



## S3.E1. What is Man?

### Image and Likeness

Ps. 8.1-8 “**1**O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens! **2**Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger. **3**When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, **4**What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

**5**For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. **6**You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, **7**All sheep and oxen— Even the beasts of the field, **8**The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. **9**O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!” (See also Heb.2.6)

This Psalm is spoken as by one who has ventured out on a dark, clear, moonlit night, standing alone gazing up into the heavens so full of the multitude of stars and planets that fill the expanse of the sky. Left alone with his thoughts he contemplates the greatness of God and the magnitude of His creation and his own insignificance and unworthiness of God’s consideration. Yet somehow in all the mystery of it, he writes, “You (God) are *mindful* of him.” He writes not that “You were mindful of him in creation, but that, “*You are mindful of him*”; in this hour, at this moment, I am being called into your remembrance. The personal thought of insignificance soon passes into thoughts of magnitude and purpose.

Though some parts of this Psalm seem to relate more to Christ than to man in general, it must be interpreted firstly to man. It is noted that verse must be interpreted in using two different Hebrew words for “man;” the first is in “*What is ‘man,’*” (Heb. *Enosh*, meaning mankind in his weakness and humiliation or inferiority; and then he writes, “*and the son of ‘man,’*” (Heb. *Adam*, as one formed out of the dust of the earth, meaning just as his earthly forefather, Adam.)

And so the psalmist writes, “*what is man*”—what is there in me that entitles me to so much notice from the Divine being? Why has God given him so much honor that he has placed him over all His creation, the works of His hands? He sees himself so insignificant, his life like the morning dew soon to disappear with the coming sun; and yet as it is written in Gn. 1.26, He

has given him, “*dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*” And in Gn. 2.15 “*15Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.*” This man has divine purpose having been given extraordinary dominion in all the earth. No other creature in heaven or earth has this status.

This Psalm relates to Christ (Messiah) only in the sense as it implies a final exaltation of man through Christ’s, reference in verse 6. “*5For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.* And so, the direct reference of this Psalm is to man, yet not to be dogmatic, we are reminded that Christ too used the title “Son of man” of Himself.

Yet, this word, which speaks of such a Divine focus of God on man, it does not answer “why” this attention, this continual call to remembrance. There is something more that remains, to explain this Divine attention, something more personal and intimate in this relationship between God and man. Perhaps insight into this relationship can be gleaned from Gn. 1.26-27,

*“26Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our **image**, according to Our **likeness**; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

Having reviewed several scholarly writers attempting to explain this passage, and the multitude of attempts to explain its words and phrases, a process called *Exegesis*, I will make no attempt to try such theology in its interpretation. Instead, I would like to apply some generalizations regarding this scripture which will hopefully give us a good idea of the emphasis and importance of man being created in the *image* and *likeness* of God.

**Gn. 1.26 “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image;’”**. Of obvious note is the use of the plural pronouns, *Us* and *Our*. Is it not true that all persons of the Godhead were present and functioning together at creation? For instance, the Holy Spirit: Gn. 1.2 “*And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters;*” and the Father: Gn. 1.3 “*Then God (the Father) said, “Let there be light;”*” and even the Son: Col. 1.15-17 “*15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or 16principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”*

And so all things were in collaboration of the Godhead, so that man was created in both the *image* and *likeness* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They certainly were not creating other gods with eternal and divine attributes of the Living God, but were creating man, a living being, to be in relationship to all of creation to some measure of what God is to him. Thus, man is set in place, as God’s own representative, between two realms, the created physical or natural realm and the uncreated spiritual realm of heaven. Man would thus need a body to relate to and communicate with the physical universe and a spirit to relate to and commune

with the spiritual dimension. Therefore, man must be created in the image and likeness of God.

**In God's own image and likeness.** Once again, please note that there is such a significant difference of opinions regarding the strict interpretation of the phrase "*In God's own image and likeness,*" that no attempt here will be made to do so, or to put a new spin on it. Rather, let's just focus on the simplest root meaning of the words *image* and *likeness* and allow some generalizations to follow.

### **Image (Heb. Tselem)**

The Hebrew word for "shadow" (*tsele*) comes out of the word *tselem* (image). In other words, if God would cast a shadow on the earth, man would be that shadow. We certainly do not look like God, but the shadow behaves like God. If I wave my hand, my shadow waves; if I jump up and down, my shadow jumps up and down; If I dance, my shadow dances. The shadow is an image of who and what we are. We have this gift, if we choose to accept it, to be image bearers of God, and that means to be living our lives and behaving, and serving like God intended us to do.

And so, being created in the *image* of God signifies being that shadow, a representative of God, reflecting His attitudes, character, purposes and goals. In the ancient Near Eastern cultures, images or "idols" were commonly used in religious practices to represent deities. Our God forbade such practices. However, these images were believed to embody the presence or essence of the gods they depicted. The biblical use of "tselem," the word for *image*, describing humanity as made in God's image was revolutionary, emphasizing the unique relationship between God and humans, and the inherent dignity and value and purpose of human life.

There is a biblical example of the concept of "shadows." Reading Col. 2.16-17 it says that all that is in the Old Testament is but a type or a *shadow* of Christ, "<sup>16</sup>So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, <sup>17</sup>which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance (body) is of Christ."

This verse clearly compares the Old Testament's religion, all its practices and objects, as shadows of that which was to come spiritually, in Christ, who is the actual *substance* or *body* that casts the shadow. The Old Testament is not the reality of the New Testament, for it is physical and temporal in nature, whereas the New Testament is spiritual and eternal in nature. It is however, a prophetic image or shadow of that which was to come. And so mankind is that shadow of God, and we, the Church, in particular are that shadow of Christ.

### **Likeness (Heb. Damuth)**

If *image* denotes the "shadow" of God, *likeness* (*damuth*) signifies the resemblance of that shadow to God in actual function. This means that man received "divine gifts" or "abilities" that cannot be found anywhere in any other living creature or angelic being. As an idol is

formed to resemble some living creature, man is formed to resemble God. This *likeness* is the unique relationship between man and God and between man and all of creation—that is, just how man relates and interacts with God above and creation below—other creatures have not this ability.

In the Genesis account of Adam, we see him walking about the garden, doing this and that, naming the creatures, and eating of the fruit of the land. Gn. 2.15 “<sup>15</sup>*Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.*” And, Gn. 2.19-20 “*And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field.*” So Adam was amply able to relate and interact with creation.

He is also depicted as relating to the spiritual realm interacting with God, as well as with the devil. Satan spoke to Eve, Gn. 3.1 “<sup>1</sup>*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’*” Following this conversation Eve, then Adam, disobeyed and ate of this forbidden fruit, and sin entered into created man. Immediately afterwards God came to commune with Adam (and Eve), Gn. 3.8-10 “<sup>8</sup>*And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ <sup>10</sup>So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’*” This interaction of man with both the spiritual and natural realm did not have such a good outcome as sin had its consequences.

## God’s Ambassador

It is quite understandable that if this ambassador of God to the earth, His crown jewel of creation, this man (Adam) was to be God’s shadow in the earth, and act as His chief administrator and representative, then Adam also must have some *likeness* of the divine nature to allow him to function in this priest-like capacity. This man of God must be able to interact in two distinct realms, the spiritual and the physical worlds. Following his disobedience in the Garden, Adam, and afterwards all his progeny, lost the ability to directly interact with God; they have become spiritually dead to God, but he remained spiritually alive to the devil and the whole rest of the spiritual realm. Nothing contaminated and tainted with sin could ever enter the Divine presence of God, wherein only holiness and righteousness dwells. Sin is darkness which cannot exist in the presence of light, as it is written of natural man, 1 Tim. 6.16 “*who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see,...*”

And so today, there is by man’s own fallen nature, an enmity between man and God. God’s valued representative has been lost to the devil; mankind hates God and His righteousness, and God is angry with man. But then God sent His only Son into the world to *reconcile* man back to God and to *restore* him to his divinely appointed righteous duty as His ambassador to the earth.

It is written, Col. 1.19-20 “<sup>19</sup>*For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup>and by Him to **reconcile** all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*” This “*all the fullness* (of God) *should dwell*” means

that Christ was divinely complete spirit, soul and body and able to serve as God's divinely appointed representative in the earth and as man's high priest (Heb. 4.14). The passage continues with Col. 1.21-22,

*"**21**And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has **reconciled 22**in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight."*

He has reconciled! Christ has thus purchased our reconciliation to God. However, until man receives Christ as his Savior and is born again of His Spirit, mankind is not actually recovered to God because man's spirit remains dead to God. Man MUST be born again to renew his spirit. God sent His Chief Ambassador, Jesus Christ, to speak and to act in His name, thereby reconciling man to God. And now Christ, who is the Head of His body, the Church, sends His own envoy into the earth to act on His behalf, 2 Cor. 5.18-20,

*"**18**Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, **19**that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

***20**Now then, we are **ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*

To be *reconciled* to God is to have all barriers between man and God removed, such as sin, and to be presented as holy "in Christ." Once accepted in the Beloved, man is *restored* to his former function as God's ambassador. A Greek lexicon interestingly describes this word, *ambassador*, this way,

*"The verb "presbeuó" primarily means to act as an ambassador or representative. In the New Testament, it is used metaphorically to describe the role of believers, particularly apostles, as representatives of Christ and His message. This involves conveying the message of reconciliation and the gospel to others, acting with the authority and responsibility of a divine envoy."*

And so this capacity of man to function as God's representative in both the spiritual and physically creative realms has been restored, in Christ, and remains critical to his life and to his service to God. The key to this ability lies in the fact that man originally had been created in the *likeness* of God; and the keys to that is that man, like God, is to be triune being, *spirit, soul, and body*. We see this trinity of God in the following verses in which God is described as in *soul, spirit, and body*,

Mt. 12.18 *"Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My **soul** is well pleased! I will put My **Spirit** upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles."*

Jn. 1.14 *"And the Word became **flesh** (body) and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

Thus here the word speaks of God the Father having a *soul* and a *spirit*, and of the Son a *body* of flesh; and furthermore, speaking of the Son alone, it is written of Jesus Christ,

Col. 2. 8-10, “**8**Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. **9**For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; **10**and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

So this fullness, this completeness of Christ, and for those “in Christ,” relates to being fully functioning in spirit, soul, and body, even as it is also written of Him functioning in all three components,

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Mt. 26.38 “Then He said to them, “My **soul** is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

At the Cross, Lk. 23.46 “And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My **spirit**.’ ” Having said this, He breathed His last.

In the tomb, Lk. 24.23 “When they did not find His **body**, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.”

Thus it is written of Jesus Christ, who is indwelt by the fullness of the Godhead, is spirit, soul, and body in which and through which He had full fellowship spiritually with His Father in Heaven and in the natural with man on the earth. Jesus Christ was the sole representative of God in the earth, functioning in His priestly capacity, and reconciling man back to God and restoring man’s relationship with God. And now Christ is the Head of the Church, and that functioning of reconciliation and restoration is now given to the Church to act as His ambassadors and representatives in the earth. Once again, it is written,

2 Cor. 5.20 “Now then, we are **ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”

May this word of reconciliation grip every soul who reads or hears these words. A primary goal of Christ’s representative is *reconciliation* of the world. It means to restore to a state of harmony. In the New Testament it is used to describe the restoration of the relationship between God and man through Jesus Christ. This reconciliation involves a change from enmity to being a born-again child of God, with the removal of the sin barrier and the establishment of peace and rest for the soul. Consider the following two scriptures noting the importance of *reconciliation*:

Rm. 5.10 “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

2 Cor. 5.17-21 “**17**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. **18**Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, **19**that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

**20**Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. **21**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Recall now that the title of this message is, “What is Man,” and that we originally began with the idea that man was created in the *image* and *likeness* of God. This led us to discover that being in the *image* of God man was to be as God’s shadow, His representative in earth, overseeing and managing the earth in the natural on the one side and fellowshiping with God on the other side receiving His input, His thoughts, and the sharing of His goals for creation.

In order for this to happen, being in the *likeness* of God was absolutely required for man’s role as God’s representative, for he had to relate to God on the one hand through his spirit and relate to the created world on the other side through his body—the soul of man being the central process unit taking it all in, understanding things, and acting accordingly. However, when sin entered through the disobedience of Adam, man died spiritually to God and all mankind since has been alienated from God, unable to approach God spiritually, thereby rendering him useless as God’s representative.

Man needed a Savior, Jesus Christ, whose ultimate sacrifice for sin, the crucifixion on the cross, was man’s salvation—to whoever will receive Him into their hearts and be born again of a renewed spirit. In Christ man is now reconciled to God, and now fit to be restored as God’s representative in the earth in general, and Christ’s ambassadors to the world reconciling man to God. So, to be fully alive to God, functioning in relationship with God according to His intended purposes man must be complete in spirit, soul, and body, meaning that salvation must come to the whole man, as described in 1 Thes. 5.23

*“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

We will continue with this next time.