

LESSON FOUR

MAN

A. MAN WAS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

Scriptural References:

"So God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27).

"For in the image of God made he him" (Genesis 9:6).

Scriptures are very clear regarding the creation of man. The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Man was God's highest act of creation and was in God's own image and likeness.

B. TO WHAT DOES "IMAGE OF GOD" REFER?

1. THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN.

Possibly the greatest way in which man resembled his Maker was in his moral nature. Man was created sinless with an absolute purity and holiness. In fact, he was clothed with the righteousness of God. It was because of this fact; he was able to have fellowship with God. It was this that he lost in the fall and caused him to realize that he was naked.

2. THE INTELLECTUAL NATURE OF MAN.

The intellectual powers of man from the beginning prove that man is not evolved from a lower order but was created in the image of his Creator. He was given the intelligence necessary to name all living creatures and have dominion over this earth. He was given the power to reason and to make decisions. He was created a free will moral agent. It was because of this that God granted man the ability to make the wrong decision and sin in the original transgression.

3. THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF MAN.

God is Spirit and invisible but it was in the plan and purpose of Deity to manifest himself in flesh in the incarnation. If the "image of God" has any reference to man's physical appearance, it was in the likeness of the man Christ Jesus who was to be born at Bethlehem. Let us remember that as far as time is concerned the advent of Christ took place at a definite point in history, but as far as God is concerned who dwells in eternity God had it planned and saw it from the beginning.

4. THE TRINITY OF MAN.

Scriptural Reference:

"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Man is body, soul, and spirit. We would not ordinarily introduce this thought here. We do so because some would use this to try to prove that man was made in the image of the trinity, and therefore another proof that there are three persons in the Godhead. However, the very opposite is true and proper. Even as man's body, soul, and spirit, and yet one person bearing one name, so is the Creator Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but yet one person bearing one name, JESUS.

5. THE UNLIMITED POTENTIALS OF MAN.

God has given man unlimited potentials. Man can rise higher and sink lower than any other of God's creatures. In Mark's Gospel, chapter five, we have the story of a man possessed with a legion of demons. This one man was able to contain more demon powers than two thousand swine were able to contain. There seems no bottom to the depths that a man or woman can fall. Likewise, man has the capacity of yielding to God and becoming a vessel filled with the Spirit of God. There seems to be no limits to the height that God can lift man. Only God Himself knows the potentials of man both for good and evil. No other of God's creatures can even come close to the potentials of man.

C. THE ORIGINAL CONDITION OF MAN.

Scriptural Reference:

"But one in a certain place testified saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands" (Hebrews 2:6-7).

Man was crowned with glory and honour and made a little lower than the angels. Man was not created an ignoramus nor a savage but a being of lofty intellectual powers and a high moral nature. The theory that man evolved from a lower order such as an ape is simply imagination falsely called Science, without one fact to prove it.

D. THERE IS A DIVINE PURPOSE IN THE LIFE OF MAN.

Scriptural Reference:

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Ephesians 1:5-6).

Man is not upon earth by just a mere whim of nature; a child is not born just by an accident of nature; man is not just the result of a biological urge only. There is a definite purpose of God to be fulfilled in the existence of every man. He may know why he is here upon the earth, the purpose of his existence, and his eternal destiny.

The primary reason for man's restlessness and dissatisfaction today is the fact that he has been taught that he is only a biological creature. This teaching that man only differs from the brute beasts in that he has more intelligence leaves man in a spiritual vacuum without any real direction.

Before the foundation of the world God had planned a definite purpose in man's existence:

1. That he might be adopted by Jesus Christ to Himself.

2. That he might be to the praise of the glory of his grace.

E. MAN IS A FREE WILL MORAL AGENT.

Scriptural References:

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

At the very beginning God gives man a clear choice. He places in the garden before man a tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man was given strict instructions not to eat the fruit of it. However, man had a choice. He was created with a God given right, that of making decisions and choosing for himself.

God longed for fellowship with His creature that He had created in His own image. However, fellowship to be of any value has to be freely enjoyed. Fellowship that is forced is worthless. It is for this reason God made man like Himself with the ability to choose. God was not interested in having a puppet or a robot in man.

At the close of the Bible it is clearly seen that man still has this power of choice. The water of life is for the "whosoever will." God had never taken from man this wonderful prerogative.

It must be clearly understood that God in His sovereignty will never violate this God given ability to choose. Man is a "free will moral agent" before he is born again; man is still a "free will moral agent" after he has experienced salvation.

This truth settles once and for all the question of what is known as unconditional eternal security. The whole matter of his eternal destiny will depend upon his choices in life. Man has the privilege to choose eternal life or he may choose death.

LESSON FOUR

SELF HELP TEST

- A. How was man created in the "image of God."

- B. Why did God create man a "free will moral agent?"

- C. How does the free will moral agency of man prove that the theory of the "unconditional security" of the believer is false?

- D. Write a paragraph on the following subject: "God has given man unlimited potentials."