

The IMAGE and LIKENESS of GOD

The Relationship between GOD, JESUS CHRIST and MAN

PART 1 - God, Father, Holy Spirit

A. GOD (Not specifically referring to Father, Son or Holy Spirit)

1. His "Divine Nature" can be seen through what has been created.

Romans 1:20 - God's *divine nature* [2B-2] can be understood through creation, so people have no excuse for rejecting him.

(a) Yet we, by nature, *suppress* the obvious - v. 18.

2. God cannot be represented by crafted images (man-made objects, such as idols).

Acts 17:29 - The *divine being* [2B-1] is not *like* [6A] a *crafted image* [2B] of silver or gold.

(a) Other passages show us that *no* created object (whether or not crafted by people) is to be used to represent him.

3. Nevertheless, the entire human race chose to abandon God's glory - all the greatness he is and has - and to go after images and created things.

Romans 1:23 - They abandoned the glory of the immortal God and went after *images* [1A] made to look *like* [6D] mortal creatures. (They traded the one for the other.)

(a) We also read elsewhere that *any* substitute for God - whether a tangible object, an invisible attitude, an activity or set of values, or anything else - is an expression of idolatry. *Anything* that is given more attention, or that is treated as more important than God, is idolatry. Example: A love for money is a form of idolatry - Colossians 3:5.

B. The Father

1. Nobody has ever seen his appearance or shape.

John 5:37 - You have never seen his *form / shape* [5A] ...

(a) This agrees with the many Scripture passages that describe God as *invisible* and *unseen*.

(b) This leaves us with a question: What about all the instances in the Old Testament, in which people *did* see God? (This would include, among other instances, his appearances as "the angel of Jehovah.") The answer is simple: It *wasn't* the Father. Well then, who was it? The New Testament would lead us to conclude that it was *Jesus*. Look at what the apostle John says about the instance in which Isaiah saw God (Isaiah 6): He says that it was *Jesus'* glory that Isaiah saw (John 12:39-41)!

C. The Holy Spirit

1. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit took on the form of a dove, and landed on Jesus.

Luke 3:22 - The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in bodily *form / shape* [5A] like a dove.

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PART 2 - Jesus Christ

A. Jesus as God

1. *The "Divine being" fully resides in him - bodily.*

Colossians 2:9 - The fullness of the divine being / deity [2B-3] resides *in bodily form* in Christ.

- (a) He didn't have merely a "touch of divine spirit" floating around inside him... rather, the "divine being" was present *in bodily form*.

2. *Jesus is (exists as) the visible image of God.*

2 Corinthians 4:4 - Christ... is the image [1A] of God.

- (a) The word "is" (in both of these verses) is from Greek eimi [1A-2] and refers to Jesus' ongoing existence as God's "image." In contrast, the word used to describe humans as "existing" as God's "image," does not seem to have quite the same emphasis.

Colossians 1:15 - He [the Son] is the image [1A] of the invisible God.

- (a) He makes visible what God *is*.

3. *In him is the "exact representation" of all that it means to be "God."*

Hebrews 1:3 - [The Son] is the radiance [2A-2] of God's glory and the exact representation / imprint [2A] of God's being / nature / substance [2A-1].

- (a) All that can be seen of God's glory is visible (or "expressed") in the Son.
- (b) The word "being" or "nature" focuses on the "foundation" of what it means to be "God." The exact "substance" that defines "God" is "imprinted" in him.
- (c) This word "exact representation" is never used to describe the relationship between people (created beings) and God.

4. *Jesus is in every way equal to "God."*

John 5:18 - Jesus' claim that God was his "Father" indicated that he was equal [9A] to God.

- (a) Note that this was the apostle John's evaluation of Jesus' claim! In this context, it was *not* the same as when people (created beings) call God their "Father."

B. The act of becoming "human" - what did that involve? (Philippians 2:6-8)

1. *Jesus existed in the "form" of God.*

Philippians 2:6 - He existed in the nature / form [3A] of God.

- (a) This is what he looked like in heaven.
- (b) Comment about the word "form": Though there is an "external" aspect to this word, there is a greater focus on what is "internal" (that which is expressed by the "external"). Because of this, some translations will use the word "nature." In contrast, the word "appearance" (used below) has a greater focus on what is "external."

2. *He let go of his "equality" with God.*

Philippians 2:6 - He chose to *not* cling to his equality [9A] with God., but emptied [9A-1] himself of it.

- (a) He let go of it, rather than "grasping" on to it.
- (b) This does not mean that he let go of his *deity*. (He did not stop being God.) Rather, he let go of the glory and honor that naturally belonged to him. He chose to receive humility, shame and dishonor, instead of the glory he had the right to receive. (According to verse 9, he received his glory back, after his resurrection.)

3. *He took on the "form" of a servant / slave.*

Philippians 2:7 - He took on the nature / form [3A] of a servant.

- (a) This is the same word as used above, in reference to his "form" as God. In v. 6, he "existed" in the form of God; here, he "took on" the form of a servant.
- (b) The contrast is between "God" and "servant." The "human" aspect hasn't yet been mentioned. (That comes next.) Jesus did not cling to his rights as God. Instead, the "Lord" (which means "Master") *over* all choose to become the "servant" or "slave" *under* all.

4. *He became "like" a human.*

Philippians 2:7 - He was made [6D-1] in the likeness [6D] of a human.

- (a) "Likeness" with humans - contrasted with his "equality" with God.
- (b) Made - Greek "ginomai" - he "came to be" in the likeness of a human. This is an interesting contrast to what James says about humans (James 3:9), who are made ("came to be") in the likeness of God!
- (c) Perhaps this has something to do with his birth. (Some translations say that he was "born" in human likeness.)
- (d) More about what it means for Jesus to be "like a human" can be found in "Section C," below.

5. *He took on the "physical appearance" of a man.*

Philippians 2:8 - He was found in the appearance [4A] of a man.

- (a) Even *angels* are called "servants" or "slaves" (Revelation 19:10; 22:8+). But Jesus chose to be like us *humans*, not like *angels*. (Compare with Hebrews 2:14-16.)
- (b) When people looked at him, they saw a *man*. As a man, he humbled himself, became obedient unto death, etc.

C. More about Jesus becoming "like" us

1. *He became "like" sinful humans (i.e., in "flesh"), in order to destroy sin.*

Romans 8:3 - God sent his Son in the likeness [6D] of sinful man... in this way he condemned sin in sinful man.

- (a) The word "man" is actually "flesh," and focuses on what controls us, by way of our desires, inclinations, habits, etc. This is in contrast with being controlled by the "Spirit." Jesus dealt with the sin issue (which had become an inherent part of our nature), so that sin would no longer have power over us.

2. *He became "like" us in every way, except for our sinfulness, in order to accomplish this.*

Hebrews 2:17 - He had to be made like [6C] his "brothers" (us) in every way (in order to deal with our sins).

- (a) This included (among other things): taking on flesh and blood (v. 14), the ability to die (v. 14), and the ability to suffer temptation (v. 18).

3. *One big difference: He did not sin.*

Hebrews 4:15 - He was tempted in every way, just like [6B] us - yet without sin.

- (a) Because of this, he became the perfect high priest... and the perfect sacrifice. (See later passages in the book of Hebrews.)

D. What is his physical appearance *now*?

1. *He now has the glory he originally had... and more!*

- a. **A description of what he now looks like - Revelation 1:12-16 - shows that he is glorious beyond comprehension. We have to use symbolism or comparisons to describe him. An example: Revelation 1:15; 2:18 - His feet are like [6A] (they "resemble") glowing bronze in a furnace.**

- b. **Because of what he has done on the cross, he is also the eternal king over all.**

Revelation 1:13; 14:14 - ... one "like [6A] a son of man."

- (a) This term has prophetic significance - see Daniel 7:13.
(b) See also Philippians 2:9-11.

2. *Some of the apostles got a temporary glimpse of this glory, when Jesus took them up on a mountain (some time before the crucifixion).*

- a. **Jesus' appearance was "transformed" before them.**

Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2 - He was transformed [3D] before them. (His appearance / clothes became dazzling bright.)

- (a) In 2 Peter 1:16-18, the apostle makes reference to this occasion.

- b. **A specific description of his change:**

Luke 9:29 - The appearance [5A] of his face changed. (Also, his clothes became bright as lightning.)

- (a) Compare this to the description in Revelation 1!

- c. **Other passages mention people who saw him *after* his ascension to heaven. Two examples:**

- (a) Stephen, as he was dying (Acts 7:55-56).
(b) Paul, when Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:8).

3. *Note that, immediately after the resurrection, Jesus did not reveal his glory... he looked just like a "normal" human.*

- a. **At different times, he was (mistakenly) thought to be different people.**

Mark 16:12 - After his appearance to Mary Magdalene, he appeared in a different form [3A] to two others.

- (a) In that culture, people didn't look into the faces of strangers. Not yet understanding the resurrection, they had no reason to think that he *wasn't* a stranger!
(b) Mary thought he was the gardener. She wasn't looking directly at him, at the time (John 20:14-16).
(c) The two others (most likely the two described in Luke 24) thought he was a visitor to Jerusalem (Luke 24:18), so they wouldn't have been inclined to look directly into his face. Also, they were *kept* from recognizing him (v. 16) until their eyes were *opened* at a later time (v. 31).

E. Some details about Jesus' ministry, which are related to the Old Testament

1. *He had a priestly ministry patterned after that of Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20; Psalm 110:4).*

Hebrews 7:15 - Jesus... a priest *like* [6B] Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:3 - Melchizedek was *made like* [6D] the Son of God

- (a) See v. 1-3, for some of the similarities.
- (b) The information *recorded* about Melchizedek was chosen specifically so that it would form a parallel to Jesus. This does not mean that they were exactly the same in these matters. (This is one of the reasons for the word "like.")
- (c) For instance, there is no written record of Melchizedek dying; so in a sense (as far as written records are concerned), his priesthood is still ongoing. In "real life," he would have eventually died and his priesthood would have ended. But this lack of records provides a "picture" of the high priest - Jesus - who can no longer die and who really does have an unending priesthood!

2. *He had a prophetic ministry comparable to Moses' ministry.*

Acts 3:22 - Moses: "God will raise up a prophet from among you, *like* [6H] me. Pay attention to what he says!" [The context shows that this was fulfilled in Christ.]

- (a) Note: Many manuscripts use a synonym for the above word "like," but the message remains the same.

3. *There are striking parallels (and contrasts) between Jesus and Adam*

Romans 5:14 - Adam, a *picture* [8A] of the one who was to come (Christ).

- (a) See Romans 5 (especially v. 12+), to see some of the parallels and contrasts. See also 1 Corinthians 15.

4. *There are many other ways that Jesus' ministry relates to the Old Testament (not listed here).*

- (a) This includes his "kingly" ministry (and its parallels to King David and various other Jewish kings); the parallels between Jesus and the Old Testament sacrificial system; etc.

F. Some of the parallels/contrasts between the Old Covenant (brought by Moses) and the New Covenant (brought by Jesus)

1. *The Law is but a "shadow" of the "realities" that Jesus brought.*

Hebrews 10:1 - The Law is a *shadow* [7A] of the good things to come, not the *image / form / reality* [1A] itself.

- (a) It is not the "form" that causes the shadow.

2. *The Old Covenant ceremonial activities are "shadows" of the realities found in Christ.*

Colossians 2:17 - [Such things] are a shadow [7A] of what would come; the "reality" (the "body" that casts the shadow) is in Christ.

3. ***Moses' tabernacle was a "shadow" and "copy" of the heavenly tabernacle that Christ entered.***

a. **It was a "copy" and "shadow," based on a pattern that Moses was given by God.**

Hebrews 8:5 - (Moses' tabernacle) is a copy [10A] and shadow [7A] of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was told to carefully follow the pattern [8A] he was shown on the mountain.

(a) This pattern would have been the instructions given in Exodus 26+.

Acts 7:44 - The tabernacle was made according to the pattern [8A] God gave Moses.

b. **The "shadow" could be purified by animal blood, but the "reality" needed purified by Christ's blood.**

Hebrews 9:23 (see v. 18+) - The copies [10A] of the heavenly things needed purified with sacrifices (described in the previous verses); but the heavenly things themselves needed better sacrifices (described in the verses that follow).

4. ***The Law pointed to the truth, but was powerless to destroy sin.***

a. **It contains the "embodiment" of truth, so we don't dare ignore its message.**

Romans 2:20 - You have in the Law the form / embodiment [3C] of knowledge and truth. Do you dare to ignore what it says? (Implication: NO!)

b. **However, only Christ could destroy sin.**

Romans 8:3 - God sent his Son in the likeness [6D] of sinful man (or "flesh"), to destroy sin in sinful man (or "flesh"). He did what the Law was powerless to do.

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PART 3 - Man (humans)

A. Man as created in God's "image"

1. *Man is the "image" of God.*

a. Man in God's image.

1 Corinthians 11:7 - Man is the *image* [1A] and glory of God.

- (a) The word "is" comes from Greek *huparcho* [1A-1] and focuses on humans as "existing" as God's "image." It does not seem to have quite the same emphasis as the word used to describe Jesus' *ongoing existence* as God's "image." Jesus "is" God's image from all eternity; people have "existed" as God's image (or an expression of it) only since the time of creation.

b. The Old Testament record: Created in God's image; made in God's likeness.

Genesis 1:26-27- God said, "Let us make man in our *image*, after our *likeness*... God created man in his own *image*, in the *image* of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 5:1-2 - When God created man, he made him in the *likeness* of God. He created them male and female... When they were created, he called them "man."

- (a) Contrast with verse 3, mentioned below.

Genesis 9:6 - "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the *image* of God he made man.

2. *How do Christ and man compare on this issue?*

a. A look at the range of words used to describe each suggests a significant difference.

- (a) Some words are used of Jesus, but *never* of man. Examples: Jesus is the "exact representation" of God's being (Hebrews 1:3); the "fullness of deity" resides bodily in him (Colossians 2:9).
- (b) Some words are used of humans, but *never* of Jesus. Example: We are made in the "likeness" of God (James 3:9).

b. Even when the same word is used for both, there are directly stated or implied differences.

- (a) The way the word "image" is used suggests a difference. (See "Section A-1," above.)
- (b) This applies to other words, such as "offspring" [2B-4], "son," "begotten," etc. Examples: Though the word "son" is used for both, Jesus is "Son" by nature and we are "sons" by adoption (Romans 8:23). Both are "begotten," but Jesus is the "only begotten."

3. *The effects of sin.*

a. Sin has changed things. The "image" is marred, *but it is not gone*. Even now, we can still be called God's "offspring," etc.

- (a) Adam's offspring experience the same "marred" consequences as did Adam. Some of these consequences of Adam's sin are described in Romans 5:12+ and 1 Corinthians 15.

b. In the Genesis account, the focus changes from being in "God's image" to being in "Adam's image."

Genesis 5:3 - When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own *likeness*, in his own *image*... (Verse 4: "... and then he died.")

- (a) Contrast with verses 1-2, mentioned above.

- c. **We are now described as bearing "Adam's image" - and it's a marred image.**
1 Corinthians 15:49a - We have borne the *image* [1A] of the "earthly man" (Adam)...
 - (a) This verse describes it in "past tense," because the apostle Paul is beginning to describe what happens when a person turns to Christ for salvation. (More about this is given below.)
 - (b) Note that this passage describes humans as being made in Adam's image - just as Genesis 5:3 does.

- d. **We still have enough "likeness," that it is contradictory for us to praise God and then to curse humans.**
James 3:9 - Do we praise our Lord and Father, and also curse men, who are *made* [6D-1] in God's *likeness* [6E]? (This would be totally inconsistent!)
 - (a) Made - Greek "ginomai" - he "came to be" in the likeness of God (when man was created). This is an interesting contrast to what Paul says about Jesus (Philippians 2:7), who was made ("came to be") in the likeness of humans!
 - (b) Though James refers to the account of man's creation, he is applying it to *sinful* humans, thus showing that there is still a "likeness."

- e. **Through the work of Christ, changes begin to occur in the saved person - changes which restore that image to its original... and beyond it. (See the next section.)**
 - (a) Through Christ, we can be "made new" - Colossians 3:10 (below).
 - (b) What we lost in Adam, we can gain in Christ... and more!
 - (c) Now we can become "like God" again!

B. Changes that occur when a person turns to Christ

1. *Change is a fact of life for the genuine follower of Jesus.*

- a. **Some of the changes are "past tense."**
 - (a) They have already occurred - such as, changes which occurred when they were saved.

- b. **Some of the changes are "present tense."**
 - (a) They occur like a process throughout life - such as, becoming more "Christ-like."

- c. **Some of the changes are "future tense."**
 - (a) They won't occur until after this present life is over - such as, the changes that will occur when our bodies are resurrected.

2. *This change will occur because of our "connection" with Jesus Christ.*

- a. **There are many analogies used to teach us about our relationship to Jesus Christ. Some of these include:**
 - (a) United with Christ - Philippians 2:1.
 - (b) Christ the "head" and we the "body" - Colossians 1:8.
 - (c) Us in Christ - Romans 8:1.
 - (d) Jesus our brother (all of the same family) - Hebrews 2:11+.
 - (e) (Many others exist, but not all are applicable to our present study.)

- b. **Some of the changes could be summarized by one of the goals the apostle Paul had for the Galatians: that Christ would be formed in them.**
Galatians 4:19 - I (Paul) am in the pain of childbirth, until Christ is *formed* [3B] in you!
 - (a) This passage has a greater focus on the "present tense" changes.
 - (b) This is figurative for the greatness of Paul's desire for their spiritual growth and maturity.

- c. **Some of the changes are illustrated by the parallels between our union with Adam (as head of the whole human race) and our union with Christ (as head of the redeemed human race).**
1 Corinthians 15:49 - Just as we bore the *image / likeness* [1A] of the "earthly" man [Adam], so also will we bear the *image / likeness* [1A] of the "heavenly" one [Christ].
 - (a) This passage has a greater focus on the "future tense" changes.

3. *Some of the changes involve obligations we have.*

a. These changes start with our willingness to associate with Christ in his death.

Philippians 3:10 - Paul: I want to know Christ and his power (etc.)... having first become like / conformed to [3F] him in his death... (and thus capable of experiencing resurrection, etc.).

- (a) Many people like the idea of sharing in Christ's resurrection; few like the idea of sharing in his suffering and death. But sharing in his suffering and death is a *prerequisite* for sharing in his resurrection and glory!

Romans 6:5 - If we have been united with him in the likeness [6D] of his death [symbolically dying with him], so also we will be united with him in [the likeness of] his resurrection. (Most mss. do not have the second word "likeness," but the word is assumed by the context.)

- (a) See also Romans 8:17; 1 Peter 4:13.

b. We must be willing to have (or develop) a total change in our perspective on "reality."

Romans 12:2 - Don't conform [4C] any longer to the ways of the world, but be transformed / changed [3D] by renewing your mind (= changing the way you think). Then you will be able to understand God's will.

- (a) 1 Peter 1:14 also reminds us to pursue holiness, rather than conforming [4C] to the evil desires we used to follow.

4. *Some of the changes involve things that God does for (or in) us.*

a. We now have a "new self," which is being made new in the image of the Creator.

Colossians 3:10 - (We have taken off the "old self" and put on the "new self.") This "new self" is being made new in the image [1A] of the Creator. (This results in a change in our perspective and conduct.)

b. We are being conformed into the image of the Son.

Romans 8:29 - God predestined us to be conformed [3E] to the image [1A] of his Son.

c. We are being transformed into the image of the Lord's glory (= becoming more like him).

2 Corinthians 3:18 - We, who are being exposed to the Lord's glory (like seeing it through a mirror) are being transformed / changed [3D] into that image [1A] of glory that we are viewing.

- (a) Note the contrast - When Moses saw God's glory, its effects were temporary and fading; when we see God's glory (through Christ), it is permanent and increasing.

d. In the future, we will be "like him" (God/Christ).

1 John 3:2 - Right now, we are children of God. We don't yet know what we will be; but we know that when he appears, we will be like [6A] him, for we will see him as he is.

- (a) When the passage mentions "seeing" God, it is referring to *Jesus* - the one who will be returning. Since Jesus *is* God, saying it this way is not a problem!

e. In the future, changes will even affect our physical bodies.

Philippians 3:21 - Jesus will change / transform [4B] our "lowly" bodies, so they will be conformed to / changed to be like [3E] his glorious body.