

A Tarnished Image

Romans 3:23-24

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,



In any journey, it helps to know where you have come from and where you are going. In your journey of faith and your walk with God, you should realize that you have been created with great purposes in mind and with a very high calling. You are so important to God and so part of His plan that He paid an ultimate price to redeem you: He came Himself as a man and took the penalty of your sins upon Himself! The "good news" of the Gospel is that we can be free from our sin and can belong to God now. God's ultimate purpose in our life is a very good question to consider. The answer to that question is as complex and diverse as the Person of God Himself! Human beings have a very special place and role in the universe. According to the Bible, we were made in the *image* and *likeness* of God. Humans were not evolved

from lower primates and God did not use evolution over billions of years of genetic mistakes to create the various kinds of animals we see on planet earth today. You are not a cosmic accident that occurred by random mutations over billions of years.


For the most part, the Bible tells us only about the history of mankind and the earth from 6000 years ago forward, though there are some references to eternity past and eternity future. The book of "Genesis" is the book of "beginnings" and its focus is primarily as a retelling of the history of man on planet earth, the story of our rebellion against God, and the story of God's plan of "redemption" (which means to buy or purchase back). It was not meant to be a scientific writing about creation (there are no math formulas or scientific equations, right?). However, we can trust absolutely the statements it makes concerning our natural world and we trust absolutely the account of creation given to us in the Scripture. Why? Because Jesus did! Jesus believed in a real Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:4-6), a real Noah who built a real ark for a real global catastrophe (Matthew 24:37-38), and a real Lot who fled a real fiery hail storm from a real Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28-29). Jesus also spoke of a real fallen spiritual being named satan (Luke 10:17-18, Matthew 4:1-11) and He cast real fallen angels out of people who were possessed by them (Matthew 10:1, 12:22-27, 17:14-18).

Since we are talking about beginnings, you may naturally question the Genesis account because of what you have been taught in school or college. We choose to believe the account of creation absolutely... instead of choosing to believe a *theory* that remains unproven and that excludes God from its consideration. God is the greatest scientist of all... He created the laws that scientists discover. The Bible is not in "opposition" to true science... however most scientists today exclude the possibility of any mechanism outside of nature in their definition of "science." You must realize that mankind is in rebellion to God and does not acknowledge Him as the Creator. The ONLY other choice man is left with (when he rejects God) is to try to account for our existence by a purely *natural* means (this is why the *theory* of macro-evolution is equated with *truth* in modern science). There are many good resources available in this regard that present the scientific evidence that supports the Biblical account of a recent "creation event" on earth and a recent

global flood. However, the scientific level is secondary to the primary focus of Genesis: the creation, fall, and redemption of man.

James 3:9

... men, who have been made in the similitude [*likeness or resemblance*] of God.

 Do you like to create something? If so, what kind of feelings do you get when your “masterpiece” is finished? Why do you think men and women have strong desires in some cases to have children? Why do you think humans are the only animal that can talk, reason intelligently, make music, advance our knowledge, and grow intellectually and emotionally?

To discover the reasons why we were made in the image or likeness of God is of great importance to us. These reasons are rooted in the very nature and character of God and a desire in the very heart of God to share Himself with another “being” who could give, understand, and receive love. We were made and born of a fiery desire in the heart of God.... as one that would be in the very image and likeness of God Himself. This mystery was not spelled out clearly in the original creation account, but it can be found in the Word of God as you study and devote yourselves to the Scriptures on a daily basis.

Psalms 2:7-8

I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

In one regard, the greatest purpose for our life is to discover who God is and to respond to that revelation in love and obedience. In another regard, we have been saved from eternal destruction by our willingness to repent (change our mind) and follow Jesus as our Lord. God’s purpose in our life, however, is not *primarily* to save us from the destruction of hell or from the consequences of our sin. Those are awesome *side* benefits... for sure! Rather, you were saved from sin and hell for GOD Himself and for His purposes. You were saved to be His possession. We are those who by our voluntary “YES” have become chosen by Father God to be the very inheritance that He will give to His Son Jesus. Becoming that inheritance and becoming a person who is “possessed” by God is all part of your purpose here on planet earth. The real and true meaning of your life is found in the person of God—your Creator—and His desire to have you voluntarily be His “own” special treasure. By looking at the account of man’s creation, man’s rebellion, and God’s redemptive plan, your identity in God as a part of His family will become clear.

One of your *first* identities in God’s Kingdom is as a *disciple* or *follower* of Jesus. What does this mean and why are we commanded to come after Jesus, first, as His disciples? Human existence and man’s history on earth tells us that we become like what or *who* we pursue and follow. Whatever we worship and love, that is what we become like. If we love and worship money, we become greedy and selfish. If we love and worship sex, we become slaves of sexual passion and perversion. If we love power, we become ruthless and demanding of others. This is one of the most powerful laws in the universe! In essence, being a disciple of Jesus speaks to the greatest purposes of God in your life: that you would become like the ONE you follow. In other words, His intent desire and purpose, for those who say “yes” to Him, is that you would BECOME LIKE JESUS. The meaning of being a follower is tied very closely to how God changes us from the inside out. It is also inseparably linked to the idea of being changed into the image of the “One” we are

following. We are going to look at the image of God in man... and why that image is not a perfect or good reflection of God in us. To do so, we first look at the creation and fall of the first humans (you should read the first five chapters of Genesis for the full context):

Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

Genesis 1:26-28, 31

Then 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." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ... 31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.



What do we learn about the nature of God when we read the words "let Us make" and "in Our image" as He talks about the creation of mankind? In whose image were the first male and female humans created in? What do you think it means to be "in the image of God"?

The Hebrew word for *image* means a shade, resemblance, illusion, or a phantom. A *phantom* is a "perception of something not really there". We think of phantoms as being "ghost images" that quickly vanish before our eyes. This describes how mankind, in the original creation, gave a perception of God to the rest of creation, even though it wasn't *really* God. An illusion is something you think you saw, but when you really look closer, your eyes have played a trick on you. You can think of it in this way as well: when the rest of creation (angels and the animal kingdom) looked at Adam and Eve, they had to do a "double-take" because more than likely they were thinking, "Hey, wasn't that God that I just saw in the garden?" Then they would just consider that it was Adam and Eve... not God Himself... but beings who looked like God and reflected His glory.

Even the word for "likeness" in Genesis 1:26 has a Hebrew connotation of "comparable to". In a very real sense, we were made to be "comparable to" our creator in our original design, so that we would act and think and express love and have dominion almost just like God does! You were created with high dignity, high purpose, high ability, and high destiny. God did not reveal His ultimate plans for why He made man, initially. But we now know that somehow or another, the image of God in man would allow the Creator to become a man Himself in the fullness of time to rescue us and buy us back from destruction. This is nothing less than the most radical and amazing story every told or heard! God's plans for mankind were (and still are) extravagantly great! More importantly, His plans for you were (and still are) extravagantly great! They are so great, the Son of God became a man, Jesus, to bear our sins and adopt us into His family.

Psalms 8:4-6

What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels [*elohim or God*], And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

Hebrews 2:5-9

For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Psalms 89:11

The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all its fullness, You have founded them.

Psalms 115:15-16

May you be blessed by the LORD, Who made heaven and earth. 16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; But the earth He has given to the children of men.



Why do you think the earth is so special in comparison to the rest of everything that God created? What special role does man have in relation to the earth? What did God "give" to man according to the Scriptures? How many things were put in subjection under the feet of Adam and Eve?

Psalms 8:5 says that "man was created a little lower than...the *angels*". The word *angels* is actually the Hebrew word "elohim" and is the same word that is translated in many cases as "God" all throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Genesis 1:1 says that "In the beginning, *Elohim* (God) created the heavens and the earth." One of the puzzling aspects of the nature of the God of the Bible is that He is absolutely unique and awesome and beyond human description! *Elohim* is actually the plural form of the word "god" and is translated in some cases as "gods". That is why it is sometimes used to refer to angelic beings or idols. The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of Scriptures (such as Moses) to use this word because it revealed a unique aspect of God's being. It basically means that God is singular (or one), but at the same time He is plural!

The emphatic revelation of the Scriptures is that there is ONLY ONE God... but this God is so fascinating He somehow exhibits a plurality in His "oneness". This makes your head hurt if you think about it for too long... so don't try. It is why God, when speaking of creation, can say things like "Let *Us* make man in *Our* image..." and at the same time say "God saw everything *He* had made..." and be correct! Many cults have arisen because they believe the God of the Bible can not be explained by human reason and so they add "other" Scripture that somehow helps explain God in more human (but untrue) terms. In fact, some cults believe that God WAS a man first... and

somehow became God later on. Steer clear of any belief that "adds" to the revelation of the Bible... it only leads to confusion and the eventual destruction of those who pursue those beliefs.

The issue here is that God really did make man a "little lower" than Himself—a being that was "comparable" to Him and one that bore His very "image". We were and are similar to God in many ways... and only a fool would go further than that to say that "we are God" or "we can become God". Only a fool would go further and somehow blur the distinction between the Creator and us as His creation. He is the maker of the heavens and the earth and we were His appointed caretaker of the earth and *made* to be over His creation. You don't have to worry about "heresy" by talking about the divine image of God in man... this is a Biblical truth. In fact, we were so much "like" God in our original creation that Adam and Eve appeared to be an illusion... a phantom... of God. We were meant to be partakers of the divine nature of God... we were meant to be reflectors of His glory. We were never meant to BE God or to BE divine or to BE the source of glory... get it? In fact, salvation is essentially when a person says to Jesus "I am going to stop being my own 'god' and I am going to let you be my Lord and Master..." When that decision is made, God can begin to restore and return His image and His glory in you.

2 Peter 1:1-4

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

From what the entire Word of God tells us, nothing else in all of creation is ever referred to as being "in the image of God." Animals, angelic beings, demons, plants, physical creation, and the universe itself all originated from God but evidently humans are the ONLY thing in all of creation (whether visible or invisible) that is described as being "in His image". Surely the angels had to stare in amazement when God made man in His image: what KIND of creature was this? You can almost hear them saying, "It looks like God, but it isn't Him! What kind of plans does God have for this creatures?" The answer to this question is going to frame the rest of your life on planet earth as a disciple of Jesus. You are here to learn what His purpose for man is, how that purpose was lost through sin and rebellion, how God restored it through history and through covenant (God's promises to man), how Jesus came to the earth to restore the image of God in us, and how you can walk in the fullness of your creative purpose—which is to know, love, and enjoy God and be a partner in His Kingdom!

Genesis 1:20-28

Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." 21 So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." 23 So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its

kind"; and it was so. 25 And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Then 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." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:18-24

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.



When God made the sea creatures, what did He speak to that caused sea creatures to abound? When God made the beasts of the earth, what did He speak to that caused living creatures to be brought forth? When God created man, who did He speak to that caused man to be created? Do you think this is significant?

Genesis 1:20 Let the _____ abound with an abundance of living creatures...

Genesis 1:23 Let the _____ bring forth the living creatures....

Genesis 1:26 Let _____ make man in our image....



What was the reason given by God that the female Adam (Woman) was made for the male Adam (Man)? What quality did all the other creatures lack for being a good "helper" or "companion" for Man? Did Adam have a father and mother to leave when His wife was made for him? Why do you think God did something so strange as taking a wife for Adam out of a rib that came from his open side while he lay asleep?

There was (and is) something about human beings that was special... something God had in mind for us that was *extremely* different from any other thing He had created. You and I are not accidents and every one of us shares a common bond in the fact that we were created with a capacity to reflect the very glory of the One who made us. Just like the moon reflects the light of the sun, we were made to reflect the glory of the One who HAS ALL GLORY! In the creation of man, we were made to be bearers of His image and reflectors of His glory. Many Bible teachers believe that Adam and Eve were actually covered with the "glory" of God when they were created.

When Adam looked at Eve, he saw something of God in her and when Eve looked at Adam, she saw something of God in him. It says they were “naked and unashamed”. This could explain why they did not see each other as “naked”, even though evidently they did not wear clothes initially.

The image of God in man, from what we know in the rest of Scripture, is tied very closely to our ability to reason, to give and receive love, and to make moral decisions. Our ability to express emotions, our ability to see beauty, our ability to procreate, our ability to think, our ability to show compassion and mercy, and our ability to feel emotional pain and hurt are very likely part of God’s “image” in us as well. The ability to make and create music is also a sign of the image of God within us.

Zechariah 12:1-2

... says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him:

Ecclesiastes 12:7

7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Humans have the power to create other humans, with the help of God. God forms the spirit of man (who we really are) but it is our parents who frame or fashion the human body that our spirit lives in. Our spirits, once created by God in partnership with human conception, are eternal. Our human bodies return to “dust” when we die (but they too will be resurrected one day). From what we know, no other creature has been given the power to create other “eternal” beings other than humans. What power we have been given! This is *why* satan works to pollute and corrupt mankind’s sexual ability and drive—because it is part of God’s image in us. We live forever as humans... and our earthly life is merely lived in the houses of the earthly bodies that are given to us by our parents. Our life on earth is spent determining where we will live the “rest of our life” when we die.



In considering the differences between humans and other “animals”, what are some of the unique attributes of mankind that separate us from animals? What was the original command of God to the first humans? What were they to have dominion over?

God is the ultimate sovereign of the universe and He is the one with ultimate dominion over everything in the universe: He is the Maker and Creator of all things, and ultimately the Owner! Yet we see that in the creation of man, God made a very important statement about “dominion.” We learn that our first human parents, from whom all the nations of mankind have descended, were given *dominion* over the entire earth. They were told to fill and subdue the earth. Of course, God intended and wanted for mankind to subdue the earth “under” His authority and for His pleasure. The earth was given to human beings for our rule and our dominion.... “under God”. That was the plan all along.

One of the paradoxes of God’s sovereignty is that He is the rightful owner of all and the one with ultimate dominion over all. Yet, He has chosen to “give” the earth to the “children of men”. The earth “belongs” to the LORD, but He gave it to Adam and Eve (our parents) so that it would “belong” to them as well. This is what the story of our creation tells us. We have seen how mankind was made with a very special attribute: “in the image of God.” We were also made with a very special purpose: “fill and subdue the earth.” Our ability to govern and have dominion is

also part of the image of God in us. The idea that we "represent" God on this planet is based on God's original gift of the planet earth to our parents: Adam and Eve. To represent someone means to "present again" in their absence. Adam and Eve were to "present again" the nature and image of God on planet Earth, in His place. They were to rule, under the authority, direction, counsel, and will of God, over the entire Earth!

Romans 3:23-24

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Begin to formulate a picture of who you are to God: YOU are very special to God, and the OBJECT of God's great affection, love, and purposes in the universe. It does not matter what social position you hold, how rich or poor you are, and what possessions you own. Even though the American culture has abandoned this truth and enshrined laws to this effect, human life is THE focus of the activity of God on planet earth and the sanctity of life (from its conception to its death) is absolutely important to God. What we know about the image of God in man, however, is that we have ALL fallen SHORT of the glory of God and His image in us has been corrupted and tainted. It is only through a relationship of following Jesus that this image can be restored, "from glory to glory."

Genesis 2:8-9

The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15-17

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."



What are the only two trees that were given names in the Garden that God created for the first humans? Did God give any special commands concerning any of the trees of the Garden?



What were the consequences of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Was there any prohibition given by God against eating from the tree of life? Did God put a fence or barrier around the tree that He commanded Adam and Eve not to eat from? Why or why not? Do you think this was "fair"? Why or why not?

When Moses recorded the creation events, he wrote in Hebrew that "God breathed into Adam the breath of *lives*". In other words, there was life on multiple levels (physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual). God told Adam that if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "in *dying you shall die*". In other words, they would die, continue to die, and then eventually die! Not only was there life on multiple levels, but disobedience would cause death on multiple levels as well. This is exactly the connotation of the Hebrew words. You will learn many fascinating aspects about our creation as we progress: how God is triune (three in one) and how He also created us as triune beings (three in one), how the temptation of satan is related to our makeup as a spirit who lives in a body and has a soul, and how Jesus faced the same temptation and was victorious. Consider for now that the issue about the tree of knowledge of good and evil was centered around love and trust.

Would Adam and Eve trust God's judgment? Would they be deceived into thinking God was holding something back from them? Would they really believe that they could get any more "like God" when they were already made in His image? Would they forsake God's wisdom and rule and embrace their own?

The ultimate question of our generation is going to be this: "Will you voluntarily love God?" Voluntary love is WHAT the entire created order is ALL about. The existence of mankind centers on our ability to either give or refuse voluntary love for God. Your eternal destiny is linked to whether or not you voluntarily love God. Heaven is defined by those who want to be there ... those who want to love and obey God. It is not defined by those who are perfect, do everything right, or had more good works than bad works. Heaven is all about love and the obedience that comes from love. This is what the Garden of Eden represented: God's presence, unveiled, in fellowship with mankind and the choice to trust God's wisdom or not.

Love that is forced or coerced is not love at all. In fact, if physical restraints are the only thing that holds you back from doing something evil, then you will do that evil thing once the restraints are removed. Unfortunately, the same genetic runs through us as it did Adam and Eve: we want to "see for ourselves" and evaluate right and wrong not based on God's wisdom or judgment. Adam and Eve were essentially trading God's judgment (which was perfect!) for their own judgment. Humans to this day still evaluate things not on what God says or thinks, but instead we evaluate things based on our reasoning, our experiences, and our own thoughts and feelings. This is the "fruit" of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. We have all eaten of the fruit of this tree: we have chosen to evaluate what is good and what is evil for ourselves—apart from what God thinks or God says.

Unfortunately, human history bears witness to the answer to all of these questions. Adam and Eve made a "declaration of independence" from God when they ate of that fruit. That decision was related to love, because without a choice there really is no love. In fact, the greatest definition of love is to *choose* to put someone else's welfare and benefit ahead of your own. Whether we like it or not, there was no fence put around the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve had to *choose* whether or not to love God and trust His wisdom or not. They had to *choose* whether or not to listen to and obey God. Jesus and His command for us to follow Him is the same way: He tells us to come and follow Him and learn to love Him and abide in His Word. He commands us to abide in His Word and He commands us to take His yoke (which is easy and light in comparison to sin and rebellion) upon us. He confronts us with a *choice* as a result.

Genesis 3:22-24

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.



Why do you think God blocked the way to the Tree of Life after Adam and Eve had sinned? What do you think would have happened had Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Life when they were in a fallen and separated condition from God?

Human history has been defined by man living outside of the Garden that God originally created for us: the place where we lived in intimacy and knowledge of God. The image of God within us was *marred* and *disfigured* when our parents (Adam and Eve) sinned and disobeyed God. In other words, when we look at the world today and we look at human beings (ourselves), we cannot see what God *originally* created nor what God *originally* intended. Likewise, man's dominion over the earth was actually forfeited to another spiritual being that was created by God as well: satan. This angelic being was responsible for helping deceive the first humans and helping them decide to disobey God. In fact, this angelic being is the spirit that works behind the scenes to cause mankind to rebel against God and to reject God's rulership over us.

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Genesis 5:1-5

This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. 3 And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. 4 After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. 5 So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.



When Adam was 130 years old, in whose image was his first son "after"? What happened in between man's original creation and the birth of Adam's first son?

Adam and Eve became "sons of disobedience" when they disobeyed God and ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Ever since then, people have been living in a cycle of death that continues on to this day. As humans have continued on since this rebellion against God, our children have been borne according to *our* image. Adam's first son, Seth, was "begot" or born in the image of Adam. Notice that it does not say that Seth was born "in the likeness of God" like Adam was. That is the essential problem of humanity: we have reproduced children after *our* own image and *our* own likeness. Unfortunately, that image and likeness that Adam and Eve had

was corrupted and tarnished because of sin and disobedience and so the image of all human beings as a result was affected.

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--

It is not that we are no longer in the "image of God", but rather the image of God in mankind has been *tarnished* because of our sinfulness, selfishness, and rebellion against God. Humanity casts a very DULL and FADED image of God now because our first parents sinned. Just look at the world and human history.

- ◆ What has human history been characterized by? War, disease, death, selfishness, hatred, murder, rape, abuse, deception, false religions, molestation, greed, sexual perversion, drunkenness, hatred, wickedness, envy, covetousness, and so on and so on...
- ◆ What else has it been characterized by, though? How about intellectual achievement, scientific breakthrough, artistic expression, cultural advancement, and human excellence, just to name a few.

Do you notice how our history is marked by both good AND evil? The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is marked by BOTH: trying to be good while at the same time manifesting evil. This is the human experience. You may not be a murderer or a thief or a child molester, but you are nonetheless guilty of disobeying God and His commandments. We are under a similar death penalty that Adam and Eve was. Death is best defined as separation from God... and the wages of sin is death. What we need is to eat and partake of the Tree of Life. However, the way to that tree was blocked, lest Adam and Eve ate of that tree and were forever separated from God in their sinful condition. The Book of Genesis never indicates whether Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Life before they ate of the forbidden tree... but from all indications, it appears that they did not. There was no prohibition against the Tree of Life!

Proverbs 3:5-8

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.

You can begin to trust the LORD even right now... that He is good, that He has your best interest in mind, and that you can obey Him without fear of "missing out" on something better. The tree of knowledge of good and evil represents the intellectual, rationale, and logical choices that we are confronted with everyday in how to run our lives. The tree of life, however, represents God's way of running our lives: our voluntary agreement with His will and our trust that He loves us and will take care of us best. The tree of life speaks of another tree... on which the Son of God was crucified. This is the tree that we come to NOW for life: it represents us wanting God to come and rule our lives instead of us ruling our lives. It represents forgiveness for our sins, life eternal with God, and fellowship with God now. It also represents the highest cost God was willing to pay to restore us to fellowship with Himself. God had to become a man Himself and bear the punishment for our sins in order for the "way" to the Tree of Life to be once again made available to man. He had to deal with the "sin" problem. The tree of life speaks of how we each need to

cling and trust to God instead of trusting in our wisdom and our own understanding. The writer of Proverbs tells us to trust in the LORD with ALL of our heart: this includes our intellect, emotions, and free will. We show that we trust God by obeying His will (revealed to us in the Bible) and turning from our own way. We partake of the tree of life when we allow Jesus to be Lord over our day to day decisions: how we spend our time, how we spend our money, and how we spend our talents.

Begin now to cultivate this kind of relationship with your Lord. Ask Him for His wisdom, His guidance, His thoughts, His ways, and His will. Ask for His kingdom to come and be established in your life and in your affairs.

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Paul encourages followers of Jesus to “work out” what God has “worked in” them through salvation. We do this primarily by coming to the Word of Life (the Bible) and asking for revelation of the “Tree of Life”—who is Jesus, the crucified One. If you are not doing so already, find time during each day to come to the Lord using the Scriptures. Use the Word as a conversation piece with the Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate it’s meaning to you. Ask for faith to believe the promises that are given. Give thanks for all the things that God promises you. Commit yourself to the Lord to obey His commands and ask for God to empower you to do so (ask for grace). Paul uses the words “fear and trembling” to describe how we should approach the Lord in this way. He wanted to make clear that we should not take lightly the grace of God or what great a salvation we have received! This kind of “fear” is a good kind of fear: it is the very awe of God Himself. It is to be fascinated, awed, stunned, and amazed by God to a degree that our hearts respond “in trembling”. This is the connotation, because the very Creator of the universe is WORKING in you for His good pleasure. He is working to restore His image in you. He is working to rebuild, revamp, renovate, and renew you so that you begin to reflect the image of His Son Jesus.

This is the essence of discipleship: to become like the One we follow. We will discuss this process of restoration and transformation in the next lesson.

Questions

1. We need the grace of God and His offer of redemption because all of us have _____ and fall short of the _____ of God? (Romans 3:23).
2. We were created to be an _____ for Jesus, the Son of God, and His own special _____. (Psalms 2:8, Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9)
3. Being a disciple means that we will be _____ the one we follow (Matthew 10:24-25).
4. We are commanded to follow Jesus and obey His commands because we are transformed into the _____ of the one we behold and follow. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)
5. True or False. We can see perfectly the image and glory of God in other people today (Romans 3:23).
6. True or False. The reason the world is in the state it is today is because God gave mankind the rulership over the earth originally. (Genesis 1:26-28)
7. There only two trees specifically named in the garden of Eden were the tree of _____ and the tree of _____.
8. How did satan convince Eve to eat of the forbidden tree (Genesis 3:1-5)?

9. When man chose to obey satan instead of obeying God, whom did they forfeit the dominion of the earth over to? _____ (John 12:31, John 14:30, John 16:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2).
10. What was the first question God asked when Adam and Eve sinned? (Genesis 3:9)
_____ Why would an omniscient being ask a question?
11. Who took the initiative to make things right when Adam and Eve disobeyed? (Genesis 3:21)

12. What were the two responses of Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God? (Genesis 3:7-8)

13. What did God promise He would do to the serpent (the devil) for his role in causing Adam and Eve to sin? (Genesis 3:15) _____
14. The prohibition against eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil stemmed primarily from _____ love, which is love based on a choice to trust God versus trusting our own wisdom.