

Travis R. Niles

# The Image of the Invisible God

## An Exegetical Study of Colossians 1:15–20

[Das Bild des unsichtbaren Gottes. Eine exegetische Studie zu Kolosser 1:15–20.]

Published in English.

Given the human propensity for making and using various kinds of images, it is little surprise that religious-philosophical authors from various ancient cultures used the concept of an »image« when speaking of the divine. What does the author of Colossians mean to convey by calling Jesus Christ the »image of the invisible God«? Through an examination of various image discourses and a detailed exegetical study of Colossians 1:15–20, T.R. Niles situates the image concept of Colossians within the image discourse of the first century A.D. and elucidates its specific contours.

Survey of contents

### Introduction

- A. Homo Pictor?
- B. Working Assumptions of the Study
- C. Outline of the Study

### Chapter 1: Image Discourses

- A. The Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls
- B. Plato of Athens
- C. The Wisdom of Solomon
- D. Philo of Alexandria
- E. Plutarch of Chaeronea
- F. Dio Chrysostom's *Olympic Discourse* (*Oratio* 12)
- G. Three Stoics of the First Century A.D.
- H. The Apostle Paul
- I. Image Discourses: Résumé

### Chapter 2: Exegetical Prolegomena for Colossians 1:15–20

- A. Textual Criticism
- B. Origin of the Text
- C. Anatomy of the Text

### Chapter 3: Exegesis of Colossians 1:15–20

- A. Verses 15–16: What is the »Image of the Invisible God«?
- B. Verse 17: The Supremacy of Christ
- C. Verse 18a: The Head of the Body, Which is the Church
- D. Verses 18b–20: Restorative Reconciliation

### Chapter 4: Colossians among its Contemporaries

- A. The Image Concept of Colossians
- B. Situating Colossians in the Image Discourse of the First Century A.D.
- C. Résumé

### Concluding Reflections: »As We Catch Sight of the Sun in the Water«

- A. The Problematic Nature of Images
- B. Inclusion in the Image: A Positive Estimation of the Discrepancy between Model and Image
- C. All Things Hold Together in Him

Travis R. Niles Born 1989; 2021 PhD in Theology at the University of Bern; postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for New Testament Studies of the University of Bern.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7286-2740>

Order now:

[https://www.mohrsiebeck.com/en/book/the-image-of-the-invisible-god-9783161614736?no\\_cache=1](https://www.mohrsiebeck.com/en/book/the-image-of-the-invisible-god-9783161614736?no_cache=1)

[order@mohrsiebeck.com](mailto:order@mohrsiebeck.com)

Phone: +49 (0)7071-923-17

Fax: +49 (0)7071-51104

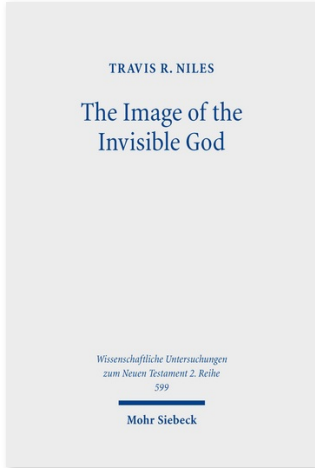
Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. KG

Postfach 2040

D-72010 Tübingen

[info@mohrsiebeck.com](mailto:info@mohrsiebeck.com)

[www.mohrsiebeck.com](http://www.mohrsiebeck.com)



2023. XIX, 311 pages. WUNT II 599

ISBN 978-3-16-161473-6

sewn paper 89,00 €

ISBN 978-3-16-162557-2

eBook PDF 0,00 €



Mohr Siebeck