1:15 (A) In what way is Christ the image of God?

Image here means essentially and absolutely the perfect expression and representation of God. The word is applied to Christ on account of His divine nature and moral excellence (CP 2Cor 4:4). All that Jesus is and does, interprets and explains all that God is and does (CP Jn 1:18; 12:45; 14:7-11; He 1:3). Christ is the visible representation and manifestation of the invisible God. (See also comments on Jn 1:18 and 14:7).

(B) What does it mean that Jesus is the firstborn of every creature?

The firstborn of every creature in Col 1:15 means that Christ existed before every created thing, which came into being by His creative acts (CP V16-17; Jn 1:3, 10; Ro 4:17; Eph 3:9-11; He 1:1-2, 10; Rev 4:11). Christ has always existed as an equal member of the Godhead from all eternity – He only became the Son of God at His incarnation (CP Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; 52:12 Mic 5:2; Jn 1:1-2; He 1:8-12). See also comments on Lu 1:35(B) and author's studies *Jesus – Eternally God* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**, and *The Doctrine of the Trinity* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.

1:16-17 What profound truth does this passage highlight?

The profound truth this passage highlights is that Jesus was not eternally the Son of God as a great many Christians believe - He was God. Before He took on human form at His incarnation, Jesus always existed as an equal member of the Godhead from all eternity (CP Mic 5:2; Zech 13:7; Mt 1:23; Jn 1:1-2, 15; 3:13; 8:56-58; 17:5; Php 2:5-8; 1 Ti 3:16; 1 Jn 1:1-3; 3:16). *Fellow* in Zech 13:7 refers to the pre-incarnate Jesus as being a fellow-God with Jehovah. The pre-incarnate Jesus was a spirit being and carried out the divine order of creation (CP Psa 90:2; 102:25-27; Jn 1:3, 10; Eph 3:9; He 1:1-2, 10-12; Rev 3:14). For a more detailed study on this subject see comments on Lu 1:35(B). See also comments on Jn 12:41, Ac 20:28 and 2Pe 1:1-2, and author's studies *Jesus – Eternally God* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**, and *The Doctrine of the Trinity* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.

1:18 What does it mean that Christ is the firstborn from the dead?

This means that Christ is the first to be resurrected from the dead to enter into eternal life and immortality of the body (CP Ac 26:23; 1Cor 15:20-23; Rev 1:5). The fact that Christ is the firstborn from the dead confirms the subsequent resurrection of all those who have died in Him (CP Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28-29; 1Cor 15:51-58; 1Th 4:13-18). See also comments on Jn 5:28-29 and 1Cor 15:51-58, and author's study *The Resurrection* in his book **Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith.**

1:20 Does the fact that Christ has reconciled all things to Himself through His atoning death mean that everyone will be saved in the end as some think?

No, salvation only applies to those in Christ. *All things* here do not include those who do not believe in Christ, as scriptures clearly teach (CP V21-23 with Mk 16:16; Jn 3:16-18, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 20:31; 1Jn 5:10). Those who do not believe in Christ are doomed to eternal damnation. The erroneous teaching that everyone will be saved in the end is called "universalism". *All things* in Col 1:20 refers to all things in the created universe, not only humans; the whole universe of things, material as well as spiritual, will ultimately be restored to harmony with God (CP Ro 8:19-23 with 2Pe 3:10-13 and Rev 21:1).

1:24 How are we to understand what Paul says here – does this imply that Christ's redemptive work on the cross was incomplete as some teach?

What Paul is simply saying here is that he too was enduring sufferings for the church like Christ endured. These sufferings have been promised to every follower of Christ down through the ages when they are faithful to Christ's command to preach the gospel (CP Mk 10:29-30; Ro 8:17-18; 2Ti 3:12). Paul rejoiced in his sufferings, seeing them as an extension of Christ's sufferings for the church through his ministry (CP Ac 9:10-16; 1Cor 4:9-13; 2Cor 1:3-7; 4:8-15; 6:3-13; 7:4; 12:10; Php 2:17-18; 2Ti 3:11). Col 1:24 does not teach, as some claim, that Christ's expiatory sufferings – His atonement – climaxed on the cross, were incomplete and had to be supplemented by Paul's sufferings. Paul's sufferings add nothing to the completeness of Christ's atonement (CP Jn 1:29; Ro 5:8-11, 17-19; He 7:22-28; 8:1-6; 9:11-15, 24-26; 10:5-14; 1Jn 2:2). Paul's sufferings are simply used by God to extend Christ's atonement into the lives of others in the church (CP Php 1:12-14, 29-30; 1Pe 5:10). See also comments on Jn 19:30.

1:26 What is the mystery Paul refers to here?

The mystery Paul refers to here is Christ indwelling believers, the hope of glory (CP V27 with Jn 14:23; Ro 8:8-11; 1Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2Cor 6:16; Ga 2:20; 4:6; Col 3:11). The indwelling spirit of Christ is the believer's guarantee of future glory (CP Ro 8:11, 22-23; 2Cor 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph 1:13-14; 1Pe 1:3-4). The Old Testament predicted that the Gentiles would partake of the salvation benefits in Christ along with the Jews, but it did not reveal that Christ would actually indwell them all (CP Psa 22:27; 65:5; 98:2-3; Isa 42:6; 45:21-22; 49:6; 52:10; 60:1-3). See also comments on 1 Cor 2:7-8.

1:27 There are a number of facts about Christ revealed in this chapter – what are they?

The facts about Jesus revealed in this chapter are that He is head of the eternal kingdom (CP V13 with 2 Pe 1:10-11). He is the redeemer (CP Col l:14 with Mt

20:28; Ro 3:21-26; Ga 3:13, 4:4-5). He is the image of God (CP Col 1:15 with Jn 12:45; 14:7-11; 2Cor 4:3-4; He 1:1-3). V15 also teaches that Jesus is the firstborn of every creature (CP Jn 1:1-2, 15; 3:13; 8:56-58; 17:5; Php 2:5-8; Rev 1:8; 22:13). He is the creator of all things (CP Col 1:16 with Psa 33:6; Jn 1:3, 10; Eph 3:9; He 1:1-2, 10; Rev 4:11). He is an eternal being (CP Col 1:17 with Mic 5:2; Jn 1:1-2, 10, 15; 8:56-58; 17:5; Php 2:5-8; 1Jn 1:1-2; Rev 1:8; 22:13). V17 also teaches that Jesus is the upholder of all things (CP He 1:3). He is head of the church (CP Col 1:18 with 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:22-23; 5:23). V18 also teaches that Christ is the firstborn from the dead (CP Ac 26:23; 1Cor 15:20-23; Rev 1:5). He is the fullness of God (CP Col 1:19 with 2:9 and Jn 1:14-16; Php 2:5-6). He is the only mediator between God and man (CP Col 1:20-22 with Ac 4:12; Ro 5:6-11; 2Cor 5:14-21; 1Ti 2:5-6; He 8:6; 9:14-15; 12:24). Finally, He is the indweller of all believers (CP Col 1:27 with Jn 14:23; Ro 8:8-11; 1Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2Cor 6:16; Ga 2:20; 4:6; Col 3:11). See also comments on Col 1:15(B) and author's studies *Names and Titles of Jesus* and *Jesus* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.

2:2-3 What is the mystery of God and of the Father and of Jesus Christ that Paul refers to here (KJV)?

There are two different views among Christians as to what exactly Paul is referring here. The first view is that the mystery refers to all the mysteries of the gospel that are now revealed by God and Christ (CP 1:26-27; 4:3; Mt 13:11; Ro 16:25-26; 1Cor 2:7; Eph 1:9-13; 3:1-11; 5:32; 6:19; 1Ti 3:8-9, 16). The second view is that the mystery Paul refers to in Col 2:2 is Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (CP Jn 1:14; Ro 11:33-36; 1Cor 1:24, 30; 2:6-8; Eph 1:8-9; 3:8-9). Neither view is fundamental to salvation, so whichever we hold to, let us agree to disagree with the other in love (see also comments on Ro 16:25-26, 1Cor 2:7-8, 2:9, 4:1; Eph 1:9-12, 3:9-12).

2:9 What does this mean?

This asserts Christ's Deity – that Jesus is God. The full content of the divine nature lives in Christ's bodily form, and believers have been brought to fullness of life in Him. He is head of all rule and authority in the universe (CP V10-12 with Jn 1:1; Php 2:5-8; 1Ti 3:16). See also comments on Mt 1:18-21, 3:16-17, Lu 1:35 (B), Jn 1:1, 5:16-23, 12:41, Ac 13:33, 20:28, Php 2:5-8, 1Ti 3:16, He 1:5, 5:5, 1Jn 5:6-9, Rev 1:8, and author's studies *Jesus – Eternally God* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**, and *The Doctrine of the Trinity* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.

2:12 What baptism is Paul referring to here?

This is yet another scripture which a great many Christians believe refers to water baptism, which also is not correct. The baptism referred to here is spiritual: the baptism of believers into Christ and into His body, the church, by the Holy Spirit upon their conversion to Christ (CP 1Cor 12:12-14 with Ro 12:5). In 1Cor 12:12-14 we see that the church is called "Christ" and is compared to a human body with its many members, which is confirmed in Ro 12:5. This shows us how the church is constituted: the Holy Spirit unites repentant sinners with Christ as members of His body, the church, when they put their faith in Christ for their salvation. This is what being baptized into Christ means (CP Eph 2:1-9 and Col 2:11-13 with Ro 6:3-5, Ga 2:20 and 3:26-27). For a more detailed study on this subject see comments on Ro 6:3-5.

2:14 What is Paul referring to here?

Paul is referring to the Old Testament law here with all its decrees that worked against those who were under it, being abolished in Christ's death (CP Ro 4:15; 5:20; 1Cor 15:56; Ga 3:23). Everyone under the old covenant was guilty before God, but as the fulfilment of the law, Christ took away that guilt (CP Ro 8:1-4; 10:4; 2Cor 3:6-11; Ga 3:19-25; 4:21-31; Eph 2:13-22; He 7:12, 18-25; 8:6-13; 9:11-15; 10:1-10). These scriptures all teach that the entire Old Testament law was abolished in Christ, yet a great many Christians are blind to this fact. They argue that only the ceremonial law was done away with, not the moral law. What they also do not understand is that the old covenant was for Israel only, whereas the new covenant is for all people – Jews and Gentiles alike (CP Ex 31:12-18 and Eze 20:9-13 with Hos 2:23; Ro 2:14; 9:22-26).

Many Christians also use Mt 5:17-18 to support their claim that the old covenant has not been abolished (CP Mt 5:17-18). Those who use this scripture to argue that Jesus did not abolish the law do not realize that the purpose of the law was fulfilled in Christ and is therefore no longer in force (CP Ro 10:4-7; Ga 3:19, 24-25; Col 2:15-17). See also comments on Ro 10:4, 2Cor 3:6, 3:12-16, Ga 4:21-31, Eph 2:15-16(A), He 8:6, and author's study *The Old Covenant – Fulfilled in Christ and Completely Abolished* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 1)**.

2:15 What are the principalities and powers referred to here (KJV)?

The *principalities* and *powers* here (KJV), are the same as in Eph 6:12 – demons (CP Eph 6:12). There are differing views among bible scholars however as to the exact meaning of what Paul says here. Some believe it refers to Christ's triumphant victory procession leading vanquished demons behind Him when He ascended to heaven after His resurrection (CP Psa 68:18; Eph 4:8-10). Others believe it refers to Christ's proclamation of victory over Satan and death to the spirits in prison, when He descended into hell (CP Mt 12:38-40; 1Pe 3:18-20). Neither view is fundamental to salvation, so whichever we disagree with, let us do so in love. (See also comments on Eph 4:8, 4:9 and 1Pe 3:18-20).

2:16-23 What is Paul warning Christians against here?

Paul is warning Christians here against allowing themselves to be caught up in self-imposed fastings and self-denials of anything to appear religious, which are not forbidden in scripture (CP V16-18). Christians

are also not to observe holy days, new moons or sabbaths. All these things were only ever meant to point to Jesus, and now that He has come they are fulfilled (CP V20-23 with Ro 14:5-6; Ga 4:8-11; He 10:1-10). In Col 2:18-19 Paul exhorts Christians not to let anyone induce them to forgo the spiritual for the natural: now that we have found Christ and been delivered from sin's power by the Holy Spirit baptizing us into Christ's body – the church – we must not revert to fleshly things. If we do we are no longer acknowledging Christ as the head of the church (CP Ro 6:3-5, 16 with Ga 3:1-5; Eph 4:14-18; 2Jn 8). See also comments on Ac 12:4, Ro 14:1-9, Ga 4:9.

3:1-3 ***How can one be risen with Christ and yet be dead?***

The word *dead* here refers to sin, the law, and the things of this world. Upon their conversion to Christ believers spiritually entered into His death and resurrection. His was a physical resurrection out from among the physically dead. Theirs was a spiritual resurrection out from among the spiritually dead and from a state of spiritual death, into that of spiritual life. They died to their former sin nature and now have the nature of Christ *... for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God* (CP 2:20; Ro 6:2-4, 6-7, 11-13; 7:4-6; Ga 2:19-20; 1Pe 2:24). See also comments on Ro 6:1, 6:3-5, 6:6-11, 6:12-14, 6:15, 6:16, 6:17-20, 6:21-23, 7:4.

3:4 ***See comments on Php 3:20-21***

3:5 ***See comments on Lu 12:13-15, 12:16-21 and 16:14-15***

3:15-17 ***See comments on Eph 5:18-20***

3:18-19 ***See comments on Eph 5:22-24 and 5:25-32***

3:20-21 ***See comments on Eph 6:4***

3:22-24 ***See comments on Eph 6:5-9***

4:5-6 ***How is salt defined here with which Christians are to "season" their speech?***

Salt is both a seasoning agent and a preservative. In this context it is used metaphorically of the Christian's speech directed to those outside the church being wholesome and preserved from corruption (CP Ecc 10:12 and Mk 9:50 with Eph 4:15, 29-31; 5:4; Col 3:8, 16; Tit 3:9). Just as salt not only flavours but prevents corruption, the Christian's speech should act not only as a blessing, but also as a purifying influence upon all who hear it. By the sweetness and courtesy of their conversation Christians are to impress favourably the heathen and make the most of every evangelistic opportunity. This is what *redeeming the time* means (CP Psa 119:46; Eph 5:15-16; 1Pe 3:15). None of this is teaching however that fervent and stern words cannot be directed when necessary against false believers who are enemies of the cross (CP Mt 23; Ac 15:1-2; Php 3:2; Col 2:8, 16). See also comments on Eph 5:3-4, 5:16; 2Ti 4:1-2 and Tit 2:7-8.

4:14 ***Who is Demas?***

Demas was Paul's co-worker in the gospel in Rome. He abandoned Paul soon after this epistle was written, having found the things of the world more enticing (CP 2Ti 4:10). It is not known if Demas was ever restored to fellowship with Christ. If not, he is condemned to eternal damnation, because whoever loves the world is the enemy of God (CP Jas 4:4; 1Jn 2:15-17). See also comments on 2Ti 4:10, Jas 4:1-4, 1Jn 2:15, and author's study *Christians, Love not the World* in his book **Advanced Studies in the Christian Faith (Volume 2)**.