

Jesus' Nature: Image of God

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Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? (John 14:8-9, NKJV)

What does Jesus mean when He answers Philip? How is Jesus the image of His Father?

1. Carefully observe two passages that the apostle John records. What does Jesus emphasize about His representation of His Father?

And **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (John 1:14-18, NKJV)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

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Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? **The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me** does the works. (John 14:6-10, NKJV)

2. The apostle Paul speaks of Jesus as "the image of the invisible God." Can you list what you observe of Paul's statement?

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (Col 1:15-20, NKJV)

The Teacher Note for this lesson is at:

<http://Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/25Curriculum/Class9-12/print/Jesus.Nature.ImageGod.9-12.pdf>

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Ask the student: what is the meaning of "word" highlighted in the two passages? Does "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" make sense?

When encountering difficult passages to understand, remember to let the Bible explain itself, and in most cases, difficulties will be resolved.

By itself, the phrase "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" can be difficult to understand. However, when Jesus explains in John 14:10, "The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me," you learn that Jesus really embodies God's word.

Inform the student that as he learns more about God's word, he will discover that the Old Testament is about Jesus Christ; thus, Jesus isn't just confined to the New Testament – the "Word became flesh" includes the idea that Jesus also embodies the Old Testament as well:

Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (Luke 24:44-45, NKJV)

Ask the student: as you read John 1:14-18, what else do you observe of the apostle John's statement about Jesus and His Father?

Jesus reflected God's glory, grace, and truth. The glory of God is His all encompassing goodness (Ex 33:18-23) from which God's grace and truth (the reality of sin and salvation) emanates.

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Help the student learn how to parse a passage by breaking it into its component phrases and then examining each part. It might look like this:

the firstborn over all creation

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers

All things were created through Him and for Him

He is before all things, and in Him all things consist

He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross

Once the passage is broken into its component concepts, the student will have an easier time to observe each part and understand what God is conveying. Help the student by asking questions that will help him carefully observe the passage.

Jesus is the image of God because:

1. With His Father, Jesus took part in the creation of heaven and earth including the creation of angels. And this kingdom was created for Jesus Christ, who will later return it to His Father (1 Cor 15:24-28).
2. With His Father, Jesus existed before Creation. Jesus is the head of the Church, God’s people and nation of priests. Jesus is preeminent as the first to resurrect from the dead as the way for all of God’s people to escape death.
3. With His Father, Jesus Christ is the agent of God's salvation and mediator of the New Covenant that reconciles human beings and all Creation with God.