

Firstborn From the Dead

Colossians 1:18 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 preeminence.

Scholars have identified as many as 700 titles and names for Jesus in the Bible.

Jesus said of Himself that He was the Alpha and the Omega. Those are the first letter and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. We would say that Jesus is A-to-Z. He's the entire alphabet. He is everything God wants to say to you – the entire language of God.

Just for fun, we've been using our alphabet to identify some of the 700 titles and names. We're going, as it were, from A-to-Z. So far we've looked at these biblical names:

1. The Last **A**dam
2. The **B**ridegroom
3. The **C**omforter
4. The **D**oor
5. The **E**xpress Image of God.

Tonight we've arrived at 'F.' Some of the names for Jesus starting with 'F' are:

1. Friend. John 15:15, Jesus no longer called His disciples servants, but friends. Then He spoke of having shared with them everything His Father had told Him.
2. First-Begotten of the dead (Revelation 1:5). Jesus experienced a full humanity – including death. But because He was sinless and holy, death could not hold Him.
3. First-Fruits (First Corinthians 15:20). In His resurrection there was the promise of a greater harvest of souls who also would rise to live forever in new bodies.
4. Foundation – Isaiah 28:6, **Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone... a sure foundation, and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.**

5. Fortress – Numerous Psalms. A fort of rest – despite the surrounding turbulence.
6. Fountain of Living Waters. Can't help but think of the Rock that appeared in the wilderness wanderings of Israel. It was struck; then, it only needed to be spoken to; to yield a fresh flow of water for millions of people and their animals. You're told plainly by the apostle Paul that the Rock from which the fountain came was Jesus.

We want to talk about Jesus as He is described in Colossians 1:18, as [Firstborn from the dead](#).

[Firstborn](#) is a word of rank. It occurs in verse fifteen, where you read that Jesus was the [firstborn over all creation](#). At 'first' glance, that might be taken as teaching that Jesus was the first being ever created. This is the position that the JW's take; it's an old heresy.

Two things to notice:

1. The context in which the term firstborn is found is that Jesus is Himself the Creator of everything. This matches what you read elsewhere in the Bible. He was, and is, eternal and uncreated.
2. The word [firstborn](#) can mean the first child; but it also means *first in rank or honor* – and that is its meaning with regard to the Lord.

You see this exactly in the life and death and living of Jesus. Jesus rose from the dead; but He was *not* the first person ever to do so. He raised the dead while He was on the earth, before He died and was raised. So He was not first in a chronological sense; He was and is first in a theological sense.

Jesus was the first person to be raised from the dead who would never die again. He was the One who conquered death; the One who overcame the grave. It is His rank and honor for all eternity.

But He wasn't the last person who would be raised to never die again! Because Jesus rose from the dead, and remains alive, **you** – if you are a believer – will rise from the dead to never die again.

In His resurrection Jesus is called the **firstfruits of those who are asleep** (First Corinthians 15:20). **Firstfruits** were the *first installment* guaranteeing the rest of the future harvest. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead guarantees the future resurrection from the dead of **all** those who are asleep in Jesus.

Asleep is the word the Bible uses to describe the physical death of Christians:

1. When you fall asleep at the end of the day your body lies temporarily still and resting from its labor until you awaken.
2. When you die at the end of your life your body lies temporarily still and resting from its labor until it arises.

Your physical body arises in resurrection at the coming of Jesus. The Greek word from which we get our word "cemetery" means *resting place or sleeping place*. It is the same word you would use for *dormitory*. **Cemeteries are dormitories for the dead!**

It's important you realize something regarding the resurrection. There are two resurrections mentioned in the Bible – the resurrection of believers, and the resurrection of unbelievers. The resurrection of believers is called the first resurrection; the resurrection of unbelievers is called the second resurrection.

The second resurrection takes place all at once, at the end of the one-thousand year Kingdom of God on the earth. All of the unbelieving dead from all of time will be brought before the Lord at His Great White Throne. If you appear there, it's because you never accepted Jesus as Savior, and are lost for all eternity.

The first resurrection **does not occur at one, general time in history**. It occurs in stages. Some of those stages are:

1. The resurrection of deceased believers from the Church Age at the coming of Jesus to Rapture His Church home to heaven. The Bible says the dead in Christ will rise first; it means the deceased believers of the Church.
2. Then the first resurrection continues as Jesus Raptures living believers from the earth.

3. Tribulation saints and Old Testament saints are not raised at that time, but are raised after the Great Tribulation.

You see, not all believers are raised at once. It occurs in stages; over time. But eventually, at the end of all things related to this heaven and this earth, all believers **will** be raised or Raptured and have glorified bodies for all eternity.

Jesus earned the rank, and deserves the honor, of being **Firstborn**, because He was God who became man to save you from sin and death and give you eternal life.

I want to notice something else in the verse. One of the conclusions you draw from Jesus being Firstborn (and the other descriptions of Him) is that **in all things He may have the preeminence**.

Everything extends His 'firstness' to as wide a scope as you can conceive. It's **Jesus First** in everything!

Marriage

Family

Career

Missions & Ministry

In how you spend your time... In what and who you love...

In art, in music, in literature...

In everything.