

## Christians At Texas State Bible Study—Genesis #3

### God's Eternal Purpose and It's Procedure

#### Gen. 1

26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. 27 And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 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 heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

#### John 3

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that every one who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

#### 1 John 5

11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 13 I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

#### 2 Pet. 1

4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

#### Col. 1

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation.... 27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

#### 2 Cor. 4

4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.

#### 2 Cor. 3

18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

#### Rom. 8

29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.

### GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATING MAN

Why did God create man? What was His purpose in creating man?

Genesis 1:26 says, "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion." God created man in His own image so that through His plan man may receive His life and nature and thereby become His expression (John 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 3:18). God's desire is to have a corporate man to express Him in His image and to represent Him with His authority (Gen. 1:26-28). Image and dominion are two seeds that grow and develop throughout the

Bible; the harvest is the New Jerusalem, which expresses God, having His glory and bearing His appearance, and exercises God's authority to maintain His dominion for eternity (Rev. 4:3a; 21:11, 18a, 24, 26).

This word *image* is related to and implies duplication. God wanted to duplicate Himself, and in order to do this He created human beings in His image as vessels to contain Him with His life, nature, and attributes. On the one hand, Genesis 1:26 may be a familiar verse; on the other hand, this verse is inexhaustible—it will not be fully fulfilled until the New Jerusalem, in which there is a corporate man in God's image shining Him forth.

Genesis 1:26 and 27 are of great significance. They reveal to us that God's creation of man was indeed an exceedingly special one. Before God created man, He 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 fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." This was God's plan in creating man. "God said, Let us..." This speaks of the kind of man God wanted. In other words, God was designing a "model" for the man He was to create. Verse 27 reveals God's creation of man: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Verse 28 says, "God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

We notice here something quite remarkable. Verse 26 says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..."; but verse 27 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." In verse 26 the pronoun "our" is plural, but in verse 27 "his" is singular. During the conference of the Godhead, verse 26 says, "Let us make man in our image"; therefore, according to grammar, verse 27 should say, "So God created man in their own image." But strangely, verse 27 says, "So God created man in his own image." How can we explain this? It is because there are three in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, yet only one has the image in the Godhead—the Son. When the Godhead was designing man's creation, the Bible indicates that man would be made in "our" image (since They are one, "our image" was mentioned); but when the Godhead was in the actual process of making man, the Bible says that man was made in "his" image. "His" denotes the Son. From this we ascertain that Adam was made in the image of the Lord Jesus. Adam did not precede the Lord Jesus; the Lord Jesus preceded him. When God created Adam, He created him in the image of the Lord Jesus. It is for this reason it says "in his image" rather than "in their image."

God's purpose is to gain a group of people who are like His Son. When we read Romans 8:29 we find God's purpose: "Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers." God desires to have many sons, and God desires all these sons to be like that one Son of His. Then His Son will no more be the only Begotten, but the Firstborn among many brethren. God's desire is to gain such a group of people. If we see this, we will realize the preciousness of man, and we will rejoice whenever man is mentioned. How God values man! Even He Himself became a man! God's plan is to gain man. When man is gained by God, God's plan is accomplished.

God's image, referring to God's inner being, attributes, the most prominent of which are love (1John 4:8), light (1John 1:7), holiness (Rev. 4:8), and righteousness (Jer. 23:6). God's likeness, referring to God's form (Phil. 2:6), is the expression of the essence and nature of God's person. Thus, God's image and God's likeness should not be considered as two separate things. Man's inward virtue, created in man's spirit, are copies of God's attributes and are means for man to express God's attributes. Man's outward form, created as man's body, is the copy of God's form. Thus, God created man to be a duplication of Himself that man may have the capacity to contain God and express Him. Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15. 2Cor. 4:4). Man was created according to the Christ with the intention that Christ would enter into man, and be expressed through man (Col. 1:27).

It is by man that God's plan is fulfilled, and through man His own need is met. What, then, does God require from the man whom He created? In God's plan to create man, man was ordained to rule. This is revealed to us in Genesis 1:26. Here God unveils to us His desire and tells us the secret of His plan. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." This is God's purpose in creating man.

The first thing that we need to see on the line of life is that we were created in God's image with a capacity to contain Him through His dispensing so that we may be His duplication, expression, and representation. This is our destiny. We will become a duplication of God, part of God's corporate expression, and we will represent Him.

### **God's Procedures to Fulfill His Purpose**

Genesis chapter 2 reveals the way God uses to accomplish His purpose. This is why we have the second record of creation in Genesis 2. Although the record of creation in Genesis 1 reveals God's purpose in creating man, it does not show us the way to fulfill this purpose. Therefore, we need the second record to reveal the way, the procedure, God takes to fulfill His

purpose. After seeing the purpose in chapter 1, we must come to see the procedure in chapter 2. This procedure is fully revealed in Genesis 2, starting with verse 5 and continuing through the end of the chapter. We want to point out that the means by which God fulfills His purpose is life.

### ***By Life***

God is going to accomplish His purpose by means of His own life. How can one person express another if he does not have that person's life? A dog cannot express a cat because a dog does not have a cat's life. A dog has a dog's life, and this life is only suitable for expressing a dog. How can we human beings express God? There is no way except by having the life of God. Man is destined to express God. Are we able to do this? It is impossible for us to do it by our life because it is simply a human life. God is transcendent. Our life is too low to express Him. If we are going to express God, we need the life of God. If we have the life of God, we will express Him spontaneously and unconsciously. Once we have His life, we will express His image. Life is the way to fulfill God's purpose. This life is not our natural life, but the divine and eternal life of God.

Authority is also related to life. Neither a table nor a chair has authority, for authority is always related to a certain life. Look at yourself. The more life you have, the more authority you have. In order to represent God with His authority, we need His life.

This is the basic and logical principle that we must care for: we can never express God or represent God by our own life. Consider your life. Your life is incapable of expressing God; it is only adequate to express yourself. We all must admit that our natural life disqualifies us from expressing God and representing Him. Not only is our fallen life inadequate for this, but even the created life we had at the beginning was inadequate. This was the reason God, after creating man, placed him in front of the tree of life, indicating that man needed to possess a higher life than he already had.

Some people may ask, "Didn't God create us in His image?" Yes, God did create us in His image. Then these people may say, "Since we already have God's image, why can't we express Him?" We may say that the man created in the image of God resembles the photograph of a person. Suppose you take a photograph of John and show it to others saying that this is John. In a sense, you are correct, for that is John. However, the photograph is not the real John; it is John in a picture. Although the picture reveals the features, style, and the person of John, it does not have the life of John. It can show something of John, but it cannot express him. The only way for the photograph to express John is for it to have his life. Man was created in the image of God, but he was like a photograph showing something of God without having the life of God. Although man was in the image of God, he did not have the life of God. God intended that man should partake of the life indicated by the tree of life. Man failed to do it. Today, by believing in Christ, we have been brought back to share in that life (1 Jn. 5:11-13). We all have received eternal life (Jn. 1:12-13). Thus, there is no other way for us to express God in His image and to represent God with His authority except by sharing His life. This is confirmed by many verses in the Bible.

#### ***a. Life Conforms the Believers to the Image of God and Brings Them into Glory***

The Bible says that it is life which conforms the believers to the image of the Son of God (Rom. 8:2, 6, 29). Only by the way of life can we be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Romans 8:2 speaks of "the Spirit of life," and verse 6 mentions that the mind set on the spirit is life. It is by this life of the Spirit that we can be conformed to the Son of God. This is very clear. Also, it is Christ as life who brings us into God's glory to express God. Colossians 3:4 tells us that Christ our life will bring us into God's glory that we may express God. This confirms the claim that it is by God's life that we express God.

#### ***b. Resurrection Life Gives Authority***

Revelation 20:4 says that it is the overcoming resurrection life which brings believers into the reign with Christ during the millennium. Resurrection life brings us into the kingship with Christ because it proceeds out of the throne of God. The throne of God signifies authority. We see a picture of this in Revelation 22:1 where the water of life issues out of the throne of God. Therefore, authority and life are mutually related. The river of life is related to the throne of God. If we have the throne of God as our source, we will be in the water of life. If we are in the water of life, it will bring us to the throne of God, giving us the authority that proceeds from His throne. Life brings authority. We all must see that representing God requires God's life.