

Message Twelve

Image and Dominion—the Heart of Genesis

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26-28;

Mark 1:14-15; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; Rom. 8:29; 5:17;

Col. 1:13, 15; 3:10-11; Matt. 13:43; Rev. 21:10-11; 22:1, 5

I. The book of Genesis begins and ends with image and dominion—1:26-28:

- A. The subject of Genesis is man bearing the image of God and exercising God's dominion over all things—vv. 26-28:
 - 1. For God to create man in His image means that God created man with the intention that man would become a duplication of God, the reproduction of God, for His corporate expression—John 12:24; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10; 1 John 3:1-2.
 - 2. God's intention in giving man dominion was for man to exercise God's authority to deal with the enemy, to recover the earth, and to bring in the kingdom of God; dominion and the kingdom are synonymous—Gen. 1:28; Matt. 6:10, 13b.
 - 3. We were created for the purpose of expressing God and exercising His dominion; this is the heart of Genesis.
- B. Genesis concludes with a life that, in Jacob, expressed God in His image and, in Joseph, represented God with His dominion—48:14-16; 41:40-44, 57:
 - 1. After Jacob was transformed and matured, he became the expression of God, becoming Israel, a corporate person—35:10.
 - 2. The exercise of God's dominion over all things was manifested in Joseph's life—45:8-9, 26a:
 - a. Joseph's life under the heavenly vision was the life of the kingdom of the heavens described in Matthew 5—7.
 - b. Joseph's self-denial was the key to the practice of the kingdom life—Gen. 45:4-8; 50:15-21.
 - c. Because Joseph lived under God's restriction, the kingdom could be brought in through him—Matt. 16:24-28.
 - d. The reigning of Joseph in Egypt was the kingdom of God for the fulfillment of God's purpose—Gen. 41:55-57; 47:11-27; Rev. 11:15.
 - e. In Genesis 47 we have a picture of the millennium:
 - 1) Under Joseph, Egypt prefigured the millennium with all the people on the same level, without distinctions.

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- 2) Under Joseph's rule, the whole land of Egypt became a land of enjoyment:
 - a) All the people were enjoyers on the same level because everyone and everything was under Joseph—vv. 14-21.
 - b) This is a picture of the millennium, where everything will be under the Lord's hand—Psa. 24:1.

II. The matters of image and dominion, presented as seeds in Genesis, are developed and consummated in the New Testament:

- A. Christ's incarnation and God-man living fulfilled God's intention in His creation of man—Gen. 1:26-27; Luke 1:31-32, 35; 2:40, 52:
 1. The incarnation of Christ and His God-man living are closely related to God's purpose that man would receive Him as life and express Him in His attributes—Gen. 1:26; 2:9; Acts 3:14a; Eph. 4:24.
 2. When Christ came, He brought the kingdom of God with Him; the kingdom subdues rebellion, casts out demons, heals the sick, and raises the dead—Luke 17:21; Matt. 12:28; Mark 4:35—5:43.
- B. Whereas in Genesis 1 image precedes dominion, in the gospel the order is reversed, and dominion comes before image, because man has fallen from God's dominion and must repent—Mark 1:1, 14-15; Matt. 4:17:
 1. Through the gospel of the kingdom, God brings rebellious people under the ruling of His authority so that they may become His kingdom and be ruled by His authority—24:14; Rev. 1:5-6:
 - a. The gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed so that rebellious sinners might be saved, qualified, and equipped to enter into the kingdom of God—Acts 8:12.
 - b. As believers in Christ, we have been regenerated to enter into the kingdom of God as the realm of the divine species to live under the rule of God in life—John 3:3, 5, 15-16.
 2. Christ is the image of God and the effulgence of His glory; hence, the gospel of Christ is the gospel of His glory that

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illuminates and shines forth—2 Cor. 4:3-4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3:

- a. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 God is the image, the image is Christ, Christ is the glory, the glory is the gospel, and the gospel is the illumination.
 - b. Through the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, the shining reality of Christ, who is the embodiment and expression of the Triune God, is the treasure within us—vv. 6-7.
- C. God intends that the believers in Christ be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son and that they reign in life—Rom. 8:29; 5:17:
1. Conformation to the image of God's Son issues in His being the Firstborn among many brothers—8:29:
 - a. Conformation denotes the shaping of life, shaping us into the image of the firstborn Son of God.
 - b. Conformation is a process in which we are saved in life from our self-likeness to be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son for His corporate expression—5:10.
 2. God's complete salvation is for us to reign in life by the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness—vv. 17, 21:
 - a. In experience, to reign in life is to be under the ruling of the divine life, the kingly and royal life with which we have been regenerated—John 3:3, 5-6, 15-16; Rom. 5:17.
 - b. All the believers who have received the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness need to practice the restriction and limitation of the divine life—Matt. 8:9; 2 Cor. 2:12-14; 5:14.
- D. As believers, we may know Christ as the image of God and live in the kingdom of the Son of God's love—Col. 1:15, 13:
1. God is invisible, but Christ as the Son of His love, who is the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance, is His image, expressing what He is—Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15.
 2. To be transferred into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love is to be transferred into the Son, the Beloved, who is life to us—v. 13; 1 John 5:11-12:

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- a. Because the Father delights in His Son, the kingdom of the Son is a pleasant thing, a matter of delight—Matt. 3:17; 17:5.
 - b. The kingdom in which we may live today is a realm full of life, light, and love; in this realm there is no fear—1 Pet. 2:9.
 - c. The church is the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, which is as delightful to the Father as the Son is—Col. 1:13; 4:15-16.
- E. The church as the one new man is the corporate man in God's intention; this universal new man will fulfill the twofold purpose of bearing God's image to express Him and exercising God's authority to represent Him and fight against God's enemy for God's kingdom—Eph. 2:15; 4:24; 6:10-20; Col. 3:10-11:
1. God's creation of man for His expression and representation is a picture, a type, of the universal new man in God's new creation—Gen. 1:26-28; Eph. 4:24.
 2. The corporate new man bears the image of Him who created him (Col. 3:10), for the new man was "created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality" (Eph. 4:24).
 3. The one new man is a corporate warrior fighting against God's enemy to bring in God's kingdom—6:10-20; Rev. 12:10.
- F. In the coming age, the age of the millennial kingdom, the glorious kingdom of God will be manifested on earth—Matt. 6:13; Rev. 11:15:
1. When the Lord Jesus comes again, He and the overcomers as the corporate smiting stone will become a great mountain to fill the whole earth, making the whole earth God's kingdom, His dominion—Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45.
 2. The kingdom is a realm in which God exercises His power so that He can express His glory; thus, God's glory goes with His kingdom—Matt. 6:13; 1 Thes. 2:12.
 3. In the millennium the overcoming believers will be with Christ in the bright glory of the kingdom, shining forth "like the sun in the kingdom of their Father"—Matt. 13:43.
- G. The New Jerusalem in eternity is the consummation of image and dominion—Rev. 21:2, 10-11:

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1. The New Jerusalem bears the image, the appearance, of God, expressing the Triune God by her shining with a light “like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal”—4:3; 21:10-11.
2. The New Jerusalem is the eternal kingdom of God, filled with the glory of God—22:1, 5; 21:11.