

him and for him. Also, he is before all (other) things and by means of him all (other) things were made to exist."<sup>9</sup>

Now it is true that in Luke 13: 2 and 4, the word "other", though not in the Greek New Testament, is clearly implied by the context, but the only way the word "other" can be implied by the context in these verses is for the phrase "the first-born of all creation" to mean that Jesus was the first-created of all creation, but there is no evidence to prove that is what this phrase means. As we have already indicated, if this was what Paul wanted to say, he would have used the Greek word which means "first-created." Furthermore, if the phrase "the first-born of all creation" means that Jesus was the first-created of all creation, then Jesus is a created being and he could not be God.

### **Proverbs 8:22**

The third passage is Prov 8: 22. This passage says, "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old." Like Rev 3:14 and Col 1:15, this passage is also interpreted by Jehovah's Witnesses to mean that Jesus was the first-created of all creation. According to them wisdom is personified in Prov 8. Christian writers in the early centuries A.D. took this as a reference to Jesus Christ in His prehuman form. So wisdom in this chapter is Jesus Christ, and since it is wisdom that speaks in v22, Jesus Christ himself is the speaker in this verse. Jehovah's witnesses claim further that the Hebrew word translated "possessed" in this verse means "created",<sup>9</sup> and this is how we should construe it in Prov 8:22. On the basis therefore that Jesus Christ is the speaker in Prov 8, they say that the LORD created Jesus as the beginning of his creation before he created anything else.

Is this correct? It is true that wisdom in Prov 8 is personified, and that many Christian writers of the early centuries A.D. say that this is a reference to Jesus Christ in His prehuman form. But it is a mistake to identify wisdom in this chapter with Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the content of this chapter makes it clear that wisdom in this chapter is not Jesus Christ: wisdom here is personified just as love is personified in 1 Cor 13:4-7. Further the Hebrew word חָכָמָה has two meanings. The first, "to create", is the meaning assigned to it by the Brown, Driver, and Briggs in *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*.<sup>10</sup> But note in the following verse that wisdom is everlasting: with reference to wisdom it states "I was set up from everlasting." This cannot be the meaning here. The second meaning, "to possess" suggests that the LORD possessed wisdom in the beginning of his creation before anything else was created. This agrees with the following verses which say that wisdom is everlasting and that it existed before the creation of the world. This also agrees with vv24 and 25 which say that wisdom was "brought forth", i.e., was in existence<sup>11</sup> before the created things mentioned in these verses. This then must be the meaning of this Hebrew word here. There is therefore no contradiction between this passage and the doctrine that Jesus is God.