

# God created man in His image

The creation of man in the image of God does not mean that anything was added to his humanness. No, being the image of God is an inherent characteristic of man.

What does it mean to be the image of God?

It *first of all* means that man is to be God's *representative* here on earth, in the same way that governments have ambassadors to represent their country in other countries. He must ensure that the interests of his country are served in the foreign country. Similarly, man as image of God must be God's representative on earth.

Being the image of God *also* means that man – especially prior to the Fall – *resembled* God in many ways. (Genesis 1:26). This means that man's life must reflect and radiate the virtues and powers of God's being.

Among the characteristics in which man reflects God's image – and especially prior to the Fall – is: God can love, in fact, He is love – man is also able to love; God is holy – man was also holy; God is righteous – so was man.

Then came the Fall and although man remained the image of God after the Fall (Genesis 9:6; James 3:9), God's image was shattered. Instead of being righteous, man became largely unrighteous; instead of loving, he started to hate (Genesis 4).

In his boundless compassion and grace God sent his only begotten Son who through his sacrifice of atonement restored the image of God in man and through his Word and Holy Spirit, He changes and renews us that we may reflect his image all the more in our life (Romans 8:29).

It is by *grace* that we may reflect God's image, but it is also our holy *calling*: We must now display his image wherever we go and in whatever we do. As Paul says: "...put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." (Ephesians 4:24)

Because of sin, we will always fall short of revealing God's image in our life here on earth. On the new earth, however, we will reflect God's image in all its perfection. (Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2, also read Genesis 1:26-31; Heidelberg Catechism Answer 6)

*If you are interested,*

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