

## **Seeing the Lord of the Word in the Word of the Lord**

*Jesus: The New Man*

Genesis 1:26-27

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The calling of Israel as God's chosen people; the calling of the Gentile world through Christ as God's people has been for one great reason. We are called to be a people who seek to give glory to the God of creation. That is all our lives are meant to be about. Glorifying God by enjoying Him forever.

For the people of God to be able to do give praise and glory to the God of creation we must know who that God is. He is the God who put Adam in the Garden, called Abraham, spared Noah, and sent His Son in this world as the New Man.

We often lose sight of the humanity of Christ. We defend the doctrine of Christ's deity with fervor and we should. We also must remember that Jesus was also fully human. When He was born through the virgin Mary we see the uniting of deity with humanity.

This has not always been affirmed and to a degree is still debated today. There are groups that will say that Jesus only appeared to be man, that He wasn't really human. That is been a teaching that historic Christianity has rejected and continues to reject today. The Bible teaches that Jesus was fully God and fully man, two natures without division united in one person.

Just as the deity of Jesus must be fought for the humanity of Jesus must also be fought for. It is as man that Christ came and acted on behalf of those who He could relate to.

### **INTRO TEXT: SETTING THE STAGE**

In the opening pages of Scripture we are shown the creative work of God. It is God who created; He alone has brought into existence this universe. There is no randomness within the cosmos from the perspective of the Bible. It is a sovereign Creator who is responsible for setting things in order according to His good pleasure.

The Genesis creation account walks us through the first week. It is in this first week that God creates the heavens and the earth and it is in this first week that God completes His creation. He says that everything is "very good" (1:31) on day six and rests on the seventh day.

It is here in the first few pages that we can see the creative work of God in the creation of the all that exists including the creation of man. It is also from this account that we can see God's intended purpose for mankind. It is out of this account that we set the stage for the rest of the history of mankind.

### **THE TEXT: MAN AS THE IMAGE OF GOD**

*“Then God said, ‘Let us make man (Adam) in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:26-27)*

Here in these two verses we see the special creation of man as the image bearer of God. It is here that we see the uniqueness of man as opposed to the rest of creation. The vegetation, the other animals, all were created according to what? *“According to their own kind.” (1:25)*

But when we get to verse 26 and 27 we see some subtle differences in the creation of man:

- In the creation of animals, plants—“Let there”
- In the creation of man—“Let us make”
- Animals and plants created—“According to their own kind.”
- Man created—“In our image”.

These are all subtle contrasts within the narrative, but nonetheless tell us something very important about mankind. *(Look at the account in Ch. 2) Man is created in a very special and unique way, a way that shows man to be the very pinnacle of God's creative order.*

### **AN IMPLICATION NOT TO BE MISSED**

So at the very outset we need to make sure and see the importance of what the Bible is teaching in the way that man is created. Since man is uniquely and specially created we need to affirm the value of human life. This has major points of implication for us today. We live in a culture that in many ways does not affirm the value of human life. We abort babies with abandon and consider those with special needs of less value than the superstar athlete and the supermodel who sells a bathing suit. What we need to do as a people who affirm the Bible is to stand up and affirm that all men in all places at all times are created equally in the image of God! We need to fight for human rights, fight for the rights of the unborn, and seek to love all regardless of ethnicity, nationality, mental state, or physical features. We seek as Christians to love all people, everywhere!

However, that man is created in the image of God carries more connotations than simply saying that human life is precious and valuable in the eyes of God. For centuries men and women have debated what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God. Lots of thought, many hours of study, and many articles, books, and essays have been written to try and define what this means.

To answer the question I have to ask myself what the original readers of Genesis 1:26-27 would have taken this to mean. **When we determine what it meant to them we can then ask what the implications are for our life today and then how this passage ultimately points us to Christ.**

## I. WHAT DOES BEING CREATED IN THIS WAY MEAN?

*“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” (vs.26a)*

When God says let us, the us referring to the Trinity, make man “in our image, after our likeness” we have to ask what image and likeness both meant at the time of writing.

The word for **image** is *tselem* and the word for **likeness** is *demut*. Both these words would have been very familiar to the Hebrew audience. They are two words that refer to statues or representations, things that are similar but not identical. When the God says “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” we could take it to read like this.

*“Let us make man in such a way that he represents us, is similar to us, but not identical to us.” (Author translation)*

Similar but not identical, representatives, that is the way in which God intends for us to be created in His image! So the question we have to ask is “In what ways are we similar and in what ways do we represent?”

## II. Implications for Our life today!

The fact that we are created in this way has implications for our lives today. There are numerous ways that we could mention in which we image God on this Earth, but we don’t necessarily have the time to get through them all so lets just mention a couple.

### 1. It means we represent God as His vice-regents!

To be a vice-regent means “to act in the name of another”. That is exactly what we are called to do when God commands Adam to exercise dominion over the created world.

*“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (1:28)*

We are to rule over creation! But we are to do so in a manner reflective of the One who created it. God has cared enough to create the world; He has seen it as “good” and then given us the charge to tend it. Indeed, Adam was the first gardner, responsible for tending the Garden of Eden, taking care of what God has given.

This means for us:

- a. That we need to be conscious of our world, the environment. Be good stewards of what God has given us. I am not real big in issues of global warming or the extinction of certain species of animals and so on. I do believe that I would better represent God if I concerned myself more with those types of things.

I believe I can hunt and fish and cut down trees and build buildings, and so on! But we do those things with restraint. I don’t poach animals; I don’t cut acres of forest down for fun or build buildings that are not needed. Instead I am mindful of the way I rule and exercise dominion over creation.

## **2. It means we represent the holiness and righteousness of God.**

When Adam was created He was created in a holy state. Matthew Henry would say, “Holy, thus happy, were our first parents.” They were free from the bondage of sin, free from its affects, and free to honor God with their lives.

Then sin enters. Although the image of God has been distorted after the fall of Adam and Eve, it has not been lost. (Gen 9:6) Nonetheless it has been marred.

In Christ we are to *“put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph 4:24)*

As believers we again have the ability to glorify God with our lives! We do so by seeking holiness and purity while on this earth.

This means:

- a. God sees, we see: So we guard our eyes, the things we cast our sight upon. God will not look upon sin, neither should we.
- b. God hears, we hear: What do we let pass through our ears?
- c. God speaks, we speak: Do the words that come from our mouth build up others, honor Christ?

We must remember that one of the ways we represent God is by displaying His holiness and righteousness for others to see and be drawn to Him.

We can say then that we image God in such a way that we are similar to Him, represent Him on this earth, and those two facts have major implications for our day to day lives. We seek to rule this earth faithfully and display the holiness and righteousness of God to a watching world. But the question then becomes do we do this? The answer is no!

### **III. How does this passage point us towards Christ?**

We fail to rule the earth, to tend it, and to have dominion over it with any sort of integrity. We use it and abuse it! We fail to display the righteousness and holiness of God to a watching world. We are sinners who fall far short. The first man was charged with doing these things perfectly, He failed, sin entered the world and mankind has failed ever since. Indeed because of sin it is impossible for us to succeed!! Thus even in the first pages of Scripture we see the need for a New Man, One who will come fulfill the Covenant of Works that God has given!

Adam is the representative head for all of mankind. He is given the charge to exercise dominion, to rule. He fails to do so; instead he is ruled by creation. The serpent, a creature, deceives Adam and Eve, and they obey the created order rather than the Creator!

The moment that man disobeys God sin enters the world. No longer is man allowed to stay in the Garden in the presence of God. He is immediately removed from the Garden, separated from the intimate fellowship with the Maker. The relationship that man was to enjoy was severed!

Was the design for man to represent God on this earth, to display His glory, was that plan trashed? Was God surprised by these events? Certainly not! The first man was simply pointing us towards the New and Greater Man to come.

*“For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.” (Rom 5:19)*

*“For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor 15:21-22)*

It is Jesus who would come as the Greater Adam, as the One who would fulfill the commands of God with perfection. It is Jesus who leaves His throne in the heavens to come to earth and do the work we were meant to do. It is Jesus who exercises dominion over the created order as He commands the water to turn to wine, as He casts out demons, walks on water, feeds the multitudes, and shows His authority even over sickness. He walks in holiness and righteousness, completely obeying the commands of God.

As we are united with Christ in faith, our Son ship we have in Him far exceeds that which we had in Adam. Now as Sons and heirs with Christ, we seek to walk worthy of our calling, and to walk in a way that we begin to reflect that image which was marred by sin.