The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the slide, framing the central white area where the text is placed.

# Reading the Bible Forwards and Backwards

Session 4: The Image of God

# Table Discussion: Questions

- ▶ 1. How do you describe yourself when meeting someone new?
- ▶ 2. What makes you different from other living things in creation?
- ▶ 3. What in your life makes you feel less than human?

# 1. Image of God: Gift and Calling

## Common Misperception

- ▶ The Image of God is not something “in” us.
- ▶ It is true that humans are different from other creatures in
  - ▶ Language
  - ▶ Rational reflection: Ability to reason at a high level
  - ▶ Deliberative action: acting with meaning and purpose
- ▶ None of these “natural capacities” make us special other than being a **more complex** biological lifeform.
  - ▶ What if someone lacks those traits?

# Image of God: Gift and Calling

- ▶ Definitions of Image of God that focus on “something in us” tend to picture humans as fundamentally autonomous and independent.
- ▶ The image of God is **not** something in us that is semi-divine but something between us and God that constitutes a covenant relationship.

# Image in Relationship

- ▶ Very word “image” implies **dependence** on something else. This is true from the very beginning.
- ▶ Genesis 1 does not picture God creating man and then entering into a covenant relationship with him (as if there was a time when man was on his own without any reference to or relationship with God).
- ▶ *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image’* Genesis 1:26

# Image Not Independent

- ▶ Created in relationship with God
- ▶ Created in relationship with Others
- ▶ Genesis 1:27

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Even before we get to marriage, we see relationship and dependence of humans with each other.

# Image Not Independent

- ▶ Marriage reflects unity and diversity
- ▶ “bone of my bone” Genesis 2:23

“Although different, they belong to each other. Male and female are created as beings who offer something the other does not have. They find satisfaction in the intimacy of their union, which is richer by virtue of their differences. We might say the idea of ‘person’ from the beginning of Scripture is a ‘being involved in the relationship of unity and diversity’

...The words instituting marriage in Genesis 2 function not merely to cement a social contract between consenting parties, but rather as a deeply theological claim on their reflected identity. Marriage is a significant recognition of this unity in diversity across the canon.”

-Rick Lints “Identity and Idolatry”

# In Relationship with Creation

- ▶ Man as image of God is given responsibilities toward creation: to tend and care and exercise dominion.
- ▶ Question:
  - ▶ How does being an introvert tempt us to distort our created purpose?
  - ▶ How does being an extrovert tempt us to distort our created purpose?

# In Relationship with Creation

- ▶ Day 1: Let there be Light and Dark
  - ▶ Day 4: Sun/Moon “rule day and night”
- ▶ Day 2: Let there be Water and Sky
  - ▶ Day 5: Fish/Birds multiply water/sky
- ▶ Day 3: Let there be Land
  - ▶ Day 6: Man “have dominion” over fish/birds/livestock/etc.

# A. Royal Vocation

- ▶ Drama of Creation Depicts Our Purpose (Gen. 1)
  - ▶ Notice the movement forward 

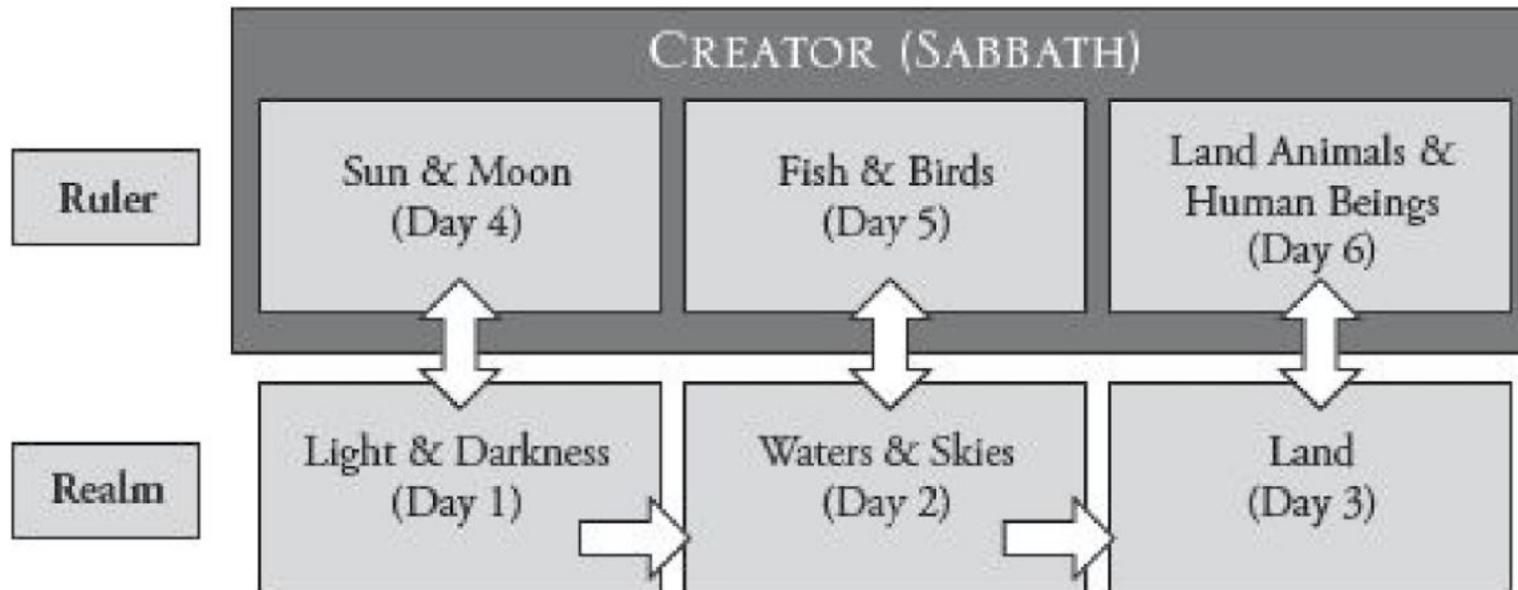


Chart h/t Horton

# Royal Vocation

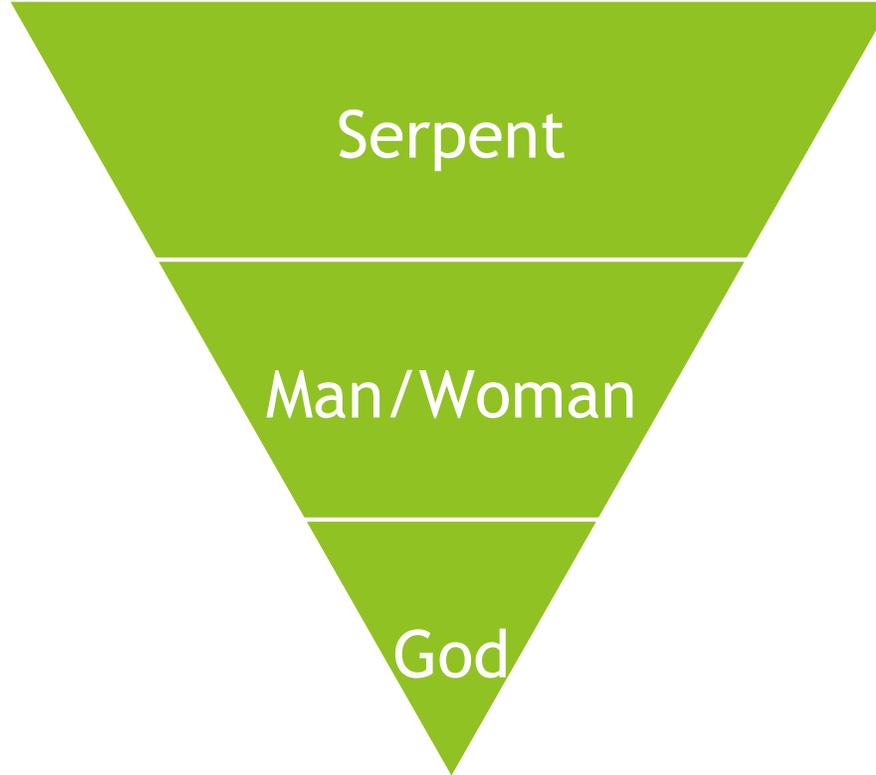
- ▶ Creation in the garden still pointed forward to something more. All creation began with a greater destiny lying before it!
- ▶ Following the Gen 1 imagery, Man is in position as ruler (Vice-King) of the sixth day. It is a position of responsibility.
  - ▶ It was Adam's calling to lead the whole of creation into God's everlasting shalom signaled by the Tree of Life
  - ▶ Man the vice-king processes into the Sabbath presence of God bringing all creation as a tribute laid at the feet of God.
  - ▶ Seventh Day Pictures God Reigning as Ultimate King over all

# Order of Responsibility

Creation (Gen 1)



Fall (Gen 3)



# Image Reflects God

- ▶ What evidence do we have that God exists?
- ▶ Image of God teaches us the we reflect God

Genesis 5:1-3

[1] This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. [2] Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. [3] When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Image of God and Son of God are twin concepts

# Image Reflects God

- ▶ Ways we reflect God:
- ▶ *“He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?” Psalm 94:9*
- ▶ WCF, Chapter 4.2 After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image;

# Image Reflects God

## ▶ Work

- ▶ The Creator God designed us as working creatures after his likeness. We like him should do things well.

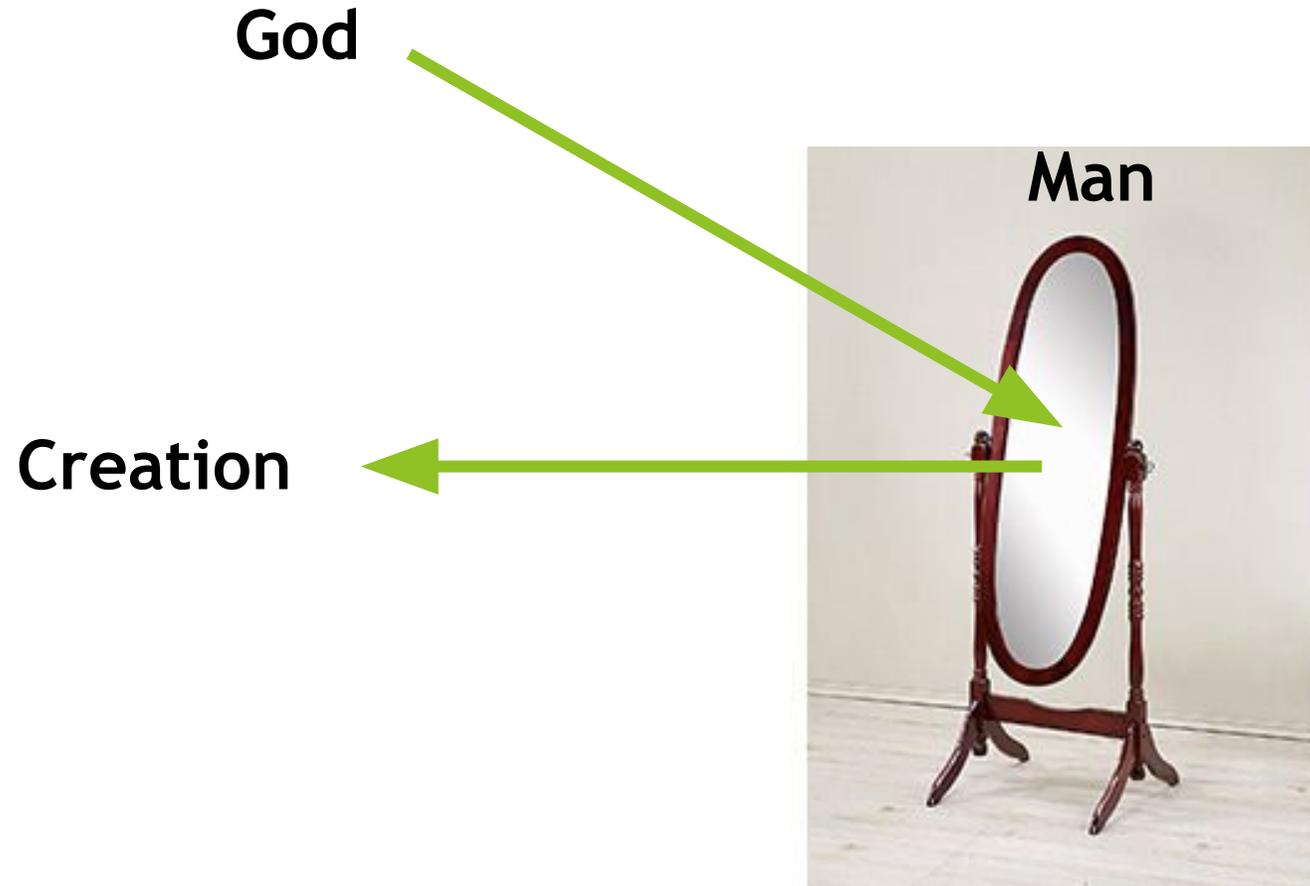
## ▶ Dominion/Rule

- ▶ God grants us to be vice-regents. We like him should bring order out of chaos.

## ▶ Judicial Discernment

- ▶ Genesis 3:22 “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.” Also, makes us like God morally (lost after the Fall)
- ▶ Man is like God in terms of knowing good and evil, which has to do with the royal function of judicial discernment and decision rendering.

# Image Reflects God



# Image Represents God

- ▶ “It was a common practice for ancient rulers to place statues in conquered lands representing their rule. The statue would bear some resemblance to the king, signifying his real though not physical presence in the conquered land. By so doing the king asserted his sovereignty over regions where he could not be physically present”. Lints
- ▶ What does having God’s image all around the world communicate?



# Image Represents God

- ▶ Mark 12

“Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” [16] And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” [17] Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they marveled at him.

- ▶ How does the Image of God inform your understanding of what Jesus is saying?



## B. Priestly Vocation

- ▶ Creation is pictured as a temple
- ▶ Psalm 19 “Heavens declare the glory of God...”
- ▶ Genesis 2:15 “to work it and keep it” is language used of priests in relation to the Temple
- ▶ God is present everywhere, yet
  - ▶ Uniquely imaged/present in man
  - ▶ God is redemptively present in covenantal relationships
  - ▶ Humans are mediators of sacred space

## 2. Sin's Distortion

- ▶ We no longer exercise **proper dominion** in service but **tyranny** over things instead.
- ▶ Genesis 9:6 “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.” (also James 3:9)
- ▶ The fall does not eradicate the covenantal relationship between God and humanity; but now, after the covenant curses, humanity is divided between Cain's proud city and the city of God represented by Seth.

# Sin's Distortion

Romans 1:26-32

[26] For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; [27] and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

[28] And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. [29] They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, [30] slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, [31] foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. [32] Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

# Sin's Distortion

- ▶ Those particular sins aren't making society wicked. Humanity/society has departed from the image they were to reflect and those sins are the result.

# A. Image Reflects Creation NOT God

**God**

**Man**

**Creation**



## B. Idolatry: Images of Creation

- ▶ Genesis 1-11 Hebrew word for “image” is positive, almost every instance of “image” after that is negative.
- ▶ Second Commandment warns against mistaking the created order for the Creator.
  - ▶ Golden Calf
- ▶ What happens when we worship created over Creator? What happens when we make an aspect of creation our God? We become like these Images
  - ▶ Life is found in...
    - ▶ Sex: We must reflect sexuality, youth, even transform body
    - ▶ Wealth: We must reflect status symbols of wealth

# 3. Image of God: Christ

▶ Colossians 1:15-16,19

[15] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. [16] For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him...For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell

▶ If idolatry was the theological act of honoring the creature above the Creator, Jesus was the one who reversed that theological move by reconstituting the *imago Dei* with the full reflection of the divine glory in his own person. Jesus was the true image in contrast to the false idol

# Image of God: Christ

## ▶ John 14:8-9

[8] Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” [9] Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

## ▶ Hebrews 1:3

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

# 4. Images Remade: In the Image of Christ

- ▶ Act of Investiture: “putting on” Christ

- ▶ Colossians 3:12-14

[12] Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [13] bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. [14] And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

- ▶ 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

[1] For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2] For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, [3] if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. [4] For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

# Images Remade: In the Image of Christ

## ▶ Reflecting Christ

2 Corinthians 3:18

[18] And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

“Not by an inflowing of divine substance, but by the Spirit’s work of conforming us ethically to Christ do we finally become those who bear God’s image in grace, and, one day, in eschatological glory.” Horton

# Conformed to Image of Christ

## ▶ Romans 8:29

[29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

- ▶ “Paul claims that to share in being conformed to the image of the Son is to share in the **death and resurrection pattern** instituted and constituted by Jesus. Sharing the image of the one who is the image of God is to participate in his death and resurrection.”  
Lints
- ▶ “...God has ordained suffering as the path to dignity. Enduring hardship is the means by which we receive glory.” (Rom 8:17, we **share in his suffering** in order that we may also share in his glory”) Pratt

# 5. Our Future in Christ

- ▶ Adam/Christ parallel

- ▶ 1 Corinthians 15:49

[49] Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

- ▶ “In Adam humans inherit death as their just sentence. In the resurrection Christ’s people will bear his image, the man of heaven, and will inherit an imperishable existence. Yet strangely, on this side of paradise God’s people bear both the image of Adam and the image of Christ. These images are not mutually exclusive.” Lints

# Conclusion

- ▶ You are an Image of God
  - ▶ You have purpose and worth just in who you are not in what we need to become or accomplish.
  - ▶ Ourselves: Modern Quest for identity
    - ▶ We use intellect, career, race, gender, class, relationships, etc. to define us
  - ▶ Others:
    - ▶ Every person has dignity and value and is accountable to God.

# Conclusion

## ▶ You are an Image of God

- ▶ “the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship” CS Lewis
- ▶ “I want you to put this book down for a moment. Go find another person and shake his or her hand. Although you will see a flawed, weak human being, say to that person, ‘Hello, Your Majesty!’ Don’t say it as a joke. Let the look in your eyes and the tone of your voice convey sincerity.” Pratt

# Conclusion

## ▶ You are an Image of God

- ▶ You are not God. We aren't made to be the center of the universe.
- ▶ Our vocation is to lead creation to Sabbath presence of God.
- ▶ How does this change your relationship to work? Are you working to lead creation to lordship? Or, are you worshipping work?