

GOD'S HUMAN FAMILY

Created In His Image

Genesis 1:26-28 (ESV)

Then God said, "Let us make man 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. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "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."

PREPARATION FOR VIDEO SESSION

- ◆ Pray, seeking wisdom and understanding of the content.
- ◆ Read Chapters 5-9 of the Unseen Realm
- ◆ Review viewer guide and Questions for Deeper Understanding.

Viewer Guide

In Genesis 1:26-28, there are at least three things in this passage that link us to God and the other sons of God: _____ – Human-kind's likeness is connected to our (plural) _____.

What are the attributes of being made God's image?

- ◆ Male and female possess it _____.
- ◆ It is not _____, acquired over time or in stages.
- ◆ It uniquely _____ humanity from rest of the created terrestrial world

What does image **not** mean? Most theology books would say intelligence or self-awareness, consciousness or some other ability or quality, such as ability to communicate with God.

This is the _____ view.

There are other parts of the created world that share these attributes, which muddies the water.

What about the human conceptus? If not thinking or praying or conscious, does it lack the image of God?

- ◆ Sanctity of human life: Ethical Implications for _____ and end of life issues / _____.



POINT TO PONDER

Why would God need to announce "let us create" to the other members of the trinity?

Wouldn't they already know?

What are some other problems with how we define the image of God?

- ♦ Insects can communicate and possess a kind of intelligence / cognition.
- ♦ Koko the gorilla could communicate with sign language.
- ♦ Parrots can speak.

Communication is not unique to humans.

Artificial intelligence can mimic consciousness or perhaps someday even have independent thought
What if there are intelligent aliens? The bible does not speak to this issue.

Is the conceptus only _____ human life, still not sacred yet? Ethically okay to terminate?

If the image of God is not a quality, is it our soul?

- ♦ Hebrew *Nephesh* is usually translated as _____.
- ♦ *Ruach* = spirit
- ♦ *Nis mat hay-yi m* = breath of life

These terms are often used to describe humans. (Gen 1:21 and Gen 2:7) Supposition is that these are distinct. But this language is also used elsewhere of non-human life. In Job 10:12 and Ps 31:5 Humans have a *ruach* / In Eccles. 3:21 and 12:7 so do animals :

- ♦ Gen 1:21 God created every living creature = (*Nephesh hayim*) – not unique to humans.
- ♦ Gen 7:22 – Everything in whose nostrils was the breath of life (*Nis mat hay-yim*), refers to _____ life force.

So these terms cannot be used to define the image of God because they also apply to animals.
The qualitative view is ruined by the incremental problem. And we can't rely on language because it is also used of animals. Based on Gen 1:26 - Humans must have it exclusively, male and female have it equally, it is not incremental

How does one define the image of God?

Go back to the phrase "let us create humankind in our image" (*Bet tsellim*) "in the image". The little preposition has a range of options.

- ♦ Put the dishes in the sink – location

We are created to be God's representatives— His proxies on earth, both in relationship to each other and anything God wants done. It speaks as a status or role, not a specific quality.

- ♦ I wrote the letter in pencil - instrument used
- ♦ I broke the vase in pieces - result
- ♦ I work in medicine – describes a field of different activities / functions – this is how we need to understand *bet tsellim*

God created us **as** his image – this is a status – you are created to fulfill a specific role / task.

Since we are created "as God's image," we are created to be God's representatives as his proxies, both in relationship to each other and anything God wants done. So it speaks as a status or role, not a specific quality.

If the image is a status or role, then it doesn't change with age – **so all human life is sacred!**

- ♦ Aliens and AI's do not share this role on earth.

In Hebrew grammar this is called the *bet essential* or *bet predication*. Exegetically, the role of the preposition is to denote

Is that why the Image statement is followed by commands?

If the image is a status or role, and we _____ as God's proxies, it makes sense for Him to tell us what to do. God tasks us to understand and steward His creation for the benefit of others in His place.

- ♦ Be fruitful and _____.
- ♦ Take Eden throughout the rest of the earth.

"The commands become coherent in conjunction with the language of human creation."
It is a partnership with God.!

What does that have to do with the plural language in Gen 1:26-28?

Imaging language refers to a status "Let us create humankind as our image" So God (switches back to singular) created humankind as His image. There is only one creator in Biblical theology – this is not polytheistic creation.

But isn't the plural language a reference to the trinity?

Why would God announce "let us create" to the other members of the trinity? Wouldn't they already know? All members of trinity are co-eternal and co-omniscient.

Equally strange passage in Gen 11:6 – Tower of Babel – and the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built... Come, let us go down and confuse their language.

In Job 38 the sons of God are _____ to the creation of the foundations of the earth. So they already exist. God announces the creation of man to His supernatural family, His _____ . Hebrew grammar calls this the plural of exhortation – God announces what He alone will do.

There is a shared similarity between God, humans and the heavenly host God is speaking to. What is the connection?

- ♦ Humans are God's proxies on _____.
- ♦ Angels are God's proxies in the _____.

As in heaven, so on earth. He creates family and _____ relationships both in heaven and on earth.

At the end of the story, heaven will come to earth and it will look a lot like Eden again.

Other examples of God's divine council / heavenly host involved in decision-making?

- ♦ 1 Kings 22:19-23 – God decrees Ahab must fall at Ramoth-gilead and a deceiving spirit is debated / proposed. God allows this _____ back and forth to decide how Ahab will die. He allows his servants to have input.
- ♦ Dan 7 – A divine council scene – God is seated on the throne. V 9-10 There is a court of counsel setting "the thrones were set up... The court sat and the books were opened."

Theme in OT where you have a throne room scene, is where judgment is rendered.

Sometimes this is all God, other times it is participatory. Dan 4:17 – Nebuchadnezzar is judged "by decree of the watchers." Watcher is a term for a member of the heavenly host – it describes a function – those who watch and never sleep. In Jewish literature they are the keepers of the heavenly books, member of the bureaucracy.

Yet God remains in _____.

“ Dan 4:24 "this is the interpretation... and the decree of the Most High."

One verse says "by decree of the watchers (plural) and other verse says "by decree of the Most High." The watchers are somehow participating in, and involved at God's discretion in accomplishing His plan.

Does this imply that God needed a council?

God could accomplish the Great Commission at any time. God wants us here to _____ in fulfilling His will. He likes to create beings like Himself and involve them in doing things He wants done. He invites our participation.

How does all this help us to live our Christian lives?

If we begin to look at all people as fellow imagers it would remove all instances of _____ and _____.

Fallen man still retains the status as God's imager. Gen 9:6 "for in the image of God He made man" (post fall). But the unredeemed cannot possibly fulfill their role.

Ultimately, it's the believer who has been restored to membership in the family of God and who is aware of what imaging means. That should be the catalyst to sharing that view of God, the Christian mission, and general purpose in life. This is what God wants for every human being.

Implications for life – how do we run our businesses? For personal gain or for others?

- “ Any meaningful occupation can be “done to the glory of God” to enhance relationships with fellow imagers and God.
- “ We are imaging God to others.

If we live this way intentionally it will change not just our behavior
but how we look at life generally.

*God likes to
create beings
like Himself
and involve
them in doing
the things He
wants done.*

What Stood Out to You?

Questions for Deeper Understanding?

What two sentences in verses Gen 1:26-27 appear directly opposed to each other?
Explain why they create this disconnect?

Why is the made in the “image of God” more than a set of attributes?

Why can’t we defend the sanctity of life by saying the conceptus has a soul and spirit to defend that it is made in the image of God?

What does it mean to say we are “made in the image of God”?

What did God command humankind to do after he created them? Think role or function.

Prayer Request

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆
- ◆



Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Job 1:20-22 (ESV)

Other Resources to Consider:

www.drms.com
www.nakedbiblepodcast.com
www.moreunseenrealm.com

Lesson guides developed by Missy Chapman, Deborah Elmquist, and Duretta Anderson