

THE IMAGE OF GOD

Our lesson text contains a Hebrew phrase that explains the uniqueness of the creation of mankind – “Let US make man in OUR image according to OUR likeness.”

The Hebrew grammar is important because it gives one important feature of the creation of man – “ in OUR image (be / tsalem / enu) according to OUR likeness (ki / demuth / enu).

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the origin of the Image of God upon the human race.

1. Both of these Hebrew words carry the idea of resemblance.

Tselem refers to image or copy and demuth refers to likeness or similarity. ISBE refers to these two words as “the ecotype resembling the archetype.” (pg.146)

The Greek word for image is (eikon). Jesus uses it with a coin of Caesar in Matt.22: 15-22 – “And He said to them, ‘Whose **image** (**he eikon/ tselem**) and inscription is this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar’s. Then He said to them, ‘then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s’”(22:20-21)

2. The US and OUR of the lesson text refers to the Godhead.

It doesn’t refer to man since he was created later. It doesn’t refer to angels since man was created lower than Angels were:

“What is man, that Thou rememberest him? Or the son of man that Thou art concerned with him? Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast appointed him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” (Heb.2:6-8; Ps.8:4-6)

Therefore the image according to likeness is the resemblance of the Godhead and essence. The Hebrew grammar for make is (Let US make – asah / kal impf). Asah means to make out of existing materials and pattern.

The pattern of the Godhead that is transposed to mankind is one in essence but different in persons.

- The essence of the Godhead is Omniscience, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Immutable, Veracity, Sovereignty, Eternal life, Love, Righteousness, and Holiness.
- The persons of the Godhead are God, the Father and God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit.
- The essence of mankind is Self-conscious, Conscience, Mentality, Volition, and Emotion.
- The persons of mankind are male and female.

“With it (tongue) we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made (ginomai / perf.a.ptc. aplm) **in (kata+acc. of norm and standard) [according to] the likeness (homoiosis / demuth) of God.**” (James 3:9; Gen.1:26)

3. A different Hebrew word than (asah) is used for the actual creation of the soul of mankind.

It is the Hebrew word (bara). Bara means to create something out of non-existing materials. Bara has only been used twice before Gen.1:26-27 (1:1; 1:21).

In the case of man, bara means to make his soul in the image according to the likeness of the Godhead. Bara is used three times in reference to the creation of mankind – “And God created (kal impf) man in His own image, in the image of God He created (kal pf) him; male and female He created (kal pf) them. (Gen.1: 27)

- First bara refers to essence of the soul of mankind.
- Second bara refers to the husbands position in the chain of divine delegated authority (1 Cor.11:3; Eph.5:23-25).
- The third bara refers to persons of the soul (male / zakar and female / neqabah).

“So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” (1 Cor.15: 45; Gen.2: 7; Rom.5: 14) The first Adam and the last Adam are used for representation of two categories of human race (unsaved and saved).

4. The first Adam was created in the image according to the likeness of God while the last Adam, Jesus Christ, was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the image according to the likeness of God (Matt.1: 20; Luke 1:34-35).

“And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb.1:3)

“In Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” (Col.1:14-15)

“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.” (2 Cor.4:4)

5. Man made “in the image according to the likeness of God” is what gives him worth as a sinful Adamic person worthy of redemption.

“Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matt.10: 31; 6:26) [birds]

Fallen Adamic man is made in the image of God **but** according to the likeness of a fallen Adam (Gen.5: 1-3) – “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.” (1 Cor.15: 22; Rom.3: 23; 5:12)

“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.” (Gen.9: 6) [capital punishment] “In killing a human being, a murderer demonstrates his contempt for God as well as his fellowman.” (NIV, Gen.9:6)

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:36-37)

6. Those member of the human race who believe that Jesus Christ died for their sin, was buried and raised from the dead (gospel) can be transformed into the image of His Son. (Rom.3: 23-24; 8:29; 2 Cor.3: 18; 5:17; Col.3: 10; Eph.2: 10; 4:22-24).