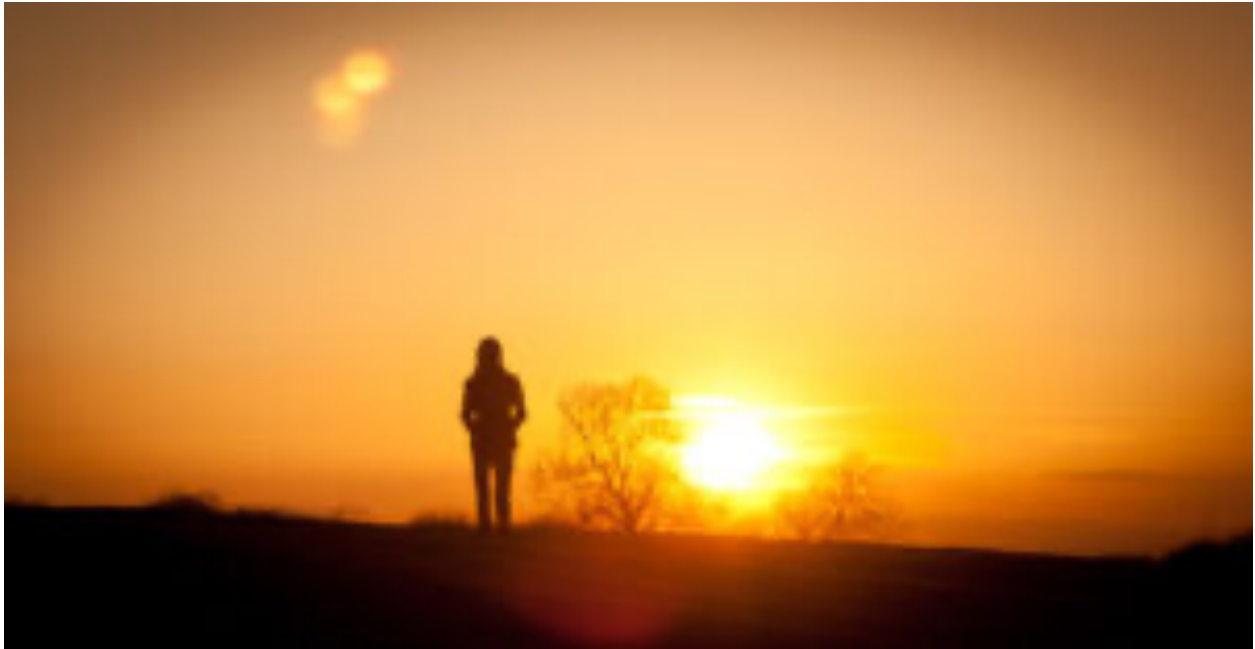


## CREATED IN THE SHADOW OF GOD

Unbelievably, although I have been pressing into understanding more about The Father's image for weeks and weeks now, I have yet to look into the actual Hebrew Word. So one night, while I was waiting for the 10 pm count (where they come around and make sure everyone is still here), I decided to pull out my concordance and do some homework. What I read completely shocked me, encouraged me, and deepened my entire experience of tasting the image of Yahweh. I would like to share with you what He shared with me in this post.



If you remember from my last post, I described to you what the image of God, or essence, actually was like in the experience He let me take part in. It was like a dark, misty, fog that filled every gap in my bones and left me paralyzed in awe of His penetrating love. I had never thought to look up "image" before because I thought I already knew what it was. When I looked up Strong's #6754, the Hebrew word is "**tselem**." When I looked that up, it said that the word "image" means to shade, a phantom, an illusion, resemblance, or a representative figure. Did you hear that? A phantom? An illusion? This was exactly what I experienced! It was like a mysterious, shaded phantom! So does that mean that to be in His image is to be a mysterious, shaded phantom? Not quite. Let's dive in a bit deeper. Many of you might remember me stating many times that everything in this life is not real. It's just an illusion. It feels real. It looks real, but it is not the true reality. It is a "**phantom**" experience.

The tabernacle was said by God to be a pattern of the reality in heaven. Even the Ark of the Covenant was not the real ark. It was a "**shadow**" of the real one in heaven. When a 12-year-old says she is "in love," is what she's feeling real? To her, it is the most real thing she has ever felt. But we all know that it is not real love. It is infatuation, or what we call puppy love. But no one can convince her that it is not real. And herein lies the deception. If she trusts and goes by the rules of her reality, then her "reality" becomes a graveyard for her heart. If she trusts the rules of the higher reality, of those that have her best interest at heart, her heart becomes as protected as Fort Knox's. Reality is subjective to the rules that are applied to it. Can water part on its own free will? Can a man defy gravity and walk on water? Can a man time travel from a watering hole in the desert to the city of Azotus in a blink of an eye the way Philip did? The answer to all of these questions is a very clear no. Then how did they all happen? Because the reality of this world bowed its knee to the rules of the higher reality.

***"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our tselem (image), according to Our likeness" - Genesis 1:26***

Strong's goes on to say "**image**" is merely a phantom, a thing that represents the original more closely but lacks its essential characteristics, or reality. When He made man, He made Him in His "shade," His shadow. Man had a resemblance of Him, but lacked the reality. He lacked the fullness of His character. The fullness of His character IS what He is. It is His image. We are but a phantom and an illusion of that image.

If you were standing outside and the sun was behind you casting your shadow in front of you, **THAT** is your *tselem*. It is not you, but it is your "image," your shadow. It looks like you, and has your appearance, but it lacks the reality of the one from which it is cast. The only way to truly maintain the "resemblance" of His image is to **STAY** in His shadow! When we are in His shadow, we are in His image! They're the same word! Let's take a look at a few scriptures that deal with this concept.

In the parable of the trees in Judges 9, the bramble tree is made king over all the rest of the trees (representing people). Verse 15 says, *"And the bramble said to the trees, 'If in truth you anoint me as king over you, then come and take shelter in my shade; But if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon!"* This is a Messianic passage where the bramble tree, whose thorns were used to crown the Messiah, represents Yeshua, the King over all the people. And He says to take shelter in His "shade." Under the shadow of His "tree" (cross), a man will be safe. If he does not take refuge in His shade, fire will devour him (representing the fire that comes down at the end of time that destroys His enemies). In his shadow (image), there is protection and salvation. The bramble tree is not a very large tree. It is more like an oversized bush. To be in its shadow is to be very close to it. You must bow your head, get on your knees, and crawl near it to be in its shade. The bramble tree teaches us that humility and the bended knee are key components to getting closer to the image of God.

Psalms 17:8 says, *"Keep me as the apple of Your eye. Hide me under the shadow of your wings."* This is a direct reference to the shadow that was created in the Holy of Holies under the wings of the cherubim that covered the mercy seat (Exodus 25:20). When the smoke from the incense filled this room, the *panim* (pah-neem), or face/presence of Yahweh, appeared in the cloud. In

this sense, we discover a new attribute of the "image" of God. We discover that when we stay under the shadow of His wings, we are in His mercy. So we have humility, and now we have mercy. These are two critical components of His image.

It is also important to note that in this passage, the word for "**wings**" is the Hebrew word "*kanaph*," Strong's #3671. It can mean the wing of a bird, but it can also (and more often) mean the edge, extremity, or corner of something. In ancient times, the lower part of the garment, or bottom seam, was called the "wings" of the garment, the *kanaph*. By the time of the first century, it would, by extension, be specifically connected to the tassels, or tzitzits (tzeet-tzeets) that hung from the four corners of the outer garment. Each tzizit consists of five double knots and eight threads, of which at least one is blue. All together, there are thirteen components to each tassel. This number added to six hundred (which is the Hebraic numerical value of the word "tzitzit"), points to the six hundred thirteen commandments of the Torah. A true shadow within a shadow! Malachi 4:2 says that the "Son of Righteousness [the Messiah] is going to come with healing in His wings." Yeshua was the Word of God and the tassels He wore represented the Word of God. So we can see a direct fulfillment of Malachi 4:2 when, in Matthew 9, the woman who had the issue of blood fought through the crowd just to touch the "hem of His garment." Her faith had convinced her that if she could just touch His tassels, His wings, she would be healed.

Now, connecting the two together, we see that the wings of the cherubim represent the tassels (tzitzit), which, in turn, represent the power of Yahweh. The tzitzit are likened to the wedding ring today. The ring is worn as a symbol of being in covenant. The tassels are also worn on the four corners of the garment as a symbol, a wedding ring of sorts, of the covenant with the God of Israel. It is not the reality of the covenant, but a shadow, a powerful reminder of who we serve.

Under the "shadow" of the wings of the cherubim is not just the mercy seat, but in the center of its shadow, deep beneath the seat itself are the Commandments themselves, the very Word of God which the tassels represent. So we discover that not only is humility and mercy found in the shadow of His image, but His very Word is at the center of that image. It is our responsibility to obey His Word which is the center of His shadow. When we make a mistake, we then humble ourselves, bowing before the "bramble tree," before His "image," and He grants us mercy as the benevolent King that sits on His Throne.

Let's take a look at one more example of a *shadow* in scripture and let's let the Spirit paint an even fuller picture of what His image looks like. In Colossians chapter 2, Paul is fighting against the heresy that keeping the commandments of God was required for salvation. He had taught his new converts how to follow God and keep His commandments without all the man-made doctrine, traditions, and vain philosophy that they were trying to add. This legalistic group was judging Paul's converts for the way they were taught to keep the Sabbath, the new moons, and the festivals of the LORD. In verses, 16-17 Paul tells them, "*So let no one judge you in food or drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*" The legalists were getting caught up in worshipping the shadow and had taken their eyes off of Christ, who was the reality behind the shadow! Paul wasn't saying that they should get out of the shadow, but only that the shadow doesn't save. And while they are in the shadow, they need to keep their eyes on the reality from which the shadow is cast!

Think about this for a second. The scriptures say that the *Feast Days of the LORD are part of His shadow*. That means that, by default, they are part of **HIM!** If they were not part of Him, they could not be included in the shadow. Wherever the reality (Christ) goes, the shadow goes with Him. To remove the shadow and say that it doesn't exist anymore or has no value is to remove the reality, for they are intimately connected!

Hebrews 10:1 says that the entire Law of God is a shadow of the real image, which is the Word made flesh. The frustration felt by Yeshua, Paul, and the writer of Hebrews is that some of the early believers were brainwashed by their former lives in first-century Judaism to almost idolize the Law, so much so that they had a hard time seeing what the Law was actually pointing to. When you follow the shadow, it leads to Christ! "*Christ is the end (point, purpose) of the Law for righteousness for everyone that believes*" -- Romans 10:4. Christ **IS** the Law made flesh. He is not destroying Himself; He is the point and purpose of the entire thing! Before Christ, following the shadow (the Law) led to the human high priest, a man who put his life on the line once a year to atone for the sins of all. That was a dang good covenant seeing that it was either that or die. But now, the high priesthood has been changed so that when you follow the shadow now (the Law), it leads you to the **REAL HIGH PRIEST!** This makes it a **BETTER** covenant, as the entire book of Hebrews proclaims. Following and honoring His perfect Law now leads us to a deeper relationship and understanding of our King and keeps us in His shadow!

There are two realities that exist in our realm. There is the perceived reality of our existence, of all things that happen to us and around us as humans. Then there is the higher reality, the rules of the Kingdom. There is a shadow and there is the reality. These are the two sides of the coin that we have been talking about. The shadow is intimately connected and minted to its counterpart, like a woman is to her husband and like children (who are made in their parents' image) are to their parents. They all work together like a well-oiled machine. They operate as a complex unity, or, in Hebrew, *echad* ... one. Not a single component can ever be removed if the image is to be complete. If there were children that were lost from their parents and the only thing the authorities had to go on in locating them were the characteristics of the children, should we disregard the "image" that brought us to them when the parents are identified? Of course not. When the real parent (Christ) shows up, the family and image (His Law) are complete.

Humility, mercy, obedience to His Word, His Law...all of these are only the beginning attributes of the real image that we're searching for. Faith, belief, and trust are the key elements to the image the same way a proton, neutron, and electron are to an atom. Which reality are you relying on? Which eyes do you look through? When the circumstances of this life demand you to stay in your "prison" and say that there is no way out, which rules will you live by? Will you run to and fro trying to fix your problem with the latest wisdom that man can offer, or will you get on your knees, crawl up near the base of the bramble tree and sit under its shade while it sends its fire out on whoever would try to approach you? Mercy is found for those that humble themselves and crawl under His "wings." The reality, the spiritual treasures of heaven (the gifts of the Spirit), and the One from whom they come is found only by those that, by faith, are seeking the shade of His reality and trusting that His reality.

Shalom,  
Jim Staley

