

Message Four

**God Creating Man  
in His Own Image for His Expression**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26-27;  
Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; Rev. 21:11

**I. “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...  
And God created man in His own image; in the image of  
God He created him”—Gen. 1:26a, 27a:**

- A. *Let Us make man* reveals that a council was held among the three of the Godhead regarding the creation of man—v. 26a:
  - 1. The decision to create man was made in eternity past, indicating that the creation of man was for the eternal purpose of the Triune God—Eph. 3:9-11.
  - 2. God’s intention in creating man was to carry out His divine economy for the dispensing of Himself into man—1 Tim. 1:4; Rom. 8:11.
- B. God created man in His own image, according to His likeness—Gen. 1:26a:
  - 1. God’s image, referring to God’s inner being, is the expression of the inward essence of God’s attributes, the most prominent of which are love (1 John 4:8), light (1:5), holiness (Rev. 4:8), and righteousness (Jer. 23:6).
  - 2. God’s likeness, referring to God’s form (Phil. 2:6), is the expression of the essence and nature of God’s person.
  - 3. God’s image and God’s likeness should not be considered as two separate things—Gen. 1:26a:
    - a. Man’s inward virtues, created in man’s spirit, are copies of God’s attributes and are the means for man to express God’s attributes.
    - b. Man’s outward form, created as man’s body, is a copy of God’s form.
  - 4. God created man to be a duplication of Himself so that man may have the capacity to contain God and express Him:
    - a. All other living things were created “according to their kind” (vv. 11-12, 21, 24-25), but man was created according to God’s kind (cf. Acts 17:28-29a).
    - b. Since God and man are of the same kind, it is possible for man to be joined to God and to live together with Him in an organic union—John 15:5; Rom. 6:5; 11:17-24; 1 Cor. 6:17.

Message Four (continuation)

- C. Christ the Son is “the image of the invisible God,” “the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance”—the expression of what God is—Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3:
  - 1. Christ the Son, as God’s embodiment, is the image of the invisible God, the expression of the essence of God’s attributes—Col. 2:9; 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 1:3.
  - 2. Man was created according to Christ with the intention that Christ would enter into man and be expressed through man—Col. 1:27; Phil. 1:20-21a.
- D. God’s purpose in the creation of man in His image and according to His likeness is that man would receive Him as life and express Him in all His attributes—Gen. 1:26-27; 2:9:
  - 1. God created man in His image and according to His likeness because His intention is to come into man and to be one with man—Eph. 3:17a.
  - 2. God created man in His own image so that through His economy man may receive His life and nature and thereby become His expression—1 Tim. 1:4; John 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 3:18.
  - 3. God created man in such a way that man has the capacity to contain God’s love, light, righteousness, and holiness—1 John 4:8; 1:5; Eph. 4:24; 5:2, 8-9.
  - 4. Because we were created according to God’s kind, our human virtues have the capacity to contain the divine attributes—2 Cor. 10:1; 11:10.
- E. For God to create man in His image means that God created man with the intention that man would become a duplicate of God, the reproduction of God, for His corporate expression; this reproduction makes God happy because it looks like Him, speaks like Him, and lives like Him—John 12:24; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10; 1 John 3:1-2.
- F. In the Bible there is a mysterious thought concerning the relationship between God and man—Gen. 1:26; Ezek. 1:26; 1 John 3:2b; Rev. 4:3a; 21:11b:
  - 1. God’s desire is to become the same as man is and to make man the same as He is—1 John 3:2b.
  - 2. God’s intention is to work Himself in Christ into us, making

Himself the same as we are and making us the same as He is—Eph. 3:17a.

3. God's economy is to make Himself man and to make us, His created beings, God so that He is God "man-ized" and we are man "God-ized"—John 1:14; Rom. 1:3-4.
- G. The pronouns *them* in Genesis 1:26-28 and *their* in 5:2 indicate that Adam was a corporate man, a collective man, including all mankind:
1. God did not create many men; He created mankind collectively in one person, Adam.
  2. God created such a corporate man in His image and according to His likeness so that mankind might express God corporately.

**II. Christ's incarnation and God-man living fulfilled God's intention in His creation of man—1:26-27; John 1:1, 14; Luke 1:31-32, 35; 2:40, 52:**

- A. The incarnation of Christ is closely related to God's purpose in the creation of man in His image and according to His likeness—that man would receive Him as life and express Him in His divine attributes—Gen. 1:26; 2:9; Acts 3:14a; Eph. 4:24.
- B. The Lord Jesus was born of the human essence with the human virtues in order to uplift these virtues to such a standard that they can match God's attributes for His expression—Luke 1:35:
  1. As the One who was conceived of the divine essence with the divine attributes to be the content and reality of His human virtues, Christ fills the empty human virtues—Matt. 1:18, 20.
  2. The divine attributes fill, strengthen, enrich, and sanctify the human virtues for the purpose of expressing God in the human virtues.
- C. When the Lord Jesus saves us, He comes into us as the One with the human virtues filled with the divine attributes—Luke 2:10-11, 25-32; 19:9-10:
  1. As the life-giving Spirit, He enters into us to bring God into our being and to fill our virtues with God's attributes—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
  2. Such a life saves us from within and uplifts our human virtues, sanctifying and transforming us—Rom. 5:10; 12:2.

**III. In His incarnation Christ put on human nature and became in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:6-8) so that through His death and resurrection man may obtain God's eternal, divine life (1 Pet. 1:3; 1 John 5:11-12) and by that life be transformed and conformed to the image of Christ inwardly (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29) and transfigured into the likeness of Christ's glorious body outwardly (Phil. 3:21); in this way we may be the same as Christ (1 John 3:2b) and may express God with Him to the universe (Eph. 3:21):**

- A. By beholding the glory of the resurrected and ascended Lord with an unveiled face, we are "being transformed into the same image"—the image of the resurrected and glorified Christ—2 Cor. 3:18.
- B. God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God; as the end result of transformation, conformation includes the changing of our inward essence and nature and also of our outward form so that we may match the glorified image of Christ—Rom. 8:29.
- C. In Genesis 1:26 we see a corporate man created in God's image for His expression, and in Revelation 21 we see the New Jerusalem as the ultimate development and consummation of the image in Genesis 1:26; the city of God is the corporate expression of God, bearing the image of God and shining with the glory of God—Rev. 4:3; 21:11.