

## The Nature of God—Part Two: Created in the Image of the One God

*What does the Bible tell us about the nature of God? Does Scripture present to us a “oneness” about God whose existence is defined in the context of two or three distinct beings who constitute “one” God?*

When the Apostle Paul taught the oneness of God in contrast to the belief in many gods, he made it clear to the developing first century church that there was only one God, the Father, which affirmed the agreement held by the prophets and the apostles regarding the oneness of God.

But some may question God’s “oneness” based on a statement found in the book of Genesis, which at first glance seems to imply there is more than one being who is God: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:26-27).

This is an intriguing statement given that God is said to be the “invisible God,” and his existence and nature—respective to his image—are indiscernible by us except as we may perceive them in the work and purpose of his creation. A point that was made by the Apostle Paul who wrote that: “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20).

And, notably, one of the things that God “made”—leaving scoffers without an excuse—was “man,” that is to say humankind,

beginning with the first man Adam. Which gives us reason to pause and consider how the “invisible things” of God are understood in the image that is God’s physical human creation.

Now the Apostle Paul tells us that we are to come to the: “unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” which implies that even though we are in the image of God like Adam we are not yet complete respective to the measure of Christ (Eph. 4:13). With the understanding that Jesus also was in the image of God like Adam and was himself “made perfect,” that is complete, by his human experience and the indwelling of the *logos* of God and the spirit of God (Jn. 14:6-7; I Jn. 2:5). [Author’s emphasis throughout.]

Revealing to us then—by Jesus’ life—the way to spiritual maturity and eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Which brings us to consider this.

That the physical human creation that was Adam was not a complete representation of God, because he did not have within him the nature of God—and would not—because Adam had rejected the authority and judgment of God. Consequently, the nature and eternal power of God, though understood in the work of God’s creation—which included the first man Adam—was not given to Adam.

Revealing then the certainty of another Adam.

One who would bear in himself the power and nature of God, whose beginning was determined before the first man Adam.

And this “Adam” was Jesus.

For the Apostle Paul tells us that: “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man [Jesus] is the Lord from heaven” (I Cor. 15:45-47). Which is a statement that allows us to say that the “first man” had his origin from the material world, but the “second man (human, ἄνθρωπος, anthrōpos)” —the “man” from heaven—had his origin in a living soul by the power of the eternal spirit of God.

Therefore we could say that by having the knowledge of Jesus’ human beginning, and by witnessing the indwelling of the eternal *logos* and spirit of God in Jesus, the disciples were able to attest that Jesus “came out from” God (Jn. 16:27-28; 17:8). Meaning then that even though Jesus was observed to be in the “likeness” of a man, that is to say like Adam who was in the image of the invisible God, he was also, according to the Apostle Paul, understood to be in the “form of God” (Phil. 2:6).

Which brings us to ask an age-old question.

How could Jesus—being born human—be in the form of God?

Commonly it is thought or assumed that Jesus was fully God in mind, but was also fully man in that he had a human body—making him a supposed “god-man”—with this conclusion being based on an interpretation that the person of the *logos* that is God was Jesus. Or, stated another way, Jesus was assumed to be a God—the *logos*—distinguishable from the Father, who transformed himself into a man and then came among his creation as a human being, while retaining the nature of God.

However, this was not the explanation of the Apostle John or the Apostle Paul.

Because they taught that Jesus was the son of God.

Affirming then the witness and [testimony of John the Baptist](#).

Which testimony became the foundation for what the Apostle Paul said about Jesus being in the form of God, for Paul wrote: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

Conveying to us then that the *logos* of God was observed to be in Jesus, and by the miracles performed through Jesus the disciples became witnesses to the eternal spirit of God that was also in Jesus (Jn. 14:10; I Jn. 1:1; 5:11). Establishing then—from the testimonies of the prophet John and the Apostle John—a context for what the Apostle Paul also wrote concerning Jesus: “for in him [Jesus] dwelleth [tabernacled] all the fulness of the Godhead [nature of God] bodily,” so that by reason of the indwelling of the *logos* and spirit of God, Jesus was not only in the image of the invisible God like Adam, he was also in the form of God (Col. 2:9).

That is Jesus was the representation of God because the *logos* and spirit of God was in Christ.

A conclusion that would not have been beyond the understanding of the prophets—particularly Moses—whose understanding of God was brought forward by the Apostle John who tells us that the utterance (spoken thought) of God was “made flesh,” and the “life” that was the “light of men” was witnessed to “tabernacle” in the human-born son of God, Jesus. And so John was able to say that: “The one whom God sent speaks the words of God, because God does not give the Spirit in limited measure to him” (Jn. 3:34, ISV).

Allowing us to say that the “invisible things” of God were understood in the visible son of God, Jesus, just as they were understood in

the son of God, Adam. But also, according to the Apostles John and Paul, God himself was manifest in Jesus by the indwelling of God's *logos* and by the spirit that "tent" in Jesus, making Jesus to be in the form of God (Jn. 14:10-11; 17:21; Rom. 8:9-11; I Jn. 4:12-13).

Thus Jesus was—in a sense—the tabernacle of God.

Because as Paul testified, "God was in Christ" making Jesus complete and reconciling the world to himself through Jesus (II Cor. 5:19). Noting also that by the indwelling of the *logos* and spirit of God, Jesus became the firstborn from the dead and preeminent in regard to the inheritance of eternal life.

For the Apostle Paul also tells us that Jesus was "the beginning" in regard to being the "first-born out of the dead," and because he was the firstborn, he was "preeminent in all things"; because all the fullness was pleased to dwell [inhabit] in Him" (Col. 1:18-19, LITV). (See also, Jn. 11:25; Rom. 8:29-30; Phil. 2:6-8.)

Implying then that Jesus had his own "human spirit" and identity apart from God because God "was pleased" to dwell in his human-born son, Jesus.

Who—being "preeminent"—was exalted to the right hand of God (Lk. 22:69).

Becoming then "the beginning" because he was the firstborn from the dead.

And so we ask.

The "beginning" of what?

Now the Apostle Paul wrote that: "by him [God] were all things created," that is to say all things were created by the spirit of God respective to God's utterance, and by means of this same utterance and spirit of God being in Jesus he was in the form of the "invisible God," and being made perfect, Jesus

became—according to Paul—"the beginning" and the "first-born of all creation" (Col. 1:15, YLT). (See also, Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:3.)

Which is a statement that gets our attention.

Because Jesus was certainly not the firstborn of the human creation, but he was nonetheless, according to the Apostle Paul, the firstborn and "the beginning" of a creation of God. And this was affirmed to us by the Apostle John who recorded the words of Jesus as they were directed to the churches and the messengers of the churches, wherein Jesus claimed to be "the beginning of the creation of God." And according to John this same Jesus was the "faithful witness" and the "first begotten of the dead," who said that he would make us a "pillar in the temple" of his God, and put the "name of his God" upon us, giving us also citizenship in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 1:5; 3:12-14, ASV).

Leading us to conclude then that Jesus became the "beginning of the creation of God" by reason of him being the first begotten of the Father, and by having the indwelling of the *logos* and spirit of God, and by being the first to be resurrected from the dead, and by being the first to be made a "quickening spirit," and by being the first to receive the promise of eternal life from God the Father.

Implying then that the first man Adam was not the beginning of what God has been creating by and through Jesus, which further implies that the human creation—descended from Adam—came into being for the sake of Jesus. And the sense of this may be seen in the words of the Apostle Paul who wrote that: "there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we by Him" (I Cor. 8:6). (See also, Jn. 17:24; Eph. 4:5-6.)

And so we could say this.

That God had determined from the beginning to have an immortal son who would be conceived in the flesh by the holy spirit, and who would—by reason of being the first begotten of the Father made perfect—become preeminent in regard to the inheritance of eternal life, receiving then a kingdom and authority to rule over all the creation of God (Jn. 17:2).

Thus the way to eternal life in the kingdom of God is by and through Jesus, for the Apostle Paul wrote: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he [God] hath chosen us in him [Jesus] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph. 1:3-5).

Which allows us to summarily say that we may become the adopted children of God by and through the only begotten son of God who is Jesus, making Jesus then the beginning of the immortal family of God.

Bringing us then to [reexamine what God](#) meant when he said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” respective to the “invisible things” of God and the oneness of God.

Now Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, and while they were in the garden they interacted with the spoken thought or *logos* of God as heard from God, because after Adam and Eve had wrongly taken of the fruit, “they heard the voice of the Lord God [YHWH *Elohim*] walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden” (Gen. 3:8).

Simply, then, Adam and Eve heard the “voice” of God walking in the garden because they did not see God.

However, by the “voice” of God, Adam and Eve were able to discern the presence of God, and by his words they knew it was God. That is to say that Adam and Eve were aware of the presence of God, and the voice of God, and the words of God, all of which collectively expressed the existence of the one being and mind who is God (YHWH *Elohim*). And so we could say that by the way God revealed himself to Adam and Eve we are able to discern a multiplicity expressed about God as thinker, thought (*logos*), and mover, which attributes may be observed in the image that is his human creation, that is in the “spirit of man”—the human mind—and in the limited physical human capacity. (This was not Augustine’s conclusion in that he applied similar concepts to the Father, the son, and the spirit, accepting the interpretive paradigm that is the doctrine of the Trinity.)

Thus the human mind and the limited human capacity are a testimony to the existence of God—leaving scoffers without an excuse—as the multiplicity of God’s attributes are in measure able to be observed in what is the created image of the invisible God—that is humankind.

Which attributes are also a testimony to the oneness of God.

As understood by Moses.

Because Moses said to the people of ancient Israel that: “Out of heaven he [God] made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou hearest his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give

thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day” (Deut. 4:36-38). (See also, Deut. 4:12.)

Understandably then we can say that the people of ancient Israel never saw God, but they did hear the voice of God, and they were witnesses to the power and words of God, which expressed to them a multiplicity about God. Making it evident that the people of Israel knew of God by the “voice of the words,” and for the people of ancient Israel the words of God and the voice of the words of God was God. That is to say that the utterance was the invisible God, who was the one God of Moses and the one God of the people of ancient Israel.

Meaning then that by the way God revealed himself to the patriarchs, and to Moses, and to the people of ancient Israel, they knew of the presence of God by hearing the voice of God, and by the words of God they knew of the oneness of God. For God himself said regarding his existence that he was “I am” (I will be who/what I will be), which expressed his existence and “oneness” that became the foundation for what Moses wrote about the one God who was identified as the *Elohim* who created Adam and Eve (Ex. 3:13-14).

The confirmation of which is found in the book of Genesis, which states: “And God [*Elohim*] said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” which is a statement that is to be understood in the context of Moses’ understanding of the oneness of God.

For Moses told the people of ancient Israel: “Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord [YHWH] he is God [he is *Elohim*]; there is none else beside him” (Deut. 4:35). Which is a definitive monotheistic statement by Moses that affirmed the “oneness” and singular individuality of God—as *Elohim*—which, as a prelude to what is called the Shema, also affirmed the agreement that was held between the scribe and Jesus regarding the oneness of God (Mk. 12:32).

Which “oneness” was also understood by the prophets of God.

For the God of the patriarchs, and the God of Moses, said, as recorded by Isaiah the prophet: “To whom will you compare and make Me equal; yea, compare Me, that we may be alike?... Remember former things from forever, for I am God [*E*], and no one else is God [*Elohim*], even none like Me” (Isa. 46:5, 9, LITV).

Adding also: “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord [YHWH], and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God [*E*] formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God” (Isa. 43:10-12).

Which brings us to a summary.

That there is no other god equal to the creator God, and there is in actuality no other true God except the one who calls himself Yahweh, assuring for us that there will be no other God but YHWH, and also assuring for us that no human will ever be God (YHWH).

Therefore, in knowing that God had said there was no other God (*Elohim*)—imagined or regarded as such—like the creator God, and in knowing that there was no other god in his presence when he spoke to the prophets, we should thoughtfully consider what was stated by the Apostle Peter.

For on the day of Pentecost the Apostle Peter said that Jesus was in the presence of God, and that Jesus was then: “by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost [spirit], he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until

I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:33-36). (What Peter stated to the “house of Israel,” that is to the descendants of the twelve tribes of the commonwealth, was that Jesus was made the Lord of David, just as David had foretold, which implies that David will be resurrected from the dead.)

Observing closely then that David understood that his descendant—the future heir to his throne—would be “made” both “Lord and Christ” when he would be exalted to receive the promise of the holy spirit, which promise is foundational to the coming new covenant, and which promise is now being fulfilled in the “first fruits” of God. And as Jesus was appointed to be Lord and Christ he now sits at the right hand of God, and “for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament [covenant], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament [covenant], they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15). (See also, 1 Tim. 2:5.)

Allowing us to conclude further that Jesus has been exalted to be in the presence of God, being ordained Lord and Christ, which confirms for us that Jesus is the resurrected firstborn “son of God,” and not “God the son,” because it was recorded by the prophets that there was no other god equal to or present with God when God made the promises to Abraham regarding the posterity of David, who was Jesus (Gal. 3:16-17; Phil. 2:9-11).

Something that was also confirmed by the apostles.

And recorded in the book of Hebrews.

Where we read about the covenant made with Abraham.

Now we see that: “when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no

greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 6:13-20).

So what then were the “two immutable things” that gave assurance to the promise made to Abraham, and to the “heirs of promise,” which included the “forerunner” and posterity of David, who was Jesus?

In knowing that Jesus was made a high priest by God, who was the first to receive the promise of eternal life, and in knowing that God cannot lie, we see that: 1) God made a covenant by promise and confirmed it “by an oath,” and 2) because there was no one greater than God or equal to God, he “swore by himself” respective to the promise given to Abraham.

Therefore by reason of these unchangeable things we see that there was no other God (*Elohim*) but Yahweh when he made a covenant by promise to Abraham.

Confirming then the oneness of God, who was the *Elohim* of the patriarchs, and Moses, and the people of ancient Israel, and the one who said “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” which—given the context of Scripture—would mean that God was not speaking to others or directly to himself, but rather God was speaking of himself and the “invisible things” of God that would be

reflected in the image that is his human creation beginning with Adam. **(Continued in part three of this series.)**  [andrewburdettewrites.com](http://andrewburdettewrites.com)