

**Text: Heb 1.3b**

We are talking about those clauses in Hebrews 1 that describe our Lord Jesus for our communion services. So far we've touched on these phrases:

1. Heir of all things
2. Creator of all things
3. Radiance of God's Glory [2023-02-12]

Today our phrase is:

*Imprint of God's Nature*

We are people who have faith in God. We believe what the Bible said about him. We believe we have a relationship with God.

Yet if we were to try to describe God, we might have some trouble. We could use terms that describe God's attributes. Power, Might, Knowledge, Holiness, Love, Transcendence, Immanence, Truth ... all these are attributes that describe God.

Yet these attributes by themselves leave us a little cold. God as a collection of attributes is somewhat far off.

How do you have a relationship with a list of perfections?

Our relationship with God is based on our relationship to Jesus Christ. Jesus said,

Jn 14.7-9 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." <sup>8</sup> ¶ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." <sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

So, we know God through many aspects of the Bible, but we know God most through Jesus Christ. That is what we will talk about today.

Jesus is the imprint of His nature...

Read Heb 1.1-4, text 3b

**Proposition: The best way to know God is to know Jesus Christ**

## I. What we mean by God's nature

### A. The Gk word is *hypostasis*

1. Basic meaning, something placed under, substructure, foundation
2. Something that is real, has real substance, that exists
3. It is the thing that makes the insubstantial real

Heb 11.1 ¶ Now faith is the **assurance** of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. [assurance = hypostasis (KJV "substance")]

4. A thing's nature is the underlying substance of the thing

### B. Some illustrations

1. Hippocrates used it to describe "that which 'settles' at the bottom of a container of liquid"<sup>1</sup>
2. Aristotle and philosophers considered it to be the essence of something that really exists, but it is the underlying "real thing"

### C. The word parallels glory in the previous phrase

1. "the radiance of His glory"
2. "the exact representation of His nature"

With respect to His glory, Christ shines into this world; with respect to God's nature, Christ displays the exact character of the thing itself, the exact representation of God.

All of that is lots of ways to say, Jesus displays the very nature of God.

<sup>1</sup> Köster, 578.

## II. What we mean by exact representation (imprint)

### A. The word is *karakter* (character)

#### 1. Some passages call Jesus the *eikon* (icon) of God

2 Cor 4.4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Col 1.15 ¶ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Col 3.10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—

The idea of *eikon* is the image of a prototype.

#### 2. *Karakter* is a stamped “duplicate” (though not one of two in this case)

a. When the image of an emperor is stamped in a coin, the image is a *karakter* of the emperor (exact representation)

b. It is a “reproduction”

As an icon may be a faithful image, this is an exact representation; an icon is drawn from the original, a *karakter* has the original stamped into it.

Not a general likeness to the original, but an exact copy of the original.

### B. The meaning of Jesus as the exact representation of God's substance

1. God's being really is in Christ – he isn't just *like* God, he is God
2. God's word is really revealed by Christ – he doesn't just tell us about God, he reveals who God really is || he speaks God to us
3. The very substance of God inheres in both Father and Son

“In some languages there is no ready lexical equivalent of ‘real being’ or ‘nature.’ Therefore, one may express this concept in He 1:3 as ‘who is ... just like what he really is.’”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 584.

### III. What God's nature displayed in Jesus means for our salvation

- A. We emphasize God the Son's identification with us when we talk about the Incarnation (very important aspect of our salvation)
- B. We emphasize God the Son's identification with the Father when we talk about the *karakter of his substance*
  - 1. Our salvation depends on the infinite substance of God
  - 2. God really involved his very self in our salvation
  - 3. When we celebrate communion, we bow our hearts before
    - a. Jesus, the man, our Saviour
    - b. Jesus, our God, and our Saviour

#### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The best way to know God is to know Jesus Christ

In him we live and move and have our *eternal* being.