

The Reflection of God

Our Destiny As His Image

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THE REFLECTION OF GOD

Chapter 1 The Glorious Image of God

Man: The Reflection of God

When God said “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...” He distinguished man’s being and existence as wholly unique in the universe. And so “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:26,27). The man and the woman together were made in the image of God—to be the image of God. The Lord God had so imprinted and impressed Himself into human life as to have stamped His very Being into the pinnacle of creation—Adam (as they were both known).

In the truest sense, God had made man—male and female—to be *His mirror*. The Latin root for **mirror** is *mirari*: “to look at” or “to wonder at” so as “to smile.” Webster defines mirror as “a polished or smooth surface (as of glass) that forms images by reflection” or “something that gives a true representation;” or finally “an exemplary model.”

God had made the invisible visible, because He wanted someone to look at, someone to wonder at, someone who would make Him smile and bring Him pleasure and delight. Man was the polished substance of God’s creative handiwork. Adam was that “something that gives a true representation” of God back to God. He was to God, indeed, the “exemplary model” of Himself...in created, limited and subjected form. Adam was “the

image and the glory of God” (I Corinthians 11:7). He was the imprint and the true reflective representation of God. The man and the woman together were uniquely the mirror of God; His true reflection in the created universe.

To mankind alone—among the vast created universe, in both the visible and invisible realms, among the myriad creatures and beings—goes the unique and lofty designation: **The Image of God**. The image of God in man was what simultaneously distinguished him and made him glorious. And yet, both the life which was *in* him and the brilliant light which emanated *from* him (covering his nakedness), were derived from the One Who had made him. As the moon in its fullness has no light in itself, but derives its brilliance from the sun, so man from God. As a mirror’s reflection is derived from the face looking into it, the true significance and meaning of man’s existence comes from God Himself alone.

God intended from eternity past that man would mirror back to Himself His own glory and reflection. He also wanted every visible and invisible creature that looked upon man to see a visible representation of Himself. Furthermore, beginning with the first man and woman, He desired that every human being who ever looked into the eyes of another human being would see His glorious presence.

God’s design was to fill the earth with His own glory through the *vessels* of His glory, the light-bearing mirrors of His invisible nature; man and woman. His heart was for them to bear children in their own image...which was His. And for their children to bring forth children in their own likeness...which was His. In this way, generation after generation, the earth would gradually be filled with the mirrored and reflected glory of the Lord Himself.

He kindly intended, from deep within the eternal counsels of the Godhead, to have every human soul as His son or daughter. It was His heart to have women look at their husbands and see in them the image and glory of God as a reality. He wanted children, when they looked into the faces of their parents, to see exact representations of the Father’s own goodness, kindness and faithful love. He longed for husbands to see in the eyes of their wives the brilliance of God. And he had fully intended that mankind would progressively move—in obedience to Himself and by eating of the Tree of Life, His Son—from one realm of His glorious nature to the next glorious realm, until they would eventually become mature expressions of His Son.

That was His heart. That was His desire. That was how it was supposed to be. Those were His longings. But part of His imprinted image inside of every human being is the God-like freedom to choose.

And choose, our parents, Adam and his wife, did.

Man: The True Delight of God

For a season in the Garden of Delight called Eden, the man and his wife enjoyed the pleasure of ever-deepening and rich relationship with one another. Everything in their world was harmonious. Daily the Lord God, Creator, would come at the appointed time to walk and talk with them. It was during those times, in the cool of the day, while being together with Him, that they would experience their deepest joy. Nothing they experienced while alone together compared with the inexpressible rapture they felt when with Him. And the Lord felt it too.

Although He had made and created all things for His own pleasure, *the image* was His special delight. With heart-racing anticipation He would enter the gateway of the garden. At the first sound of His excited Voice, the man and his wife, like the children they were before Him, would come running, smiling and laughing their way into His embrace.

It was always the unbridled joy-filled laughter of their Maker in their garden-home with them that made Adam and his wife feel so secure. And the joy of God was so contagious. No creature ever acted quite the same when He was around. The branches of the trees danced in the wind of His presence. The birds would all sing simultaneously and loudly as He passed by. The animals, one and all, were noticeably elated to see Him. The garden was full of His delight and exquisite pleasure.

Clearly His *greatest* joy was found in looking into the smiling eyes of the man and his wife. It was there alone, although all of creation bore His signature, that He could see His own reflection. In them He saw Himself. In Him they saw themselves. The overwhelming joy of God filled the universe in every seen and unseen realm, whenever God was in the garden with His image.

Man: Vessels of Glory

Upon the inward tablets of their hearts and minds, in His own handwriting God had written the laws and moral principles that were to guide their lives. They instinctively understood the Royal Law that was to guide their moral decisions: love for God Himself, love for one's own self, and love for others. This inwardly written moral code would be endlessly replicated into the heart, mind and conscience of every descendant of Adam

for all time. All other moral laws within them flowed out of the source of this *singular* law. It was the greatest of all the laws in their hearts, because it was the same law that directed the heart and activities of their God and King. In this way they would reflect the glory of His heart.

Adam and his wife possessed a knowledge that was innate and inherent. It was there by creation. This knowledge was a light that guarded and guided their path. It was an intuitive light of the knowledge of the glory of God. It was inborn from the first breath. Everything in creation was an expression of that great glory. Everywhere they looked they saw it. Every sound they heard reverberated it. Everything they touched manifested it. Every breath they breathed sustained it. All of creation, as far as they could perceive, seemed to beckon and whisper, “Come, explore and expand your knowledge of the great glory of your God.”

They knew that the glory of God was His Person, His Being, His Essence, His Nature, His invisible attributes, qualities and characteristics. He left His unmistakable fingerprints on everything He made. The mysteries were everywhere around them, awaiting discovery. All of creation seemed to have a soundless voice saying, “Come and learn more of the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of your Creator.”

Their whole world, their very existence—even the cosmos itself—was full of expressions of the glory of God. He was everywhere to be seen and yet nowhere to be seen. The knowledge of the glory of God was in them and it was growing, as were they. It multiplied in their consciousness at mind-blurring rates on a daily basis, as they made one discovery of His glory after another.

They saw His wondrous beauty everywhere and in everything. His infinite power was undeniable. His wisdom defied description. His knowledge was incomprehensible. His artistic attention to the minute details of every created thing completely bedazzled their minds. The rapid pace at which He taught them, revealing His invisible attributes in greater dimensions, daily left them spent.

Even at night, when they laid their heads down on soft beds of leaves, the lessons continued. In the evenings, as they lay holding each other, gazing into the heavenly canopy above them, the galaxies of stars silently spoke to them, declaring to them the glory of God (Psalm 19). And in the stillness of one night they heard the Voice of God saying, “I know the name of every single star in the universe.” Filled with the awesome wonder of that revelation, they fell asleep to the laughter of the only God in the universe.

...Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made...

—Paul the Apostle

Lift up your eyes on high
And see who has created these stars,
The One Who leads forth their host by
number,
He calls them all by name;
Because of the greatness of His might
And the strength of His power,
Not one of them is missing.

—Isaiah the Prophet

Man: The Visible Ruler

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your
fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have
ordained;
What is man that You take thought of him, And the
son of man that You care for him?
Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And
You crown him with glory and majesty!
You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,
All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field,
The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all
the earth!

—King David

The same God Who made, numbered and named all the stars, has made heaven His throne and the earth His footstool (Isaiah 66:1). From His invisible place He sustains the universe through the spoken word of His own

power. Inside of Him all things live and move and breathe and have their being. Nothing exists outside of Him. All things are contained within Him. The heavens of the heavens themselves cannot contain Him. He contains and sustains all things. He alone is God, the King of Glory, the Ruling Monarch of the Universe.

To mere man these thoughts are distant, lofty and utterly unimaginable. To God Himself, they are vivid reality. The Invisible Father is Himself the Transcendent Reality of all things. When man wondrously considers the majesty belonging to this God, he is left feeling insignificant and puny. And so he should! Yet, if God, the Ruler of the universe, were to make man in His own image, He would not only have to share with him His own moral likeness, He would have to share with him His “governmental likeness” as well. And so He did.

From the first announcement of His kind intention toward man, He included the capacity to govern and rule. He said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule...” And a moment later He said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:26,28).

The plan was simple and glorious. The God of the universe, the sole absolute authority in the universe, would create the universe and divide it into two separate realms: invisible and visible; heavenly and earthly. He Himself would rule over both. In both realms He would delegate His authority to others, entrusting the administration of those realms to beings suitable to the tasks. In the invisible realm He set invisible rulers on thrones and created angelic authorities with specific areas of dominion. In the visible realm He made man in His own image and gave him authority to rule and have dominion.

He is the Image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

—Colossians 1:15-18

God the Father, the Architect of creation, executed the plan of creation through the direct agency of His Eternal Son; the Word of God. The Eternal Son, as the direct agent of creation, is Himself the Creator of all things. As such, He Himself is therefore the appointed-by-the-Father Head of all things. All things were made for His pleasure and delight. All things originate in Him, are sustained by Him and consummate into Him. Because He Himself, being the Eternal Son, is prior to and pre-existent to all creation, as well as being the Creator Himself, He Himself is over all: the Rightful Legal Owner, the Heir of all things. He was appointed and anointed as such, by the Father Himself, before the foundations of the universe were ever laid.

The architectural plan and blueprint for the creation of the universe, as well as the plan for oversight of the ages, were all born out of the Father's overwhelming joy, delight and pleasure with His own Son. Everything was to be for Him. In everything He was going to have first place, the place of supreme honor and recognition. Everything was going to be "the works of His fingers," whether invisible or visible. Every being in every realm was meant to be a joyous celebrant of the unfathomable wealth of the Person of His Son. The Father had planned and hoped that every creature in every dimension—out of devotion, gratitude and love for His Son—would both worship Him and be ever faithful to Him.

As for man, the visible ruler of the earth-realms, He had made a helper. The man Adam had simply and lovingly called her "woman, for she was taken out of man." (Genesis 2:22) Together, the lord of the earth and his lady, the visible king of the earth and his queen, were intended to rule and have dominion over everything. Together they had been blessed. Together they had been commanded to enjoy one another by being fruitful. Together they had been commanded to multiply the image of God in the visible earth-realm. Together they had been given the responsibility to fill the earth full of the image of God everywhere. Together, along with their sons and daughters, they were to expand and enlarge the Garden of Eden to fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of God. Together they had been invited to eat of the Tree of Life and partake of the Divine Nature of the Eternal Son of God ...and be transformed into His image.

In all of the blessing and commandments given to them, however, the Lord God had made no mention of man ruling over the woman or of man ever ruling over man, simply because it had always been the Lord's intention to be Himself King over all the earth. Mankind was meant to rule over the three dimensions of the birds of the air, the beasts of the field and the fish of the sea. He was to rule the entire earth. The Lord Himself, in wonderful

union and fellowship with mankind, intended to kindly rule over man, because He was the Head and source of human existence.

Father intended for all people to live together in unity. He intended for all men to be brothers in the family of man. He had intended for man's language to be one. He intended for man to live, work and play together: all to His own glory. He intended for mankind to worship Him together. He intended man to sing, dance and praise Him *together*.

He intended mankind to love and serve one another as simple acts of worship to their God. He intended for people everywhere to be kind and helpful to one another. He intended for marriages to stay together. He intended for all men, women and children everywhere and for all time to be His glorious image and reflect His nature back to Himself. And He fully expected to come down to us daily, walk in our midst, talk and laugh with us, and receive our worship and adoration.

Finally, He had eternally intended for man to eat of the Tree of Life. In man's partaking of the holy fruit, in loving obedience to God over the ages, He intended to mingle His Divine Nature with the nature of man, and to move him from the earthly realm of glory to a heavenly realm of glory as a mature corporate son, with His own Son as the Head of a New Humanity. This new human race, in the full mature glory of the Eternal Son of God, would be elevated above the angelic world and the realms of the earth, to sit with Him in glory and rule and reign over the universe with Him, as His glorified image. God the Father was looking for sons for Himself who would be exactly like His own glorious Son. With these sons and by means of these sons, whom He Himself would bring to glory, He would eternally manifest His great love, and forever demonstrate the kind intention of His Paternal Heart.

Man: Made For Intimacy

Intimacy is defined by Webster as "...belonging to one's deepest nature." It is "marked by very close association, contact or familiarity." Also "marked by a warm friendship developed through long association." It is relationship "of a very personal and private nature."

God Himself in His deepest nature is a relational Being. Relationship lies in the very center of His heart. The decision to make man is stated by God Himself in these relational terms: "Let Us make man in Our own image, according to Our likeness." The eternally plural Godhead has determined to create His image *out of* relationship, *for* relationship and *in* intimate

relationship to Himself. For “He is intimate with the upright” (Proverbs 3:32).

God longed to share with another the joyous eternal intimacy that He had shared within Himself. That other was man, whom He made for intimacy. By creation He introduced, invited and welcomed man into a fellowship of intimacy that had an eternal heritage. That heritage was the eternal joy of the Father, Son and Spirit together in unbroken intimacy. It is true that God, being Self-sustained and Self-existent, did not need to make man out of any lack in Himself. However, He did long for another, like Himself yet vastly different, with whom He could share His life and to whom He could give His love. He wanted someone with whom He could share His deepest Nature. He desired another whose relationship with Him would be marked by the closest association, contact and familiarity. More to the point, the Father was looking for sons who would be like His unique Son.

Though He was Almighty God, He would humble Himself (Psalm 113:5-6) to develop the warmest of friendships with man, to be maintained through time and eternity. And He desired to individualize His relationship with each unique expression of His image, thus making it very personal and of the most private nature. He wanted intimacy with the image.

As well as the moral and governmental likeness, the image and mirror (reflection) of God would therefore have to bear a “relational likeness” to God: the longings for intimacy in relationships. These longings would be innate from the first breath of Adam. He, like God, would long for this intimacy. He would have the capacity for closeness and connectedness. The image, like His Father, would long to know and be known thoroughly and experientially. He, like His Father, would hunger for another to love, and he would equally thirst for that love to be returned. He, like His marvelous Paternal-Designer, would desire to be treasured and valued *simply for being*. And the Image-Maker would create within the image-bearer a secret place reserved for Himself alone, where no one else could go. He would make him with a spirit. He Who had made such longings for intimacy within the man would reserve for Himself alone the place of fulfilling them...with Himself.

Although the deepest place of man’s being and nature was reserved for God’s embrace alone, part of man’s longing would be for another like himself, but wonderfully different. It was not good for him to be alone. Like God, he did not need this other to live, for God was His life. He needed another with whom he could share his life and to whom he could give his love. If God were to long for a mirror and reflection, so would Adam. And so it is written, “Man is the image and reflection of God and woman is the

reflection of man” (I Corinthians 11:7). As man was intended to be the mirror and reflection of God, so woman was intended to be the mirror and reflection of man.

Even as man was intended to be intimate in the deepest ways with God, so the woman was made to be intimate with the man in the deepest of ways. Together they carried within them the divine capacities and longings for intimacy, closeness, connection and oneness, both with God and one another.

But the longings for relationship would not be limited simply to God and each other. This was no diminished capacity with which they were made. They were to multiply and fill the earth with rich and fulfilling relationships of intimacy and closeness. Man was intended to be an extended family with God as Father. And each member of that family was to bring to the family a unique portrayal of the Father Himself.

In the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son was the “source and wellspring” out of which God did everything. He would create man with a rich sense of unity, harmony and oneness in his own relationships. All of human life would be comprised of an interconnection between three areas of relationship:

- Relationship with God
- Relationship with one’s own self
- Relationship with others.

While each relationship would be separate and individual, all three were interwoven and united as one. Each would affect and impact the other. Man’s relationship with God, his Life-Source, would be first and primary. Man’s relationship with himself—his inner sense of being and identity—would be derived directly from his relationship with his loving Maker. And man’s ability to relate rightly to others around him would spring out of both his relationship to God and to himself.

So man was made with a clear identity and a true sense of being. God loved him *simply because he was, and* because of *who* he was: The Image of God. As the man communed with His Creator, he clearly comprehended not only Who God was to him, but also who he was himself. There was never a single thought given to “being” apart from God. A river would not exist apart from its source. Sunlight would not exist apart from the sun. Man was the mirror of God because God was his Reality and Substance.

Therefore the man was one both with God and himself. There was a flow of Life to life. There was a joining of Being to being, each separate and

yet one. The man could not conceive of himself as being or even having a being apart from the One Who made him. He “was” because God Is. His entire identity and relationship to himself was because of God. He was the mirror looking into the Invisible Transcendent Reality ...and finding himself there.

After all, he was the image OF GOD! He was not simply one of the creatures showing the handiwork of the Craftsman. He was the masterpiece! He was the flawless representation of the best of God’s creative genius. He had been an eternity in the planning. He had occupied more of the mind of God, more thoughts than could ever be numbered had been spent on him, the image and reflection OF GOD. That was what he was made to be. That was who he was supposed to grow and mature to be, by partaking fully of the Divine Nature. And that was his destined identity: to be a mature son.

Then with the exquisite creation of woman came the potential for the man to have another of equal substance and corresponding parts, with whom he could share himself. She was one with him and equal to him because she was of him. She was also different than him and second to him because she was out *of him*. The man and the woman together reflected an eternal reality within the Godhead: essential and substantial equality combined with functional subordination and difference. After all, they were made in the image OF GOD.

They shared God together as their common Life-Source. But their relationships with Him were completely separate and unique, because they were just that: separate and unique. Out of their individual and personal relationships with their God they learned to relate to themselves...their true selves. And out of their relationships to God and themselves, they then related to one another. They were individual persons with separate identities and simultaneously one with another and in relationship with each other. Indeed they were a reflection of and the true image OF GOD. They were made for intimacy.

Man: Destined For Glory

There they stood, the man and the woman, crowned with glory and honor. Their glory was in their likeness to God. Their honor was in their position as rulers of the earth. There they stood in Eden, in the garden of God, the Garden of Delight ...the Paradise of the whole earth. There they stood, innocent and childlike in Paradise. knowing only good. There they stood, life-bearing, light-wearing, beloved created representations of their Creator, robed in great glory and destined for a greater glory still.

They were in every way perfect and flawless. *But they were immature, untested and unproven.* They bore the moral likeness to God in their created human natures, but it was immature. They shouldered the governmental likeness to God, but it was untested. They inwardly carried the relational similarity to Him also, but all was unproven.

As newly created beings, they were before God like an infant child before his parents. They were fully made in the image of God, but they were children in terms of their experience. They possessed the full capacity and potential for spiritual maturity. For when God had said, "Let Us make man in Our image," He had not only man's beginning in mind. More to the point of their destiny, God had man's END in mind, in full view in His kind-hearted intention.

When a mother gives birth, she gives birth to a child, an infant. At birth she sees the child, but she also sees the potential for growth and maturity into full adulthood. Her mind's eye can see the end from the beginning. She sees the man inside the boy or the woman inside the little girl. And so it is with God. Adam and Eve were created physically as adults. They were moral, volitional and fully responsible, but spiritually they were *children*, destined to inwardly grow to full maturity by partaking of the Tree of Life...of the Uncreated, Eternal Life of God's Own Nature.

They were to have inherited many things from the Father. But of all that they stood posed to inherit from Him, the greatest was His Divine Nature. They were intended to share in and partake of the very Nature of God Himself. Everything pertaining to life and the mystery of godliness was dependent upon their sharing in His Divine Nature. In this way they were to become heirs of God Himself, by sharing in His very Life. And that Life was hidden in a Tree.

There can be no proof of love without unfeigned fidelity. There can be no demonstration of love without honoring obedience. Therefore the LORD GOD placed two unusual trees in the very center of the Garden. The eating of the one, The Tree of Life, would prove love by the choice of dependency. The refusal to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil would demonstrate love by the choice of obedience. *And both were essential for their growth and transformation into mature adult-like expressions of the image of God.* Both would be necessary to change and transfigure them from created earthly sons to eternal heavenly sons of glory for the Father.

The route by which the Father would bring Himself sons of glory would be twofold: (1) The Choice of Dependency, combined with (2) The Choice of Obedience. This was so from the *very first day* of creation. It was always to be the case. Man would have to exercise his will. He would have

to choose to “eat freely” of the Tree of Life. He would have to choose to *not* eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as the LORD GOD had commanded him on the first day of his existence.

God had created Adam limited, subjected and dependent. After all, he was a creature, a being created by God. He was not God, *nor would he ever become God*, regardless of his glorious beginning and destiny. In this sense alone, God would always limit him. He was always meant to be subjected to God. He would have to remain dependent upon God if he was to fulfill his destiny. He would have to choose to be dependent upon and choose to be subjected to God in order to become what the Father had ordained for him to be: a full-grown mature son in the image and likeness of His Eternal Son.

Hence, the two trees in the Garden. One was a Tree of freedom and the pathway to the Uncreated Eternal Life of God’s own Son. The other was the forbidden tree leading to bondage and death. One was a Tree of dependency and obedience. The other was a tree of independence and rebellion. One was a Tree with the power of transformation. The other was a tree of degradation. One was a Tree ascending into Light. The other was a tree descending into utter darkness. One was a Tree into the very Nature of God Himself. The other was a tree into the hideous nature of evil. One was a Tree of Glory and Immortality. The other was a tree of misery and mortality. One was a Tree of Generation. The other was a tree of degeneration. One was a Tree of Incomparability. The other was a tree of incorrigibility. One was a Tree of dignity. The other was a tree of depravity. One was a Tree of Blessing. The other was a tree of curses.

Adam’s pathway from earthly glory to heavenly glory was to be the way of dependency and obedience. He was to eat of the Tree of Uncreated Eternal Life. He was to taste and see that the Lord is good. He was to partake of the Divine Nature through the Tree of Life. The Tree was the Way. The Tree was the Truth. And the Tree was the Life of God. He was to be utterly transformed by sharing in and partaking of the Divine Nature. And the gradual Transformation would have eventually produced a Glorification requiring a Translation from the earth realm into the heavenlies.

Then, had not only Adam and Even undergone that transforming process from glory to glory, but also their children, and then their children’s children--throughout the generations of man--eventually God the Father would have had a glorified, made-in-the-image-of-His-Son, seated-in-the-heavenlies-with-His-Son, Headed-up-by-His-Son *family of sons*, to satisfy His Father-Heart. He would have forever looked into the far reaches of His

immeasurable universe and seen the mirrored reflection of His Son's face in the faces of His innumerable sons.

What a Heart!

What an Intention!

What a Plan!

We were destined for His Glory!

