

This relationship is defined in the words "the first-born of every creature." The words "every creature" in this phrase should be translated "all creation," and the word "of" should be translated "in relationship to." Thus the phrase "the first-born of every creature" should be translated "the first-born in relationship to all creation."

The word "first-born" in this phrase denotes a position of sovereignty. This is evident from the way this word is used in the Old Testament. For example, Abraham had two sons. They were Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was born first, but Isaac had the right of the first-born. Isaac had two sons. They were Esau and Jacob. Esau was born first, but Jacob possessed the right of the first-born. Jacob had twelve sons. Reuben was born first, but Judah who was the fourth son possessed the right of the first-born. It is evident then that the word "first-born" denotes a position, and Psa. 89:27 (vs. 28 in the Hebrew text) makes it clear that this position is one of sovereignty, for this passage says, "also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth." The words "higher than the kings of the earth" in the latter part of this passage explain what God means when He says He will make the subject of this Psalm His first-born, and what He means is that He will make the subject of this Psalm sovereign over all the kings of the earth. The word "first-born" then denotes a position of sovereignty. Thus the phrase "the first-born in relationship to all creation" means that Jesus is sovereign over all creation. This is the relationship that exists between Jesus and the creation. If Paul wanted to say that Jesus was the first created of all creation in this verse, he would have used the Greek word that means "first-created" *πρωτόκτιστος*, but he didn't use that word because that is not what he wanted to say. Instead, he used the Greek word that means "first-born" (*πρωτότοκος*) because he wanted to say that Jesus was sovereign over all creation, and this Greek word expresses that idea.