

TWO IMAGES

“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Cor 15:49 KJV)

The Greek word translated as “image” in this verse is “eikon”. In English it is written as “icon” and is often associated with a small “image” on a computer screen. Clicking on that small “image” can open up huge programs. So Jesus is called the “Image” or “Icon” of the Invisible God (Col. 1:15). When we “click” on Jesus we are introduced to God. In Jesus, dwells all the fulness of the Godhead in a body (Col. 2:9).

The passage before us points out that believers have a dual nature. Physically, we bear the “image” of Adam, while spiritually, we bear the “image” of Jesus. Please note that Jesus in this passage is called the “Last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45). Just as the first Adam began a physical race that bears his image, the Last Adam began a spiritual race that bears His image.

Let us examine these two images more closely.

PHYSICAL IMAGE

Your first birth came when a physical seed, was planted in the physical womb of your earthly mother. When the sperm of your father united with the ovum (egg) of your mother, a new life began. This new life resulted from the combination of 23 chromosomes from the mother and 23 chromosomes from the father. These chromosome sets carry some 15,000 genes from each parent. The strands of DNA in this new life are so tiny that 5 million can pass through the eye of a needle at the same time. Gary Bergel and Dr. C. Everett Koop point out in their booklet “When You Were Formed in Secret” that *“the genes, like letters of a divine alphabet, spell out the unique characteristics of the new individual. The color of eyes, hair and skin, facial features, body types and certain qualities of personality and intelligence are all determined by this genetic coding”*.

Our earthly bodies contain the “image” of our earthly father. His DNA is an integral part of every cell in our earthly body. No matter what we eat or how long we live, the genetic code of our physical being does not change! This physical body, of course, is only temporal. Scripture reminds us that the things which we see are temporary, but the things that we cannot see are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18). Obviously, temporary things like flesh and blood, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God which is eternal (1 Cor. 15:50). Our earthly image, like all physical things, is destined for destruction.

SPIRITUAL IMAGE

Peter reminded believers that we are “ **born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.**” (1 Pet 1:23). As Jesus said to Nicodemus - “**Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit**” (John 3:6). Every seed reproduces after its own kind (Gen. 1:11). Spiritual life can only come from a spiritual seed. That’s why we have to be born again to have eternal life!

This spiritual seed, though invisible to the human eye, carries the “image” of our invisible God. Though the spiritual seed cannot be seen by human eyes, it is still living, active, and powerful. In fact, the Seed of Jesus that abides in us literally transforms our lives (1 John 3:9). The wind blows wherever it pleases (John 3:8). We do not see the wind, but we hear it. We know when the wind is blowing because we see what it does. This is like people who are born of the Spirit. The transformation of their lives is obvious. Believers are renewed in knowledge after the “image” of our Creator (Col. 3:10). In fact, God has predestined believers to be conformed to the “image” of

His Son (Rom. 8:29).

It is interesting to note that the “new birth” or conversion experience, is described as God writing His Laws in our minds and hearts (Heb. 8:10; 10:16). This “new covenant” places within us the “image” or genetic code of Jesus.

Consequently, just as we have born the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Since the image of the heavenly is spiritual, it will last forever.

THE IMAGE OF THE EARTHLY

Earlier we quoted Dr. C. Everett Koop that when a baby is conceived the: *“the genes, like letters of a divine alphabet, spell out the unique characteristics of the new individual.”* “The utter complexity of this “image” is beyond human comprehension.

A tomato plant and a redwood tree both come from seeds that are about the same size. The difference in how they grow is determined by the genetic code in each seed. The tomato plant grows to be 3 feet tall. The redwood tree grows to be 300 feet tall. So when a child is conceived in the womb, every aspect of that child’s physical development is determined by its own unique genetic code from day one. Human growth is directed by a blueprint, or “image” that we have received from Adam. Please prayerfully consider how God knitted us together in our mother’s womb. We are indeed “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14).

- The human brain contains 100 billion neurons, each of which is linked to as many as 10,000 other neurons.
- The eye is an interrelated system of about 40 subsystems. The retina of the eye has 137 million rod like cells that handle black and white, and 7 million cone like cells that allow us to see in color. The eye, the optic nerve, and the visual cortex are able to capture, deliver and interpret up to 1.5 million pulse messages a milli-second.
- Some consider the ear to be the most complex sensory system in the human body. It is able to process minute waves of sound pressure from air molecules banging against the ear drum into the neural signals that are sent to the brain and interpreted as sound.
- The human heart beats 70 times per minute and pumps 7 tons of blood every day.
- The circulatory system in our body is 60,000 to 100,000 miles long.
- The arteries relax as the heart beats and contract between beats, thus supplying the tiniest branches of the circulatory system with a smooth and constant flow of blood.
- The blood contains 30 trillion red cells that are destroyed at the stupendous rate of 72 million a minute. As they are destroyed the body salvages 85% of their vital iron which is returned to the bone marrow for the manufacture of new hemoglobin. Without this ability to conserve iron we would all die of anemia.
- The speed of the blood is controlled by the vasomotor center at the base of the brain. Blood flows slowly when resting, but faster during strenuous activity.
- The kidneys contain 64 miles of piping and every day separate 180 quarts of filtrate from the blood. 178 quarts of purified blood are returned to the system, and 2 quarts are extracted as waste.
- The liver is designed to see that the blood contains the exact amount of sugar needed at all times. When you have eaten more than you need, the liver will store the excess and keep a reserve supply of aminos and glycogen for emergencies.
- The human body not only grows according to the divine blueprint, but also has the capacity to heal itself and to reproduce.
- Beyond these, there are countless other human characteristics spelled out in our genetic code. Like snowflakes, each new person is unique. We have our own personal fingerprints, voice print, facial features, and physiognomy. “Eye scans”, for example, can differentiate us

- from every other person on earth just as our fingerprints do.
- Please remember that all of this and much more, was placed by God in your genetic code from the moment of conception.

THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY

When we are “born again” God promises to “write” His laws in our hearts and in our minds. This promise, as you know, was made by Jeremiah centuries before it came to pass (Jer. 31:33).

- The Hebrew word for “write” is “kathab” and is found over 200 times in the O.T. Scriptures. Significantly, this is the word used in Ex. 31:18 to teach us that the Ten Commandments were “written” by the finger of God. Note that the old covenant, that is the Ten Commandments, were written by God on tablets of stone, and not changed. The people were forbidden from tampering with the laws of God. They could not add to, nor diminish from what God had written (Deut. 4:2). When Moses received the Ten Commandments we are told that even God “added nothing more” (Deu. 5:22).
- The same is apparently true of the new covenant. The Greek word translated as “write” in this regard is “epigrapho”. (Epi = upon; grapho = to write) The five uses of the word “epigrapho” in the N.T. Scriptures do not refer to a writing in progress, but a writing that has been completed. It is used in:
 - (1) Mk. 15:26 - of the writing on the cross.
 - (2) In Acts 17:23 - of the writing on the altar to an unknown god.
 - (3) In Rev. 21:12 - of the names of the 12 tribes written over the gates of the New Jerusalem.
 - (4) In Heb. 8:10 - of the new covenant when God writes His laws on the hearts of believers.
 - (5) In Heb. 10:16 - of the new covenant when God writes His laws on the minds of believers.

Please note!

- We know that God wrote the Ten Commandments and they could not be changed.
- We know that God wrote the image of Adam in us at the time of our physical conception, and that our physical DNA is not changed.
- Please consider the possibility that when we are born again God writes his laws in our hearts and minds and that they are not changed. As Christians, we spend the rest of our lives living out the magnificent plan that God placed in our hearts and minds on the day of our conversion.
- One biblical illustration of conversion is “metamorphosis”. This word is used 4 times in Scripture. Two times it refers to what happened to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Two times it refers to the transformation of believers from the works of the flesh to the fruit of the Spirit (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18).
- The new covenant does not “conform” us by the outward pressure of rules and regulations, it “transforms” us by power of Jesus within. The difference between the ugly caterpillar and the beautiful butterfly, is precisely what happens to those who are born again.
- Saul of Tarsus is an excellent example of transformation. Before his conversion he was destructive like the caterpillar, after his conversion he was as harmless as a butterfly. He told Timothy that his conversion was intended by God to be an example to those who would believe on Jesus and receive eternal life (1 Tim. 1:15 - 16).

- Also please remember that Saul of Tarsus took years to mature in his Christian faith.

- He was set apart from birth to be an apostle to the gentiles (Gal. 1:15)
- It was probably over 30 years later that Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road (Acts 9, 22, 26)
- He spent 3 years in Arabia (Gal. 1:18).
- He also spent several years in Tarsus (Acts 9:30; 11:25).
- In Acts 13:1 - 3 the Holy Spirit separated Barnabas and Saul to the work He had called them to.
- Paul's physical maturity came many years after he was born.
- Paul's spiritual maturity also came many years after he was born again.

- Let us believe that He Who has begun a good work within us will complete it! (Phil. 1:6).

PHYSICAL NOURISHMENT

The microscopic human life in the mother's womb must have nourishment to survive and grow. For approximately nine months this nourishment comes from the mother by means of the umbilical cord. Afterward, we receive nourishment orally. Without physical nourishment we will die.

So God has placed hunger within to help insure our survival. The greater the hunger the greater the effort we are willing to make to satisfy that hunger. Since food is essential to our survival, when the Hebrew people got very hungry they were highly motivated to get something to eat. The manna that God gave them from heaven, however, was not easy to obtain. Please consider:

- Manna fell from heaven and was gathered outside of the camp.
- From the center of the camp to the outside was approximately one mile (a Sabbath Day's journey).
- Since there were two or three million people gathering manna at the same time, it must have been necessary to walk several miles in order to gather a days ration.
- There was only a small window of opportunity to gather manna. It appeared after the dew was gone (Ex. 16:14), and it melted away when the sun got hot (Ex. 16:21).
- The manna was like "thin flakes" (Ex. 16:14), and each person had to gather about 2 quarts every day. This was not easy!
- The manna had to be gathered daily, for anything left over developed a bad smell and maggots (Ex. 16:20). An exception was made each week for the Sabbath so that on the sixth day they could gather two days provisions and it would not spoil (Ex. 16:24 - 30).
- Once gathered the manna had to be washed, prepared, and cooked. In the wilderness, of course, water and wood were not easily obtained.
- Even though the miraculous manna came from heaven as a gift from God, a great deal of time and energy had to be expended every day in order to actually "eat" what God had provided.

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT

When faced with the temptation to turn stones into bread, Jesus reminded that devil that "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). This is a quotation from Deut. 8:3: "**He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.**" Please note that feeding the people with manna was to teach something! IT WAS TO

TEACH THAT MAN DOES NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD!

There is an obvious connection between eating manna and studying the Scriptures. Both are essential! Just as physical Israel could not live without manna - spiritual Israel cannot live without the Word of God. Like newborn babies crave milk, Christians are to crave every word that comes from the mouth of God (1 Pet. 2:2). Just as physical Israel would shrivel and die from the lack of manna, Christians can shrivel and die without daily nutrition from the Word of God.

The noble Bereans set a wonderful example for all believers in that they studied the Scriptures every day (Acts 17:11). Just as the Hebrews spent several hours a day to survive and grow on manna, the Bereans spent several hours a day to survive and grow on the Scriptures. Imagine, if you can, what it would be like to study the Scriptures in Berea 2,000 years ago. Since the printing press was over a thousand years in the future, copies of the Scriptures were both rare and expensive. The local synagogue normally had some books of the Hebrew Bible, but they were not easily accessible. The noble Bereans, like the ancient Hebrews, had to leave home and walk somewhere to get nourishment. The Scriptures in Berea were undoubtedly under lock and key in the "holy ark" at the local synagogue. Since there would not be Bibles for everyone, some people would obviously have to wait in line. Since there were no chapters and verses in the Bible at that time, it was not easy to find and verify the teaching of Paul, but they did it anyhow! The Scriptures are explicit: **"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (Acts 17:11)**

Most people in the world are like the ancient Hebrews in that they spend a large part of the day simply surviving. Without money, fast foods and microwaves, they are resigned to a life of hardship and hunger. Yet, these are often the very people with the greatest hunger for Biblical teaching. One missionary from Africa contrasted his students there from his students in America by pointing out that in Africa they would walk many miles to hear Biblical teaching. These eager students would seek out the front seats, and gladly stay there for hours. They constantly hungered for more spiritual food. In America, by contrast, even the students in a Christian College drove to the campus in cars, slouched down on the back row and said: "Do I have to know this for the test"?

Please consider again these inspired words: **"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." (1 Pet 2:1-3)**

Jesus said it like this: **"Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you." (John 6:27)**

TRUE TREASURE

Almost everyone is intrigued by stories of treasure. Jesus talked about a treasure to teach us the importance of His eternal kingdom. He said: **"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." (Matt 13:44)**

Note! This hidden treasure is like the kingdom of heaven. Since it is spiritual, man has to be "born again" to see it (John 3:3 - 5). Since this eternal treasure involves being born again it brings us back to the subject of a spiritual seed and a spiritual image. At the present time this "treasure" is in jars of clay (2 Cor. 4:7), and the whole physical creation groans and travails waiting for deliverance (Rom. 8:22). Since believers see what is invisible to others, they are willing to make whatever sacrifices that are necessary to inherit the eternal treasure that God has reserved in heaven for us. By comparison, the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the

glory that will be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18).

This world is not our home. Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). We are only strangers and pilgrims here (2 Pet. 2:11). When we pray, give, or fast, we do not do so for earthly benefit, but for eternal treasure. When we do our deeds of righteousness in secret, we are promised that our Heavenly Father will reward us openly (Matt. 6: 1 - 24). Such optimism is not an option. This is something that we **MUST** believe. Note: **“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Heb 11:6)**

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” (Heb 12:1-3)

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Luke 12:32-34)

REMEMBER! THE IMAGE OF JESUS WITHIN YOU IS YOUR TICKET TO ETERNAL TREASURE!

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