

Message Two

Participating in God's Image and Likeness

(1)

**Created in God's Image, according to God's Likeness,
and**

Christ as the Image of the Invisible God

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26-27; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2-3

Gen. 1:26-27 *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. ²⁷And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Col. 1:15-17 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,¹⁶Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him.*

Heb. 1:2-3 *Has at the last of these days spoken to us in the Son, whom He appointed Heir of all things, through whom also He made the universe; ³Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

I. "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him"—Gen. 1:26a, 27a:

- A. *Let Us make man* reveals that a council was held among the three of the Godhead regarding the creation of man—v. 26a:
1. The decision to create man was made in eternity past, indicating that the creation of man was for the eternal purpose of the Triune God—Eph. 3:9-11.
 2. God's intention in creating man was to carry out His divine economy for the dispensing of Himself into man—1 Tim. 1:4; Rom. 8:11.

- B. God created man in His own image, according to His likeness—Gen. 1:26a:
1. God's image, referring to God's inner being, is the expression of the inward essence of God's attributes, the most prominent of which are love (1 John 4:8), light (1:5), holiness (Rev. 4:8), and righteousness (Jer. 23:6).
 2. God's likeness, referring to God's form (Phil. 2:6), is the expression of the essence and nature of God's person.
 3. God's image and God's likeness should not be considered as two separate things—Gen. 1:26a:
 - a. Man's inward virtues, created in man's spirit, are copies of God's attributes and are the means for man to express God's attributes.
 - b. Man's outward form, created as man's body, is a copy of God's form.
 4. God created man to be a duplication of Himself so that man may have the capacity to contain God and express Him:
 - a. All other living things were created "according to their kind" (vv. 11-12, 21, 24-25), but man was created according to God's kind (cf. Acts 17:28-29a).
 - b. Since God and man are of the same kind, it is possible for man to be joined to God and to live together with Him in an organic union—John 15:5; Rom. 6:5; 11:17-24; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- C. God's purpose in the creation of man in His image and according to His likeness is that man would receive Him as life and express Him in all His attributes—Gen. 1:26-27; 2:9:
1. God created man in His image and according to His likeness because His intention is to come into man and to be one with man—Eph. 3:17a.
 2. God created man in His own image so that through His economy man may receive His life and nature and thereby become His expression—1 Tim. 1:4; John 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 3. God created man in such a way that man has the capacity to contain God's love, light, righteousness, and holiness—1 John 4:8; 1:5; Eph. 4:24; 5:2, 8-9.
- D. For God to create man in His image means that God created man with the intention that man would become a duplicate of God, the reproduction of God, for His corporate expression; this reproduction makes God happy because it looks like Him, speaks

like Him, and lives like Him—John 12:24; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10; 1 John 3:1-2.

II. Christ is the image of the invisible God—Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:2-3:

- A. Colossians 1:15 says that Christ is the image of the invisible God; this means that Christ is the full expression of the unseen God:
 - 1. Creation expresses the characteristics of Christ who is the image of God.
 - 2. Because all things were created in Christ, through Christ, and unto Christ and because all things subsist in Christ, God can be expressed in creation through Christ who is the image of the invisible God—Col. 1:15-17.
 - 3. The relative pronoun *who* in Colossians 1:15 refers to the Son of God's love (v. 13); this means that the Son of the Father's love is the image of the invisible God.
 - 4. We need to realize that the Christ who is in you is the image of the invisible God—vv. 15, 27.
- B. In the Godhead the Son is the effulgence of God's glory and the impress of His substance—Heb. 1:3a:
 - 1. The glory is the outward expression, and the substance is the inward essence.
 - 2. Christ is the effulgence of God's glory; with respect to glory as the outward expression of God, the Son is the effulgence of God's glory.
 - 3. With respect to the substance as the inward essence, the Son is the impress of God's substance; the Son is the expression of the Father's substance—v. 3a.
- C. For the Son to be the effulgence of God's glory and the impress of God's substance means that the Lord is coming to us—v. 3a:
 - 1. The Son is God reaching us, God coming to be with us.
 - 2. In God's New Testament economy, we have a God who reaches us, a God who comes to save us and to dispense Himself into us—2 Cor. 13:14.