



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 43, No. 31, August 9 , 2016 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

WORSHIP! But HOW Shall We Worship? (Revised from Volume 37, No. 39, July 19, 2011)

“There is a way that SEEMS RIGHT to a man, BUT ITS END is the way of death!” (Proverbs 14:12) **It seemed right** to Adam and Eve to eat forbidden fruit— rather than to simply obey God! **It seemed right** to Cain to worship God with offerings of fruits and veggies, rather than with a blood sacrifice. **NO DOUBT it seemed right** to ignore God, to reject righteousness, and thus to reject the preaching of Noah. Proverbs 21:2, SAYS: “Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.” AGAIN and AGAIN humans follow this ancient path: “... EVERY MAN DID THAT WHICH WAS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES!” (Judges 21:25) This is especially true when the subject is WORSHIP! Therefore, we need, **BIBLICAL Guidance for Biblical Worship!**

JESUS Unfolds the Nature of New Covenant Worship: John 4:19-21 — **True Christian Worship** is not a matter of a sacred, physical place. Rather, it is Spiritual Reality that is of supreme importance. **True Christian Worship** does not focus on man or what pleases man, but on God, His glory, and God's worthiness of worship and praise.

True Christian Worship Must be in Spirit: It is not outward ceremony. It is not pumped up emotions from special lights, high energy music, physical gyrations, nor from VISUAL helps. Rather, **worship in spirit relates to being in accord with the Holy Spirit**, aided by the Holy Spirit, and is a manifestation of sincerity in hearts which are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Moreover the Holy Spirit is the **HOLY** Spirit! He is the Spirit of **TRUTH!** His master passion is to **Exalt Jesus!** (Matt. 15:18; John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13) **THUS, Worship that is "In the Spirit" will promote Holiness, be loyal to Truth, and will exalt Jesus!** Exuberance, various physical expressions, **may or may not be** the expressions of being "in the Spirit"— they may only be a man-manufactured display of religious flesh that makes God sick, (as in Isaiah 1:2-15); or that brings God's holy wrath as in Exodus 32.

True Christian Worship Must be in Truth: That is, worship in truth is worship which is in accord with God's Word, which is truth. (John 17:17) It is worship which has God and God alone as the object of worship. (Ex. 20:3) **THUS:** The question is never about *"I like... or I don't like... or I don't agree."* **It is ONLY ABOUT— IS THIS CLEARLY ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD?!**

II. OK... so what about VISUAL representations or IMAGES of JESUS via artistic paintings, etc?

PASTOR JOHN PIPER: A few years back in a post at the DesiringGod blog, John Piper responded to a question about **portraits or pictures of Jesus**. Here is a part of what Piper said: "I'm a little hesitant about portraits of Jesus at all. There's that argument about whether that's breaking the second Commandment — don't make any graven images; don't have pictures of Jesus in your house. The reason **I'm not a stickler on that** is because Jesus became incarnate, therefore we know he had a face. God the Father didn't have a face, except insofar as He and the Son are one."

PIPER: "Jesus had a face and even though we don't know what it looked like **I THINK renderings of it** to show various things **are okay**. And if we're going to do that, they should be real diverse. **I THINK** they should be real diverse because [IF] you lock in on that famous one- I don't know



what it's called, the one with the long hair, kind of the idyllic face and the blue eyes — that's absolutely absurd."

PIPER: "But **I THINK** there should probably be black portrayals of Jesus, and white portrayals of Jesus, and Chinese portrayals of Jesus. **And everybody knows that they're not accurate. There isn't one that's accurate.** That's why it's legitimate to do lots of inaccurate works. Because you just say we all know that we don't know what he looked like **so what** we want to say with our inaccurate Jesus **is something true** about Jesus. Namely, he's there for everybody."

RESPONSE:

Over the years, John Piper has preached and written a lot of true to the Bible, God-honoring things. However, in his response about 'pictures' of Jesus Christ— **that grand old idol of the masses, the god of 'I THINK!' is enthroned.** It is easier and more common than we would like to admit to bow to this idol or to bow to the god cousin of 'I THINK' ... NAMELY— **'But I don't see anything wrong with what we are doing!'** Thus, consider the following response to Piper, edited from a blog by Paul Edwards:

On what basis should there be "black portrayals of Jesus," and "white portrayals of Jesus," and "Chinese portrayals of Jesus"? Piper bases his reasoning on the fact that any portrayal of Jesus is inaccurate, so why not say something that is true about Jesus in the midst of the inaccuracy: "Namely, he's there for everybody."

But do racially diverse images of Jesus really convey the message that Jesus is "there for everybody"? Does the fact that Jesus indeed was God incarnate in the flesh of a Jewish male, and not in the flesh of an African male, or a European male, or a Chinese male... make it any less true that "he's there for everybody"? The image is the shadow, the type. **The incarnation is the real thing.**

Is the real incarnation of Jesus in a non-diverse image therefore not effective in conveying the truth that Jesus is "there for everybody"? *I hope*

Dr. Piper does not believe that! However, that is what his words suggest. He is dead wrong.

Jesus was not incarnated *in reality* in the form of every race. He ***“took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.”*** He was found ***“in fashion as a man”*** (Philippians 2:7, 8). Biblically speaking, Jesus shows that He is indeed there for all of humanity in the incarnation: ***“Forasmuch then as children are partakers of flesh and blood, He himself likewise took part of the same”*** (Hebrews 2:14)

It is Jesus' HUMANITY — not his race — that demonstrates He is “there for us.” **And in his humanity as a Jewish male** “He redeemed us to God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” making us a new nation — a kingdom of priests — a people for his own possession without regard to race (1 Peter 2:9).

To suggest that we need racially diverse images/pictures of Jesus is 100% contrary to the clear Word of God and denies the reality of how Jesus accomplished incarnation and redemption. The reality is that Jesus, through his humanity and as God in human flesh — even though in His flesh, He was a Jew — **died to banish racial, social and class distinctive.**

In Christ we “...have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge *after the image of him that created him*: here there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but **Christ is all, and in all**” (Colossians 3:10, 11). All the nations of men are made “of one blood” (Acts 17:26) and are redeemed by “his own blood” (Hebrews 9:11-15).

We don't need white images of Jesus, black images of Jesus, Chinese images of Jesus, or even Jewish images of Jesus. We just need the real Jesus! *“That I may know HIM, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”* (Philippians 3:10). **All images of Jesus are a clear violation of the commandment of God; and all images are distractions from the reality of the true person of Jesus Christ.**

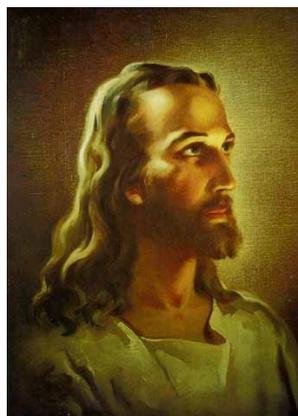
(With additions added, the above portion is drawn from a blog by Paul Edwards: <http://www.godandculture.com/blog/why-john-piper-is-wrong-about-racially-diverse-images-of-jesus>)

REALITY: ONE OF THE GENUINE HINDERANCES of various ethnic groups in coming to faith in JESUS is that when they think of Jesus, they think of the WHITE JESUS that has been portrayed to them.

III. What Did the Man, Christ JESUS Look Like?

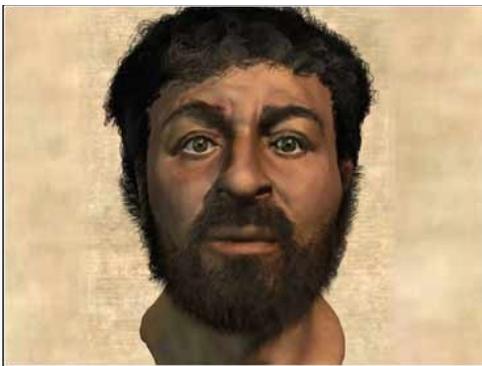
Edited from a College Campus Minister, Brandon Smith: We each have a **“Frame of Reference”** when it comes to Jesus. For most of us, our Frame of Reference has developed over years. What we learned in Sunday School as a child has affected our Frame of Reference. What we hear in sermons affects our Frame of Reference. What we see of Jesus in movies and art and in books we read affect our Frame of Reference. **Our Frame of Reference GREATLY IMPACTS what JESUS is supposed to be like, act like, and look like— all based on what we have been taught.** And if anyone comes along and challenges our Frame of Reference, we bristle and feel violated and challenged.

For example, many people picture what Jesus may have looked like in a specific way. The children’s Bible you had as a young person might affect your Frame of Reference. Or, the pictures in literature or on walls in Sunday school classes might be what you think Jesus looks like. If you are like me, and became a Christian later in life, your Frame of Reference on Jesus’ physical appearance might be affected by movies or art. **You might think Jesus looked like this:**



For many, this is what Jesus looks like. This famous painting has affected our Frame of Reference of who Jesus really may be. Show this painting and ask the question, “Who is this?”... and the masses around the world will say, “Jesus!” Go ‘online’ and ‘Google’ and you will find a multitude of supposed images of Jesus. **Many of the FAVORITE pictures of Jesus are attractive...** and yet, Isaiah says he had [“no beauty...to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”](#)

The following is a computer generated graphic that was created by scientists. They took a 1st century skull of a Jewish male and added, via computer enhancement, muscle tone, and a layer of fat cells, and skin, and hair and eyes, all indicative of the culture. Who knows, this might be the most accurate picture we have of Jesus!



This image of Jesus challenges most of our Frames of Reference! In fact, you might be repulsed or offended or even angered by this image of Jesus! He looks too much like Saddam Hussein! It makes us uncomfortable and bristle when it is suggested that this may have been what Jesus looked like!

But in reality, there is just as much validity in suggesting he looked this way as there is for suggesting he looked some other way! In either or any case— the Biblical validity is zero!

Added NOTE: The written Word of God, given by the Holy Spirit, exclusively reveals JESUS! However, in all the wonderful revelation in the Word of God of JESUS CHRIST— beyond Isaiah 53:1-3, there is NOT EVEN A HINT of His physical appearance. Moreover, the Word of God forbids all efforts to portray the physical image of Jesus! ***“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of anything that is in***

heaven above or on earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God... (Exodus 20:4) **No Likeness of ANYTHING!**

Charles Hodge states, **“Idolatry consists not only in the worship of false gods, but also in the worship of the true God by images.”** The command deals not only with the object of our worship, but also with the manner of it. **Why, (you might ask), would it be wrong to use pictures of Jesus since He was (And is) actually a man?**

J. I Packer wrote, “Any use of pictures to represent any person of the Trinity is going to be **limited and therefore conceal most**, if not all, of the truth about the nature and character of the divine being whom they represent.” **What follows are a few quotes—** if space had allowed, many more could have been added— **which reveal** that in earlier years, Bible believing Christians were quite clear on this subject.

***** 1561) The Second Helvetic Confession - Chapter IV (Of Idols or Images of God, Christ and The Saints) —**

Images of God. Since God as Spirit is in essence invisible and immense, He cannot really be expressed by any art or image. **For this reason we have no fear pronouncing with Scripture that images of God are mere lies.** Therefore we reject not only the idols of the Gentiles, but also the images of Christians. Although Christ assumed human nature, yet He did not on that account assume it in order to provide a model for carvers and painters. He denied that He had come to abolish the law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17).

But images are forbidden by the law and the prophets (Deut. 4:15; Isa. 44:9). He denied that his bodily presence would be profitable for the Church, and promised that He would be near us by his Spirit forever (John 16:7). Who, therefore, would believe that a shadow or likeness of his body would contribute any benefit to the pious? (II Cor. 5:5). Since He abides in us by his Spirit, we are therefore the temple of God (II Cor. 3:16). But what agreement has the temple of God with idols? (II Cor. 6:16).

***** (1674) Thomas Vincent, A Family Instructional Guide—**

"QUESTION 5: Is it not lawful to have images or pictures of God by us, so long as we do not worship them, nor God by them? **ANSWER:** The images or pictures of God are an abomination, and utterly unlawful, because they debase God, and may be a cause of idolatrous worship. **QUESTION 6:** Is it not lawful to have pictures of Jesus Christ, He being a man as well as God? **ANSWER:** It is not lawful to have pictures of Jesus Christ, because his divine nature cannot be pictured at all; and because his body, as it is now glorified, cannot be pictured as it is; and because, **if it do not stir up** devotion, it is in vain; **if it stir up** devotion, it is a worshipping by an image or picture, and so a palpable breach of the second commandment."

***** (1692) Thomas Watson, The Ten Commandments—**

If it is not lawful to make the image of God the Father, yet may we not make an image of Christ, who took upon him the nature of man? No! ... It is Christ's Godhead, united to his manhood that makes him to be Christ; **therefore to picture his manhood, when we cannot picture his Godhead, is a sin, because we make him to be but half Christ - we separate what God has joined,** we leave out that which is the chief thing which makes him to be Christ.

***** (1700) Wilhelmus A'Brakel, The Christian's Reasonable Service**

Question: Are men permitted to make images of God — that is, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit — and of deceased saints, in order to worship and honor them, or to serve God and the saints by them?

In the first place, one may make no images of God whatsoever; that is, of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Firstly, this is absolutely forbidden in this commandment and in many other passages.

Consider only the following passage: *"Ye heard the voice of the words, **but saw no similitude**; take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves...lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth*

in the air, the likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven” (Deut. 4:12, 15–19).

Who then, while believing the Word of God, would be so bold to act blatantly contrary to this and make images of God— a practice clearly forbidden?

Secondly, God cannot be depicted and it is therefore God’s will that such ought not to occur. *“To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?” (Isa. 40:18).*

Thirdly, it highly dishonors God. *“And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Rom. 1:23).*

The Papists readily imitate this. They depict God the Father in the appearance of a man, that is, of an old man; God the Son in the appearance of a four-footed beast, that is, of a lamb; and God the Holy Spirit in the appearance of a bird, that is, a dove. They thus dishonor God as the heathen do.

Fourthly, it corrupts man. *“Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves...lest ye corrupt yourselves” (Deut. 4:15–16).* For this prompts man to think of God — who is a Spirit, and who must be served in Spirit — in physical terms.

Objection: Both the images of God and of the saints have educational value.

Answer:

(1) God has nevertheless forbidden this. This is pagan thinking and we should not pretend it to be beneficial, since it is forbidden.

(2) God will not have us taught by dumb images, but by His Word. *"Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Ps. 119:24, 105).

***** (1970) G.I. Williamson, The Shorter Catechism for Study Classes**

The second commandment is broken when men attempt to make a graven image or a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches us that there is one God. It teaches us to worship the three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

But the Holy Spirit guided Paul to tell us that we *"ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device"* (Acts 17:29)...

The Roman Catholic Church has been careful to say that it did not want people to worship images, but only to worship the Lord through these images. They think that there is an important difference between a statue (image) and a picture (likeness).

But the commandment recognizes no such difference. **It forbids us to make any likeness, just as it forbids us to make any image, of the Lord.**

***** (1961) Prof. John Murray, Pictures of Christ**

"Secondly, pictures of Christ are in principle a violation of the second commandment. A picture of Christ, if it serves any useful purpose, must evoke some thought or feeling respecting him and, in view of what he is, this thought or feeling will be worshipful. We cannot avoid making the picture a medium of worship.

But since the materials for this medium of worship are not derived from the only revelation we possess respecting Jesus, namely, Scripture, the worship is constrained by a creation of the human mind that has no revelatory warrant. This is will-worship. For the principle of the second commandment is that we are to worship God only in ways prescribed and

authorized by him. It is a grievous sin to have worship constrained by a human figment, and that is what a picture of the Saviour involves."

QUESTIONS:

Shall we live by man's traditions or by the pure Word of God? Again and again the foundational issue is— **WHAT IS MY ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD OF GOD?**

Shall I live by the Word of God **or shall I** lean to my own understanding?

Shall I bow down to the goddess of 'But I don't see anything wrong with it'... **or shall I bow to the clear Word of God?**

Shall I refuse Holy Spirit conviction which reveals to me the clear Word of God and calls upon me to ADJUST myself, my habits, my traditions, etc... to the Word of God; **OR WILL I cling to the 'majority report' and my traditions?**

*"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart".
Hebrews 4:12*

We are to study God's Word, **know** God's Word, **BELIEVE** God's Word, **WALK according to** God's Word, **ACT on** God's Word; **and PRAY, BELIEVING** God's Word so that our lives may be transformed more and more **into the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Grace to one and all! / James Bell / www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— First and Second Monday of each month at 7:30pm. Questions? Contact Mike Munday at 615-681-7533

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Contact Bradley at 615-804-3054.

WEDNESDAYS: ☐ **6:30pm— Children** Ministry/activities; ☐ **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— (For both of these... enter via double doors by gym)

☐ **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE...** Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Meets EVERY OTHER TUESDAY: **The Epistle of James, // NEXT: August 16 @ 11:00am;** Cindy Bell teaching. [Front door open at 10:45 till 11:05am; or come in Iron Steps side entrance!]

MEN: EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! {Study in **ROMANS**}... **Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru** awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!

SUNDAY SERVICES, AUGUST: 14, 21, 28*****

9:30am- Sunday School

10:45am- Worship Service / Children's Church

NOON 'Covered-dish' Lunch / 1:00pm Service

Special notes for August 21-- 9:30am-** Sunday School

10:45am- Worship Service & LORD'S SUPPER / NO Children's Church / NO NOON 'Covered-dish' Lunch / NO 1:00pm Service

SUNDAY EVENING HOME GROUPS

Special notes for August 28***

9:30am- Sunday School

10:45am- Worship Service / Children's Church

NOON 'Covered-dish' Lunch / 1:00pm Service

5:30pm-7:30pm—

FAITHFUL

MEN'S

FELLOWSHIP/STUDY/EQUIPPING

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL— *Uniting Church, Home, and School in CHRIST!*

For the 2016-2017 school term we are offering Second through Twelfth grades. Children need the Home, the Church, and the School to model and teach the same basic philosophy of life. ***Children are like young plants in a garden— they must be protected.***

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>