

Who is Jesus?

To the Christian believer Jesus is many things. We know Him as our Saviour, Lord, Redeemer and so much more.

But here let us focus afresh on another astounding truth about Jesus. We read in the Bible *“He is the image of the invisible God ...”* (Colossians 1:15a) ... *“for God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him ...”* (Colossians 1:19a). Elsewhere we read that *“the Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being ...”* (Hebrews 1:3a). Jesus Himself stated *“I and the Father are one”* (John 10:30) and *“anyone who has seen me has seen the Father”* (John 14:9b). Clearly from these statements Jesus, as the image of God, is God.

The Image of God in Man

The very first chapter of the Bible records that *“God created man in His own image”* (Genesis 1:27a). Human beings were created as eternal beings, male and female, not the same as God, but as those who reflected His glory. The Bible goes on to record that the first man and first woman fell into sin. Right at the dawn of human history, the original righteousness of man was lost and the image of God in mankind was marred and tarnished.

The sad consequence was that all future generations of humans inherited this damaged image and could not rightly relate to a righteous and holy God. God could have wiped humans from the face of the earth and started again but in His great love He set about a rescue plan.

Jesus Our Rescuer

In the fullness of time, about 2000 years ago, God sent His only begotten Son to earth. In the opening chapter of the Gospel of John we read that the Jesus, the Son of God *“became flesh and made his dwelling*

among us” (John 1:14). Though Jesus came in the likeness of a sinful man He walked on the face of the earth for thirty-three years revealing the perfect image of God to mankind. And the sinlessly perfect life of Jesus, who was fully God and fully man, made God’s rescue plan possible for *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God”* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

700 years before Jesus came to earth the prophet Isaiah described the crucifixion of Jesus in great detail. At one point he stated that in his great suffering *“his form was marred beyond human likeness”* (Isaiah 52:13).



Perhaps this was when the perfect image of God was seen most clearly! The Bible states that *“God is love”* (1 John 4:16) and that *“God demonstrates His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). What could be a clearer picture of God? The sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross paid the price for our sin. This opened the way for God’s righteousness and His image to be restored to those who believe in Jesus and have received Him into their lives.

To Be Like Him

The Bible makes it clear that God’s ultimate desire for every true follower of Jesus is to become like Him. And so by God’s Word and by His Spirit Christians *“are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit”* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Paul also writes *“And we know in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son”* (Romans 8:28,29).

Rev Dr John Stott whose life and ministry has had a profound impact on the Church around the world wrote near the end of his life -

“Romans 8:29 reads that God has predestined his people to be conformed to the image of his Son: that is, to become like Jesus. We all know that when Adam fell he lost much – though not all – of the divine image in which he had been created. But God has restored it in Christ. Conformity to the image of God means to become like Jesus: Christlikeness is the eternal predestining purpose of God.”¹

The wonderful news is that our transformation into the image of Christ will come to a marvellous completion in heaven. Apostle John writes *“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”* (1 John 3:2). What a glorious day that will be!

They Cannot See the Image of God

But for now we live in this world with the sad reality that *“the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the*

¹ John Stott, The Last Word – Reflections on a Lifetime of Preaching, Authentic, Milton Keynes, 2008 p. 23

gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Since the Garden of Eden the aim of Satan has been to destroy man as God’s image bearer. Satan will stop at nothing. Christians need to counteract this evil and spiritual blindness *“not with the weapons of the world” (2 Corinthians 10:4)* but with God’s mighty weapons of the Word of God, prayer, faith, hope, and love, all in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Dear Lord Jesus, You are the image of the invisible God, the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being. Thank You that You willingly left the heaven’s glories and came to earth to rescue a lost humanity. Though created in the image of God we humans are marred and tarnished because of the sin of Adam and Eve. You dwelt amongst us to show us the Father and open the way for the image of God to be restored in us. For all who believe in You and receive You into their lives are made new creations in Christ. But Satan who You declared is the father of lies and a murderer is out to destroy any who bear the image of God. You came to give us an abundant life whereas the devil comes only to steel, kill and destroy. As we live here in Australia help us to be conformed more and more to Your image that others may see You living in us and through us. You sent Your first disciples out like sheep among the wolves to preach the Gospel, heal the sick, raise the dead, and drive out demons. Thank You that You are the Good Shepherd who laid down His life that we might have life. We offer this prayer and give thanks in Your precious Name. Amen.

About ‘Image of God’ Leaflets

In the Bible we read that God *“created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27)*. Many maintain that all human history revolves around this truth. The Judeo-Christian belief in the unique dignity of human beings is at the very foundation of Western civilisation.

The 2010 Canberra Declaration therefore states:

“We believe that all human life, being made in the image of God, has intrinsic and equal value from conception to life’s natural end.”

‘Image of God’ leaflets relate the doctrine of man as created in the image of God to various issues we face in Australia today.

The 21 leaflets in SERIES ONE are dedicated to Sophie Scholl who was martyred at the age of 21 in World War II for writing and distributing leaflets.

You can download other ‘Image of God’ leaflets at the Canberra Declaration website.

Please:

READ & SIGN

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to Protect

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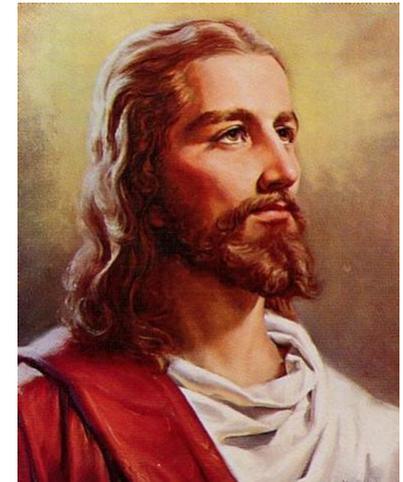
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SERIES ONE

Leaflet 1

Jesus



The Image of God