

The Image of the Invisible God

Oak Ridge Church of Christ

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REFERENCE

Colossians 1

READING

Colossians 1:15-20

OBJECTIVE

Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. He came to this earth to use the image of the invisible God that He had to save mankind.

KEY POINTS

We are made in the image of God which means that we have some of His attributes that separate us from creation.

Jesus has the attributes of divinity.

Jesus is Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, and Savior. Let us submit to Him.

I. Introduction

A. Our kids tend to look a good deal like us.

1. I remember when Graham was little, there were a lot of people that said he looked just like me.
2. One thing I have discovered is that this is kind of subjective. Some people think that the kids look just like Molly and some people think that the kids look just like me.
3. I remember David saying that he didn't want to kiss Graham because it would have been just like kissing me!
4. People will ask me who the kids look like and I am just not the one to ask. I can't tell. Graham looks like Graham and Cort looks like Cort.
5. However, I have known some that even I can see the resemblance. I know of a preacher who, when I saw his son, it just looked like they had shrunk the preacher down a couple of feet. Luckily, my kids fared a little better than that and are not just clones of me.

B. Made In His Image

1. Genesis 1:26 tells us that God said, "Let Us make man in Our image" and then at verse 27 it says, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."
2. Since we tend to apply what we know physically to our spiritual understanding, many think that this verse means that we look like God. However, this is not the case. At I John 3:1-2 John is writing about our bodies in the resurrection. He says at that time we will see Him as He is because our bodies will be like His.
3. There will come a time when we will be a being like the Father, but that time is not now. When He says at Genesis 1 that we were made in His image, that should be considered in the context there. It is a contrast between us and the animals that had just been created. They were not made in His image in that they do not have intellect, emotion, and conscience. We, however, do as the Father does!

C. Jesus in the image of the invisible Father.

1. At Colossians 1:15, Paul tells the Colossians that Jesus "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."
2. Jesus came to this earth and was in the image of the Father. Not that He looked like the Father any more than what is meant by us in His image per Genesis 1. No, it means the same thing it does for us, He has some attributes of the Father that are not shared with the rest of creation.
3. The difference being we were given intellect and such to separate us from animals while Jesus has divinity that separates Him from all creation!
4. Jesus is the Father's only begotten son, the firstborn of all creation per Colossians 1:15. Not that He is created, but that He is the Creator. Jesus said it best, "before Abraham was, I AM". (John 8:58)

D. What then can we learn about Jesus, the Image of the Invisible God?

II. Jesus Is...

A. The Creator

1. Jesus is the Creator of all that is created. Colossians 1:16 tells us that He is the creator of the Heavens and the Earth, the Visible and the Invisible, and the thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities. In other words, He is the Creator of everything except God.
 - a. This is exactly what John is saying at John 1. All things came into being by Him and apart from Him nothing came into being. Jesus was there at the time of creation and was creating.
 - b. Our Lord has brought everything into existence and has even appointed ruler and powers.
2. There has been much talk in the media recently about the Higgs Boson. Physicists have gone as far as to say that it disproves God because it has the ability to create. My question is this. Where did the Higgs Boson come from. If it is what creates matter and energy, then what created it? At some point even the scientist must acknowledge that something has got to be eternal. Our Bible tells us that the eternal creator is the Father and the Son.
3. We have been made in His image. We must submit to Jesus, the Creator.

B. The Sustainer

1. Colossians 1:17 tells us that “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” He is the sustainer. Creating is not enough. If one cannot sustain creation, then the creation is for nought.
2. At the end of our street is a very large house. It is two story and probably in the neighborhood of 4000 square feet. It looks nice from our view, but upon closer inspection it has termites in the attic, outdated interiors, and lingering Rita damage. Creating such a nice house was great, but whoever created did not have the ability or resources to sustain it and it is disintegrating.
3. Our Lord is the sustainer. He sees to it that creation continues. Jesus alludes to the sustaining role of God at Matthew 6:26.
4. The way all creation works together to keep things running is truly amazing. We have been made in His image. We must submit to Jesus, the sustainer.

C. The Ruler

1. Colossians 1:18 tells us that He is the Head of the body, the church. I can remember when I would do something dumb growing up, Daddy would say, “boy, what is going through your head?” It is always particularly confounding when the kid gives the universal reply, “I don’t know!” This exchange happens because we understand that the body only acts when the head gives a command.
2. Jesus is our ruler. He is just like the head of the body; He is head of the church. Whatever King Jesus tells us to do, we are to do. Nothing more and nothing less!
3. Acts 1:1-3 tells us that Jesus spent even His last time on this earth trying to establish the kingdom as He was entrusting it into the hands of the apostles. He is obviously serious about the kingdom, what it is supposed to do, and how the citizens of it are supposed to conduct themselves.
4. We have been made in His image with intellect. We must submit to King Jesus, the ruler.

D. The Savior

1. Finally, Paul speaks of the Lord’s main purpose on this earth, Savior. Colossians 1:18-20 tell us that He was the firstborn of the dead. He conquered death, being resurrected on that third day, making peace through the blood of the cross, so that we would have hope of resurrection one day and going to Heaven!
2. I could never have paid the price to inherit eternal life. The only thing I could do was die physically and spiritually and spend eternity in hell. Through the blood of Jesus we do not have to die spiritually and we can be raised in newness of life and go to Heaven to be with the Lord.
3. We have been made in His image with intellect. We must submit to Jesus and His way, the Savior!

III. Conclusion

- A. Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Immanuel, God with us.
- B. If we will use our intellect, we will submit to His way, and be reconciled to God. (Colossians 1:21-22)

Gen. 1:26 ¶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Gen. 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

1John 3:1 ¶ See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

1John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

Col. 1:15 ¶ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Col. 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Col. 1:17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Col. 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Col. 1:19 For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

Col. 1:20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

John 1:1 ¶ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

Matt. 6:26 “Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

Acts 1:1 ¶ The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,

Acts 1:2 until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.

Acts 1:3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Col. 1:21 ¶ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

Col. 1:22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach —