Man: The Crown of God's Creation

Holy Scripture tells us that God planned to make a being different from the angels, a being above them, who would bear His image and likeness. And so man was created in the image and likeness of God. (And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness… So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him…" Genesis 1:26, 27; "He also did predestinate to be *conformed to the image of his Son,* that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8:29)

Of the angels, Holy Scripture tells us that they are spirits who serve God and men. (And of the angels he saith, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." Hebrews 1:7; "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Hebrews 1:13-14)

God's plan was to make beings who would share His qualities, beings with whom He would live for eternity in perfect fellowship. We also find written in Holy Scripture that man was made only a little lower than God and was set to rule over all His works. ("What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than God, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Psalm 8:4)

Elsewhere we find it written that man was made a little lower than the angels, yet the final purpose is for man to rule over all of God's works. It is not the angels who will rule, but man, created in His image and likeness! (For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come. Hebrews 2:5) What an extraordinary thing, what a magnificent plan God has made for the man He created! ("What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast 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 see not yet all things put under him. Hebrews 2:6–8)

It is also written that before this world existed, God planned to have children who would share His nature and that of His Son, Jesus Christ. (For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29)

The Fall of Man

But man, the being God created, was deceived by Satan and so became separated from God, losing His likeness, His image. (Who were dead in trespasses and sins… Ephesians 2:1) The word of Scripture shows us that even before He laid the foundation of the world, God foresaw the possibility of the fall and had a remedy ready for the restoration and perfecting of man. (He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without

blame. Ephesians 1:4)

That is why His Son came into our world: to restore what was lost in the Garden of Eden, to teach us and help us rebuild this lost image, so that in the end we may once again be in His likeness and be found worthy of the eternal Kingdom. That is why Scripture lays this demand on us: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13:24)

Scripture tells us that whoever lives in sin will not enter His eternal Kingdom. The character we have when we leave this life is the character with which we will stand before God at the resurrection. (Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. 1 Corinthians 6:9)

The Restoration of Man – Bringing Him Back to the State God Designed

The Lord Jesus came to fulfil God's plan, to help everyone who wants to be restored to the standard for which they were created. (I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8:12)

That is why He works with us through His Word and through the Holy Spirit to rebuild what man lost when he fell into sin. When we enter His school, into this process of restoring His image in us, He gives us all the help we need to grow once more into the stature of His Son.

God's primary purpose is to shape our character until it becomes once again like Christ's. (Christ in you, the hope of glory. Colossians 1:27; …until Christ be formed in you. Galatians 4:19)

Those who understand this plan and accept it will take part and work together with God in restoring their character after the heavenly pattern. (For *we are his workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:10; …we are labourers together with God. 1 Corinthians 3:9)

We have no other calling on earth than to have the image of God restored in us, so that we may live for eternity with those who are conformed to the image of His Son, the people of the household of God. (Ephesians 2:19)

In this way God has made it possible for man to be born again spiritually, born of God, and to grow until he resembles Him once more and becomes like Him. (Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. 1 John 3:2)

Just as a baby begins to get used to new things in life by learning from and copying its parents, so it will be with the one who is born of God. He will be our Father and will work with us to stamp His ways and qualities upon us. To take on His character, we will have to follow Him and imitate Him, the way a child imitates his parent in everything he does.

We find written in Holy Scripture that God, who begins this good work in the person who longs for the salvation of his soul, will bring it to completion. No one is left alone in this work of restoration. (Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you

will perform it. Philippians 1:6; "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Genesis 28:15; I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:20)

God works with us through the Holy Spirit to make us perfect, and He will do this only during our life here on earth. (We are changed into the same image… by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18; Now the God of peace… make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight. Hebrews 13:20; Be ye therefore perfect… Matthew 5:48)

Faith in His Word must work together with our deeds, and through what we do in obedience to Him, the image of Christ will be formed in us. (Faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. James 2:22)

The Image of God

If man was made in the likeness of God, it is essential that we know who God is and what He is like. Only then can we truly know what man was like before he fell into sin and what he must become again.

So we must search and see how Holy Scripture describes God. How is the Kingdom in which He lives described? How do those who are in God's presence live? These are questions we must answer if we are to understand where man once was and where he will dwell for eternity.

If man is to become like God again, then it is essential that we understand what that means. No one can see God's physical form, but what we can see is His character, the way He is. Just as we come to know a person by his character, by the inner man and not by his outward appearance, so we must "see" God as He is within.

And the most important thing is that we long to be like Him, so that we may come back into His likeness. So to know God, we must look at His ways, at what He is like, just as the following verse of Scripture says. (*Shew me now thy way, that I may know thee*… Exodus 33:13)

This is how Jonah, one of the men of the Bible, describes Him: I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness… (Jonah 4:2)

We find written on the pages of Scripture that God is longsuffering, full of mercy, gracious, slow to anger, full of goodness, full of love, righteous and pure, holy… (The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Exodus 34:6; "The LORD is… slow to anger" Psalm 145:8; God is love. 1 John 4:16)

If you long to grow until you once again match the original design God had for man—that is, to be conformed to His image—please read the other articles on this site as well.

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