

Image and Likeness of God (Part 2)

Physical Creation

John W. Ritenbaugh

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I've been thinking about what, in my opinion, is the most significant and serious, in terms of its consequences, doctrinal change that the Worldwide Church of God has made and I believe it is the one in which they stated that the goal of Christianity is no longer to be God.

When a goal is changed almost everything else of consequence also has to adjust or be adjusted in order to conform to that changed goal. I think a simple illustration would be in terms of traveling. If you began with New York City in mind as your destination and then somewhere along the way you decided that you weren't going to go to New York City, you were going to go to Minneapolis, adjustments would have to be made for you to arrive somewhere else.

The same principle might be thought of in regard to if you set out to bake a cake, then partly along the way you decide, I'm not going to bake a cake. I'm going to bake bread. Though the ingredients in both bear a relationship to each other, the end product is not the same.

The same principle holds true in regard to Christianity. We see over the course of the last five or six years that one adjustment after another has had to be made because former doctrines no longer fit the new teaching. And now it is plain to see that according to the new teaching, we no longer potentially fit into the Godhead because the Godhead is nothing more than a mysterious unexplainable essence and the Godhead is closed. There is no room for extension. God is not a family in spite of the fact that Jesus clearly showed a Father and son relationship with those who have God's Spirit. We are called sons. We are called daughters. We are called children.

It's very interesting in II Peter 3: 4 that Peter said if we have the Spirit of God we are partakers of the divine nature. Since Jesus revealed God as the Father, and that He is the Son, He is our Elder Brother. I want you to think of the ramifications of this in regard to reproduction. Bears beget bears in their own image, and they look just like the parents.

The same thing is true of bees. The same thing is true of birds, the same thing is true with dogs, with cats, or lions, or tigers, or anything. But somehow or another we are asked to believe that even though God has declared that we are His children, He is our Father, He has given us His Spirit, that somehow or another when He becomes a full-fledged Father, we are not going to be in His image. We are not going to be God as He is God. I think that logic is illogic. It does not make a bit of logical sense, because there are patterns that are established in creation by which we may understand things that would otherwise be hidden from us.

I was concerned about this because I hoped that you will not dismiss this series as too basic and elementary because it is germane to this very issue and it is very important in regard to our potential and the major issue at the beginning of this series is whether we can believe the simple statements given in the Bible about what God looks like.

In the past year or so, God has been explained away as being incomprehensible, vague, and

beyond the reach of normal people. What God says about what He looks like has been spiritualized away to such an extent as to nullify the true meaning of what the Bible says. But I ask you, why not believe what God says about His form and shape with the same alacrity and acceptance as we do regarding what He says about other things?

This spiritualizing away has been done in order to support the false trinity doctrine that requires that somehow, in some mysterious way, three are one. Or is it, one are three? Which is it? Efforts to explain this or how this can be are unsuccessful regardless of who is attempting to do it. Usually what happens when someone tries to write on it, they eventually come around somewhere in the article to say that it's a mystery. It's just something that we have to accept on faith.

A question of a similar nature erupted in the first century and Paul made a very inspiring remark about it in answering the question.

I Corinthians 15:35 But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"

I want you to catch this because there is no question that even these people who are questioning the resurrection in the first chapter still accepted the fact that if there is a resurrection, a body is going to be part and parcel of the resurrection. Paul said that these people were foolish.

I Corinthians 15:36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

That's the beginning of an explanation that shows that, yes, there is going to be a change from what was put in the grave to what comes out of the grave. But what went into the grave as a body is still going to come out of the grave as a body.

I Corinthians 15:44 It is sown [put into the grave] a natural body [physical], it is raised a spiritual body.

How much plainer can we get? How much plainer can God say it? There is a body in the resurrection.

Philippians 3:20-21 For our citizenship [the *our* refers to Christians] is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body...

How much plainer can we get? When Jesus was resurrected, He took pains to make it clear to His disciples that He was not a ghost. He was not an essence. He had flesh and bone. He was very plainly saying that there is substance to what He is, was, what He was then, and what He

is today.

Let's make this very blunt. He was saying that He was corporeal. Do you know what the definition of *corporeal* is? From Webster's, "Having tangible qualities of a body such as shape, size and resistance to force." Did you get that? If you lean against the wall with your hand, it resists you. Why? Because it's solid. It's tangible. If Jesus was not solid whenever they stretched their hands out or maybe ran their fingers against the palm of His hand where the marks were, they would have felt nothing. There was substance there.

I Corinthians 15:49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust [Because we are all from Adam, we share the qualities of physicalness of Adam.], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

That heavenly Man is Jesus Christ. We are going to be transformed to be like His glorious body. If we are to have a body and it is like His, then so must He have a body. He has this body now. When God restored Him to His former glory (remember the prayer in John 17: 3, 4, and 5, He said restore to Me the glory that I had with you before the world was), He then returned to the kind of body He had before when He was the model for Adam.

Do you understand what I said? When He was resurrected He was restored to what He was before when He was the model. When He was the model for Adam, He was like He was when He was resurrected. He was God. He was solid. The composition was spirit, not flesh. But the body, the shape was there.

Related to this was a statement that usually appears near the beginning of any paper on this subject and that is that since God created all things including time and space, and since these things did not exist prior to creation, He therefore does not occupy space and time and therefore God is not a spatial creature. My response to that is: how do they know that? Were they there? What is their revelation?

Since it is obvious they were not there, who told them? Were they there? Does God say something about this in His word because we have to turn there because this was inspired to be written by God, and if there's going to be any revelation about this He would have to be the one to tell us because He was there.

Is there any revelation about this in His word? This conclusion that they reach is based primarily upon our usage and understanding of the word *spirit*. It is almost invariably thought of as being the antonym, which is the opposite, of the word *incorporeal* meaning *without body or shape*. But what is important in relation to this subject is not what our understanding and usage of the word *spirit* but what does God reveal about Himself.

God's every revelation of Himself in His word reveals Him, shows Him, with form and shape like a man. What God has done in His word is reveal to us what He wants us to think about Him and His way of living.

Holy Spirit undoubtedly has characteristics of far greater capacity, versatility and power than our minds are capable of containing at this time. But what He has given us is enough and He

reveals Himself to have form and shape and so let's not be guilty of adding to His revelation something not given.

Hebrews 8:4-5 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest [speaking of Jesus], since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

God establishes patterns in His word and we can never go wrong if we follow those patterns. They are models for us to follow so that we can conform our life to His way, so that we can think about Him within the correct parameters, so that we can understand the goal that lies before us, so that we can grab hold of it and give our time and energy and all of our enthusiasm and diligence over to it. You cannot strive for a goal or grasp some great objective when it is so vague it's beyond our comprehension and it is something that is unexplainable. God has made it clear what He is and what He looks like and He has revealed it in very simple terminology and what we have to do is simply believe what He says and apply it to our life.

Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Now what does that tell you? We are going to be like Jesus Christ. We are going to be conformed to His image. If our older brother looks and is composed of shall I call it certain materials with a form and shape that was clearly recognizable and we're going to be conformed to what He looks like and what He is, isn't that simple and plain? This word *image* here is the Greek word *icon*.

II Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory [from glory of man to glory of God], just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

II Corinthians 4:4 Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

In these three places, Romans 8:29, II Corinthians 3:18 and 4:4, we are moving into an area of likeness that indicates more than simple form. It indicates personality. It indicates character image as well. We're looking then at something that indicates other aspects of personality in which image is expanded to include the entire person.

But this is not shown in the Old Testament. It is in the Old Testament that God first makes the

statement that we are in His image and likeness. This does not tend to be shown in the Old Testament. I think though that it is implied there in the Old Testament and I don't think anybody has an argument with that.

But when men say that shape and form are not included in Genesis 1 that is an outright corruption of the usages of *tselem* meaning image, *demooth* meaning likeness, and *icon*, in the New Testament, meaning image. There is absolutely no question about man being made in the intellectual, moral and spiritual likeness of God, but the overwhelming numbers of usages in their context have to do with form and shape.

If man, then, is made in the image and likeness of God bodily, then God must have a body. That is He must have an outward form and shape. Now consider this: One might as well argue that *tselem*, *demooth*, and *icon* when they are used of idols (and they are) means moral and spiritual image and likeness and not outward bodily shape. If you are going to use that argument one way in reference to God, you also have to use it the other way in reference to God. You also have to use it the other way in reference to idols, because the same words are used for both God and idols. *Tselem*, *demooth*, and *icon* all refer to what can be observed by man's natural senses.

We're going to look at what the Bible writers state concerning what they and others saw of God with their natural eyes. We're going to begin back in the book of Genesis; right where it seems everything begins.

Genesis 18:1-2 Then the Lord appeared to him [the him being Abraham] by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,

Genesis 18:4-5 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."

Genesis 18:8-9 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate. Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent."

Let's just review those verses and look at what it says. First of all the Lord appeared and Abraham saw Him with his eyes and what did He look like? He looked like a man. But it was the Lord because Abraham bowed down and worshipped Him and He didn't reject the worship.

In verse 4 Abraham said, "Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet." God has feet. "And I will bring a morsel of bread." We find that God took the bread and the meat and the three of them ate. He spoke, so He had a voice and He conversed with them. That's pretty clear.

There are other qualities here that I think are very interesting as well that God showed. It's something that maybe one would have to think about, but I think it is so interesting that I think that I will mention it to you. How long do you think that it took Abraham to do all of that? How long did it take him to run, order a calf killed, have someone slaughter the calf, bleed the calf, skin the calf, butcher the calf, roast the meat, and then serve it to Him.

Here's God and He's running the whole universe. Do you ever feel rushed at times because you have too many things to do? I mean here is the busiest Being in all of creation and He had enough time to sit down, wash His feet, wait patiently while they made Him a meal, and He must have been handling all of the other things that go on in the universe from that chair there that He was sitting on. Do you ever get impatient? I'll tell you there is patience exemplified. It seems to me that to do all of these things must have taken several hours least.

So God exhibited qualities other than form and shape even though they may not be mentioned directly.

Genesis 32:22 And he arose that night and took his two wives [the "he" being Jacob], his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok.

Genesis 32:24 Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.

In my Bible *Man* is capitalized. The translators understood that it was in reality God, but He looked like a man, and He was solid. There was substance there like a man.

Genesis 32:28 And He said [so God spoke], "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Genesis 32:30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Isn't that plain and clear? God looked like a man. It was God. There was just absolutely no doubt about it.

Exodus 33:9-11 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshipped, each man in his tent door. So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

So He talked face to face.

Exodus 33:18 And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

Exodus 33:22-23 "So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

Are we going to call God a liar? Moses asked to see Him in His glory and in His glory God still had shape. God still had form. God still was solid. He held His hand over Moses eyes and Moses couldn't see through them and he must have felt the pressure of the hand that was on him. If He had a back, he must have also have had a front. That's pretty logical, isn't it? I think it is.

Exodus 24:9-11 Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet [another mention of feet] as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. [Does that give an indication that there was some glory being showed?] So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

So the seventy elders in addition to Moses saw and ate with Him. That's a pretty good witness. You've got seventy-some people involved with this. Were they all liars? In the book of Joshua there must be scores of scriptures in which God reveals Himself and He is consistent in His revelation.

Joshua 5:13-15 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. [Again a mention he looked like a man and he had a hand.] When Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

That's very plain that he was in the presence of God. There is a very long experience that Gideon had with God. I mean long in terms of the number of verses. They talk back and forth for quite while and Gideon made requests of Him to prove that He was God. How did Gideon describe Him? As a man. This is in Judges 6: 11-23.

And in Judges 13: 3-23 there is the experience of Samson's father and mother, Manoah and his wife. Again they were skeptical of whom it was they were in the presence of. Well, when it was over they were very sure of whom they were in the presence of. They thought they were going to die once they found out. But He revealed Himself to them as a man.

In Job 42, this may not be exactly an eye-to-eye contact, but Job did say "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You." Job saw Him. Isaiah saw Him (Isaiah 6: 1-13). Amos saw Him (Amos 9: 1). Every one of them described Him in exactly the same way. They are totally consistent. There is not one deviation. I mean who are we going to believe?

Ezekiel 1:26-28 And above the firmament [or the expanse] over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Also from the appearance of His waist [this man has a waist] and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

What did He look like? The appearance of a man. God is shown that He has a waist. We would find in chapter 10 that He rides around in a very unusual vehicle escorted just like any other commander would be by His retinue of, in this case, angelic beings of awesome power and glory. But those are things that kings do. They generally do not travel alone.

You're going to see as we develop this subject that so many of the things that we do on earth that kings do, that priests do, that ministers do, that servants do, have their pattern in what God is and what God does. Our likeness, our image of Him extends into so many areas it's almost beyond comprehension.

Daniel 7: 9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment [Notice this description. He wears clothing.] was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire [That's interesting—a throne with wheels]; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Daniel 7:13-14 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations,

and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

We see the Ancient of Days, the One who became the Father, seated on a throne. He wore clothing. He has iridescent white hair. Then we see two God beings at the same place at the same time, and it is designated that the second one is the One who is going to bear rule in the kingdoms of men.

We don't have to think very deeply to figure out who that second one was.

Matthew 17:1-2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

II Peter 1:16-17 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

When Peter recollected in II Peter 1:16, he was recalling this event in Matthew 17. When Jesus was transfigured, when He was glorified before them, He did not take on a different shape and form than He had before. He still had a face. He still had clothing on, but everything became iridescent and bright. That was done undoubtedly to impress on the minds of these three men with whom they were dealing that this was God in the flesh.

In the book of Acts the connection I want you to make is when He was transfigured He was glorified but the shape and form didn't change. He didn't turn into a ghost. He didn't turn into a vapor, an essence.

Acts 7:56 " . . . Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Is it possible Stephen saw Jesus in Judea as a man? I think there is certainly a very strong possibility of that. Did he recognize who it was? Yes he did. He knew who it was. Immediately he recognized His form, His shape. He recognized His face and that He was standing beside another God being.

We know what happened. Stephen addressed them.

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Revelation 4:2-5 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 5:1, 5-7 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Here again we have an apostle who sees the two God beings together at the same place, at the same time. The One is symbolized, at least for a period, as a lamb. John makes a very easy identification because we see Christ symbolized, and then advancing to the throne and taking the scroll with His hand. Again, God as God has a hand.

Let's look at this from a little bit different angle.

Revelation 7:9-12 Now after these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

I read this because the Bible tells us that all the redeemed will see God's face. Here is a picture of the redeemed. It is projected forward to the time that they are in the kingdom of God and they are at the throne of God. What are they looking at? The Bible says they're going to see His

face as God. He has a face.

This word is *prosopon* transliterated. The word literally means *toward*. It also *means the eye or the face*. Please follow the reasoning here. When it is used in reference to a person, it means *the part toward* or it means *the part at or around the eye or the face or the countenance*.

Why would that word be used? Well, when you are talking with somebody, they are looking at you who are beholding what is toward you and the focus of your attention is on the face, that is, the eyes and that which is around it. Hence the word then in the New Testament is almost variably translated *face*, *countenance*, *presence*, or *person* depending on how expansive the context is.

Revelation 22:3-4 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

God as God in the kingdom of God where He doesn't have to have any "put on." One of the arguments is that God just does that so we have something to relate to. It's just a figure of speech. He doesn't have to use a figure of speech. Everybody is in the kingdom of God. The issue has been decided by this time. He has a face. He still looks like a man. No figure of speech is needed.

Matthew 6:17 "But you, when you fast, anoint your head [Does anybody have any doubt at all what a head is?] and wash your [prosopon] face . . ."

If man has a face, and God says He has a face in the kingdom of God, who are you going to believe? God has a face.

Matthew 18:10a "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven...

Let's get the picture here. God doesn't have to do any put-on. He doesn't have to pretend. He doesn't have to disguise Himself. He doesn't have to use any figures of speech. He doesn't have to rely on any metaphors or similes.

Matthew 18:10b ...their angels [Now surely the angels know what God looks like.] always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 26:39 He went a little farther and fell on His face.

No doubt about what it means there.

Matthew 26:67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands.

Is it becoming clear?

Acts 6:15 And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

In I Corinthians 13 Paul said that there's going to come a time when he said now things are like looking through a mirror darkly, but then face to face.

Revelation 6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

In addition to this there are a number of scriptures showing the redeemed around the throne of God, and are we to assume then that God is invisible or are they seeing the countenance of God? The same word is used for God and man and it is very obvious that man has a face. Are we then going to say that God is telling us a lie when He testifies of Himself having a face?

Who are we going to believe? It is that simple. Are we going to call all of these witnesses that are in the Bible false just so that we can be in harmony with moderns who have never seen God? Doesn't it seem safer to you to believe the testimony of the many witnesses who literally saw what they reported rather than the testimony of men who say that God cannot be comprehended?

Brethren, the trinity is incomprehensible because it was not the revelation of God to His people. A revelation is an opening up. It is an uncovering. How can the trinity be a revelation when the most learned of biblical scholars write that it is incomprehensible and unexplainable? That is double-talk and it directly conflicts with the Bible's testimony.

God by His Spirit has revealed in general terms to His people what He looks like and it is that simple. Nowhere does the Bible say that God's bodily form or bodily parts are figures of speech. I am not saying that there are no figures of speech in the Bible. There are many figures of speech and Bollinger in his *Companion Bible* says, "They are never used but for the sake of emphasis." And for a figure of speech to be true, the concept, or the idea they convey, must be true and God keeps saying over and over that He is real, that He has bodily parts.

We do not have God's authority expressed anywhere in His word that He is a spiritual nothing whether walking the earth, participating in the events, or seen in heaven. He consistently shows Himself with form. Why is that so difficult for some to accept? Why can't His word be taken from what it literally says in the same way that it is accepted and understood literally in other places?

When a person says that God does not have form, that teaching is not consistent with what the Bible plainly shows. I'm going to give you a verse that is, to me, eye opening because it reveals how plain it is..

Romans 1:18-19a For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress [they hold down, hold back] the truth in unrighteousness, because [notice this] what may be known of God is manifest [evident, clear]

To whom? To the church? Paul is talking about unconverted gentiles. Now let's see what he's talking about that is clear.

Romans 1:19-20 Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation [or by the creation, or by means of the creation] of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Paul is making it clear that God can be understood. God has made it so clear that even the unconverted can comprehend some things about Him. Paul is saying that there is a clear testimony. It is a constant and natural revelation of God's power and nature and that revelation is sufficient for God to hold these people responsible for their conduct. Let that sink in.

It (I mean this revelation, this natural revelation) is not sufficient for salvation. It is sufficient for God to hold people responsible to understand things about God, but it is not sufficient for salvation because God shows in other places that that requires a specific and personal revelation of His word. "No man," He said, "can come to me except the Spirit draw him and I will raise him up at the last day."

But that revelation through the things that God has created is clear enough for God to hold people responsible for their conduct. So if the invisible things and the eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen by the visible things that God has made in this world, then all we need to do is use a little common sense in connection with plain statements from scriptures to find out what God really looks like and I have to say that this scripture does not harmonize with the opinions of men who say God is incomprehensible. If God Himself says that He can be clearly seen by the unconverted, and if He is clearly seen by something visible in this world, what visible things on earth give us a picture of the invisible God? The very thing that God Himself said in Genesis 1. We look like Him.

Is that so difficult? Just understanding this principle it is no wonder that the Greek gods of mythology reflected mankind in all of our foibles, weaknesses and passions. Do you know what the Greeks did? They simply turned the principle around. They turned the image around and they reflected in their gods the things of man.

We can know from other portions of scripture because this is something maybe that you need, this special personal revelation of God that He talks about there in John 6:44 and I Corinthians 2, that we might know the things of God. But we can know from other portions of scripture that this image, I mean the created human being, is but a pale reflection of the reality and that

God's creative power is still at work reproducing the image. That is, we are a work in progress and, as yet, unfinished. But that's another part of the picture.

In the next part of this series we'll start out with what God has to say about angels in regard to this same general subject, form and shape, as well as composition.