



Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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Images of God

David Clayton



Shortly after becoming involved in the independent Christian movement, many years ago, I became aware that a lot of brethren in this movement are very much against Christians putting up figurines and pictures in their homes. I have met people who consider it to be apostasy to even have photographs of yourself and your family. I am not someone who is attracted to having these articles around, so it was neither here nor there for me. However, I found it interesting that people had this approach. There are even some who believe that if you have these objects, they are really symbols of idols and thus attract demonic spirits into your home.

We are all aware that the major reason for this antipathy to images is Exodus 20:4-5. It says,

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or

that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (Exodus 20:4-5)

So the third commandment says we are not to make any likeness of anything in heaven, or in earth, or under the earth. And it goes on to add that we should not bow down to them nor serve them.

This is the basis for the idea that we should never have any photographs or any kinds of figurines in our homes. Idolatry is always represented in the Bible as something that God finds very distasteful. He is against it. In 1 Samuel 15:23, Samuel says to Saul,

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (1 Samuel 15:23)

So because of idolatry, Saul was rejected from being king. We can see here that idolatry is equated with witchcraft, rebellion, stubbornness and iniquity etc. It is clearly something that is not tolerated by God at all.

In fact, over and over, Israel was punished and eventually rejected because they made and worshipped idols. The very first apostasy they got into when they were delivered from Egypt at the Exodus was making and worshipping the golden calf. Three thousand of them

died that day because the Levites slaughtered all who were involved in worshipping this calf. Idolatry is one of the great sins highlighted in the Bible and because of this, people are cautious about images, which are usually associated with idolatry.

THE DANGER IN IDOLATRY

But why is idolatry so offensive to God? First of all, idolatry distorts the image of God. When a person makes an image that looks like a cow and he worships it, he says it represents his god, but he makes the image to look like a cow. You are bound to have a low estimation of God if you think that He appears in the form of a cow. In Hinduism, there are many gods. There is Ganesh, the elephant god, there is Hanuman, the monkey god, there are many different animal representations of god. An image always belittles God in one's mind giving unworthy concepts of Him.

This is why idolatry is so abhorrent to God. It brings Him down to the level of the creature, and you cannot rise above what you worship. In other words, humans tend to mimic and try to be like the thing they worship. One of the professing Christian denominations which has a heavy emphasis on images is the Catholic church. They have images of Mary, images of the

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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so-called saints, images of Jesus. The Catholic religion claims that they do not worship images, they merely use them to focus their attention on God or on the objects of their veneration. But when people speak in this way, they fail to consider the nature of humanity. Human nature is such, that we tend to become heavily involved with the things which impact our senses such as the things we can see and feel. This is why our involvement with these things inevitably affects our perspective on life.

For example, I have seen men look at pictures of women until they became infatuated or totally obsessed. They will say that they fell in love, but of course this is a distorted concept of love. They became captivated by simply looking at a picture, and when they actually met the person, it was completely different from the ideas they formed from looking at the picture. The problem with an image is that it distorts our perception of the real thing.

This is the reason why when God presented himself to the Israelites, he gave them a golden box, called the Ark of

the Covenant, in which he put symbols that were supposed to represent his character (the Ten Commandments and other symbols). This became the only thing that they knew about God, because He forbade them to make any kind of image. He wanted them to have a concept of Himself which did not involve their own perspectives. He did not want them to associate him with lesser things so that they would develop unworthy concepts of God.

The reason why He objects to idolatry is because it distorts our understanding of Him! That is the problem! So it is not about having a figurine in your home, and it is not about having photographs. The real question is, how do



these images and photographs affect our perspective of God? If we do not understand this, we may become like blind worshipers, people who just follow the rules and instructions without understanding why we are doing it. The misconceptions are what God is trying to protect us from.

It is in this sense that those of us who believe the truth about God say that the Trinity is an idol. It is a mental image that is more dangerous than any physical image that people ever set up. The great problem is what it does to your concept of God.

FALSE IDEAS

These days, there is a great deal of emphasis on what God looks like, and most of us grew up with a conventional per-

ception of how Jesus looked. Recently there has even been a backlash from the black community regarding the issue. Some make the claim that Jesus was a black man, as they seek something that they can identify with. These debates all stem from man's ever present desire to have a visual image of God.

The shroud of Turin is an ancient piece of cloth that is claimed to bear an imprinted image of a crucified man. It is found in a Catholic cathedral in the city of Turin. The face which is imprinted on the cloth was developed into an image from an artist's perspective of what the person might have looked like. Of course, like with everything that comes from the Catholic Church, there is great suspicion as to whether this was really the cloth that Jesus was wrapped in.

They claim that the body of the crucified Lord was carried in it, and as a result His image was imprinted on it and remains until today. Traditionally, this has become the typical picture produced when artists do a depiction of Jesus since this is the image, they base it on. Of course, I do not for one moment believe that this is factual. The Catholic Church is infamous for these kinds of forgeries, and so these assertions cannot be trusted. As an example of what I mean, there are several churches in Europe which at different times have claimed to have what is called the holy prepuce. The prepuce is the foreskin of a circumcised child. The claim is made that these churches possess the foreskin from Jesus' circumcision. Of course this is a ridiculous claim, but it illustrates the point that these claims cannot be trusted.

One distasteful image of what Jesus might have looked like was developed by archaeological historians, based on their ideas of culture and the people of the times. This caricature is offensive, because it is similar to the depiction of what evolutionists call a cave man, with a slanted short forehead and distorted features. The idea of the physical appearance of divinity is very important to the majority of the world. It is the carnal perspective. It is where people

believe that one's outer appearance is most important.

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

So what is God like? God made an interesting statement when he was speaking to Moses in Exodus 33:20. Moses had asked him, "I beg You, show me Your glory." I am kind of amazed at this, because first of all, I wonder what was going through Moses' mind to prompt him to make such a request. What did he want? Imagine that you are finally in the presence of God and you have the opportunity to speak to him, what do you want? What are you looking for?

When I was a child and read fairytales, there were stories in which powerful supernatural beings or genies would appear to someone, and grant them three wishes. Some would wish for money, and some for fame and glory. But when Moses got the chance of a lifetime, to be in the presence of God Almighty, what did he ask for?

And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. (Exod 33:18)

I suppose he really wanted to know God better. The desire of his heart, his dream was to know God as best as he possibly could, and God said yes, "I will show you my goodness." But then he says, "...Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."

This is a striking statement by God, and He is trying to teach a lesson here. I am sure that He is focused on the reality, He is saying, "I am going to show you what I can show you, but do not expect to see everything. There is a certain aspect of me that would destroy you instantly, if I were to reveal Myself in My fullness before you. You would be unable to withstand it, and you cannot survive if I show you my face."

What was God trying to say? Did he mean you cannot see my physical face, or did he mean you cannot see my spiritual appearance? What is it about Him that is so amazing, so glorious, that if you see it you will cease to exist? God went on to reinforce the point by saying, "there shall no man see me, and live."

Genesis 32:30 relates the incident when Jacob wrestled with an angel one night. It says,

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. (Gen 32:30)

What do we get from reading this statement? Jacob is saying, I passed through a miracle! I went through something that is so amazing, it is almost unbelievable. I saw God and I lived! Clearly, he never saw the face of God in a literal way, which God later told Moses is impossible. But what it means is, he had an encounter with God that was kind of face to face. If you wrestle with someone, you are in very close contact with him.

Of course, this was an angel and not God himself. But when God sends a messenger to represent Him, that messenger speaks and acts as God. As a sent representative, he is effectively God, and this is what Jacob meant. I do not think he meant, I saw God Almighty, or perhaps he did not even know the difference. But what he definitely meant was, I had a divine encounter, and my life is preserved. As you look at the statement, you can feel his amazement. I'm alive! In this statement you can feel the fear of God, because there is the expectation that if I see God, I am not supposed to survive.

In Exodus 20:19, the same thing is reflected in the statement of the Israelites. After God spoke the Ten Commandments, it says,

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. (Exodus 20:19)

If we see God, we are dead. If God talks to us, we are dead! If we wrestle with God, we are dead. It is understandable why they wanted God's protection and power, but they did not want God. They saw Him as a dreadful person. So when God said, "do not make any image," one of the things he was emphasizing was that if you focus on an image you belittle the power and the greatness of God.

A LIVING IMAGE

I want to make the point again that the more we examine these things, the more we will see that there is a stark difference in emphasis between the old and the new covenant. This very important difference needs to be taken into consideration every time we read the Bible. God's emphasis in the Old Testament is his power, but it is different in the New Testament.

There is a popular song with some lines which go like this:

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would give sight to a blind man?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy, would calm the storm with his hand?

Did you know that your baby boy had walked where angels trod?

When you kissed your little baby, you kissed the face of God?

It is kind of frightening, yet awesome at the same time. It brings into stark reality the truth of what happened when Jesus Christ became a man, it illustrates the great wonder of what occurred when God sent his son.

In 2 Corinthians 4:3 Paul says,

.... the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:3)

I am emphasizing here, 'the image of God' because God says we should not make any graven images. In this case, the image which is being referred to is not graven, but living.

Why is this different from a graven image? Why does God not only permit, but promotes a living image here, when he says that graven images are taboo? Verse 6 says,

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 4:6)

In truth, the Jews did not know what they were missing. Can you imagine having only the Old Covenant and not the New Covenant? Can you imagine not having the understanding of what these verses are saying? The Old Covenant tells us, nobody can see the face of God and live. But the New Covenant tells us, the face of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ! The New Covenant seems to contradict the Old if you do not understand what it is truly saying. If you do not understand what it means, you are missing a great blessing. Your reality continues to be that nobody can see the face of God and live. You are still living with the erroneous concept that 'if I see God I will die,' still thinking that you need to be afraid of this Person.

But the New Covenant tells us, the glory of God has appeared in the face of Jesus Christ who is the image of God. In Hebrews 1:1-3 it says,

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Heb 1:1-3)

There are two things here that we should take note of; Firstly, His glory and secondly, the express or exact image. This means that Jesus is exactly like God. This means that He is the glory of God; the full expression of the Father's glory can be seen in Him. Jesus was asked a particular question in John 14:8. Phillip dared to ask basically the same thing that Moses asked God. It says,

Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (John 14:8)

I am not entirely sure what Phillip expected to see, but they already knew very well that Jesus had the ear of God, an inside track to The Father which no

one else did.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (John 14:9)

So it is not correct to say that nobody has ever seen God or that nobody can see God. This is an Old Testament reality. According to the New Testament, Jesus says, the person who has seen Him, has seen God, because He and the Father are one.

Perhaps this was not the answer Philip expected, but what Jesus did was not fulfill his expectation, but rather his need. His need was to hear the truth! What Jesus was saying in summary is, *"I am the entire truth about the Father, I am everything that you need to know about Him. He who has seen me, has seen all that he needs to see of the Father."*

So the lesson God wanted to be understood here is that you shall make no graven image because I am going to give you a LIVING image! An express image! Graven images are weak imitations, and the details are left to one's own imagination. Hence they are often misrepresentations and false impressions of the true. This is what is so dangerous about man-made images.

ILLUSTRATION VS REALITY

I have often compared the Ten Commandments to a photograph, because we say they are an expression of God's character. However, they are a very one-sided expression because they express His character on one, limited plane. If you relate to that expression only, you will have a one-sided and even warped concept of God. In a sense, these Commandments are just an image. To understand and to know God truly, something far more comprehensive is needed than simply ten statements.

That is why the *true* law of God is seen in Jesus Christ! The true nature, character, personality, the EXACT image of the Father is seen in His Son! Not in the Ten Commandments, or in any other

law or effigy. God gave us a true image, and not a replica, a *living* image and not a dead or inanimate one.

John 1:18 says,

No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. (John 1:18)

Some people use this statement to support the idea that neither Enoch, Elijah nor Moses were ever taken to Heaven, because the verse says, "no man." This illustrates how people often misrepresent the Bible because they read verses in isolation, without understanding context.

Is this verse really saying that nobody has ever seen God? The words say that, but what is the meaning? Jacob said, I have seen God and I am alive. The Bible says that Moses spoke to God face to face, like a man speaks to his friend. Yet God says nobody can see my face and live. The Bible also says that the seventy elders of Israel saw the God of Israel, although we understand that they never saw His face. God put Moses in the cleft of a rock and He passed and said, "you can see my back parts." But then the Bible says Moses spoke to God face to face. Obviously, face to face is an expression which simply means personal interaction. It does not actually mean face seeing face.

In the New Testament, John says, "no man hath seen God at any time." You may ask the question, is the Bible contradicting itself? No! It simply means that you have to read the Bible in context in order to understand what verses mean. How many people knew God in the true way before Jesus came? Nobody! No human being ever knew Him the way He really is, until His Son arrived. Why? Because no one ever saw God in this way, and this is what the verse is saying. Nobody ever saw God the way he really is, at any time. The only person who could teach us what He truly is like is the Only Begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father. He declared God and made us

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Remembering Jerome



Our Brother, Jerome Logan went to his long rest on April 6, 2021, when he had a heart attack while driving. The following comment on his life was written by his wife Rose, and was read at his funeral.

Jerome came into my life when marriage was the farthest thing from my mind, but we shared 12 years of the deepest love and truest partnership that I could ever imagine. During our first date he suggested that we pray and ask God for direction and I immediately became impressed by God to accept Jerome and his gift to me. Two months later we were husband and wife. My only regret is that Jerome and I had not met earlier in our lives, but I will be forever grateful and thankful to God for choosing me to be Jerome's wife.

I found out very early in our relationship that God was most important in his life. On numerous occasions when we woke up in the early hours of the morning he would find out if I was awake and he would share Scriptures or a dream with me, other times I woke up and saw that he was praying or preparing his sermons for the coming Sabbath. This was his delight, the things of God excited him and he wanted to share the love of God and his son Jesus Christ with everyone he met. One morning as I was leaving out to work, I saw a good friend and pastor of a Sunday church with him. When I returned from work they were

still talking and reasoning about the Scriptures and they continued till late almost night.

Jerome was an unusual type of Christian. Although he had strong convictions about what the Bible taught, he would listen to other Christians to find out what they believed. I remember once when we spent a week in Kingston, every evening Jerome wanted us to go to a Church meeting with a different denomination. That week we attended more than six different churches. I had never thought of going to other denominations, this was definitely out of the norm for me. You can be assured that he was always vocal at each meeting and everyone there came to know him well. He was able to capture the attention of his listeners and he would always share in love what the Lord laid on his heart. He saw every Christian as a brother or sister in Christ.

Jerome was a very organized and orderly person. For example, he arranged the clothes he wore to work and to church in a particular pattern and wore them in that order and would never break the order. His clothes were washed as soon as they were taken off and when dried he would place them at the back of the order. On numerous occasions he tried to arrange my clothes in an orderly manner so that I could have an organized way of arranging my clothes and choosing the outfits, but it never worked. Unfortunately I am not as organized as he was so it couldn't work for me. This was very amusing to him and he would laugh stating that I was too disorganized.

His organization did not work with my clothes, but it was successful with my documents. Jerome made sure that all my documents were neatly arranged and placed in separate envelopes with a name written on each so that they could be easily retrieved when I needed them. This made things so much easier. I can't remember ever seeing Jerome search for things he wanted. He knew

exactly where to find them. He would constantly encourage me to return items to the correct place. He shared with me that he became organized by his reading of Genesis chapter 1; he was so intrigued by the creation story, that he read it over and over for a whole month. The order in which God created the world fascinated him and inspired him to create that order in all aspects of his life. He was an ardent reader of the Scriptures and spent hours in its words. He shared the Scripture with passion and he lived by its sayings.

Sometime after he moved to our community he asked me to accompany him to every home in the community. His purpose was to find out what the people did and how he could be of assistance to them and to let them know that he was available to share the Scriptures and to entertain questions concerning the Bible whenever they wanted. We started at the home at the entrance of the community and went on to the very last. During these encounters he collected all their phone numbers and organized them on a list in order of where they lived in the community.

It was his joy to be of service to anyone who needed it and it was just the same in our home. He saw everything that needed to be fixed or done and he would not delay in doing it. When he came to live in our community he could not understand how we survived without piped water. Soon after he ensured that we had enough water tanks to sustain the whole family and he was amazed at how God would provide water just when we needed it. I cannot imagine what life is going to be without him. My only assurance is my faith in God and his promises.

Since Jerome's recent enthusiasm for technology, he acquired different devices which he used for the sole purpose of empowering himself and others to learn more about God's word. He was

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Images of God

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know the real Him.

In John 17:6 Jesus says,

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. (John 17:6)

I have revealed Your name; I have demonstrated Your character. In verse 4 he says,

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. (John 17:4)

The glory of God in the Old Testament is a bright shining light with power and might, to terrify and fill with awe. Jesus gave no such demonstration and yet he says, *“I have glorified Thee on the earth.”* He revealed God’s true glory. He manifested the name of God, and so He declared what God is like.

How did he do this? If you search the New Testament, can you find a place where Jesus sat with His disciples and told them in detail, *‘this is what the character of God is like’*? No. But what we find is Jesus telling parable after parable and living countless situations where He demonstrated something completely contrary to the ideas that the people had. Let’s look at a few of them, and I will refer to them as ‘snapshots or photographs of God in order to maintain the idea of imagery, since we have been discussing images.

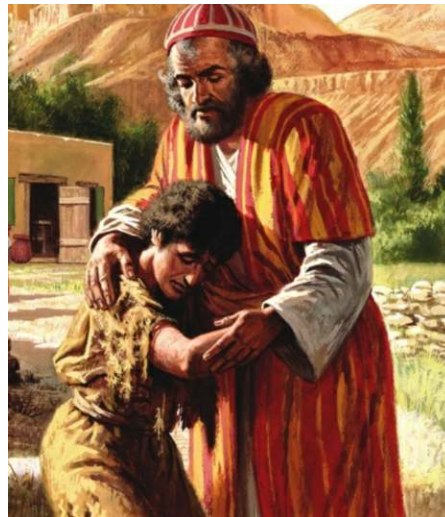
TRUE SNAPSHOTS

Many cameras today can take a panorama shot. The camera will take a series of pictures and then join them all together to create a big picture which shows the complete scenery, involving far more than could be seen with just one photo. This is exactly what Jesus gives us, snapshots of God. Many times we read His parables without getting the main point. But what He was trying to do in many of these stories was to help us understand what God is like.

The Prodigal Son is a good example of this.

I suppose one could say one of the important lessons found there is the ill minded mentality of the elder brother: maybe we could even highlight the foolishness of young people. But these were not the main points Jesus was trying to bring out of the story. What He was emphasizing was the father’s *attitude* to somebody who deserved absolutely nothing! He told an entire story to teach us about how God treats people who are completely undeserving.

The boy comes back and he is making excuses. *“Make me a servant. I am not worth!”* This is us; this is how we feel because we let God down and disgrace Him. We know what we are doing, and



yet we do it anyway. When we behave like this as humans, other people will say ‘you knew what you were doing. You deserve what you are getting. You must suffer.’ But what does the father in Jesus’ story do? He does not even allow the boy to finish his confession. He instantly throws the robe around him, so that his nakedness, his filth and unworthiness do not appear. He takes the ring off his finger and puts it on him to signify, this is my son! Authority and sonship are given to him in his lowly, unworthy state. The father makes a big feast to celebrate his son’s return.

This is the face of God that we see in the face of Jesus Christ.

The lost sheep is a similar story. What is the point there? The point is that the sheep wandered away by itself. Most people would not go looking for one missing sheep in the middle of the night if they have one hundred. It is interesting that God does not depict this lost thing as a person, but as a common animal. A sheep is merely property, not something one would have much affection or feelings of endearment for. But God is showing us that he loves us as His sons in the story of the Prodigal, and He loves us as his property in the stories of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin.

Again, Jesus shows how much he really cares for us in the case of Zacchaeus. One of the categories of people that we are sometimes very intolerant of is public officials. We often find that many politicians and public employees are scoundrels. They use and manipulate the people and they have their own agendas. Thus instinctively, we do not trust these public figures, and correctly so. Zacchaeus was one of these, a thief who was robbing the people blind.

But he was still someone’s child, and somewhere in his life, something made him take a wrong turn and the only person who could understand his situation was somebody who had the heart of God. So, Zacchaeus scrambles up into the tree, too insecure and aware of his unworthiness to dare to put himself in the face of this holy person, Jesus, too afraid to face this man who was the image of God.

He climbs up into the tree just to glimpse Him, and lo and behold, the heart of God is looking for this little man. Just like he is looking for everybody, no matter how bad you are. And wonder of wonders, he says, *‘Zacchaeus I am coming to have a meal at your home!’* He invites Himself to Zacchaeus’ home because He knows that Zacchaeus will never have the courage to invite Him. On this day, the thief and cheater is converted, and his whole household finds salvation.

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fascinated with the different apps such as Whatsapp, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter which he used to ensure that hundreds of friends and acquaintances he interacted with, either learned about God and his son Jesus Christ, or he encouraged those who already knew about them. His goal was to use social media for Christ.

It brought him much joy to upload his sermons to YouTube and Facebook and he spent a lot of his time replaying them and listening to other pastors with different understanding of the Scriptures. One of his recent efforts was to download sermons from the church of Christ, for my dad to listen to as he [my dad] is a member of that church. On each Sabbath morning you could see the joy on his face as he gathered his equipment and other items for worship. He was especially keen to see the brethren and to share his sermons with the small gathering.

Jerome was kind, patient, forgiving and a humble, God-fearing husband. I was always amazed by his calm spirit. In the home he was very gentle with my parents, especially my mom, and she adored him. Since his passing, when we have our evening worship she recalls with tears, how handsome he looked dressed for church and the time he spent studying the Bible. My father also had a special relationship with him and could depend on him for big and small things. Simple things such as bringing home the newspaper for my dad every week was something he looked forward to, but most of all my dad respected him for the supportive husband he was to me. My parents have lost a son, and although they try to hide their sadness I sense the grief which they carry.

I thank God for allowing me to be part of his journey. The memories have become my treasures which I will hold as long as I live. I miss him so much, only God understands.

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This is the face of God! Not thunder and lightning on a mountain, not fearsome terribleness that requires man to run and hide when He approaches. No, the glory of God that we see in the face of Jesus Christ, the image of the Father is something extremely loving, tender and beautiful. This is His true glory! These pictures of His true face can be seen all throughout the life of Jesus, and they are amazing!

Mary Magdalene is a friend of Jesus, but she is despised because she is a prostitute. Jesus is sitting in the house of a Pharisee, a notable church official, and here comes this woman, creeping in through the door. What does she have? She has a bottle of ointment that she has paid all of her questionable wages for. She spends it all and buys this bottle of fragrant ointment, slinks up to his feet, and does not stand before His face because how could she dare, a woman with so dark a reputation, to stand before the face of the Holy One?

As she pours the ointment upon His feet, the smell fills the entire room. Everyone looks in disgust at her, crouching before the guest of honour, weeping and wiping with her hair. The Pharisee, Simon concludes, this man cannot be a prophet. He makes this judgment because of his preconceived notions about God. What is he looking for? His concept of God is that of the terrible judge! He thinks of a God who will smite this sinner dead, who will reject this woman because she has been unholy and unclean. She has been a prostitute. How dare she touch holiness? Surely he thinks he has justification for his belief, because it was a known fact that any sinner who touched the ark of the covenant or came near to God would instantly die!

Simon concludes that if this was a man of God, He would know not to allow this woman near to Him, because God says that where he appears, even the very ground becomes holy (Exodus 3:5)! His attitude is, 'do not dare to approach me prostitute!' Based on his limited ideas and notions of God, Simon judges Jesus. But when we look at the

true image of God, what do we see? What does Jesus, the true face of God say? He says 'leave her alone!' He says, 'woman, anywhere the gospel is told, this story will be told.' He contrasts the woman with Simon - 'she has anointed my feet for the burial. She has not stopped kissing my feet. You never kissed or anointed me. Look at what she has done for me!'

Jesus gives us a completely different perspective of the face of God, and of the image of the Father. This is why God hates idolatry, this is why He has given us a **true** image, a picture that we can look at and believe in, a living, exact description through which we can see the *real* face of God.

That is almost the end of the story, but there is one more side to it. Romans 8:29 says,

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

God does not only have one image, Jesus Christ, but he has many images. His plan is to have many snapshots, many photographs of Himself. It was His plan, that those that He foreknew, (you and me) He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. We are to be like him.

We are to be the firstborn among many brethren, the first born of the sons of God, all like our Father. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says,

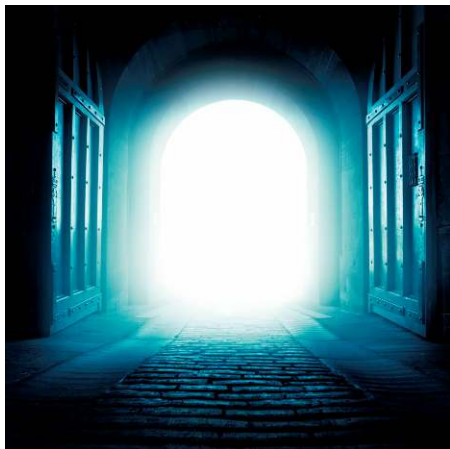
But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

God's spirit, the spirit of Jesus is accomplishing this painting, is creating this image, not an image of wood and stone but a living image in you and me, the image of God the Father. This is the truth of the image of God in this revelation of the new covenant.



Escaping the Chains (part 4)

Howard Williams



THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I am very happy for the experiences I have had because it led me to know the truth for myself. I was not in a place to ask questions of my elders or pastors anymore. If I had a question I would have to go to God and work it out through careful study of the scriptures and revelation of the Spirit.

ONE SUCH EXPERIENCE

One night I was reading from the book of Acts, in chapter 5, and I read where Gamaliel spoke about two men, one called Theudas and the other Judas of Galilee. (Acts 5:36-37) These men were false prophets and I had never heard of them before, so I decided to do a quick search to see what was mentioned of them. I went to the internet and started a search for all ancient false prophets and was alarmed to astonishment to find out who it was that several sites in a row claimed the first false prophet to be! To my amazement, the first false prophet was said to be Jesus! Was I ever surprised at that claim!

These sites also provide documentation for their conclusions so I read their reasons for making such a claim. Here was the reason Jesus was dubbed with the title 'False Prophet': *"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his king-*

dom." (Matt 16:28) So this was his false prophecy! I read also where others were given a chance to defend a position if they felt the conclusion was wrong. The defence for Jesus by Christians was pathetic. Here is what they said in essence: "Jesus is not a false prophet because there are some Jews that are still alive and roaming the earth. They are called wandering Jews, and they will not die until Jesus comes back." I could not accept that answer so I was left with a challenge: "What did Jesus mean?"

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

I looked at the three accounts of the event where Jesus spoke those words. Matthew, Mark, and Luke recorded it. Let's put them together and see what he said.

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt 16:28)

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1)

"But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:27)

The main issue in these statements was the arrival of the Kingdom of God. It is not strange when you begin to examine these things. The pieces begin to fall in place. Look at this sequence:

When John the Baptist began his ministry he had a certain message. What was it?

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt 3:1-2)

Then Jesus after he was baptised by

John started preaching as well. What was Jesus' message?

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt 4:17) See also Mk 1:14-15.

Then Jesus' disciples were sent out to preach. What did they preach?

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt 10:7)

(A point of clarity here. Matthew called it "The Kingdom of heaven" while the others refer to it as, "The Kingdom of God". It is the same thing.)

Notice the pattern that is established, they were ALL preaching one message – a message about the Kingdom.

They had electrified Jerusalem and the surrounding areas with this message. People were excited and expectant because this Kingdom – whatever it was – was near, at arms length, within reach!

THE PREACHER CHALLENGED!

One day after this preaching, with excitement filling all Judea, Jesus was met by some Pharisees. They demanded an answer from him about this Kingdom: exactly when it should come? Here is the story: *"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is with-
in you."* (Luke 17:20-21)

What was his answer? Notice carefully what Jesus said because it is important to understand it as we deal with his prophecy. If I should paraphrase what we just read it would be something like this: *"When the kingdom comes, it will not be something you can see, you won't be able to show a tangible physical domain or point to a certain place, because the kingdom will come on the*

inside." So the coming of this kingdom that Jesus prophesied was going to be an internal event, something happening inside people.

WHAT IS A KINGDOM?

Now I would like to stop for a moment and think about the word "kingdom". The Jews thought it meant a visible, physical setting up of a king on earth, but Jesus clearly meant something different. So what does the word really mean? The word "kingdom" is what we call a compound word. It is two words joined together. The word simply means "King's Domain", which is an area or territory owned or controlled by a King. The Kingdom of God are the people in whom Jesus lives and their bodies are the temples of his Holy Spirit. (1Cor 6:19) There can be no kingdom without a King! If the King does not live in his domain (our bodies) then we are not a part of his kingdom. (Rom 8:9) So how could this be done?

In John, the fourteenth chapter, Jesus spoke about the coming of another comforter. This comforter, he said, could not come unless he first went away. Further, he said that when he went away he would send this comforter. (Jn 16:7) He also said something else that is worth noticing here: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" (Jn 7:37-39)

In his last prayer recorded in John 17, Jesus prayed that his father should glorify him with the father's own self, the glory Jesus had before the world existed. (Jn 17:5) What does the glorifying of Jesus have to do with the coming of the Comforter? Jesus made it clear that the coming of the comforter was him, Jesus, coming back. (Jn 14:18) So the disciples understood that it would be Jesus coming back in a glorified state so that he could dwell on the inside of

them. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (Jn 14:20) When Jesus could come inside a person, the Son of Man would have arrived and be ruling in his Kingdom.

Before he died, Jesus told the disciples to stay at Jerusalem until they received power. (Luke 24:49) Now here is an interesting insight into a conversation Jesus had with his disciples after he was raised from the dead, "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6) Obviously, they knew that the Kingdom had not yet come even at this point. His answer was, "it is God's business." But, he added something else in connection with the question: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Here again is the promise of power. Remember Jesus' "false prophecy"? Take a look at it again in Mark: "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1) So we are getting closer!

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ARRIVES

Pentecost was a feast of the Jews that came fifty days after the Passover. The promise Jesus made to his disciples was that some would see him coming in his kingdom before they died, (Matt 16:28) and also it would be a kingdom with power. (Mk 1:9) Did they see this kingdom come? Sure they did – at Pentecost! It was at this Jewish feast that the promise of the comforter and kingdom met it's fulfilment. The disciples received power because Jesus came into his kingdom in his people. They knew it was He who came back according to his promise (Luke 24:49) and filled each of the one hundred and twenty believers waiting in the upper room. (Acts 1:15) It was the Spirit of Jesus (The Holy

Spirit) which was now in the disciples and brought them into the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Now the truth of being born again, by the Last Adam, was truly possible. And this Kingdom spread like wildfire! Even on the very first day of Jesus ruling his new kingdom, three thousand new people were born into it! (Acts 2:41) This was the fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy. It was not a false prophecy after all! All who heard Jesus say those words, except for Judas, were alive and saw it happen.

Every person who receives the same Spirit they received is a part of the Kingdom of heaven. (Rom 8:9) This Kingdom is a spiritual kingdom and produces the righteousness of Jesus in one's life. The life of Jesus is the life of New Testament Christianity. This life is the victorious life over sin, sickness and even death. This life is a superior life, but it was short-lived in the church and eventually was lost because of Unbelief. The disciples experienced it and turned the world upside down, but as soon as the disciples started dying, the Spirit and power of the Kingdom started to fade away until it was lost from the people's sight. No one believed anymore.

Even to this very day the term, 'The Kingdom of God', is misunderstood to mean the coming of Jesus in the clouds, causing people to miss what is already here. It is true that there will be a physical kingdom set up in the end when, according to Daniel, the God of heaven will set up a Kingdom that will never be destroyed. (Dan 2:44) But what Jesus already set up is his spiritual kingdom, and he is reigning on the earth in it today even as you read. This kingdom exists in the people of God, in any person in whom His Spirit lives. Do you believe it?

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE FOR TODAY?

I am sure there are already many different possible answers to this question coming to mind. People belonging to different groups and denominations hold various opinions as to what the message for today should be. There are over 33,000 different denominations in

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Your Body and Bananas

Lenworth Frankson



The banana is a superfood but this humble “fruit” botanically, is actually a berry! This is because rather than developing from flowers with one ovary, they develop from flowers with multiple ovaries. That is why they’re often found in clusters and categorized as aggregate fruit.

Bananas have often been called “the perfect food,” for good reasons. Not only do they come perfectly packed and you can easily grab one for a snack on the go but they are delicious and contain a lot of what our body needs with no preparation necessary. Here are some of the top health benefits of bananas:

HELP TO BUILD LEAN MUSCLE.

If your muscles are sore after a workout or their growth is very slow, you might not be getting enough magnesium in your diet. Bananas are a good source of magnesium and can help with muscle contraction and relaxation as well as the combining and production of protein, which in turn, increases lean muscle mass. In addition, magnesium intake helps boost lipolysis, a process by which your body releases fat from its stores. An interesting way to get magnesium is by making banana tea. Just boil some water, cut off both ends of a banana (still in its peel) and boil for 7-10 minutes. Then drain and drink before bed.

HELP MUSCLES RECOVER

Many people know that bananas are a

prime source of potassium. Potassium happens to be an electrolyte which helps your muscles recover from a workout, strengthens their development, and allows you to work out more. According to WebMD, potassium is a mineral that is important for heart health, mainly by lowering blood pressure by ridding your body of sodium (salts) when you urinate. Potassium can help relax the walls of blood vessels, which will also naturally lower blood pressure. Because potassium plays a buffering role in your blood, it helps keep the bone-strengthening minerals, calcium and phosphorus, from being lost from the bones and kidneys. Numerous studies suggest that having plenty of potassium in your diet helps increase the density, and thus the strength, of your bones.

A SOURCE OF VITAMIN C

Usually when people think about fruits that are packed with vitamin C, they think about citrus fruits like oranges. But citrus fruits are not the only important antioxidants on the market. Like with many other fruits, bananas contain a good amount of vitamin C. In fact, these long, curvy fruits contain about 10-mg of vitamin C, which is approximately 15-percent of what you need every day. Getting more vitamin C can help boost immunity, as well as help your body absorb other essential nutrients such as iron.

HELP REGULATE BLOOD PRESSURE

The combination of a low-sodium, high potassium intake is associated with the lowest blood pressure levels and lowest frequency of stroke in individuals and populations. One of the main causes of high blood pressure is the high level of sodium in the body. Potassium reduces the effect of sodium on the body. Hence, eating bananas could help lower blood pressure due to their high potassium content. You can try eating 2 bananas per day for one week which may reduce

your blood pressure by about 10%. Eating bananas for dinner may not be a good idea as they may not digest properly at night. Eating bananas for high blood pressure may not be recommended for everyone, especially those with other chronic health issues or medical conditions with BP. Banana is good for high blood pressure because it has high potassium content which may not be good for conditions like kidney stones. Consult your doctor before adding bananas to your diet if you have other serious medical conditions.

HELPS YOU FEEL FULLER

Ripening, bananas are rich in something called resistant starch, which, as the name suggests, literally resists the digestion process. This feeds healthy gut bacteria, which suppresses the appetite and leads to more efficient fat oxidation. In fact, one study found that replacing just 5 percent of the day’s carbohydrates with a source of resistant starch can boost post-meal fat burn by up to 30 percent! Since unripened bananas are not the best tasting, adding them into weight loss smoothies with other fruits and veggies may mask the taste, making it more palatable.

REDUCE BAD CHOLESTEROL

Bananas contain phytosterols, which are compounds that have LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) lowering effects according to a study in The Journal of Nutrition. Additionally, Bananas also contain Vitamin B6 which is important for many things including heart health, immune health, digestive health, and nervous system function. Fruits like avocados and apples, oranges, grapefruits and bananas can also help lower cholesterol.

HELP RAISE IMMUNITY

Bananas potentially can help you fight off common infections. The interesting thing is that the more ripe the banana, the more it can help in this area. A study

showed that bananas with dark spots were eight times more effective in enhancing the power of white blood cells than green-skin bananas. Having more white blood cells helps your body resist bacteria, fungi, viruses and other bad things that can make us sick.

SUPPORT BOWEL MOVEMENTS.

The high fiber in bananas can help normalize bowel mobility. With 3 grams of insoluble fiber, they help you push out waste better by making stools easier to pass. Bananas are binding for anyone with diarrhea, and they also contain probiotics that are essentially food for the healthy microbes that live in our gut system.

BRAIN AND BODY BENEFITS

The manganese content of bananas seems to benefit our skin, bones, and even the brain. Manganese is vital to many functions in the body, including proper brain function. Studies have shown that manganese can help prevent conditions such as epilepsy and Parkinson's disease. Some (animal) studies have shown that low levels of manganese appears to be associated with poor bone health and even osteoporosis.

A GOOD SOURCE OF ENERGY

Many athletes will eat a banana before, during or after a workout: Bananas are rich in glucose, the most easily digestible source of sugar that will provide optimal energy for your run, workout or cycling class. Eating one post workout helps to quickly replenish energy stores that are depleted during a tough workout session. If you're working out or training for a marathon, then perhaps you should give bananas a second look. Bananas have been called "the perfect food for athletes," as they are loaded with minerals and easy-to-digest carbohydrates. Bananas may also reduce the soreness and cramps associated with exercise. While there are some disputes to that claim, there's no dispute that bananas are a helpful source of nutrition "before, during and after" any activity that requires endurance.

HELP TO DETOXYIFY THE BODY

Rich in pectin, bananas are an all natural detox. This gelatin-like fiber sticks to toxic compounds in the blood and flushes them out of the body through the urine. In fact, citrus pectin has been proven to increase mercury excretion in urine by 150 percent within 24 hours of supplementation, according to a study in *Forsch Komplementärmed.* As a rapid weight loss bonus, research shows pectin can limit the amount of fat your cells can absorb. Pectin can also help to regulate blood sugar. To reap the benefits, pick ripe bananas over green bananas, as the proportion of water-soluble pectin increases as bananas yellow, according to a Food Chemistry study. Try consuming protein and healthy fat with the banana to slow down the absorption of the sugar from the banana into your bloodstream. This is the most effective strategy for keeping blood sugar levels stable, which means consistent energy levels and weight loss.

Bananas are a healthy addition to almost any diet, but too much of any single food, including bananas is not healthy. Bananas are not typically considered a high-calorie food but if the amount we are consuming is causing excessive calories way more than your body needs, it could lead to unhealthy weight gain and other serious health issues. Let's strive to be "temperate in all things" even with our favorite fruit/berry.

Some helpful banana tips from an old TV advertisement:

"I'm xxxxxxxx banana and I'm here to say,

Bananas must be eaten in a special way;

When they're flecked with brown and a golden hue,

It's then the banana is the best for you.

Banana is a fruit from the tropical equator,

Do not put bananas in your refrigerator!"



Escaping The Chains

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Christianity alone. Are there then 33,000 different messages in Christianity in need of being preached? According to the Bible, what is THE message that must be preached today? "***And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.***" (*Matt 24:14*) (Emphasis mine) Please read the verse again at least twice because it is possible to miss the point. The Gospel is specific. It is peculiar to the Kingdom. Have you heard any sermons recently on the Kingdom? It is clearly what Jesus says must be preached today. In fact, when this fully happens, he says the end will come.

In Acts chapter 8 Phillip went down to Samaria to preach. What did he preach? "*But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.*" (*Acts 8:12*) What was preached then is different from what is preached today. No wonder why the results are so different!

Paul's letters make up more than half of the New Testament. What was Paul's message? Let's look at his last few years. "*And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*" (*Acts 28:30-31*) Even while under house arrest Paul's message was the same, "The Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ."

The world is sick of Christian rhetoric. They have heard sermons of theories for too long with no demonstration or power. It was different when Jesus or the apostles preached. They preached the gospel of the Kingdom. "*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel*

Escaping The Chains

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of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." (Matt 4:23) "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." (Matt 10:35) The preaching of the Kingdom was with a demonstration of a reality existing in the preacher. By seeing that demonstration people were drawn to the message of the preacher and were able to find salvation and healing through him.

Here is a verse talking about Christians, the sons of God. *"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.... Because the creature itself also shall*

be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom 8:19 & 21) The sons of God are yet to be revealed. If this revelation took place today there would be such a revival of true Christianity that the world has never witnessed! This is what the Bible teaches. The world is in darkness. It makes no sense to get all worked up about crime and violence or even racism. The world needs the light of the sons of God to give a living demonstration of reality here as a witness of something greater than what they are seeing today. Are you a child of God? Is your life demonstrating the power of God? The world is waiting to see this with a longing desire!



The Only Good

There is no such thing as abstractly a principle of good, and a principle of evil; God is the only good, and choice of separation from God is the only evil. This truth Jesus expressed when the young man came to Him, saying, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" and Jesus answered, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." In God, the only good, lies inherently all conceivable good or goods; and in choice of separation from God lies inherently all conceivable evil or evils. In the original choice of Lucifer to exercise his existence, his faculties and powers, apart from God, there lay all the evil that has ever been or that can ever be. He thus became the very prince of evil; the author of all the evil that the universe can ever know. - AT Jones

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