

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

THE LIKENESS OF GOD

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART THIRTY SIX OF SIXTY FOUR*

Our treatment of man is related to our concept of him. If we think of man as an animal, we are prone to treat him as such. The treatment of men by the Communists who are atheists illustrates this. Even if we say man is a higher animal, the animal concept lowers our treatment of man. Thus James shows the great evil in cursing men by reminding us that man is "made after the likeness of God" (James 3:9). This is the teaching of all the Bible.

When God proposed the creation of man, He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). There is no higher concept of man in the world than that taught by the Bible.

But in what sense is man made in the likeness of God? Obviously it is not his body or physical form. "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24), and "a spirit hath not flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). Whatever the likeness, it must be in the realm of the spirit and not the physical. Man is a sharer in ability to reason, love, and will. He has the power of dominion, and the capacity for moral and spiritual holiness. Herein is the superiority of man to all other parts of creation.

In the garden of Eden man used his ability to choose to go contrary to God's will. However deep the blot of sin on his nature, even unregenerate man is still in the likeness of God. He must recognize this fact and also that through Jesus Christ and His gospel, he can "put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Ephesians 4:24).

"What is man?" asked the Psalmist long ago (Psalm 8:4). Your answer determines your life pattern. You were made after the likeness of God, not the likeness of animals. Are you living as God desires? Are you exercising your reason, love, and will in the pathway of righteousness and holiness? As you are not an animal of dust only, why live like one?

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