

A Study of the Book of Genesis

Made in the Image of God

In Genesis 1:26, God said, *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness"*. And in verse 27 He *"created him; male and female He created them"*. What exactly does this mean that mankind is made in His image and likeness?

The term 'image' means 'of resemblance'. Another technical definition is, 'so called from its shadowing forth'; in other words, a shadow resembling real thing. Being made in God's likeness is a phrase meaning, 'similitude', 'similar' and 'alikehood'.

Consider these amazing realities:

- We have a soul that will live for eternity.
- We have the ability to appreciate beauty.
- We have facial expressions.
- We are able to think and reason logically and abstractly.
- We are creative and inventive.
- We can communicate with meaningful words and complex languages.

What being made in God's image and likeness is NOT:

- 1). We do not look like Him physically, and He does not look like us.
- 2). We are not omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent like He is.

Righteous and Holy

This term 'image' is repeated throughout the Bible. When we string these Bible passages together in the context of being created in God's image, the picture comes into focus.

Ephesians 4:24 provides us with some valuable insight when it says, *"put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth"*. Being made in His image does not mean we 'look like Him'. We have been made to resemble Him in righteousness and holiness!

However, because of the sin that corrupted the whole of mankind (see Genesis 3), no one is righteous and no one is holy apart from God's intervening grace. There must be a restoration. We become new because of the work of Christ on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:17). Colossians 3:10-14 says that the new self *"is being renewed (a renovation) to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him"*. As such, the new man puts on character traits like compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love (see Colossians 3:12-14). These are all qualities we find in God Himself!

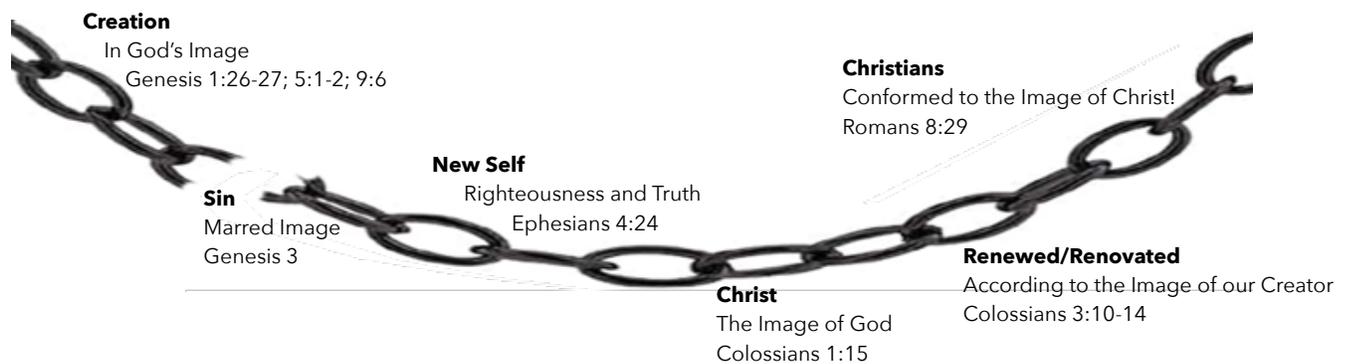
Colossians 1:15 makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. The term image here also means 'likeness'. In his commentary on Colossians, John MacArthur states that even though mankind is created in the likeness of God, we are not the perfect image of Him like Jesus is. MacArthur continues:

"Humans are made in God's image in that they have a rational personality. Like God, they possess intellect, emotion, and will, by which they are able to think, feel, and choose. We humans are not, however, in God's image morally, because He is holy and we are sinful".

Source: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Colossians and Philemon, John F. MacArthur, Jr., The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1992, page 45.

There will, however, be a restoration back to what we were supposed to be!

Romans 8:29 confirms this glorious truth, by stating that God foreknew and predestined a group of people to be conformed to the image of His Son. Conformed means to 'fashion like unto'. It means that God is going to shape and mold us back into the people we were meant to be - before sin! God sees Jesus as sinless and perfect. And because He has imputed His own perfect righteousness and holiness onto us, He sees us as He sees Jesus: righteous and holy. (The theological term for this is 'justification').



Man's Stewardship

When God created male and female (Genesis 1:26-28), He gave them a specific duty, namely to have dominion over the earth. To have dominion over something is to have the authority to rule over it. In this passage, it is a military term meaning, 'first conquer, then rule'. In Genesis 1:26, man was to have authority over the fish, birds and land animals. Later in chapter 2, verses 19-20, we see that Adam was given the task of naming all the living creatures; a sign of his authority. Specifically in verse 19, *"whatever the man **called** a living creature, that was its name"*. Called is the same word from the very first day of creation where God called light day and called darkness night. In the original context then, the readers would have understood that the person doing the naming has authority over what he is naming.

Man was to be fruitful and multiply for the purpose of filling the earth and subduing it. Subdue follows this thought of dominion, and it means to subjugate it and make it work for you. Take it by force and use it for your advantage. God said in the very next verse (v.29) that the trees will produce and "shall be food for you". Chapter 2 speaks of gold, bdellium and onyx stone (v.11-12) found near the river Pishon (which means, 'increase'). What is the purpose of mentioning these natural resources other than to let us know that they were available for man's use?!

Worship

Man and woman were (and are) God's crown of creation... created in His image! We are uniquely set apart from everything else He created. As such, He made us to be stewards over the rest of Creation. *And* He made us to be worshipers!! Unlike the land animals and the birds and the fish... we have been given the great ability and amazing privilege to *worship* Creator God, in whose image we are made!

Charles Wesley wrote well over 6,000 hymns in his lifetime. *Christ the Lord is Risen Today* originally had 11 verses but most hymnals today only include four or five.

The hymn is a joyous celebration of the victory that Christ had over death and the grave - of which we are the beneficiaries!

Each line of each verse is followed by the word Alleluia, which comes from the Hebrew word 'Hallelujah'. It is a joyful expression meaning, 'praise be to God'.

Verse four proclaims "Made like Him, like Him we rise" attests to the beautiful reality that all who put their faith in Jesus Christ will be restored and conformed to His image!

We often think of this as an Easter song, but the fact that Christ our Lord is risen is a declaration that we should be making every day. Our response to this glorious truth should be bold and unashamed worship of our Lord and Savior. Alleluia!!

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

CHARLES WESLEY, 1707-1788, and others

EASTER HYMN 77.77. with Alleluias
Lyra Davidica, 1708

1. Christ the Lord is risen to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!
2. Lives a - gain our glo - rious King, Al - le - lu - ia!
3. Love's re - deem - ing work is done, Al - le - lu - ia!
4. Soar we now where Christ has led, Al - le - lu - ia!

Child of God and an - gels say, Al - le - lu - ia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Al - le - lu - ia!
Fought the fight, the bat - tle won, Al - le - lu - ia!
Fol - lowing our ex - alt - ed Head, Al - le - lu - ia!

Raise your joys and tri - umphs high, Al - le - lu - ia!
Once he died, our souls to save, Al - le - lu - ia!
Death in vain for - bids him rise, Al - le - lu - ia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Al - le - lu - ia!

Sing, ye heavens, and earth re - ply, Al - le - lu - ia!
Where's thy vic - tory, boast - ing grave? Al - le - lu - ia!
Christ hath o - pened par - a - dise, Al - le - lu - ia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

EASTER