

Does the Bible Speak to Us? (Slide 1)

Last week, in our study, we discussed *God and Man* and what to be *created in His image, in His likeness* means. This is a particular subject that *Theologians* have debated for sometime.

As we know God created everything that we can observe on planet earth and every living creature. He brought those creatures to the first man, Adam, to be named. Of all the plant life, birds in the air, creepy crawly things, beasts of the earth, only man was designated as having been *created in the image of God*.

That is a very distinguishing difference from every other creature that God created including the species of apes, which many believe man has descended from.

I am convinced that being *created in the image of God, His likeness* is more in-line with being *God-like* in nature rather than a direct reflection of what God looks like.

We may very well look like Him but who really knows since we don't know what God looks like.

Jesus said in:

John 14:9 (Slide 2)

Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Jesus is not asking Philip, *"Don't you recognize me?"* He asked; *"Can you not see my nature, my love and compassion, my heart?!"* He's not talking about appearance but *nature*.

Jesus is a direct *reflection* of the Father in *love, compassion, forgiveness and justice*. Brethren, that's a great thing. We can see from Jesus' life just exactly how God looks at things. *How He feels and How He responds, How deep is His love, How willing He is to forgive.*

Apostle Paul further clarifies for us what the *image of God* looks like:

Colossians 3:9-10 (Slide 3)

⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Christians strive to change their behavior to match their creator because they have gained the knowledge of His nature!

Ephesians 4:20-24 (Slide 4)

²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of (Slide 5) life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Even those outside of Christ often display the characteristics of being *created in His image* which is the design of our Holy Creator.

But how will we know His image if we don't know Him?

The Bible; "If we will listen speaks to us!"

(Slide 6) *The Bible: Two Covenants - Two Testaments.*

At this point I think it wise that we define *Covenant* and *Testament* before we continue.

Genesis 26:26-29 (Slide 7)

²⁶ When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army, ²⁷ Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" ²⁸ They said, "We see plainly that the LORD has (Slide 8) been with you. So we said, let there be a sworn pact between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, ²⁹ that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD."

As you can see a covenant, an agreement can even be made between enemies. A peace agreement is a covenant. In essence, God makes a peace agreement with mankind, whom He does not want to be an enemy with, by giving His Son as a ransom for us all.

A *testament* is like a covenant but is a bit more involved. It refers to the covenant containing the agreement in a contract but I also believe it tells the story of the agreement through divine guidance and eye witness testimony.

Acts 4:19-20 (Slide 9)

¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to

God, you must judge, ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

Apostle Pauls says in:

Galatians 3:15-17 (Slide 10)

¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings, (Slide 11) " referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

A last will and testament is binding and between a specific giver to a specific receiver as stated in the will.

Just like a will, the requirements, give the receiver, who specifically meets those requirements blessings as stated in the New Testament. They have been ratified by the Blood of Christ and they are binding.

The Old Covenant worked in conjunction to bring man to the New. The one and the only way to experience the blessings offered by Jesus and the cross!

You can see the unity of the Old and New Covenants in what Apostle Paul writes to Timothy in:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (Slide 12)

¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

breathed out by God: The origin of scripture: The Old and New

The scriptures purpose; that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work

Don't miss that because many want to only subscribe to the New Testament and not see the necessity and purpose of the Old Covenant. It is included for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness as well.

If all we knew was the New, we would miss the point of Christ's sacrifice because we wouldn't fully grasp the fall of man, the work of the prophets, the alignment of peoples in bringing Jesus through the Jewish lineage, the patience and Blessings God offers and intended from the beginning, not to mention creation and His miraculous power!

We have what happened and what was said because it has been written down.

But how did they know what to write?

Apostle Peter gives us the answer:

2 Peter 1:16-21 (Slide 13)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, (Slide 14) and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy (Slide 15) mountain. (The Transfiguration)¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no (Slide 16) prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter and the other Apostles were eyewitnesses to the life and works of Jesus and the Holy Spirit put His story in their hearts and hands to write down and as a testimony for all who will do well to pay attention.

No one in modern day has had that same eye witness experience to the Glory and story of Jesus. That I believe is the intentional will of God.

Apostle Paul has further proof of that very thing in:

1 Corinthians 2:6-13 (Slide 17)

⁶ Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed (Slide 18) before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written,

*(Slide 19) "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him"—*

(Slide 20) ¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything,

even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in (Slide 21) him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things (Slide 22) freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

Where did this wealth of spiritual truth come from: through the Spirit-taught by the Spirit and Apostle Pauls says we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit.

To whom was it given-revealed to us and they in return speak by inspiration to teach and to instruct us on how to live Godly.

God has always used a human spokesman.

He spoke directly to many of the patriarchs and the prophets. To Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. He spoke to Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Jonah, Amos and many others who wrote down what God said and did for our learning.

As one example, we learn from the Story of Jonah that you cannot run and hide from God!

Hebrews 1:1-2 (Slide 23)

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world

He speaks now through His Son which will be the subject of our lesson next week, Lord Willing.

The Holy Bible is a blessing to all of man.

When Jesus cleansed the temple He captured not only the attention of people but the entirety of their attention:

Luke 19:45-48 (Slide 24)

⁴⁵ And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, ⁴⁶ saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers."

(Slide 25) ⁴⁷ And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men

of the people were seeking to destroy him, ⁴⁸ but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

That should be the way the Bible captures our minds/ our attention.

The Holy Bible is a gift from God that speaks to us today! It's up to man to learn to understand and learn to speak its language.

Invitation

The Bible in 1 Peter encourages us; "You shall be holy, for I am holy." Though to reach the holiness of God is difficult, it is God who can sanctify us and make us clean through the blood of His Son that was shed on the cross. Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb? If not, don't delay. Do it today!

If you are a child of God but need prayer, please let us know and we will pray for you.

Let us know how we may serve you.....

Reading

Isaiah 55:1-11

¹ "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴ Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. ⁵ Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. ⁶ "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the

*LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts
than your thoughts. ¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow
come down from heaven and do not return there but
water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish
that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for
which I sent it.*

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