

In SPIRIT and TRUTH

Created In HIS Image

"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; male and female created he them."
Genesis 1:26-27

Now that we are well into the New Year, 2022, undoubtedly we have encountered many who have made all kinds of New Year's Resolutions. Interestingly, New Year's Resolutions about changing one's physical appearance (either by weight loss, exercise, or dieting) has always been at the top of the list of things to do after holiday over-indulgences. Many are passionate about making these changes after taking a look in the mirror and not liking what they see. So they begin to set goals for themselves based primarily upon changing the outward image of the flesh.



However, for those who are in Christ, we know that *the real man is the inner man of the Spirit; created by God, and made in the image, and likeness of the Godhead (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost)...* **"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"** (Genesis 1:26).

Unfortunately, soon after being created, Adam and Eve sinned by eating of *the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-24)*. Consequently, their bodies changed, and *man* was no longer in his created state of perfection; instead, they became mortal beings and subject to death.

However, because of God's love for His creation (and knowing that man would sin) He established a plan for restoration before the foundation of the world. And for those who would repent of their sins and receive Jesus Christ (as the Holy Ghost) there is the opportunity for transformation of the total man (body, soul, and spirit); and now we can have eternal life again, just as in the beginning.

"...for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7b

From further study of the Word, we may come to understand some important things about the heart of God. We are told in Revelation 4:11, that God created *ALL THINGS*, for His pleasure; and more specially, in Isaiah 43:7, that they were created for His glory. *However, only man was created in His image and likeness.*

THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST

“ye must be born again”

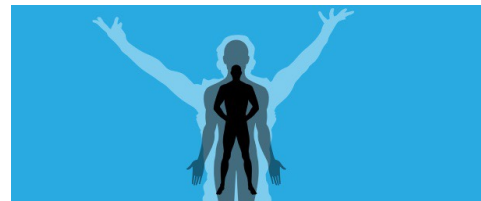
In the New Testament, the process of restoring man into spiritual fellowship with God begins with belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because God could “put no trust in His servants” under the Old Testament Law (Job 4:18) He, as the Christ, became the head of the New Testament church (Ephesians 5:23) and *“the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6)*. In John 3:1-21, Jesus teaches a Pharisee (Nicodemus) the foundation of a new spiritual principle of the kingdom of God, commanding, *“Ye must be born again”*. Examples of these practices among the early Christian converts are given in the Book of Acts.

(Jesus) “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.” John 3:5-7

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Romans 8:9

“that they may be one, as we are”

In the Book of John, chapter 17, Jesus divulges an important key to understanding why man was created in the image and likeness of the Godhead. As He prayed for His disciples, just before He was crucified, a longing of His heart for restored communion with man is revealed...



“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give ETERNAL LIFE to as many as thou hast given him.” John 17:1-2

Even though Adam and Eve forfeited their right to eternity when they disobeyed God, He had already established a way to redeem others, with a new and better covenant. Through Jesus’ death on the cross, the penalty was paid for the sins of the whole world... *once, and for all* (Hebrews 9:12-15; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Romans 10:9-10).

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one”.
John 17:20-22

Jesus prayed for unity among His disciples before the church was even established. He proved that it was possible “to be one” with the Father, by His example as a man. And because of His desire for us to do likewise, it was predestined for us to be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29).



“He is the Potter, we are the clay”

As disciples of Jesus Christ, it is important that we remain healthy and take care of our physical bodies; for we are told in 1 Corinthians 6:19, that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost. However, we must also guard our hearts and minds against conforming to the ways of the world (Romans 12:2), where our *primary focus* becomes the glorifying of the flesh. 1 Timothy 4:8 suggests that “bodily exercise profits a little”; but as believers, our *emphasis* should not be on the flesh, but rather, on building up “the new man” of the Spirit. We must strive to become *yielded vessels*, allowing our Maker to complete the work He has begun in us (Philippians 1:6).

I find it interesting that no where in the Bible do we have a description of what Jesus’ physical body looked like. We know that He performed manual labor, as a carpenter, so He was probably strong and muscular; otherwise, He most likely looked like any ordinary man. Isaiah 53:2 proclaimed (prophetically), that “**he had no form or comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him**”. In other words, Jesus was not what others even considered to be an attractive man. Philippians 2:6-7, explains further, that though He was “equal with God” (because He was God manifested in the flesh) *He made Himself of no reputation*, and took on the form of a servant (1 Timothy 3:16; John 1:1,14).

Again, we may not know what Jesus looked like physically, but we are told that we were created in His image and likeness. Therefore we should never complain about the bodies we have been given, nor be tempted to compare ourselves with others. Instead, we must always remember *whose* we are. For when we are born again, and the Spirit of God dwells within us, our bodies are no longer ours; they belong to God (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20). And because *He is the Potter, and we are the clay* (Jeremiah 18:2-6), it is the Potter who shapes and molds us according to *His will*.

“...who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?” Romans 9:20

“...thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; THOU ART MINE.” Isaiah 43:1

“... for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works;
and that my soul knows right well.” ~Psalm 139:14