

Christ as the Image [Icon] of God

2Co 4:4 Christ... is the image [eikon] of God

Col 1:15 He is the image [eikon] of the invisible God

What is an Icon?

eikon [A-kOne] 23x - an image, figure, likeness; from *eiko* [i-ko] to resemble, be like, a copy of; Anything that represents something else is an eikon

Gen 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." 27 So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. All human beings by creation bear the Image of God. We are icons. As human beings, every one of us resembles God. Like Him, we are spiritual, rational, creative, moral and communal beings. We were made to also share God's Mind, Character and Values (known as God's communicable attributes). Christ is fully Man, fully Human. That means He is an icon like us. He bears the image of God. But there is a major difference in how we image or resemble God and how Christ does that. The Image in human beings was perfect, but now is fractured or corrupted by our sin. Today, we are broken icons of God. We reflect Him only imperfectly. We no longer share God's Mind, Character and Values. Our inner most being has been corrupted. That reality has negatively impacted and perverted our spiritual, rational, creative, moral and capacity for communality.

Rom 1:20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; 21 for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools; 23 and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error. 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. 29 They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die—yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.

Who is Jesus? Part 5- The Image of God

Written by Calvin Fox

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All that is the consequence of the “Fall” (Gen.3) Because Jesus is without sin, the Image of God in him is not corrupt or fractured. Jesus reflects or represents God perfectly. He has God’s Mind, Character and Values and His spiritual, rational, creative, moral faculties and capacity for communality reflect God’s exactly.

Heb 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being essence or nature [“exact representation” is not eikon or image, but a word used only once in the NT and transliterated as “character”, i.e. - carakthr, a letter or mark imprinted in something; an exact likeness of the original; [“nature” = hupostasis (hoop-os'-tas-is) = substance]

John 1:18 No-one has ever seen God, but [Jesus] has made him known. 14:7 [Jesus said] If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” 14:9 Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

When God the Son came to earth he took on a human, physical form. He was begotten by God, but his earthly “parents” were Mary and her husband, Joseph. Jesus’ body was like any other human being’s body, like Adam’s before the Fall. Adam was created mortal. Mortality itself was not a consequence of the Fall. Jesus was mortal because he was human, but he chose the time of his demise. He voluntarily and intentionally gave up his life when he wanted to. Nothing and no one took it from him.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 18 No-one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

An image by definition is distinct from, not identical with, what it represents; by describing the incarnate Christ as the Image of God Scripture is telling us that there is some way in which the incarnate Christ and God are not identical. How? The answer is in the fact that Christ is fully Human as well as fully Divine. That is how He is different from God the Father. The Father is not a human being. He does not have a body and all its physical needs. Unlike Jesus, the Father is not limited in any way, in knowledge, presence or power. When we look at Jesus we see the communicable attributes of God, especially His Mind, Character and Values.

(“Communicable” means can be shared, held in common.) Jesus is the exact image of these. If we want to know what a Perfect and fully Human being is, “Man” as God created him to be, we look at Jesus. **Putting on the Image of Christ**

Paul tells us in 1Co 15:49, *“just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, let us also bear the image of the man of heaven.”*

“The man of dust” refers to Adam. He was made out of the dust. We bear his nature. His descendents image him in his fallen humanity. cf Gen 5:1-3. We are like Adam. We image the broken image in him.

Jesus did not come from the earth, but from Heaven above. He is the “man of Heaven”. His Image of God is perfect. Paul is saying we Christians are to be like Jesus, just as we are like Adam. Christ is the Perfect human being. Believers are called to become like Him. We are to

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become fully human, becoming the icon of the icon.

1Co 15:49 just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, let us also bear the image of the man of heaven.□

[“In light of the extremely weighty evidence for the aorist subjunctive, it is probably best to regard the aorist subjunctive as original. This connects well with v. 50, for there Paul makes a pronouncement that seems to presuppose some sort of exhortation. G. D. Fee (First Corinthians [NICNT], 795) argues for the originality of the subjunctive...”] Source: the NETBible exegesis of this text

We image the corrupted Image in Adam. We are exhorted to put on the image of Christ, which is not corrupted at all. We are exhorted to put on Christ's perfect image of God. This is a process. A Christian is the corrupted image of God being made over into the perfect image of God which is in Christ. We do not cease to be human when we come into Christ; rather, our humanity begins to be transformed. In Christ, our human attributes are sanctified. We do not become “deified”, but the communicable attributes of God are to be perfected in us over time. This transformation is done by the Spirit of Christ within us through several “means of grace”, such as hearing, reading and inwardly digesting the Scripture, corporate Worship and the Sacraments, prayer and the support of a community of faith. Jesus was and is a human being fully filled and controlled by the Spirit of God, living a holy and righteous life, in obedience to God the Father. That is what He wants to make us. This is what is involved in our “putting on” the Image of Christ who is, in turn, the image of God. This image is a spiritual likeness in holiness and righteousness, which we do not have as fallen human beings. (See Ephesians 4:22-24) This renewal shall culminate in a complete make-over including our physical bodies at the Resurrection.

Col 3:10 [we] have been clothed with] the new man.□ [That new man] is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it [i.e.-Christ]

2Co 3:18 we all ... are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which is from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Rom 8:29 ... those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son