: *JW’s—Refuted...#3* [2] *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*, 2005, p 41 [3] *In Inerrancy*, 1979 [4] *Ibid.* [5] *Epistle to the Colossians*, 1979, p 147 [6] For further insight on this, see our tract: *Facts the Watchtower Society Doesn’t Want You to Know* [7] This point is further enlarged in: *JW’s—Refuted...#3*



Jehovah’s Witnesses are famous for lifting Bible verses (or even just phrases) out of their contexts and presenting them to you just that way, with no regard to what was said before or after. What this plainly means is, when they’re quoting Scripture to you, they generally don’t have a clue as to what preceded it or what follows it. They haven’t been taught to study the Bible that way—verse by verse—so that the surrounding verses help to explain **the full meaning** of a particular passage. Rather, they’re trained in the art of “salesmanship.” They’ve had a few isolated “proof-texts” drilled into them at the local Kingdom Hall; and when they come round quoting these so skillfully at the door and “polly-parroting” the Watchtower’s “slant” on these verses, they fool a lot-o-people! Many people actually think these are *real* “Bible students” who know the Scriptures well. But the truth is, all they can offer you at the door is a pre-programmed Watchtower (**WT**) “sales pitch” and no more.

Jehovah’s Witnesses (**JW’s**) are constantly instructed by the **WT** to reject the teaching that **Christ is God**. They deny that the *New World Translation (NWT)* contains even a hint of Christ’s deity. This tract, using only the **NWT**, will examine a few of their favorite “proof-texts.”¹ When scriptural points are raised from other translations, it’s common to hear them say, “It’s not translated correctly in that Bible.” When the same questions are raised and answered from their own Bible, they cannot hide behind such excuses. This tract takes their own Bible, turns it back upon them, refutes their simplistic arguments, and exposes the **WT** for what it is—false and deceptive.

COLOSSIANS 1:15—“He is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn of all creation.**” **JW’s** will try to convince you that this word “firstborn” means “first-created,” that Jesus is “the first creation of Jehovah.”² As usual, these door-knockin’ Bible scholars haven’t done any homework, except to read *The Watchtower*. The Greek word for “first-created” is *protoktisis*. But Paul uses a completely different word—*prototokos*, which means “**first in rank, preeminent one, heir.**” It’s used as a title of sovereignty and preeminence. Christ is the firstborn in that he’s positionally preeminent over creation and supreme over all things. He’s also the heir of all things, for all things were made “by” him and “for” him (*v/16*). By divine right, all of creation belongs to him. And he’s the heir of all creation in that all that belongs to the Father likewise belongs to the Son.