

# Faith & Science CONFERENCE





# JESUS AND CREATION

Colossians 1:15-20

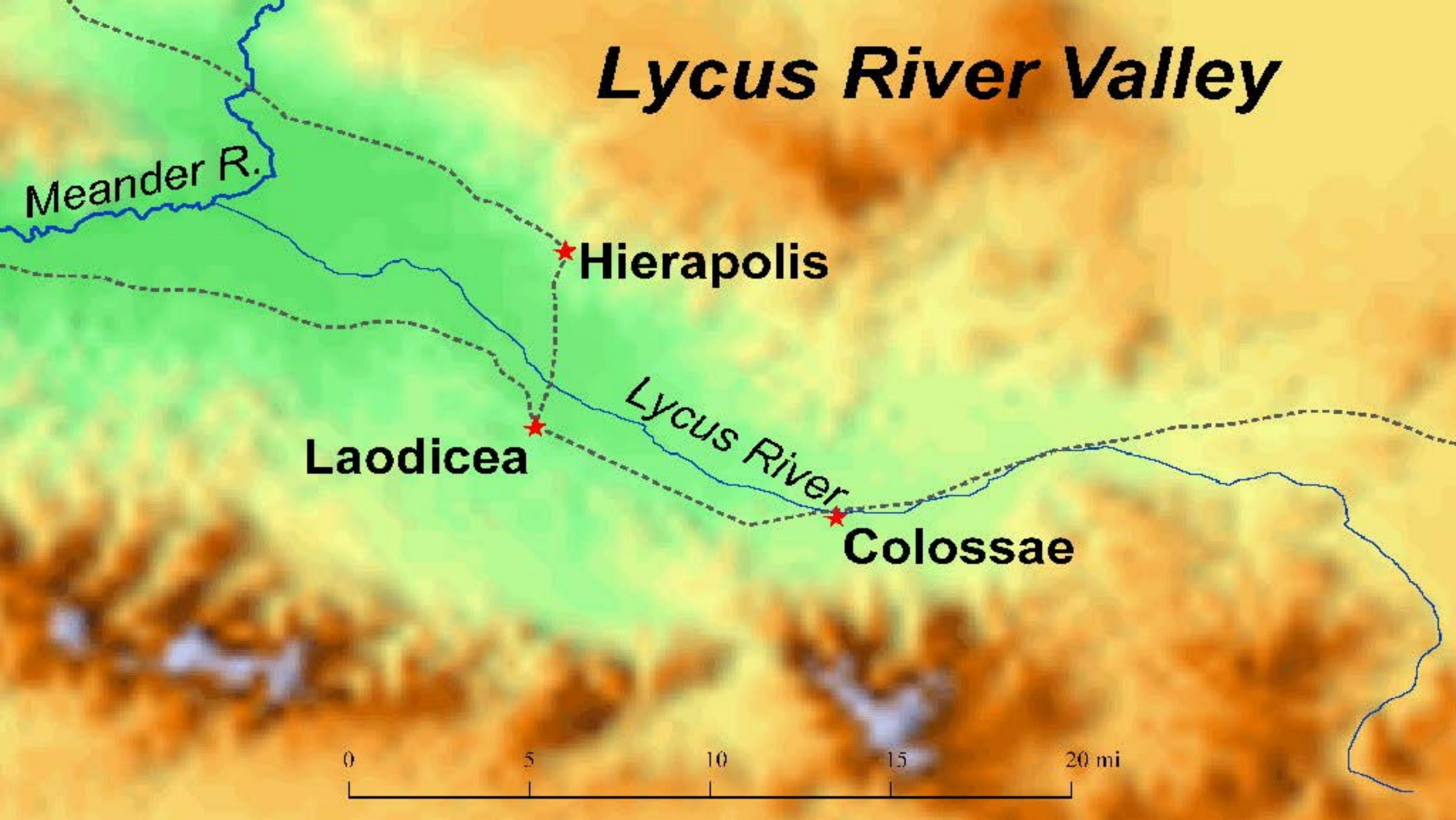


He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For *by Him* all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created *through Him* and *for Him*. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and *by Him* to reconcile all things to Himself, *by Him*, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross (Col. 1:15-20).





# *Lycus River Valley*



Meander R.

Hierapolis

Laodicea

Lycus River

Colossae

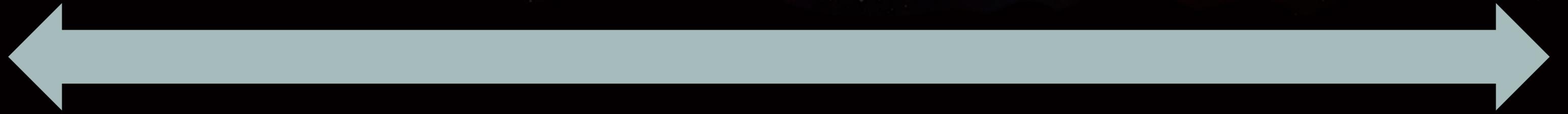
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## Big Idea

Jesus is our preeminent Saviour, because the One who redeemed us is also the One who created us.

# Christ the Preeminent Agent



Creation

Before Primeval

Work of Creation

Redemption

Divine Purpose

Inaugurated

New Creation

Divine Purpose

Consummated



<b>Jesus is Lord of Creation</b>	<b>Jesus is Lord of the New Creation</b>
<b>1:15-17</b>	<b>1:18-20</b>
<b>Who is the image of God...</b>	<b>Who is the head of the body...</b>
<b>First born over creation...</b>	<b>Firstborn from the dead...</b>
<b>For in him....</b>	<b>For in him....</b>
<b>Through him....</b>	<b>Through him....</b>



- V 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.
- image = εἰκων
- Representation, likeness that goes beyond similarity.
- The description of Christ as image is revelatory and ontological.
- “We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen.”



## ➤ Invisible God

➤ Rom. 1:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27

➤ How then can God be known?

➤ The invisible God is known through the image of God!



- ▶ V 15 the firstborn (πρωτοτοκος) over all creation. V 16 For *by Him* all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.
- ▶ firstborn (πρωτοτοκος) over all creation
  - ▶ Israel (Ex 4:22); David (Ps 89:27)
  - ▶ Preeminent in time
- ▶ Everything that *is*, whether visible or invisible, came into being through the creative power of the Lord Jesus Christ.



## ► The pre-resurrection Jesus movement – confused, uncertain

- “But who do you say that I am?” (Matt 16:15). This question, asked at a decisive point in Jesus’ ministry, requires a decisive answer.
- Jesus’ contemporaries offered the following possibilities:
- John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets (Matt 16:14), or “the prophet” (John 6:14; 7:40)



## ► The post-resurrection Jesus movement

- ✓ The death of Jesus with its cosmological phenomena (Matt 27:45, 51-53)
- ✓ The resurrection of Jesus with its cosmological phenomena (Matt 28:1-12)
- ✓ 40 days of teaching from Jesus about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3)
- ✓ The outpouring of the Holy Spirit with its supernatural activity (Acts 2:1-4)



► Christ is the cosmic Lord  
because he is the cosmic Creator !



- ▶ **V 17** All things were created *through Him* and *for Him*. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
- ▶ Consist or hold together = *synesteken* (verb, stative, perfect)
- ▶ The universe owes its continuing coherence and sustenance to Christ.



V 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning (*arche*), the firstborn (*prototokos*) from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

the head of the body = absolute identification

beginning (*arche*) = used in the LXX and points to creation



Christ is the founder, the beginner of the eschatological resurrection.

In what sense is he the firstborn?

What of Moses, Elijah and those at Christ's death?



► He is the firstborn from the dead in terms of rank and superiority.

► It is the Cosmic Lord who conquered death

► It is the Cosmic Christ who triumphed over death



▶ But how?

▶ As a man !

▶ Why?

▶ Because he was sinless



Christ is preeminent in all things.



- ▶ V 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and *by Him* to reconcile all things to Himself, *by Him*, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.
- ▶ Fullness used to counter Gnostic heresy
- ▶ Reconcile (ἀποκαταλλάζειν) used in Hellenistic politics.
- ▶ The Cosmic Christ affects a cosmic reconciliation.



► This peace is not temporal and transitory like the *Pax Romana*.

► It is peace achieved through sacrifice, not any sacrifice, but a sacrifice of cosmic proportions.



“through the blood of His cross.”

“To claim that God has acted in the crucifixion of Christ requires the adoption of a countercultural interpretation of the cosmos.”

Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians* (London: John Knox, 2008), 78.



The Cosmic Christ as Creator inverts the values of the world.

The Cosmic Christ as Lord subverts the ways of the world.



“Christ is to us just what his cross is. All that Christ was in heaven or on earth was put into what he did there...Christ, I repeat, is to us just what his cross is. You do not understand Christ till you understand his cross.”

P. T. Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross*



Paul's life follows the trajectory of his writing.





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