

Message Three

Participating in God's Image and Likeness

(2)

**Being Transformed into the Same Image
and**

Being Conformed to the Image of God's Son

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; 12:2

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.*

Rom. 12:2 *And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.*

I. "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"—2 Cor. 3:18:

- A. Transformation is not outward correction or adjustment; rather, it involves the element of Christ's divine life being added to our entire being so that Christ's image may be expressed outwardly—Col. 3:4; Eph. 3:17.
- B. Second Corinthians 3:18 indicates that Christ is increasing in our entire being, replacing what we are so that He increases, and our natural life decreases.
- C. The old element of our natural being is discharged while the resurrected and glorified Christ as the life-giving Spirit is increasingly added into us to replace the natural element—cf. 2 Cor. 5:17:
 - 1. This process is organic and metabolic.
 - 2. It is organic because it is related to life; it is metabolic because it is related to the process of discharging an old element and adding a new element—cf. Rev. 21:5.
 - 3. Metabolism involves three matters: supplying a new element, replacing the old element with the new element,

and discharging or removing the old element so that something new may be produced—Gal. 6:15.

- D. This transformation is from the Lord Spirit—the transforming Spirit producing a metabolism in us so that our whole being,—our life, nature, element, shape, and outward expression, is totally transformed—2 Cor. 3:18.
- E. For us to be transformed, we need to be like a mirror, beholding and reflecting the glory of the Lord—v. 18:
 - 1. This requires that our face (heart) does not have the covering of any veil so that spiritually we can see clearly and reflect accurately—v. 16.
 - 2. If we are covered with a veil on our heart, we will be unable to behold and reflect the glory of the Lord—v. 18.
 - 3. There are different kinds of veils upon believers—religious or natural concepts, opinions, racial and national characteristics, our natural constitution.
 - 4. In order for the veils to be taken away, our heart must be turned to the Lord—v. 16.
- F. By beholding and reflecting the glory of the Lord, we are gradually being transformed—v. 18; 4:6.
- G. To be transformed to have the same image as Christ means that we are gradually being conformed to the resurrected and glorified Christ—Rom. 8:29; John 13:31.

II. “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”—Rom. 8:29:

- A. Conformation, which is higher than transformation, and is the consummation of the believers’ transformation, denotes the shaping of life—v. 29; 12:2:
 - 1. Transformation is inward and is a matter of essence; conformation is outward and is a matter of shape—8:29.
 - 2. The Lord is sanctifying us and transforming us so that we may be conformed to His image; therefore, transformation results in conformation—2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 3. As the divine life grows within us and transforms us, it spontaneously shapes us into the image of the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10.
- B. In order for us to see clearly that conformation is being conformed to God’s firstborn Son, we need to connect Romans 1:3-4 and 8:29:

1. Through His resurrection, Christ became the firstborn Son of God, full of the essence of God's holiness, not only in His spirit but also in His body—1:3-4.
 2. Through His incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, Christ, the Son of God (the only begotten Son) became the firstborn Son, and the many sons, who are brothers of Christ, are being conformed to His image—8:29.
 3. In Romans 1:3-4 Christ, the Son of God, is the prototype, whereas in 8:29 are those who have been “mass-produced” from the prototype:
 - a. In 1:3-4 the one Son was designated, but in 8:29 many sons are conformed.
 - b. The designation of the one Son is related to the prototype; the conformation of the many sons is the work of “mass-production.”
 - c. Having gained the prototype, God is now seeking to have the “mass-production” in order to produce many sons in the image of the Firstborn—8:19, 29.
- C. The Spirit intercedes for us, and God causes all things to work together for us so that we may be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son—vv. 26-29:
1. Christ is the pattern, and the Spirit prays that everything that happens to us will mold us into this pattern, into the image of God's firstborn Son—vv. 26-27.
 2. God the Father is sovereign, arranges everything, and knows what is best for us; He answers the Spirit's intercession by causing all things to work together for good—our being conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God—vv. 28-29.
 3. In this way, Christ will be the Firstborn among God's many sons so that God may obtain the corporate expression of His firstborn Son with the many sons to accomplish God's eternal purpose—Eph. 1:11; 3:11.