When
is the
FIRSTBORN
not the
FIRSTBORN?

Foolish? Not at all. Because the word *firstborn* has at least TWO meanings.

"And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh.

"And the name of the second called he Ephraim" (Gen. 41:51, 52).

"Ephraim is my firstborn" (Jer. 31:9b).

Manasseh is called the firstborn because he was the first one born.

Ephraim is called the firstborn, but he was the SECOND one born!

In the case of Ephraim, then, the word *firstborn* does NOT mean the first one born. What does it mean? Let us search the scriptures and find out. For instance, in Deuteronomy 21:15-17 we read:

"If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated:

"Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that *he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is INDEED the firstborn:*

"But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is *the beginning of his strength: the right of the firstborn is his.*"

This commandment would be ridiculous if the word *firstborn* meant only the order in which a man's sons were born! For then God would be forbidding a father to do something he couldn't do anyway! When God forbade the father to make another son the firstborn, He was really forbidding the father to give the RANK, POSITION, or PRIVILEGE of the firstborn to the other son who was not truly the firstborn. Because the firstborn was usually the lord and heir, the word itself was often used as a synonym for lord and heir. Hence, the word *firstborn* designated rank. In the Septuagint in 2 Samuel 19:43 the Greek word *prototokos* is not even translated firstborn. (See KJ; AS; NWT and footnote.)

What Does Firstborn Mean in Colossians 1:15?

The first one born?

or

"Lord" indicating RANK?

Verse 16 gives the answer. "For (because) by Him were all things created . . ." He is called the firstborn, then, because He is the Creator, Lord of all—because He created all things! (Not "all OTHER things" as the New World Translation says four times in verses 16, 17. There is no word *other* in the Greek text!)

The Bible says that Christ created all things. Those who teach that Christ was created must believe that Christ made Himself! The Bible

says, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was *not anything made that was made*" (John 1:3).

So in Colossians 1:15 Christ is the Firstborn or Lord of all creation because He created it all. Firstborn definitely designates rank.

The Rabbins called God the firstborn of the world. Did they think, then, that God had a beginning? Of course not. Neither did Paul believe Christ had a beginning when he called Him the firstborn of all creation.

Christ The Architect Of The World

In Revelation 3:14 Christ is shown to be the ARCHE—i.e., the Origin or Source—of the creation of God. (See Thayer, page 77.) Christ is the ARCHitect of the world! He is truly the Creator (Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:10). And the Creator is God (Gen. 1:1, 26, 27; Heb. 3:4).

Christ is "from everlasting" even as Jehovah is "from everlasting" (Micah 5:2; Psa. 93:2).

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).