

# images: Transformed into the IMAGE

## 2 CORINTHIANS 3

<sup>18</sup> But we all, with open face **beholding** as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the LORD.

Our God has given His commandments to the world as a hedge of protection against all evil. Yehovah knows the end from the beginning. He has always done that which is best for His children. He has provided great security to all those who will hear His voice and obey His words. Prayerfully consider the following.

## JEREMIAH 11

**11** THE WORD that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, <sup>2</sup> Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; <sup>3</sup> And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel: Cursed *be* the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, <sup>4</sup> Which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I commanded you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God: . . . . <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD said unto me. Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.

The words of Scripture plainly tell the reader that he is *not* to make a graven [carved] image, or the **likeness** [Strong's Concordance, number 8403: **tabniyth** – *tab-neeth'*: model; resemblance: figure, form, likeness, pattern, similitude] of anything that is in the earth. Yahweh has not done this without a definite purpose in mind, or without sufficient and good reason.

## DEUTERONOMY 5

<sup>8</sup> Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, or *any* likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: <sup>9</sup> Thou shalt not bow down thy self unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me. <sup>10</sup> And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

## DEUTERONOMY 4

<sup>14</sup> And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you **statutes** and **judgments**, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. <sup>15</sup> Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day *that* the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: <sup>16</sup> Lest ye corrupt *yourselves*, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, <sup>17</sup> The likeness of any beast that *is* on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, <sup>18</sup> The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that

*is* in the waters beneath the earth; <sup>19</sup> 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

The reader will note that within the fourteenth verse of Deuteronomy four [Deuteronomy 4:14], that these instructions are referred to not only as commandments [as in Deuteronomy 5:8; and Exodus 20:3-5] but **statutes** and **judgments** as well. Statutes and judgments, at least in part, serve to elaborate upon God's ten commandment law, and help to define and delineate the commandments of the Creator that the people may fully obey them without any fault before their Creator.

Howsoever, in direct contrast to the Word of God not to produce any likeness of anything in the earth or the heavens above, the earth is utterly filled with images. They are ubiquitous – they are everywhere we look. They inundate our modern technologies: Printed Books, even Magazines, Newspapers, and Comic Books; Movie Theater Films; Television; Home Movies; Slide Shows; PowerPoint Presentations; Photographs; DVDs; Billboards; Computers; Gaming Devices; Cell Phones; Advertisement Media, and etc. You might recognize that this is a very elementary, most incomplete, and rudimentary listing.

What if we should include school photo albums and yearbooks; graduation pictures; vacation pictures and films and videos; wedding pictures; pictures of parents and siblings; baby pictures; and pictures of our children, grandchildren and extended family? These things seem to be keepsakes for most of us. Are they evil? Almost everyone, including nearly all pastors and ministers, would tell you, 'Of course not!' But where do they fit into the commandment not to make images? For me, I have to rethink many years of amateur photography, and a large collection of photos. What does the Creator's word say? 'Do not make any likeness of that which is in the earth!' Are photos a likeness?

Those who would excuse their image making will say, 'I do not bow down to them, nor do I worship them, nor do I serve them. But the fact that they are well preserved in boxes, cabinets, albums, frames, Compact Disks, Digital Video Disks; hard drives, and etc. tells a very different story – someone is diligently serving and honoring these images; and spending a considerable amount of time and money for their preservation and storage – not to mention the cost of sometimes very elaborate equipment to capture, publish, and store all these images.

What is the problem? In a single word I could say: **Rebellion!** Would I be all that wrong? Have not all that dwell in the earth, been in rebellion to God and His laws; His statutes; His judgments; His ordinances; His precepts; His counsels; and His words?

But the problem is very likely much broader than my hasty and automatic one word - 'rebellion' - reply is able to entirely encompass

the question: 'What Is the problem?' The problem is more likely to be, that teachers which are needing to be taught correct doctrine. But, also, false teachers; rebellious teachers; false prophets; ministers in and from the pulpit; wolves in sheep's clothing have deceived and beguiled the people into expressly breaking God's explicit commandment against imagery with cunning and beguiling human reasoning and thinking. They make a multitude of excuses why God's commandment does not apply to them and to us. The ubiquitous images seen everywhere, and they say that it is 'OK'; and that we may keep them; and we may serve them; and that we may continue to make them.

I am of the belief that this is one of the most widely and universally trampled of YHVH's commandments, and broken set of statutes and judgments! I do believe that the populace in general has been taught that the images that we see in such abundant prevalence all around us are innocuous and not harmful to us. And, it may well be that through a lack of the ministers' specific teaching against the sin of imagery (idolatry), that all these images are just taken for granted – that is to say we have been acculturated to accept them as a normal part of our lives. Consider that we are more familiar with evil, than we are accustomed to do and think good things!

Know this, the enemy of our souls understands well how to destroy us; and he works tirelessly to accomplish his goal of the absolute and total destruction of the children of the Creator, YAH. Satan employs fallen angels and human beings to bring about his desired end of God's people. Consider prayerfully and with great deliberation of heart and mind the following verses.

### EZEKIEL 13

AND THE word of the LORD came unto me, saying, <sup>2</sup> Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; <sup>3</sup> Thus saith the LORD GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! . . . <sup>6</sup> They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made *others* to hope that they would confirm the word. <sup>7</sup> Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith *it*; albeit I have not spoken? <sup>8</sup> Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I *am* against you, saith the LORD GOD. <sup>9</sup> And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD GOD.

<sup>10</sup> Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and *there was no peace....*

## 2 CORINTHIANS 11

<sup>13</sup> For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

But **why** do you suppose God has given us a commandment against having, making, and serving images? I believe that the reason has to do with the principle of 'Transformation'.

The Scriptures plainly tell the reader that by beholding change is possible. But what kind of beholding, looking, or vision is spoken of here in the passage wherein this principle is laid out? The word '*beholding*'; Strong's Concordance, number G 2734: **katoptrizomai** according to the Strong's Greek Lexicon denotes and also implies: *mirroring oneself*; and to: *see reflected*. The Greek word, **katoptrizomai**, translated in 2 Corinthians 3:18 [King James version] as *beholding* in English is derived from Strong's number 2596 (which compares to number 2072), and Strong's number 3700.

The idea conveyed is an intensity of scrutiny, or looking at with the greatest attention and intent – even a studied perusal - eyes wide open! There is no conveyance, nor any thought of the idea of mere passive vision in the Greek word **katoptrizomai**. The type of looking or vision that is conveyed in this word is mind stimulating, thought provoking, it engages, and involves every faculty of the mind. The following is the text of the actual Scripture where the word is found:

## 2 CORINTHIANS 3

<sup>18</sup> But we all, with open face **beholding** as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the LORD.

The idea or concept that by so intently fixing our mind's attention on something; the act of intently beholding, has the power to change us and our behavior into that which is beheld; is immensely full of profound implications. It is the essence of salvation unto us – the power to be transformed into the image of God and of Christ.

Spiritually, mentally, behaviorally, socially, and, God willing, even physically, we who were once in the imperfect image of fallen man can be and are transformed into the perfection and the glory of Christ. This is absolutely marvelous, and utterly amazing: What awesome power is this at work? It is the marvelous power of Jehovah God unto salvation: It is the exercising of the sovereign power of the Creator of the Universe, the Creator of life, and the Author and Finisher of our salvation to perform His good will toward His saints and to bring them to an expected end upon this present evil and wicked planet!

But, know this, God would not have us to be transformed into the image of the world, or into those who are of the world! What we must aware of is how very, very carefully, and ever so diligently, Christians must guard the visions of their eyes, and their minds, and their actions, and their thoughts [by implication the mind, because that is where images are stored and imaginations are formed and played-back from]. That that, and only that which is good, clean, and holy is beheld by the viewer is of the greatest importance and magnitude: For when that which is unholy and that which is filthy and that which is evil is constantly beheld in the eyes and before the mind, the power to change and transform is operating upon the beholder.

## Do images Really Have Power to Transform the Beholder?

To discover the answer let us consider 2 Corinthians 3:18 once more:

### 2 CORINTHIANS 3

<sup>18</sup> But we all, with open face **beholding** as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the LORD.

The last seven words of the verse – ‘as by the Spirit of the Lord’ - tell us that it is the power of the Spirit of the Lord that is the source of power to transform. If we will go just a few verses further on in 2 Corinthians, reading in verses three and four of chapter four, we can see another power at work which works against Jehovah’s Spirit to transform His children into the perfect image of God. We shall see that there is more than one dynamic at work – there is the power of God unto good, and the power of Satan unto evil.

### 2 CORINTHIANS 4

<sup>3</sup> But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: <sup>4</sup> In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Satan works ever so diligently to prevent the glorious light of the gospel of Christ from shining unto men. He blinds the minds of them that believe not; so that neither the image of Christ who is the express image of God, nor that the light of the gospel should not shine unto them. The power of transformation truly resides in Jehovah’s Holy Spirit. The power to transform God’s people into the perfect image of the Creator is found in God’s Holy Spirit. However, Satan has the power to blind the minds of men, who believe not, to the power of Jehovah; or even the desire for Jehovah’s Spirit to change them into the full measure and stature (or image) of Christ.

Those who resist God’s Holy Spirit’s transforming power are changed into the image of Satan. If the ‘light of the glorious gospel of

Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them', and they would behold it with open face, that is with eyes wide open, and with an intensity of purpose, they would be transformed into the same glorious image of Christ!

The use of imagery has a vast potential to influence and affect thinking, actions, and behavior. Briefly, consider this question: Why do commercial marketing corporations, public relations companies, and advertising firms, which all so hugely successful, employ the use of images [good or bad]? Our God Jehovah knows very well the capacity of imagery to influence the mind and behavior. And He also employs the power of images to help transform His people into an holy people.

The sanctuary service is full of imagery. And in many ways the seventh-day Sabbaths of God, and the annual feasts are images or shadows of good things to come; they are even called shadows in Colossians 2:16-17. The seasonal feasts of God, in addition to the seventh-day Sabbath feast (see Leviticus 23:1-44), are powerful imagery and shadows employed to teach and illustrate God's love and His plan of salvation to His beloved children; and to give them hope for the expected and desired end. Please see Jeremiah 29:11.

The Israelite built sanctuaries were powerful and national images (parables; allegories; shadows) unto the people of God. The purpose of the imagery of the sanctuary was, once again, to teach God's people His love for them; and to show them that He had prepared a plan of salvation for the fallen human race. This plan was to be presented to the people in the imagery of the daily, and the annual sanctuary services or feasts, and through the priestly services and intercession by the son's of Aaron and the Levites.

The putting of fringes upon the borders of the garments, worn each and every day, and the fastening upon those fringes blue cords, and/or blue tassels, and/or blue ribbons serves God's purpose bringing into the minds of His people the precepts, statutes, judgments, and ordinances of the law of Yahweh. Numbers 15:38; Deuteronomy 22:12 The use of an image of a blue ribbon and the fringes upon the borders of our garments serves as a strong and powerful and continual reminder of the binding requirements of the Creator's law upon His children. The white linen serves as an image of the purity and righteousness of Christ.

The wearing of phylacteries which are small leather pouches containing tiny scrolls of Scripture were also powerful images and ever present reminders to provoke God's people to good thoughts and to do well.

While good and holy images do exert a great influence for good, wicked images do, in like manner, exert an overwhelming influence for evil. Do not suppose this has eclipsed Satan. With such a powerful

tool to employ against us, and such a formidable weapon to overcome and vanquish God's people Satan makes much advantage of imagery. Consider the destroying power of pornography!

In Psalm 101 - one hundred three - king David says that he will set no evil thing before his eyes. David was familiar with and understood very well the principle, that *by beholding we are changed*. King David would not allow that he should be changed into the wickedness of that which he beheld were he to allow something evil to dwell in his eyesight. Therefore he would set no evil thing, even evil friendships or associations with unholy people - before his eyes.

## PSALM 101

I WILL sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing. <sup>2</sup> I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. <sup>3</sup> I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me. <sup>4</sup> A forward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked *person*. <sup>5</sup> Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. <sup>6</sup> Mine eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. <sup>7</sup> He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. <sup>8</sup> I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

King David was resolved that no evil would 'rub-off' on him, that is to say, that no wickedness would be given the opportunity to transform David into an evil character. King David was ever on guard against the temptations of evil by association, or by beholding [**association** and **beholding** have essentially the same conceptual meaning as used here]. In Psalms 101, verse seven he says: "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." And in the very same Psalm David, the son of Jesse, vows that he will set no wicked thing before him [verse 3] that his eyes would behold it.

There is an old proverb that goes something like this, 'Evil associations corrupt good manners.' Sometimes we hear it spoken in this manner: 'Bad company corrupts good manners.' Is this a true proverb? Apparently so: It is the wisdom of God, and is recorded by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners." [1 Corinthians 15:33] Should one need further evidence or proof that which we allow to be constantly before us has great power and influence over us may be found in the following Proverb.

## PROVERBS 22:24-25

<sup>24</sup> Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: <sup>25</sup> Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul

Jehovah has forbidden the making, the use of, and possession of images by which the people through the process of beholding those images that those images would or should have the power to transform His people into idol worshipers. Graven images; idols that represent the gods of the heathen; or “...any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in the heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth...” that surround them are strictly forbidden.

## DEUTERONOMY 5

<sup>7</sup> Thou shalt have none other gods before me. <sup>8</sup> Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, *or any likeness of any thing* that *is* in the heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth: <sup>9</sup> Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me <sup>10</sup> And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

## Is There Any Hope? – YES, THERE IS HOPE! – Repentance!

Praise Jehovah: There is great reason for joy; and, of course, there is an abundance of hope for all those who trust in YAH! The Creator YAH is compassionate, long-suffering, and of great mercy. He is faithful to forgive men when they confess and repent of their abominations which they have committed before the eyes of an all-knowing Creator. Ezekiel chapter fourteen exhorts those who have set up their idols and their abominations in their hearts to **repent** and **turn away** their faces from them. In effect, neither gaze upon them any longer, nor consider them any further in their imaginations. Our God is faithful and just to forgive us; and to cleanse all who confess of their sins [1 John 1:9].

Let us consider our latter end! What is your supreme goal and destiny? Where do you ultimately desire to be? By faith, are you looking for a better ‘country’, that is an heavenly country? By faith our forefathers, the patriarchs, and the prophets all embraced the promises of Yahweh and forsook the riches and pleasures of the then present time. They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Which country are you mindful of, the earthly or the heavenly? Ultimately, how valuable are your collection of images compared to life eternal? What shall we do? Consider carefully what God requires of you!

## EZEKIEL 14

<sup>6</sup> Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God; Repent, and turn *yourselves* from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

The Messiah has a plan for all of us. His plan requires that we submit our wills unto His will. Therefore we should inquire of ourselves



whether we are willing to submit to His will, and His law that His plan may be accomplished in our lives? Be not deceived; do not think this to be such a simple task as simply putting away and ridding ourselves of all our collected and stockpiled images – which thing I do now believe should be done. But, know this, there is another manner or form of putting away of our images.

Ask yourself about the images stored up in the mind? These images are not graven in stone, wood, or metal, but they are graven in the imaginations of the mind: they have become, chemically and/or electrically, part of the brain. Consider the exceedingly wicked and sinful images that we allow to be played back in the imaginations of our minds? The prophet Ezekiel says of them, ‘Turn away your faces from all your abominations.’ Do you realize that this is nothing short of war? Satan and his evil angels are fighting against us with greatest skill and the most masterful cunning; using very cleverly disguised fiery darts of evil temptations. Our only hope is the power of the Creator in Christ. Let us look to this hope in the following Scripture.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 10

<sup>3</sup> For though we walk in flesh, we do not war after the flesh: <sup>4</sup> (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) <sup>5</sup> Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ: <sup>6</sup> And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

The promise of this Scripture is that the weapons of our warfare **are** mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; the casting down of imaginations and everything that exalts itself above the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ! Yehovah will grant to the poor and needy, and to the humble and contrite of heart divine power to overcome every evil and wicked imagination of the heart and mind.

Have you ever heard the proverb: ‘Nature abhors a vacuum?’ [Matthew 12:43-45] It is not enough that we should cast down all evil imaginings from our minds; but we must fill the void where formerly resided all these wicked imaginings. The words of the apostle Paul written to the believers in Philippi are golden words of advice, exhortation, succor and help in this matter of filling the void in our minds where once reigned evil and wicked imaginings. Hear him!

## PHILIPPIANS 4:8

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.

Let your mind be filled with that which is good, just, righteous, and holy. When these things occupy your thoughts, your mind will be transformed as by the power of the Spirit of Yahuah. Proverbs 23:7 tells us that, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”

“Through knowledge shall the just be delivered.” [Proverbs 11:9] Knowledge of God is found by trusting in faith in God’s promises and His word; and through studying His word and meditating on His word; and in obedience to his word. Is this not a seeking after God with our all strength, all our soul, and all our minds?

Our God has the power to help us overcome all the evil and wickedness of this present world! Let us run to Him in prayer, fastings, and supplications! Are we not buried with Christ in His death; risen to new life in His resurrection; and seated at the right hand of His power? [Romans 6:3-7] [Ephesians 2:6] [Colossians 3:1] Through baptism and through obedience to the Gospel of Christ, His power is available to us that we might overcome all the temptations and sins of this present wicked world! [Acts 1:8; 5:32] Do not forget: “For as he believeth in his heart, so is he.” If you are able, by faith, to believe that you are granted power over evil imaginations of the mind: God will grant you His power to overcome all evil thoughts of the heart and wicked imaginations! Amen.

Thank you Lord for the answer is found – thou hast supplied our want, and our need with thy divine power! Amen. Let us put away *all* images! What shall be the transition from principle to action? Is it not found in a seeking after YHVH with a whole heart, with all one’s strength, and all one’s mind; and then walking, that is, taking the appropriate action, simply by trusting in thy promises, and then obediently and joyfully walking by faith in your words of promise? Hallelujah, Amen.

‘May YHVH grant you power to put away your images; and may He grant you power to overcome all evil temptations and evil imaginings! Amen.’ Let your hearts dwell on the glory of the Lord, let your hearts ponder that which is holy and righteous. Let your mind consider that which is of godly virtue. Consider judgment and justice in your thoughts; and allow the power of the Spirit of the Lord to change you into the same image as you have beholden in your mind’s eye.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 3

<sup>18</sup> But we all, with open face **beholding** as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the LORD.