

# *The Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*

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**PART 2:**

**WHAT GOD WANTED ON EARTH**

# What Did God Want?

**An earthly family with him forever.**

- **God created humanity because they otherwise wouldn't exist**
- **God came to earth because humanity could not go to him**

EDEN

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**What was it? Who's there?**

# What was Eden?

More than a garden ...

- God's earthly home
- Superior to the rest of the earth
- Eden = a garden and a mountain  
(Ezek 28:13-14)
- Gardens and mountains OT/ANE

# What was Eden?

- Eden was where God dwelt.
- Where God is, his family is – in this case, before humanity's creation, his **supernatural family** (Job 38:5-7)
- They are **God's audience** for his momentous decision ...

# THE IMAGE OF GOD

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What is it?

## **Genesis 1:26-27**

**Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 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

Then God said, "Let **us** make man in **our** image, in **our** likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So **God created** man in **his** own image, in the image of God **he created** him; male and female **he created** them.

# **Why the Plurals? What's the Image?**

## **Why the Switch to Singular?**

- **Lots of debate on nature of the image**
- **Other questions largely ignored, though the plurality is assumed by most Christian denominations to the Trinity (flawed)**

# The Image: Criteria

- Men and women
- Equally possessed
- Distinct from all earthly creatures
- Neither incremental nor partial
- Passed on generationally (intrinsic; Gen 5:1-3; 9:6)

# What fails these criteria?

- **Consciousness**
- **Sentience**
- **Intelligence / rationality**
- **Emotions**
- **Soul-spirit**
- **Conscience / sense of morality**
- **Communication**

# Why?

- **Cannot be said to be present equally** among **all** human beings.
- **Cannot be said to be present actually** among **all** human beings.
- (Some) are not **unique to humankind**

= Brain function

# “Soul”?

Humans are animated by the breath of

God in Gen 2:7 (“living soul”) = נְפִישׁ

חַיָּה (*nephesh ḥayyah*)

# “Soul”?

Animals described the same way.

Gen 1:21 - So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature (נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה; *nephesh ha-ḥayyah*) that moves ...

# “Soul”?

Animals also have a *ruach* (Eccl 3:21) –  
i.e., animate life

Also ...

Man given “the breath of life” (*nishmat  
ḥayyim*); cp. Gen 7:22-23 (all land life)

# So What is the “image”?

So **God created** man in **his** own image

- **FUNCTIONAL vs. QUALITATIVE**

Let us create humankind **AS** our image -  
to be our **IMAGER**

# What does “imaging” mean?

a **status** = representation

- verb rather than a noun
- imagers = God’s proxies, agents

**Status / representation is behind one of the 10 commandments ...**

# What does “imaging” mean?

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.”

Exod 20:7

# What does “imaging” mean?

To image God / to be his imager means:

- to bear his name
- to represent him

Edenic version was short-lived

- in a fallen world, only **the redeemed** can do this as intended
- in our case, we **have a template** ...

## IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

“The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is **the image** of God.” (2 Cor 4:4)

# IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

- God has predestinated that all who believe will ultimately be “conformed to **the image** of his son” (Rom 8:29)

**We will ultimately be like Jesus (1 Jn 3:1-3)**

# IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

**Col 3:10**

Believers “have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after **the image** of its creator.”

# IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

**2 Cor 3:18**

**And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same **image** from one degree of glory to another.**

# IMAGING EXAMPLE: JESUS

2 Tim 2:19

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "Let everyone **who names the name** of the Lord depart from iniquity."

# Why the Plurals in Gen 1:26?

**Start with what's clear ...**

- **God is the lone creator of all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible (Col 1:15-16)**
- **We image God, our creator -- we serve in his stead on this planet.**

# Why the Plurals in Gen 1:26?

“our image” ... “our likeness” =

- Loops God’s supernatural children, members of his host / council, into the scene and concept of imaging.
- They also image God, their creator – in the spiritual realm.
- Cannot mean we image them bc v. 27 makes it clear God is the lone creator.

# Why the Plurals in Gen 1:26?

- **Our service to God imitates / aligns with the service rendered to God by his other supernatural imagers.**
- **In that respect, we are like them, we imitate their service to God.**
- **We co-represent the same Father-Creator.**

# WHAT ABOUT EVIL?

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God didn't get what he wanted (yet)

# Why the Plurals in Gen 1:26?

- Did God not know what was going to happen?
  - 1 Samuel 23
- There is no plan B