

Isaac. Ishmael was born first but Isaac had the right of the first-born. Isaac had two sons. They were Esau and Jacob. Esau came out of his mother's womb first, but Jacob eventually obtained the right of the first-born. Jacob had twelve sons. Reuben was born first, but Judah who was his fourth son possessed the right of the first-born. It is evident then that the word "first-born" denotes a position, and Ps 9: 27 makes it clear that this position is one of sovereignty, for in that passage we read, "Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." Here we have a synthetic parallelism: the idea expressed in the second line of the parallelism adds something fresh to or explains the idea expressed in the first line of the parallelism. In this passage the second line of the parallelism explains the first line. The first line of the parallelism states that God will make the subject of this Psalm his first-born. The second line explains what that means: that that person will be "higher than the kings of the earth," i.e., it speaks of the supreme sovereignty of Christ over all kings. Jesus is sovereign over all creation. If he was the first-created of all creation, the Apostle Paul would have used the Greek word *πρωτόκτιστος* which means "first-created."⁶ But Paul does not use that word because that was not what he wanted to say. Instead, he uses the Greek word *πρωτότοκος* which is translated "firstborn"⁷ because he wants to say that Jesus is sovereign over all creation, and this word expresses that idea. The Apostle Paul then gives the reason why Jesus is sovereign over all creation, and that reason is that he created it. This reason is given in v16.

In the first part of this verse Paul says that Jesus is the *cause* of the creation of all the things that are in heaven and that are in earth whether we can see them with our eyes or not, and his includes "thrones", "dominions", "principalities", and "powers". These are probably four different classes of angels. Paul says this in the following words: "for by him" or a better translation would be "for in Him", i.e., Jesus "were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers."

Paul goes on to say that Jesus was the *agent* of creation: "all things were created by him," and that he was the *goal* of creation: "all things were created ... for him." Jesus then is the creator in the fullest sense of the word, and that is why He is sovereign over all creation.

Moreover in v17 Paul says that Jesus precedes creation: "he is *before* all things." Further, Jesus preserves creation: "by him all things consist," i.e., they cohere or hold together. So vv16 and 17 teach clearly that Jesus was not part of God's creation.

Jehovah's Witnesses, however, try to get around this problem by inserting the word "other" in these verses. They say that the word "other" is inserted in Luke 13:2 and 4 because it is implied by the context, and if it can be inserted in those verses because it is implied by the context, the word "other" can also be inserted in these verses for the same reason. Therefore, they translate these verses "because by means of him all (other) things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All (other) things have been created through