

CONFORMATION

Genesis 1:26-31; Matthew 9:20-22

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 1

- ✓ Genesis 1 is the account of God's creation of the world in 6 days.
- ✓ Our seven-day week is based upon the pattern of God's creation. God created all things in six days and rested on the seventh. That's the same pattern that we follow: six days we labor and do our work and one day we rest.
- ✓ What distinguishes man from the rest of the animals is that man is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). I don't think the Incarnation would have happened had we not been created in God's image.

I. FOR THOSE GOD FOREKNEW HE ALSO PREDESTINED TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON (Romans 8:29)

A. Paul says that the grand and glorious goal of our having been predestined is so that we might be conformed to the **image** of Jesus (Romans 8:29).

1. The word "image" is the Greek work εἰκόν. It comes into the English as "icon."
2. An image is a "likeness" or a "representation."
3. Paul uses the same word, "εἰκόν", in Romans 1 about unbelievers, "exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God **for an image** in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures" (Romans 1:23).

B. There is nothing more exciting that could be said about a person than the fact that he or she is being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. "Infinity can conceive of nothing beyond the reality of our conformity to Christ nor can omnipotence accomplish more on our behalf."

1 John 3:2 (NIV)
Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

"God's whole purpose, conceived in a past eternity, being worked out for and in his people in history, to be completed in the glory to come, may be encapsulated in this single concept: God intends to make us like Christ." (John Stott, *Focus on Christ* p.143).

II. JESUS IDENTIFIED WITH HUMANITY IN EVERY WAY, EXCEPT SIN, SO THAT HE

COULD SAVE US FROM OUR SINS (Matthew 1:21; cf. Romans 8:3).

A. Jesus is the perfect *image* of the Father, and our problem is that we try making Jesus after our own fallen *image* (John 14:7-9). All of us, NOT SOME OF US, but ALL OF US have our own little cookie cutter molds that we try to fit Jesus into.

Romans 1:22-23 (NASB95)

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an **image** in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NASB95)
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 from the Lord, the Spirit.

*The vision of Christ that thou dost see
Is my vision's greatest enemy:
Thine has a great hook nose like thine,
Mine has a snub nose like to mine....
Both read the Bible day and night,
But thou read'st black where I read white.*

B. The *goal* of the Incarnation was NOT so that Jesus would be like us, but so that we might be made like Him (Romans 8:29).

We need to show without pretense that though other books may inform or even reform us, only one Book can and does transform us, making us conformable to the image of Christ (Joel R. Beeke & Ray B. Lanning, "Reading and Hearing the Word in a Puritan Way"; *Reformation and Revival Volume 5* vnp.5.2.67).

C. Taking hold of the tassels of Jesus' garment by faith (Matthew 8:20; **Numbers 15:37-41; Deut.22:12; 1 Samuel 15:27-28; 24:1-15**; Matthew 14:35-36; **23:5**).

Zechariah 8:23

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." ' "

"In a word, faith does all that in man of which the Scripture testifies externally. It [Scripture] describes the image of God externally and that image must come to be in me through faith. It describes the kingdom of God externally in letters and it must come to be in me through faith. It describes Christ externally and he must come to be in me through faith" (Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*. Arndt's work is the first great literary expression of Pietism. Pietism was a 17th and 18th century Lutheran movement to renew the devotional ideal of Protestantism).

QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:

Take what you have learned this morning and make it into a prayer. Have you taken hold of Jesus by faith and do you trust in Him alone for your salvation? Are there any areas of your life that you need to confess that you have made Jesus after your fallen image? Give thanks that "infinity can conceive of nothing beyond the reality of our conformity to Christ nor can omnipotence accomplish more on our behalf."

What was the title of this morning's sermon and what does it mean?

What distinguishes human beings from the rest of creation?

Does a person realize their "full potential" the more they are like God or they more they do what feels right to them? How is this different from our culture?

Explain the meaning of the following quote, "God created man in His image and man has returned the favor." Can you think of examples of how you or others make God after their own image?

What is the goal of the Incarnation?