

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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INCARNATION
FULFILLING THE PURPOSE
OF GOD'S CREATION
OF MAN

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Living Stream Ministry
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It is a great thing to see that Christ's incarnation is linked to God's purpose in creating man. God's purpose in the creation of man in His image and after His likeness was that man would receive Him as life and express Him in all His attributes. The Man-Savior's incarnation brought God into man to restore and to recover the damaged and lost humanity and to express God in His attributes through human virtues.

MAN DESIGNED TO BE ONE WITH GOD

If we have an all-inclusive view of the revelation in the holy Word, we shall see that in eternity past God designed man to be one with Him. Throughout the Scriptures we have a complete revelation of God's building. For His building God had a design. He designed to have man and that man should be one with Him.

MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE AND AFTER HIS LIKENESS

Based upon His design, God created man in His image and after His likeness. “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” ([Gen. 1:26a, 27a](#)).

GOD'S EMBODIMENT IN CHRIST

In the Scriptures the word “image” is used to refer to God’s being. This can be proved by certain New Testament verses. [Second Corinthians 4:4](#) says that Christ is the image of God, [Colossians 1:15](#) tells us that Christ is “the image of the invisible God,” and [Hebrews 1:3](#) reveals that Christ is “the effulgence of His glory and the express image of His substance.” Christ is the very embodiment of God. As God’s embodiment, Christ is God’s image.

CONTAINING GOD AND BECOMING HIS DUPLICATION

Furthermore, according to the Bible the image of God is related to His duplication. In [Genesis 1](#) “image” is for God to be duplicated,

to be “copied” in man. This means that man was created in such a way that he could become God’s duplication, His copy. God created man in His own image with the intention that man would become His duplication.

Since God created man for the purpose of man’s becoming His duplication, and since this purpose is indicated by the use of the word image, we may go on to say that the word image implies the capacity to contain God. If man did not have the capacity to contain God, how could he become God’s duplication, His copy? In order for man to be a copy of God, man must have the capacity or ability to contain what God is.

THE APPEARANCE OF GOD FOR HIS EXPRESSION

Man was created not only in God’s image but also after God’s likeness. The word “likeness” refers to outward form, outward fashion, outward appearance. Hence, “likeness” here is a matter of expression. First, man was made in God’s image to be a duplicate of God, and then man was made after God’s likeness to have the appearance of God for His expression. The image is the inward reality of the outward expression, and the

likeness is the expression, or the outward appearance, of the image.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATING MAN

Man was created in God's image and after God's likeness in order to be God's duplication that he may express God. The duplication is in God's image, and the expression is after God's likeness.

GOD'S INTENTION TO BE MAN'S LIFE AND CONTENT

In [Genesis 1:26](#) and [27](#) we have the container but not the content. The content is found in [Genesis 2](#). According to the record in [Genesis 2](#), after God created man, He prepared a garden and placed man in it. Two trees are mentioned by name: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's intention was that the man created by Him would take of the tree of life and live.

We cannot understand the significance of the tree of life simply by [Genesis 2](#). By reading the entire Bible we see that the tree of life is a symbol of God as life. For example, [Psalm 36:9](#) says, "With thee is the fountain of life." In the

Gospel of John we see that when Jesus, the Son of God, came, life was in Him (John 1:4). The Lord Jesus said that He was life (John 11:25) and that He came that we may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). In Colossians 3:4 Paul says that Christ is our life. Furthermore, 1 John 5:11 and 12 say, “And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life.” Finally, the book of Revelation speaks clearly of the tree of life, with which the entire city of New Jerusalem will be nourished in eternity (Rev. 22:1-2, 14). Therefore, by considering the whole Bible we see that the tree of life symbolizes God as man’s life. God’s intention was that the man created by Him as a container would take Him in as his life and content.

THE IMAGE OF GOD AND THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Let us now consider further what God’s image is. The New Testament tells us that God’s image is Christ. But still we need to ask how we should describe the image of God.

The Bible tells us that God is love and that He is light (1 John 4:8; 1:5). Love is the nature of God’s essence, and light is the nature of God’s

expression. The Bible also reveals that God is righteous and holy. The adjective “righteous” used with respect to God refers to God’s way. God’s way of doing things is always righteous; He never does anything unrighteously. The adjective “holy” refers to God’s inward nature. God is righteous in His doings and holy in His nature.

God’s image is depicted by these four words: love, light, righteous, and holy. These are God’s attributes. Hence, when we use the term “divine attributes” we are referring to God’s love, light, righteousness, and holiness. Our God is love and light, and our God is righteous and holy. This is not a description of God’s likeness; it is a description of God’s very being. God is love; that is, love is His being. God is light; that is, light is His being. Furthermore, the being of God is righteous in His acts and holy in His nature. This is the image, the description, of our God. The four main features of this description are God’s attributes.

MAN CREATED WITH THE CAPACITY TO CONTAIN THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

God created man in His own image in such a way that man has the capacity to contain God’s love, light, righteousness, and holiness. The

human virtues were created by God to contain His attributes. Human love, light, righteousness, and holiness are created capacities to contain the divine love, light, righteousness, and holiness.

People everywhere agree that hating others is contrary to our conscience. Furthermore, it is also contrary to our conscience to lie, steal, and do things in darkness. Even an unsaved person may have the sense that it would be unrighteous to keep extra change given to him by mistake in a restaurant or store.

The human virtues created by God are the capacity to contain God's attributes. God created man in this way with the intention that man would take Him as the tree of life to be his life and content.

ADAM'S FAILURE TO BECOME A GOD-MAN

If Adam had eaten of the tree of life and thereby had taken God into him as life, he would have been filled with God, and his human virtues would have been filled with God's attributes. Then man's virtues would have expressed God's attributes.

As we know, Adam failed to fulfill God's purpose, and he spoiled God's design. God had

made Adam according to His design. But because Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil instead of the tree of life, he spoiled God's design. The humanity created by God was damaged and, in a sense, lost. However, thousands of years later, the Man-Savior came to fulfill God's purpose in creating man.

THE SECOND MAN

Through the incarnation of Christ, God in the Son became a man. What a great matter this is! God had created man with a purpose according to His design, but man failed Him in His purpose and destroyed His design. Instead of creating another man, God Himself came to be the second Man ([1 Cor. 15:47](#)).

CONCEIVED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BORN OF A HUMAN VIRGIN

The Man-Savior as the second Man was not created; rather, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a human virgin. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in order to have the essence of God, and He was born of a human virgin in order to have the human essence. Therefore, this Man was a composition of two essences, a composition of the divine essence

and the human essence. Hence, He was the mingling of God with man. Because this wonderful One was a composition of two essences, the mingling of God with man, He was a God-man.

LIVING A HUMAN LIFE FILLED WITH THE DIVINE LIFE

A crucial matter concerning the God-man is that He lived a human life filled with the divine life as its content. Contrary to what some may think, the Gospel of Luke is not merely a book of stories. This Gospel is a revelation of the God-man who lived a human life filled with the divine life as its content. As the One who lived such a life, the Man-Savior had the divine nature with the divine attributes, that is, with the divine love, light, righteousness, and holiness. The divine nature with its attributes was expressed in the Man-Savior's human nature with all the human virtues.

THE LOVE OF THE GOD-MAN

Because the Man-Savior's divine nature with the divine attributes was expressed in His human nature with the human virtues, it is difficult to say when He was living on earth whether it was God loving others or a man loving. Readers of

the New Testament can easily realize that the Lord Jesus loves others. Children are even taught to sing, “Jesus loves me, this I know.” But what kind of love does Jesus have? Is His love human or divine? His love is not merely human love nor merely divine love; His love is human love filled, strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by and with the divine love. This wonderful love is a composition, a mingling, of the divine love with the human love. This love was the living of the Man-Savior, the living of the God-man. The Lord’s living was a matter of the human virtues filled, strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by the divine attributes.

QUALIFIED TO BE THE MAN-SAVIOR

It was this kind of living that qualified the Lord Jesus to be our Man-Savior. He saved sinners by such a human-divine living, by a living that was humanly divine and divinely human. The living of the Lord Jesus was not merely human nor merely divine; it was humanly divine and divinely human. His living was the dynamic power by which He saved pitiful sinners.

If we understand this, we shall realize that the divine love merely by itself could not save us. Of course, mere human love could not save us. The

love that saves us must be a composition of the human love and the divine love. The mingling of these two loves is a saving love.

In the Gospel of Luke we see a life filled with human virtues that are strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by divine attributes. In such a living we see the composition, the mingling, of God with man. This living is both the saving power and the qualification of the Lord Jesus to be our Savior. In His status as a God-man the Man-Savior is qualified to save us.

This One, our Man-Savior, accomplished an all-inclusive death on the cross for our redemption. Then God raised Him from among the dead as God's verification of and God's sanction to His life and work. This resurrected God-man has ascended to the heavens, has been enthroned and crowned with glory and honor, and has been made the Head of all. Oh, we all need to know this wonderful Person!

THE RESTORATION OF FALLEN HUMANITY THROUGH CHRIST'S INCARNATION

The Man-Savior's incarnation was mainly to bring God into man. His incarnation was also to restore, to recover, damaged humanity. God

made Adam in His own image and after His own likeness, but Adam became fallen. Now within the fallen humanity there is sin—the evil nature of the Devil ([Rom. 7:17](#); [1 John 3:8](#)). Nevertheless, the humanity created by God still remains. When Christ, who is the very God, was incarnated, He restored the lost and damaged humanity. God sent His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin ([Rom. 8:3](#)), that is, in the likeness of fallen humanity.

TWO KINDS OF HUMANITY

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He had a humanity that had been rescued from the state of the fall. Through incarnation, He put on a recovered, restored, humanity. As the God-man was living in such an uplifted humanity, all those around Him, including His disciples, were living in a fallen, damaged, humanity. Their humanity was not the humanity originally created by God. On the contrary, it was a damaged and deformed humanity.

THE RECOVERY OF THE DISCIPLES' HUMANITY

Through the Man Savior's death and resurrection, the fallen humanity of His disciples was

recovered. In chapters one and two of Acts we see that the disciples had another kind of humanity, an uplifted and restored humanity. In the Gospels they were arguing about who was greater. But in *Acts 1* they could pray persistently and perseveringly in one accord for ten days. They could do this because they had another humanity. Their humanity had been uplifted, restored, and recovered. Not only had they been saved, but their humanity had been restored, recovered, through the Spirit's regeneration and transformation.

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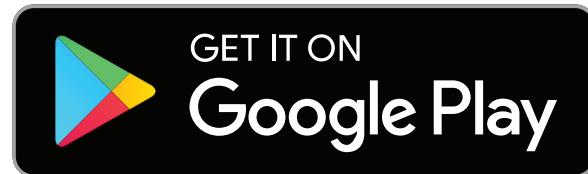
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