

Philippians 2:6 says that Jesus “was in the form of God” and Colossians 1:15 calls him “the image of the invisible God.”

Response: If Paul meant to say that Jesus was *God* in Philippians 2:6 he could have simply written that Jesus ‘was God,’ and omitted the phrase ‘*in the form of.*’ What did Paul mean by this expression?

At Exodus 4:16 God tells Moses that Aaron “*shall be a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God,*” and at 7:1, “*See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh.*” God even gave Moses miraculous powers to prove that He had sent him. Jesus was sent by God as His chief representative, one even greater than Moses. He, too, was given miraculous powers, and authority to control the weather and to command legions of angels. So he was “*in a form of God*”¹² while he was on earth; yet, he “*emptied himself,*” that is, he did not use these powers and authority to save himself from degrading treatment by sinners and a horrible death. Having taken the “*form of a bondservant*” Jesus submitted himself to God’s will, thus glorifying his Father and buying salvation for us, even at his own expense. -- Matthew 8:26, 27; 26:53, 54; Philippians 2:7-9; Matthew 20:28

Jesus’ being an image of the invisible God does not make him one person of a trinity any more than Adam’s being made in the image and likeness of God made him part of a triune God. When you look at your image in the mirror, are you actually looking at your body, or are you looking at the reflection of your body? Colossians 3:10-15 shows that the “*image of*” God refers to certain qualities among which are compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance, the willingness to forgive, and “*above all... love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*” Jesus perfectly reflected these qualities of God.

¹² The Greek text does not contain the definite article in either phrase. The texts could have been translated “*in a form of God*” and “*is an image of the invisible God.*” [Prop # 14]