

## The Image of God (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:4-7)

I. **Man is the Unique Creation of God.** God's creation follows a common pattern in the first chapter of Genesis. God says, "Let there be..." and what He speaks comes into being by the word of His power. The only exception to this is in the creation of man. Rather than simply speaking, God deliberates within Himself concerning man's creation (1:26). He declares that He will give man dominion over the rest of His creation, and He makes them in His own image (1:27). Chapter two sheds further light on the manner in which God creates man. He "gets His hands dirty" by forming Adam's body from the dust of the ground and personally breathing life into him (2:7). Similarly, He personally takes Adam's rib and fashions the woman from it (2:21-22). There is no parallel to man among all of creation.

## II. What Constitutes the Image of God?

### A. Possibilities

1. **Our bodies or souls.** Some believe that it has something to do with our bodies. However, God does not have a body (Deut. 4:15; John 4:24), so this cannot be true literally, and the sense in which this could be true would then be lost to us. Conversely, some believe that it must be the spiritual aspect of us that is made in the image of God since God is spirit. Although this idea is valid, it has difficulty in that the angels are also spirits (Heb. 1:14), but the Scriptures do not testify to them being made in God's image.
2. **The family.** Some believe that it has to do with the family as an image of the Trinity since male and female and their need to be fruitful and multiply are mentioned in connection with God making man in His image (1:27-28). There is some validity to this, as the Scriptures do compare the husband and wife relationship to the relationship between the Father and Christ (1 Cor. 11:3). However, neither this verse nor any other connects the family to the image of God explicitly, so the connection is unproven at best.

### B. Scriptural testimony

1. **Knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.** There are two places that explicitly speak of the image of God in man, in particular, God's restoring that image in redemption (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24). These verses speak of the image of God consisting of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Adam was not made with a childlike mind but had knowledge of God and the world in relation to Him. Adam had a spotless righteousness before God prior to his fall into sin. Adam was set apart by God to serve Him in holiness.
2. **Man as imitator of God.** These realities have to do with the character of man. If we think about them in relationship to God, we recognize that man is to be these things because God is. God is perfect in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, as well as justice, goodness, truthfulness, etc. The image of God in man calls for him to serve God by reflecting the character of God.

## Man as a Priest in God's Temple (Gen. 2:8-15)

I. **Holiness.** That which is holy is set apart from common use, to be specially used for God. The simple fact that Adam is a unique creation made in the image of God speaks to a special relationship that He is to have with God. Also, as we just discussed, part of the image of God in man is the holiness in which man was to serve God. This has a close connection to the idea of the priest who also was set apart from common people to be holy and to serve God in a special manner (Ex. 28:41; 29:1; Lev. 21; Deut. 10:8-9). Adam's original holiness speaks to his priestly function.

- II. *Priestly Language.*** The language used concerning Adam also indicates his priestly calling before God. In **2:15**, God puts Adam in the garden to “work and keep” it. These specific Hebrew words are specially used in the Old Testament to speak of the duties of priests working in the tabernacle (**Num. 3:7-8; 8:26; 18:5-6**). This makes sense if we understand that Eden is a temple.
- III. *Eden as a Temple.*** The biggest indicator that we are to understand Adam as a priest comes from the clear connection that the Garden of Eden has to the tabernacle and temple. There are hints of this in the text of chapter two in that God specially plants the garden in order to place Adam there (**2:8-9**) and it is the special meeting place between God and man. Eden is equated with God’s holy mountain and His temple that comes down out of heaven (**Eze. 28:11-19; Rev. 21-22**). Imagery concerning the temple is closely connected to Garden of Eden imagery, such as the image of a river that flows to give life to the land around it (**Gen. 2:10-14; Eze. 47:8-12**). The only places in which Cherubim are found are in Eden (**Gen. 3:24**) and in the tabernacle and temple (**Ex. 25-26; 1 Ki. 6; Eze. 41**) and in both places, they guard the presence of God.

### Establishing the Covenant (**Gen. 2:16-17**)

#### I. *Did God Make a Covenant with Adam?*

- A. **Defining a covenant.** A covenant is a binding relationship between two or more parties that involves both blessings and obligations. When it comes to covenants that God makes with man, we also see that God sovereignly establishes each covenant, that these covenants ultimately promise life as a blessing and death as a curse, and that these covenants are for our benefit.
- B. **Scriptural testimony to a covenant with Adam.** Although the word “covenant” is not used in these opening chapters of Genesis, **Hos. 6:7** affirms that there was indeed a covenant with Adam. The verse says that God’s people have transgressed the covenant “like Adam.” Some translations say “like man” or “men” instead of “Adam” because Adam is the Hebrew word for man. However, even if that is a proper translation, it still testifies to a covenant with Adam because the only way there could be a covenant that is common to man in general is if it was made with Adam first and this verse would still testify to the universal guilt of humanity. This covenant has been given many names, such as the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Life, the Covenant of Creation, etc.

#### II. *Man’s Natural Relation to God*

- A. **Who God is.** Understanding humanity’s relationship to God apart from a covenant helps us to understand what a gift God’s covenants are. God is the sovereign Lord and creator of all things, He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings (**Psa. 47; 1 Tim. 6:15-16; Rev. 19:11-16**).
- B. **What God requires.** As such, all creation is bound to obey Him perfectly in all things (**Job 38:8-11; Prov. 8:29; Isa. 45:12; Luke 8:25**) and exists only for His glory (**Rom. 11:36; 1 Chr. 29:11; Psa. 24:1; Deut. 10:14**). We were made to be perfect morally, not as the highest aspiration of humanity, but as the bare minimum of what God requires of us (**Luke 17:7-10**). The moral law of God – summarized in loving God with all our being and loving our neighbor as ourselves (**Matt. 22:35-40**) – has been the obligation of all people at all times (**Rom. 1:32; 2:14-16**) from the beginning. Even as we have already seen, man was made in God’s image and so is bound to imitate God’s character and to worship God according to His command. In all this we would deserve no reward even if we obeyed God’s commandments perfectly forever and would be subject to judgment the moment we sin. It is only God’s covenant that promised blessings to Adam for doing what He was already bound to do.

### III. *The Details of the Covenant*

- A. **What is required.** In addition to the moral law and the creation mandates (**Gen. 1:28**) that Adam was already required to keep, God gave the specific command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (**2:16-17**). Whereas the other commands would naturally benefit Adam to keep and are grounded in the being of God and the order of creation, this command is intentionally arbitrary. This was to test Adam's will as to whether he would obey God's word simply on the basis of God's authority or if he would choose his own will over God's.
- B. **Adam's role.** In this covenant, Adam represents all humanity that will ever be as the head of the human race. He was placed under a period of testing at the end of which his obedience or disobedience would be imputed to all humanity. Paul makes this argument by equating the work of Christ with Adam (**Rom. 5:12-21**). All humanity is guilty in Adam, but Christ as the second Adam redeems His people. Christ was given a period of testing and, instead of failing, He perfectly kept the covenant. Because He kept the covenant, His righteousness is imputed to His people (**Rom. 10:4; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:8-9**). Christ's role in redemption helps us to see Adam's similar role in the fall.
- C. **The promise of the covenant.** If Adam had kept the covenant, he would have obtained everlasting, glorified life beyond the possibility of sin for himself and all humanity. That this life is the promise of the covenant is clear from the presence of the tree of life in the garden and in the new heavens and earth (**Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2, 14**), in that Christ gains for us what Adam forfeited (**1 Cor. 15:21-22**), in the repeated promises God gives of life for keeping the law (**Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:10-12**), and in that the Sabbath is the final goal of creation and salvation is pictured as the eternal Sabbath that God had established from the beginning (**Heb. 4:1-11**). So, as we can see, God's covenant with Adam was a gracious arrangement, whereby Adam and all humanity had the opportunity to gain eternal life by the temporary obedience of one man.

### Marriage: A Second Covenant (**Gen. 2:18-25**)

- I. **The Need for Woman.** The only thing in all creation that God said was not good was for man to be alone (**2:18**). God had brought all the animals to Adam to name them, but it was clear that there was not one suitable for him among them all. Therefore, God specially crafted the woman from the rib of Adam and brought her to him in marriage (**2:22-24**).
- II. **Understanding Marriage**
  - A. **Marriage is normative.** Marriage is the natural state to which all are called. There are exceptions to this (**Matt. 19:10-12**) but God's normal purpose is for each of us to be married (**2:24**).
  - B. **Marriage is between one man and one woman.** It is clear from the declaration in **2:24** that the institution of marriage was to be only between one man and one woman. This is the plain understanding of the verse and the understanding that Jesus gives of it (**Matt. 19:4-6**). Any other arrangement – whether a union that is outside of marriage, polygamy, or so-called homosexual marriage – is against God's intended design for marriage.
  - C. **Purposes of marriage.** Marriage is for companionship and mutual help of husband and wife (**2:18; 1 Cor. 11:11; Eph. 5:22-33**). Marriage is for proper sexual conduct (**1 Cor. 7:1-5**). Marriage is for the production of children and discipling them in the faith (**Gen. 1:28; Mal. 2:15; 1 Cor. 7:12-14; Deut. 6:7**).
  - D. **God has provided all Adam needs.** Marriage is the final thing Adam needed to fulfill his calling.