1. Κτίζω appears 15 times in the NT, of which 2 are in Paul (Rom 1:25; 1 Cor 11:9) and 8 are in the deutero-Pauline letters (4 in Ephesians, 3 in Colossians, and 1 in 1 Timothy). The remaining occurrences are in Matt 19:4; Mark 13:19; and Revelation (3 occurrences). The 19 occurrences of κτίσις are similarly distributed: Here also the majority are found in the letters: 9 in Paul (7 in Romans, 1 each in 2 Corinthians and Galatians), 6 in the remaining Epistles (2 in Colossians, 2 in Hebrews, 1 each in 1 and 2 Peter), and additional occurrences in Mark (3) and Rev 3:14. Κτίσμα appears only in 1 Tim 4:4; Jas 1:18; Rev 5:13; 8:9. Κτίστης is a hapax legomenon in 1 Pet 4:19. As a whole the emphasis of the word group lies in Paul and in literature influenced by him.[1]

The NT follows the LXX and postbiblical Judaism conceptually when it avoids, e.g., δημιουργός, which was common in the surrounding world, for the Creator.[2]

In contrast to the association of δημιουργός with the work of the hands, κτίζω κτλ. connote the act of the will or decision (cf. Foerster 1025).[3]

The NT does not explicitly describe how the creation of the world took place. Its concrete descriptions remain within the understanding provided by the OT creation narratives. The only direct reference is found in Gen 1:26 (Mark 10:6 par. Matt 19:4); it is to be assumed that the priestly narrative of Genesis 1–2 was regarded as the determining account.

The OT creation narratives are most intelligible within the framework of ancient Near Eastern views; each motif has parallels. Knowledge still stands "at its beginning in the investigation of the language of Creator and creation" (Westermann 13). It is increasingly being recognized that the function of the conception of the creation lies not so much in an (intellectual) explanation of the beginning of the world as in the interest in the continued existence of the world and of persons or in the concern of the person about his existence (cf. Eliade 11–34; Westermann 17). Thus the process of creation is consists conceived of as a battle of the powers of order ("cosmos") against chaos (cf. Foerster 1001–5). Faith in the Creator God is thus faith in the reliability of the course of things and trust in the future; the idea of the person as creature expresses the experience of dependence on powers beyond human control. In OT and NT monotheism all powers except the *one* God become radically devalued. The new idea in the NT, in contrast to the OT view, is that of Christ as mediator in creation.[4]

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[1]Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Translation of: Exegetisches Wrterbuch zum Neuen Testament.;Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993), 2:325.

[2]Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Translation of: Exegetisches Wrterbuch zum Neuen Testament.;Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993), 2:325.

[3]Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Translation of: Exegetisches Wrterbuch zum Neuen Testament.;Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993), 2:325.

[4]Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Translation of: Exegetisches Wrterbuch zum Neuen Testament.;Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993), 2:325.

The belief that God created the world is assumed everywhere and is thus not especially emphasized. Thus, e.g., the reference in Mark 13:19 is to be understood in this way when the *creation* is characterized more precisely as *created* by God. According to Rom 1:25 the idolaters worship the *creation* in place of the *Creator,* and thus stand under the wrath of God. The reference to God the Creator can be used as the basis for a teaching: In Matt 19:4 (God *created* man and woman) and 1 Cor 11:9 (man was not *created* for the sake of woman) marriage, the relationship of man and woman, are characterized with reference to the "order of creation," as it can be formulated in modern terms. In a similar way 1 Tim 4:3 rejects asceticism: God *has created* food to be received with thanksgiving. God is sometimes characterized, explicitly in doxologies, as the one who *created* everything (Eph 3:9; Rev 4:11 bis; cf. 10:6: "heaven and that which is in it"). According to 1 Pet 4:19 the *Creator* is "faithful": The one who created the world can be trusted even today and in the future.

Independent of the generally attested creative activity of God, a role of mediator in creation is ascribed to Jesus Christ when it is said in Col 1:16 (bis) that everything "*has been created* in him … , through him, and to him." Some mss. have inserted a similar conception into Eph 3:9 ("through Jesus Christ").[5]

πλάσμα, ατος, τό *plasma* something formed, creation[*]

Rom 9:20: "Does perhaps *what is created* say to its creator… ?" (cf. Isa 29:16 LXX). H. Braun, *TDNT* VI, 254–62.

πλάσσω *plassō* form, construct, create[*]

Rom 9:20: "Will perhaps what is molded say to the *molder* (τῷ πλάσαντι): Why have you made (ἐποίησας) me thus?"; 1 Tim 2:13: "Adam was *formed / created (ἐπλάσθη)* first (πρῶτος), then Eve" (cf. Gen 2:7, 8, 15 LXX; on the priority of man see also 1 Cor 11:8). H. Braun, *TDNT* VI, 254–62, esp. 260f.

πλαστός, 3 *plastos* made up, false[*]

2 Pet 2:3: "In their greed they will exploit you with *fabricated* words (πλαστοῖς λόγοις)," referring to false teachers. H. Braun, *TDNT* VI, 262.[6]

a) It is used of the creative, historical, and future eschatological action of God:
1) God appears as *Creator* in the comprehensive sense particularly in Acts. He "*made* heaven, earth, and sea and everything in them" (4:24); 14:15 (cf. 7:50; 17:24; Heb 1:2) cites Exod 20:11; Ps 145:6 LXX, similarly Rev 14:7; (κτίζω in Rev 10:6; in the LXX κτίζω is much

[5]Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Translation of: Exegetisches Wr̲terbuch zum Neuen Testament.;Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993), 2:325-326.

[*] All New Testament occurrences of this word are mentioned in the body of this article.

[6]Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Translation of: Exegetisches Wr̲terbuch zum Neuen Testament.;Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993), 3:101.

LXX Septuagint

less frequent than ποιέω for *bārā'*). More specifically, God "*made* from one every human nation" (Acts 17:26), he "*made* them male and female" (Mark 10:6; cf. Matt 19:4, where κτίζω is probably original rather than ποιέω; cf. *TCGNT* 47), he *made* "the inside and the outside" (Luke 11:40). He *made* the angels winds (Heb 1:7) and human beings "thus" (Rom 9:20), according to "his will" (v. 19).[7]

Jesus: Lord of Creation (1:15–17).   The structure of the passage provides a guideline for analysis. In this first stanza of the hymn, the structural analysis reveals two assertions about the person of Christ (v. 15) that are followed by a reason for the assertions (v. 16) and a summary statement expressing Jesus' prominence (v. 17).

1:15 Two assertions set the direction for the entire discussion. They are: "He is the image of the invisible God," and "[He is] the firstborn over all creation." Two important matters emerge from the first assertion: the idea of the image of God and how the image is a revelation of God. In the Greek world, the word "image" (*eikōn*) conveyed one of two nuances of meaning. Both elements were always present, but one tended to dominate the other. The first is that of representation. The image represented and symbolized what the object pictured. This usage occurred often in the contexts of an image on a coin or a reflection in a mirror.[67] If this emphasis were primary, Paul would have said Jesus was the symbol of deity. Paul would have meant that Jesus exactly symbolized God.

The second element of meaning in the word "image" (*eikōn*) was manifestation. When the term was employed, it meant that the symbol was more than a symbol. The symbol brought with it the actual presence of the object. Thus J. B. Phillips translated it, "visible expression," and by it Paul meant that Jesus brought God into the human sphere of understanding. He manifested God. The terminology is similar to Heb 1:3, where the writer stated that Jesus is called the "exact representation" of God, and John 1:18, which states that Jesus "has made him known." The point is that in Christ the invisible God became visible. He shared the same substance as God and made God's character known in this earthly sphere of existence. The revelation of God in Christ is such that we can actually see him, even with all of our limitations.

This points to a significant truth about the uniqueness of Christ. The Old Testament forbade images made in the likeness of God (Exod 20:4–6). No person was to design a likeness of God and use it for worship. To do that confined the concept of God to the mental image conveyed by the symbol. God would always be conceived of in terms of the specific symbol which pictured him to people. This was inadequate because God was bigger than that and because the people were to think the highest possible thoughts of God. On the other hand, the Old Testament clearly stated that persons were created in the image of God (Gen 1:27, where in the LXX the Greek

TCGNT B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek NT* (1971)

v. verse

[7] Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Translation of: Exegetisches W_rterbuch zum Neuen Testament.;Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993), 3:124.

[67] C. Vaughan, *Colossians and Philemon, BSG* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 38.

word *eikōn* is also used). Paul argued that concept at Corinth when the women apparently were violating proper authority structures within the church (1 Cor 11:7). He also related Adam to Christ in a unique manner (1 Cor 15:45), a theme which deserves some contemplation.[68] In this passage, he stated that Jesus was unique in that he manifested the image of God. Thus, for Paul, Jesus bore the image of the earthly, Adam, and the image of the heavenly, God. He was the unique manifestation of both God and man, always embodying the best of both wherever he was. In choosing the word "image," Paul stressed that God was present wherever Jesus was. He was the personal manifestation of deity.

The second assertion about Jesus expresses his relationship to all of creation. This is found in the term "firstborn." History reveals that this term has had various definitions. In the fourth century, Arius, a preacher from Alexandria, Egypt, taught that Christ was a created being. He was greater than the rest of the creation but lesser than God himself. Arius hoped this position would protect Christianity from the charge of polytheism. This position was condemned in the church in A.D. 325. Even so, Arius's position has refused to die and lives on in several sectarian groups. He understood this text to teach that Jesus was the firstborn (part) of the creation (whole).[69] Even though Jesus was unique among created beings, he was still created. According to Arius, Jesus occupied the strange position of being "created creator."

The Greek word "firstborn" comes from two words which mean *to bring forth, or beget* and *first*.[70] The word is seldom used outside of biblical materials, and its use in extra-biblical sources has limited value to biblical meaning. It occurs 130 times in the LXX, normally with the primary meaning of *primogeniture*. Used this way, it expressed the first birth of men or animals. The word, however, also developed a second use in the LXX. It often expressed a special relationship with God the Father, one of privilege.[71] This is certainly the meaning in such passages as Ps 89:27, where David is called the "firstborn" among the kings of the earth. In the New Testament the word occurs only eight times. It is clearly used literally of primogeniture only once.[72] The rest of the occurrences are figurative, and they are far removed from any idea of birth. Finally,

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[68] E.g., the development of this theme in H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 78–86.

[69] This would be a partitive genitive, in which the part is a portion of the whole.

[70] The terms are πρῶτος ("first") and τέτωκα, perfect of τίκτω ("to bring forth").

[71] This is confirmed first by the use in the LXX of such passages as Exod 4:22 and Jer 31:9, in which the stress is on the idea of privilege rather than birth. Second, the Hebrew בְּכוֹר is the word translated by the Greek πρωτότοκος 111 of its 130 occurrences in the LXX (with 6 more from this word group, and 5 have no equivalent). The Hebrew term "might become increasingly remote and even detached altogether from the idea of birth or the whole question of origin" (W. Michaelis, *TDNT*, 6:873). Certainly the term often stresses the idea of privilege. See the article by K. H. Bartels, *DNTT*, 1: 667–669.

[72] The eight are Luke 2:7; Rom 8:29; Col 1:15, 18; Heb 1:6; 11:28 (plural); 12:23; Rev. 1:5. The one time it occurs with a literal sense is Luke 2:7, and that is a questionable usage. For a thorough and valuable discussion of this data, see Michaelis, 6:865–882.

the Fathers also used the term figuratively. Polycarp, for example, referred to an enemy of the church as the "firstborn of Satan."[73]

The Jewish concept of the birthright also influences the meaning of the word. As Lightfoot pointed out, the term "firstborn" referred to a rite (ritual) that accorded the first son a special place in the family. The term soon lost the meaning of the first in time and developed the meaning of first in priority. Following this reasoning, Paul stated that Jesus "is His Father's representative and heir and has the management of the divine household (all creation) committed to Him."[74]

The meaning of privilege predominates in the passage. Three lines of argument support that conclusion. First is the lexical significance of the term as it was used in the biblical materials. Second is the idea of birthright, which figured so prominently in Jewish life. Third is the problem of mixed metaphors. If Jesus were a created being, the figure of birth is hardly appropriate. Birth and creation are not to be equated here. The point of the metaphor is to distinguish Jesus from creation, not to tie him to it by placing him within it. Michaelis pointed out "that Adam, though not born but created, can be called the 'firstborn of the world' in Nu. r., 4 (141c)."[75] Recognizing this usage, we can see that the term must refer to the unique place of Jesus in relation to creation.

The definition of "firstborn" provides understanding for the statement translated "over all creation." As previously noted, some have wanted to take the statement in a partitive sense, as the "firstborn part of the whole creation." This is impossible with the sense demanded of the word "firstborn." The NIV translation correctly states that Jesus is "over all creation." The term "firstborn" distances Jesus from creation rather than subsumes him under it. Therefore, the point is that Jesus is the firstborn (preeminent) with reference to the creation, just as later Paul argued that Jesus was preeminent "out of the dead."[76]

Thus two assertions are made regarding Jesus. In his work toward us as revealer of God, he manifests God to us. In his work toward creation, he is prominent over it.

1:16 In this verse Paul provided the reason for asserting the supremacy of Christ over creation. The three phrases "by him" (v. 16a), "by him" (v. 16b), and "for him" (v. 16b) indicate the relationship. In actuality, three different ideas are expressed by these phrases. The first of these is the Greek expression translated literally "in him."[77] It should be understood as *in his mind* or *in his sphere of influence and responsibility*. Practically, it means that Jesus conceived of creation and its complexities. Creation was his idea. Hendriksen illustrated the term by saying Jesus is the cornerstone from which the whole building takes its bearings.[78] The illustration is limited, however. The phrase points to Jesus as the "detailer" of creation.

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[73] Polycarp, 7:1.

[74] Vaughan, 39.

[75] Michaelis, 6:876, n. 30.

[76] This takes the genitive construction as a genitive of reference.

[77] The Greek is ἐν αὐτῷ.

[78] W. Hendriksen, *Colossians and Philemon*, *NTC* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 73.

Theologically a clear distinction is to be made between the work of the Father and the Son. The Father, of course, has a significant relationship to creation. He is presented as the architect; he determined to bring creation into existence. The Son, Jesus, actually brought the plans into existence. Through his creative imagination and power, the created order exists. He is, in a sense, the foreman of the construction. The Spirit, finally, does the actual work of applying the plans in a hands-on relationship to creation. This statement about Jesus, therefore, speaks to Jesus' originating the details of creation and bringing them into existence by his own creative energy.[79] The second informative phrase is that creation came into existence "through him."[80] The NIV says "by him." This phrase means that creation came to be through his power and ability. He is the effective agent of creation. In this Paul spoke consistently with other biblical writers. In John 1:1ff., John affirmed emphatically that everything created owes its existence to Jesus. In Heb 1:1–3, the writer pointed to Jesus' creative and sustaining power in relation to all material things.

Finally, the passage affirms that creation exists "for him." The literal expression is "unto him."[81] This means that Jesus is the goal of all creation. Everything exists to display his glory, and ultimately he will be glorified in his creation. Paul's argument in these verses may be illustrated by an artist who produces a sculpture. Originally the idea and details of the sculpture come from the mind of the artist. He builds the proportions, the perspectives, the figures, and the emphases desired from the statue. Then, the sculpture is constructed by the artist as he and he alone can "see" it. Finally, those who admire the finished work think of the artist who imagined, planned, and accomplished the work of beauty. As long as the sculpture stands, people remember and appreciate the artist. In the same way, Jesus is the central point of all of creation, and he rules over it.

When discussing Jesus' work in creation, Paul expressed the dimensions of creation. They are "things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities" (1:16). The series begins with two contrasts between two dimensions of life set against each other. They are universal in scope. A chiastic arrangement reveals that they are one unit of thought.[82] In a chiasm, the outside members receive emphasis. Thus the unseen world receives emphasis, expressed here as "heaven … things invisible." The seen world receives secondary emphasis, expressed as "earth … visible."

The two dimensions are dimensions of creation. Some modern readers are prone to understand "heaven" as the term which describes the timeless future destination of believers. Others see it as an unending time, an eternal realm. Sometimes the term does refer to the state of eternal bliss, but neither explanation is correct in this context or in this epistle. Paul used the word for another dimension: the unseen but created reality. This meaning is demonstrated by the

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[79] In another sense, of course, the Scriptures speak of the unity of deity in all tasks, including creation and redemption. Yet there are fine divisions of responsibility which are regularly maintained by a number of different biblical authors.

[80] The phrase is δἰ αὐτοῦ.

[81] The Greek is εἰς αὐτόν.

[82] Here, the chiasm is (1) heaven, (2) earth, (3) visible, and (4) invisible. Two groups emerge: (1) and (4) refer to the same general thing, and (2) and (3) do also. There is a slight emphasis on the heavenly, invisible dimension of creation.

immediate context and the context of both Ephesians and Colossians. The immediate context sets heaven and earth apart from each other, but attributes their existence to the creative energies of Jesus. If heaven were understood as the place where God lives, it could hardly have been created by Jesus in the way Paul discussed it here. Second, the Epistle to the Colossians uses the term "heaven(s)" similarly to Ephesians.[83] Actually, the term is used in two ways in these epistles.

On one hand, it may have reference to the heavens as a place above the earth (Col 1:23; 4:1; Eph 4:10; 6:9). This is the more common designation. On the other hand, it may refer to a place where spirits dwell and where the Christian is placed spiritually at the time of his salvation (Eph 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10). This is also the place of the evil spirits against whom the Christian wars (Eph 6:10ff.).[84] Since in the conclusion of this verse Paul referred to spirit beings primarily, it may well be that he had in mind the home of spirit beings, a different dimension of existence. Probably, however, Paul spoke of the earth and heaven as created realities. Here the heavens are the locale of the spiritual warfare in which Christians engage.

The thought of the two dimensions of creation, however, soon gives way to the spirit beings who live there and who concern the Christian. These are identified as "thrones or powers or rulers or authorities." Paul may well have referred here to the same kind of pre-Gnostic *plērōma*, although nothing specific in the text demands such interpretation. The assumption may be made that these categories continue the twofold categories of heaven/invisible and earth/ visible. In fact, the terms may be used in that fashion, capable of designating human political rule (thrones, powers, rulers, authorities). The chiasm has ended, however, clearly indicating that the twofold categories are over.[85] This is a new list which identifies a new perspective within the scope of creation, but different from heaven and earth.

There is a general consensus among scholars that the terms used here refer to spiritual beings. Some, such as Theodoret and several of the Fathers, seemed to understand them as good spirits. They have been given the task of supervision. The "thrones" are the cherubim; the "authorities" "rulers," and "powers" are the guardian angels of the nations.[86] Little evidence exists to determine whether these are good or bad. They are simply higher classes of angelic beings. In light of 2:8–3:4, however, they probably refer to fallen beings who oppress the Christian. In Ephesians, the terms definitely refer to enemies of the gospel (Eph 6:10ff.). They may have been the focus of the Colossian teachers since evidently they taught the necessity of intermediaries between God and man.[87] These terms may refer to separate classes of beings rather than designating one type. F. F. Bruce points out that "the highest angel-princes, like the rest of creation are subject to Christ as the one in whom, through whom and for whom they were

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[83] Generally the term "heaven" is plural, "the heavens" (οὐρανοῖς).

[84] Some patterns of usage seem to exist regarding οὐρανός, but they defy clear analysis. Also, Paul seemed to use οὐρανοῖς almost interchangeably with οὐρανός. Thus the specific context must determine the precise meaning.

[85] Chiasms mark the beginning and end of a specific section.

[86] Taken from Moule, 65–66.

[87] E.g., Martin, *Church's Lord*, 40.

created."[88] Although little biblical evidence exists on which to base the conclusions about spirit hierarchies, Moule was certainly correct in stating, "The cumulative effect of this catalog of powers is to emphasize the immeasurable superiority of Christ over whatever rival might, by the false teachers, be suggested."[89]

These spirit beings occupy a significant place in the epistle. The special attention they receive suggests considerable preoccupation regarding them. Indeed, they are the object of much discussion here and in 2:8–3:4. Paul seems to have felt a need to note that these spirit beings are created by the power of Christ and conquered by the power of the cross (2:15).

1:17 The summary includes two statements of significance to the readers. The first is, "He is before all things." Clearly this comment has a time orientation, and it teaches that before creation Jesus existed. Since for the ancients priority in time often meant priority of person, this argument not only stresses Jesus' role in creating but also gives him a prominent position with respect to creation. The second statement is, "In him all things hold together." The work of creation included the continual sustaining of what was created. Looking to the present, ongoing routine of creation, therefore, Paul stated that Jesus keeps things in order. The Creator has not forgotten the creation. He daily maintains a balance in the universe.

Jesus: Lord of the New Creation (1:18–20). As creation and redemption go together in theology, so Paul tied them together in the second stanza of the hymn. Here, Jesus is praised for his role in the new creation. In the new creation, every aspect of creation touched by sin will be touched by grace. This does not mean that every element affected by sin will be redeemed into a state of grace. It means that every category of creation will be restored and that those areas left in a state of sin will be put into their proper place by the power of Christ. The structure of this stanza parallels the first. There are two assertions (1:18) and reasons for the assertions (1:19–20).[8]

The words in Heb. 11:3, 'what is seen was made out of things which do not appear', taken with Gn. 1:1, 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth', indicate that the worlds were not made out of any pre-existent material, but out of nothing by the divine Word, in the sense that prior to the divine creative fiat there was no other kind of existence. This *creatio ex nihilo*[9]

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[88] Bruce, 198.

[89] Moule, 65–66.

[8] Richard R. Melick, vol. 32, *Philippians, Colissians, Philemon* (electronic ed.;, Logos Library System; The New American Commentary Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1991), 214.

[9] D. R. W. Wood, *New Bible Dictionary* ((InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962)), 239.