

The Image of God

Man as Imago Dei

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Americans' Identity Crisis

II. Defining the Imago Dei

A. Creation: Created in the Image of God

- *Gen 1:26–27 - ²⁶Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*
- *Gen 5:1b – ¹... In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.*
- *Gen 9:6 - ⁶“Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.”*
- *1 Cor 11:7 - ⁷For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.*
- *Jas 3:8–9 - ⁸But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude [likeness] of God.*



Human beings exist to point to God, to display His glory in the world, to stand as a sign of God’s authority and rule.

B. Fall: Desecrating the Image of God

When Satan rebelled against God, he *attacked the image of God*. He hates God! Consequently, he hates the image of God! The early church father Irenaeus remarked in the 2nd century that, “*The glory of God is a human being fully alive.*” Hence, Satan does all within his power to crush human life. He despises mankind because we continually remind him of God, of his Creator and Lord as well as of ours.



C. Redemption & Restoration: Restoring the Image of God (Dan 7; Col 3:8-11)

The Second Adam, Jesus, lived, died, and rose again as a real man *for us men and for our salvation*. He did not come merely as an example of a human being fully alive; He died and rose again that He might raise us to life (cf. Jn 10:10). Jesus’ resurrection brings power into the here and now by the Spirit so that the image of God might be fully restored in us; that we might be restored to glory like the Torlonia Marbles. So Paul writes in Colossians 3:10 that believers “*have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...*”



“What kind of freak is man! What a novelty he is, how absurd he is, how chaotic and what a mass of contradictions, and yet what a prodigy! He is judge of all things, yet a feeble worm. He is a repository of truth, and yet sinks into such doubt and error. He is the glory and the scum of the universe!” Pascal, Pensees (131)

III. Contextualizing the Imago Dei

As creatures made in God's image, therefore, we humans were created to point to God; to be perpetual reminders of the Creator. Every time we see another human being we are to confess, "Yahweh is Lord!" So how is it that we as human beings remind one another and the angels of God? What is it about us that points to God's glory?

- God **created** the world, so man is a _____ being (cf. 1:1; 4:21-22); what God creates is **good**, so man makes **good** things out of those which he is given (2:11,12);
- God **speaks/communicates**, so man _____ both in word and in writing (cf. 1:3; 2:23);
- God **distinguishes** one thing from another, so man _____ the creatures of the earth (cf. 1:3-4; 2:19-20);
- God **rules** over all things, so man is created to exercise _____ over all the world (cf. 1:26, 28; 2:15); this includes exercising **authority** among men (cf. 3:16; 9:6; Ps 82:1ff; Ro 5:12);
- God is **love**, existing in eternal fellowship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and so man _____ and lives in fellowship with others, especially in the bond of husband and wife (cf. 1:26-28; 2:24; 3:22; cf. 1 Jn 4:8);
- God **gives** freely to His creatures, so man practices _____ and open-handedness (cf. 1:29-30);
- God **rests** and enjoys the fruit of His labor, so man _____ the goodness of God and enjoys the fruit of his hands (cf. 2:2-3; 1 Kgs 4:25);
- God is **upright** and **holy**, so man **obeys** God and is to treat Him as _____ (cf. 2:3; 2:16-17).

To be made in the image of God is an astonishing thing, pointing to the true wonder and glory of humanity. As David declares, "Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your Name in all the earth ... For You have crowned [man] with glory and honor" (Ps 8:5b). It is truly a humbling and an ennobling thing to be God's image bearers here on earth. So our calling is to ask ourselves repeatedly:

- *How can I be more creative, communicative, excellent in my home, work, schooling, etc.?*
- *How can I love, give, rest, feast ever more faithfully?*
- *How am I doing living righteously, reflecting the righteous character of God?*

IV. Conclusion