

GENESIS 1 - 2 - 3

Each time we read through the Genesis account of the creation we see new and significant things that influence our understanding. There seems to be no end of progressive understanding. Sometimes we will read a verse in Isaiah that will illuminate a verse in Genesis etc.

This recently occurred in reading Gen. 1:26-27. GEN 1:26 Then God said, "Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." GEN 1:27 And God created man in **His own image**, in the image of God **He** created him; male and female **He** created them. The conference in heaven between the Father, the Son or Word, and the Holy Spirit is represented by **OUR**. However, when it came to the actual work of creation it changes from plural to singular. There is probably a theological answer to this which I am not aware but it struck me as being a curious thing.

An "image" in scripture also refers to a statue that represents something but is not identical with it. It can be a form of something. Possibly a reflection of something. An outward dimension that can be seen.

"Likeness" is a similitude, a figure, a form, a pattern or something that resembles. This Hebrew word is translated 8 times as likeness and 5 times as like, and 4 times as form. A word study is hardly conclusive to give a clear meaning therefore we must see the meaning from the New Testament.

ROM 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined {to become} conformed to **the image of His Son**, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;

1CO 11:7 For a man ought not to have his head covered, since **he is the image and glory of God**; but the woman is the glory of man.

1CO 15:49 And just as we have borne **the image of the earthy**, we shall also bear **the image of the heavenly**.

2CO 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed **into the same image** from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

2CO 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, **who is the image of God**.

COL 1:15 And **He is the image of the invisible God**, the first-born of all creation.

COL 3:10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to **the image of the One who created him**

From this short study it is clear that man was created in the "image of God" but something

happened to change and damage that image. Therefore, it is said that we are in a process of being changed back again to the image of the one who created us. We have been predestined to once again be conformed to the image of His Son. Two images are in view. One is earthly and the other is heavenly. One is of the first Adam and the other is of the last Adam. However, we also see that Christ is the Image of God, who is invisible.

Since Christ created all things and we are being renewed to the image of the One who created us, we must be transformed into the image of Christ. The eternal word of God manifested in Jesus Christ is the only one of the Trinity that has image. From this we can assume that the singular of God is referring to the eternal Word of God, The Christ, the eternal Son.

Man has an outward "image" as well as an inward "image". One is seen by man and the other is seen by God. Even though we lay aside this earthly image we will still have the heavenly image. Growth then is measured by how much we have been transformed into the image of the one who created us. Outward appearance will be reduced to dust but the inward appearance should be in the process of being transformed into His image from glory to glory.

ISA 40:18 To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him? We will have the same difficulty trying to define what the likeness of God really is. Man's likeness cannot be compared to the Infinite God who spoke and the worlds were formed.

EZE 1:26 Now above the expanse that was over their heads there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, {was} **a figure with the appearance of a man.** EZE 1:27 Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and {there was} a radiance around Him. EZE 1:28 As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so { was} the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such {was} **the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the \Lord.** And when I saw {it,} I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking. EZE 2:1 Then He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!"

We know what it means for the eternal Word of God to become flesh and take on the likeness of sinful man but what does it mean for man to take on the likeness of the one who created us? ROM 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God {did:} sending **His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh** and { as an offering} for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

PHI 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, {and} **being made in the likeness of men.**

Even though Christ was manifested in the likeness of man, He was still the Son of God. Even though man has the outward appearance of flesh and bones, he still must put on the likeness of God. Since this likeness seems to be undefinable, what can man do to take on His likeness? This is beyond man so it must be the work of God. In the beginning God made man in His own image and likeness. In the church age, it is still God who must restore man to His own image and

likeness. Man can only submit to the restoration.

It appears that when Adam was created, he was created in the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man lost that image and now God's work is to restore man back to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Likeness is something else. If likeness has to do with a pattern, then God is using the pattern of Jesus Christ to cut us into the same shape. If likeness is "form" then God is joining us together into a body that represents The Lord Jesus Christ.

God's work and God's purpose in Genesis 1 & 2 both reflect God's need and His desire.