

1 Corinthians 15:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Analysis

And as we have borne the image of the earthly (καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοῦκοῦ)—The verb ephoresamen (ἐφορέσαμεν, "we bore, wore") uses clothing metaphor. Eikōn (εἰκόνα, "image") connects to Genesis 1:26-27—humans are created in God's image but after the fall bear Adam's fallen image: mortality, sinfulness, corruption. We've "worn" Adam's nature like a garment defining us.

We shall also bear the image of the heavenly (φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου)—The future tense phoresomen (φορέσομεν, "we shall bear, wear") indicates certainty, not mere possibility. Believers will bear Christ's image—righteousness, glory, incorruption, immortality. This is glorification, the final stage of salvation (Romans 8:29-30: "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son"). Sanctification progressively conforms us to Christ's moral image; glorification will conform us to His resurrection body. Some manuscripts read imperative ("let us bear") rather than future, but context favors future—this is promise, not exhortation.

Historical Context

Image of God theology traces from Genesis 1:26 through Romans 8:29 to 1 John 3:2. The fall marred but didn't erase God's image (Genesis 9:6, James 3:9). Redemption restores God's image morally (Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10) and will restore it physically in resurrection (Philippians 3:21). Christ is the perfect

image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15); believers are being transformed into that image.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to 'bear the image' of Adam vs. Christ—how do these images differ?
2. How does progressive sanctification (bearing Christ's moral image) relate to final glorification (bearing His resurrection body)?
3. What comfort does the certainty of bearing Christ's image ('we shall') provide to struggling believers?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	καθὼς	φορέσομεν	τὴν	εἰκόνα	τοῦ	χοῦκοῦ
And	as			the image		of the earthly
G2532	G2531		G5409		G1504	G5517

φορέσομεν	καὶ	τὴν	εἰκόνα	τοῦ	ἐπουρανίου
bear	And	G3588	the image	G3588	of the heavenly
G5409	G2532		G1504		G2032

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:29 (Parallel theme): For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (Parallel theme): 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.

Genesis 5:3 (Parallel theme): And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

Matthew 13:43 (Parallel theme): Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

1 John 3:2 (Parallel theme): Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

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