

QUESTION

Doesn't the fact that Jesus is called the "firstborn" mean that he is less than God?

ANSWER

In Old Testament times the firstborn male was given the title of "firstborn." This meant that he would have the first place position in the inheritance rights that were passed down from the patriarch of the family. The person designated firstborn would also receive a double inheritance as a way to honor his position as the next patriarch (ruler) of the family.

It makes for an interesting study in the lives of Abraham and Isaac to discover that neither of their firstborn sons received the title of firstborn. Ishmael was born first, yet the title went to Isaac who was born second. Jacob was born after Esau, yet Jacob received the title. David was born the eighth son to Jesse, yet he was given the title of firstborn in a prophetic sense because the Messiah, the son of David, would rule forever. Please read Psalm 89:27 and context.

This should give us a clue that birth order does not necessarily determine who will be given the title firstborn. This is because it is not as much about birth as it is about who will rule. In the case of Jesus, he was given the title to show that he has absolute sovereignty. Therefore, when Colossians 1:15 states that Jesus is "the firstborn over all creation" it means that he is Lord of creation.

We must remember that Jesus did not have to be born in order to exist. The Bible states the fact that Jesus has no beginning and no end. He is eternal with the Father. He became God incarnate (in the flesh) as he entered creation through the virgin birth. Jesus Christ rules as "the firstborn over all creation."