

## LESSON FIVE - MAN

Life throws up many conundrums that we need answers about. We are like the man who said, "I've got a clock that tells me when to get up - but some days I need one to tell me why." There are many intuitive questions that we ponder throughout our lifetimes: Who is man? How did he enter this world? What is the purpose of his life? Why does man sin? What relationships are good and evil for man to have with other men? What is man's relationship to God and this created world? Why does every man die?

The Bible reveals that God made man as the finishing touch in creation. He was created at the end of the list of God's creatures on the sixth day,

**And 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 fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Gen. 1:26-27)**



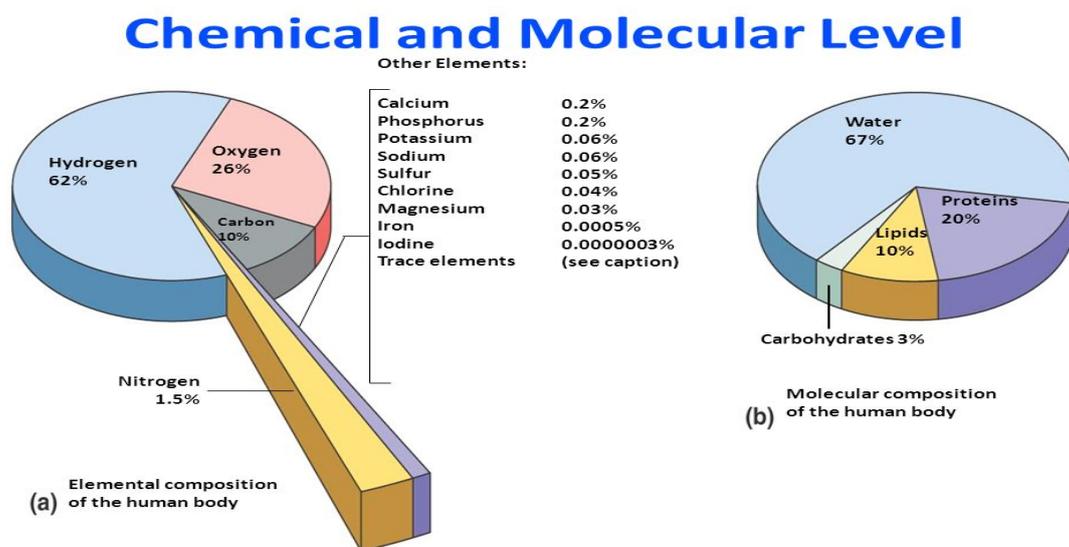
Genesis 1 teaches us that man is made uniquely in the image of God, which distinguishes him from every other living creature. That does not mean that there are no similarities between man and the animal world. We are told here that, "*the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground.*" In the NT the apostle reiterates this, "*The first man is of the earth, earthy*" (1 Cor. 15:47). These "*earthy*" building blocks of life identifies us with the other animals, as "*out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air*" (Gen. 2:19). Every living creature on the earth is created from the same basic chemical elements. Modern science confirms this fact, which the Bible revealed thousands of years ago.

It should be noted that God is active here. The Master Potter shaped man from "*the dust of the ground.*" This implies a personal, delicate, interested, and intelligent touch. He did not sit back and simply observe man evolving from some pre-existing creature.

Man's appearance did not evolve from incremental stages of animate development. There is no hint of mutation or a struggle of the survival of the fittest! Stedman notes,

“Here is a wonderfully condensed account of some tremendously significant things. I do not think we need to quibble over just how God formed the body of man. Did He pile dirt together, wet it with water to make a kind of a mud-statue, and then breathe life into it? No one knows. Certainly, when we consider the miracle of conception and birth, when two tiny, almost invisible, cells meet together and begin to grow and divide under a rigid interlock of controls, developing at last into a human being such as we see ourselves to be, we need not ask about the ability of God to make man in his own remarkable way.”

Even today, we can marvel at the wisdom and skill of the Creator when we look at the amazing design in man. For instance, science allows us now to understand more of the molecular structure. Inside each of our 100 trillion cells there is coiled 2 metres of DNA which weighs about 6 trillionths of a gram. The information content in DNA of one cell of the three billion codes of the human genome is equivalent to more than 75,000 copies of the *Strait Times* newspaper. Bill Gates stated that: “DNA is like a software program, only much more complex than anything we’ve devised.” These facts are revealed not to make us proud, but to lead us to praise our Creator, “*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well*” (Psa. 139:14).



The fact that we are made from the same basic elements of life as the animals should have a humbling effect on man. This was not special dust lest we should be full of pride. Indeed, the constituent elements of man, if broken down and sold off on the open market, would be worth just a few dollars today. Matthew Henry observes, “He was not made of gold-dust, powder of pearl, or diamond dust, but common dust, dust of the ground.”

The fact of our humble origins should remind us to be balanced in our judgment of man. Man is a combination of what is low and what is high. We are different from the animals as we are made in the image of God, but we are not God as we are made from the same raw material as the animals! Every time we look in the mirror we see a “Dust-

Man.” Lest we be tempted to despise others, we need to remind ourselves that we are all made from the same lump of dust. There is no “special dust” people on the planet.

We are also told that man is not simply a material entity. After his physical body was made from the dust, the Lord “*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*” This conveys the clear idea that man has a transcendent, immeasurable part of his being that is provided only by God. The metaphor of shared breath here also suggests the correspondence between man and God. This is the “*breath of life.*” Man is more than a mere physical body.

Now, because God sovereignly provides life, He has the sovereign right and power to remove it at any time. Man lives in fear of this truth, as “*Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust?*” (Psa. 104:29). When God removes it, no man can bring it back.

**Attributes of God and Man**  
**Communicable and Incommunicable Attributes**

<b>God</b>		<b>Humanity</b>
<b>Incommunicable Attributes</b>	<b>Communicable Attributes</b>	<b>Human Attributes</b>
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<b>Spirit</b>	<b>Being</b>	<b>Mortal</b>
<b>Infinite</b>	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Finite</b>
<b>Eternal</b>	<b>Power</b>	<b>Temporal</b>
<b>Unchangeable</b>	<b>Holiness</b>	<b>Changeable</b>
<b>Creator</b>	<b>Justice</b>	<b>Created</b>
	<b>Goodness</b>	
	<b>Truth</b>	

### IMAGE OF GOD

The other created beings were not said to be “*in the image of God.*” This is something that would make man stand out from all the other creatures. Of course, no one can evolve into God’s image! Man will be the crown of God’s creation. He will have intrinsic worth and dignity by virtue of this fact. This is not something that is merely granted him by a Bill of Rights or by other men but it is the sovereign gift of God. Now, any alternative view to the divine creation of man will diminish the dignity and worth of man. That is why evolution has been used to justify abortion, euthanasia, perverted bioethics, eugenics, genocide etc. down the centuries.

Every man and woman in this world is significant. All are stamped with the image of God. There are no “mere mortals.” We are a chosen and privileged order in creation. The world may judge you as irrelevant, but God never does. Every human is intrinsically significant to God and, therefore, they should be to us. If you can grasp that

it will transform your attitudes in evangelism and fellowshiping with the saints of God. It will change your view of those you work with and those that serve you.

**MEANING** - But what does it mean to be created "*in the image of God?*" Children are not exact replicas of their parents but often reflect the characteristics, mannerisms and appearance of them. In similar manner man was created with certain attributes to our Heavenly Father. Herein lies our true worth. Now, that does not mean man is identical to God. There are certain incommunicable attributes of God that only He has such as His immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence etc. But it does mean that we have certain similarities to God that animals do not share. In the NT, we gain some insight into what this was originally before the Fall,

**And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24)**

**And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him (Col. 3:10)**

Solomon observed some of the intuitive sense of eternity that man uniquely possesses, He tells us that God has "*set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end*" (Eccl. 3:11). The Hebrew word translated "*world*" here can also be translated "eternity." Only humans have self-consciousness and God-consciousness. The Apostle Paul tells us that all men instinctively understand that God is our Creator (Romans 1:19-20).

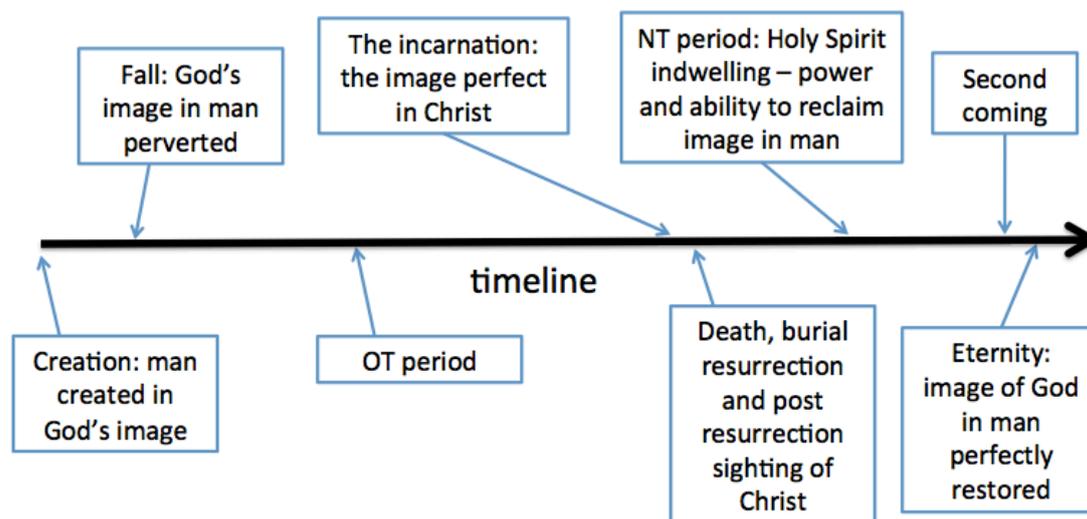
So we can conclude that man's original creation by God included his creation after the divine pattern in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Unlike the animals, man has an innate moral consciousness with a conscience warning him about any breach of the law of God (cf. Rom. 2:15-16). Alan Cairns explains, "Man was created as a perfect being, with knowledge (the proper understanding of revealed truth and of his own position relative to God), righteousness (a full obedience to the law of God written on his heart) and true holiness (an inclination of will towards God as his chief end; an inbuilt love of God)."

Man can meditate, reason, worship, appreciate aesthetics, plan, and experience the sensitive emotions of personal relationships. He alone has the capacity for fellowship with God. It is man that has an aspect to his being which is spiritual and immortal. These transcendent qualities are not part of man's DNA but are what makes up the personality of a man. We share many aspects of DNA with other species as we are made from the same raw materials of the dust of the ground. But these material characteristics will decay and die when we die. The attributes that reflect the image of God are independent of any common DNA materials.

## **EFFECT OF THE FALL**

Man today is not what God originally intended. The Fall of man has tarnished or marred the image of God in man (Eph 4:18-19). Man has lost the original holiness, as his heart is now "*desperately wicked*" (Jer. 17:9). However, the Fall did not eradicate the image of God

in him. If you look closely, there are still aspects of every man that resembles the image of God. The Scriptures remind us that fallen man retains aspects of the image of God (cf. 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9). Capital punishment was instituted by God for this reason, “*Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man*” (Gen. 9:6).



Redemption restores much of the image of God that has been lost by the Fall, as God recreates us in Christ, (cf. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Sin progressively eradicates the image of God in us, whereas sanctification by grace always increases that image in us. Satan is the enemy of life, but life is *protected* by God (Job 10:12) and life is *valued* by God (Isaiah 49:16). Ray Pritchard uses an interesting analogy,

Imagine a clean piece of paper with these words in huge letters: MADE IN GOD’S IMAGE. That paper represents Adam in the Garden as he comes from the hand of God. He is created with no sin, with the image of God intact and complete. Now take that piece of paper and crumple it up into a tight ball. Make a few rips in it. It would probably help to rub some dirt on it too. Now look at that crumpled, ripped, dirty ball of paper. That’s Adam after the fall. Sin has terribly marred the beauty of God’s image in him. The beauty is largely obscured by the destructive power of sin. And that’s not just Adam; that’s you and me and every person in the world. We aren’t born with a clean sheet. We’re born crumpled and then we just make things worse by our own foolish choices. Sometimes the image of God seems to almost disappear in us. But it’s never really gone. And at exactly this point we see the power of Jesus Christ. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, II Corinthians 5:17 tells us. Imagine taking that crumpled, dirty, ripped piece of paper and unfolding it a little bit at a time, smoothing out the edges, cleaning off the dirt, repairing the rips one by one. That’s the whole process of conversion and Christian growth. In this lifetime we’ll never have the perfectly clean sheet of paper that Adam had. At best our paper will still be somewhat crumpled, still a bit torn, and bearing smudges here and there. In heaven the image of God will be finally and completely restored. But even now there is substantial change and improvement as day by day we are

transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit (see II Corinthians 3:18). And that's why the best advertisement for Jesus is someone whose life has truly been changed. It says to those whose lives are crumpled and marred and badly damaged by sin, "You don't have to stay that way. Jesus can repair you from the inside out."

## PROPAGATION MANDATE

Another aspect of the creation of man was that God in grace gave man (male and female) delegated dominion over the earth,

**And 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. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. (Genesis 1:28-29)**

This is another part of our resemblance to God's image. The command to "*subdue it*" implies that from the beginning, even in the perfection of Eden, God had ordained that man should work out a divine purpose in bringing creation under man's rightful dominion. Man lost this dominion in the Fall by virtue of his sin.

As part of this stewardship as "caretakers" of God's planet, God sovereignly blessed man as the recipient of the rich resources of the earth around him, "*Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat*" (v29). This does not mean that we are to waste the earth's resources indulging our fleshly cravings but using it for the glory of God, "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*" (1 Cor. 10:31). We are stewards of God's creation and accountable to Him for it. In Genesis 2:15 God tells Adam to "*dress and keep*" the Garden that He gave him. We honour the God of creation by not dishonouring His creation.

This is not a command to simply have as many children as physically possible. The NT warns that couples must think through prayerfully their ability to provide for children, "*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*" (1 Tim. 5:8). This provision includes spiritual as well as physical care. God has sovereignly given each couple different gifts to carry out this. Although the Scriptures do not mandate the number of children we should have, it always speaks of children as a blessing from the Lord to a Christian home (cf. Psalm 127-128). Save for exceptional circumstances such as medical problems, no Christian couple should deliberately set out to avoid a blessing from the Lord. Every couple should prayerfully examine their motives in this area and ensure that it is not personal selfishness that leads them to reject having children. That is the spirit of the world around us. Nor should couples use wrong motives to have children such as to keep together a fragile or loveless marriage. Couples should always see their children in the light of God's perspective and for God's purposes.