

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

- Currid ... By virtue of having been created ‘in the image of God’, mankind receives the status of ruler of the earth under the sovereignty of God ... a privileged status over creation.
- Currid ... Humans are created in the image (Hebrew *šēlēm*) of God. The word *šēlēm* originally meant ‘something cut from an object’—for example, a piece of clay cut from a sculpture. In such a case there exists a concrete resemblance between the object and the image. In the Bible *šēlēm* also denotes a statue of himself that a king would erect to serve as a symbol of his sovereignty.
- Ross ... The significance of the word “image” should be connected to the divine purpose for human life. Von Rad has made the analogy that, just as kings set up statues of themselves throughout the border of their land to show their sovereign domain, so God established his representatives on earth.
- Hughes ... We see man as the apex of a fully formed and filled creation made by God for him. Man and woman are glorious indeed. There they stood before the fall—vicegerents of creation in a state of spiritual, social, and ecological perfection.
- Hughes ... So with these realities about the Imago Dei the spiritual potential of humanity is immense. Image-bearers can hear God’s word and ride it to untold spiritual heights. Image-bearers are innately regal beings meant to rule over all creation. Image-bearers are the created offspring of God, with real possibilities of eternal sonship.
- Walton ... The image is a physical manifestation of divine (or royal) essence that bears the function of that which it represents; this gives the image-bearer the capacity to reflect the attributes of the one represented and act on his behalf.
- Matthews ... John Calvin ... For him the “image” in Adam was “the perfection of our whole nature,” which was “destroyed in us by the fall.” By “whole nature” Calvin meant foremostly knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, but he also admitted that the “image” included the human body: “Yet there was no part of man, not even the body itself, in which some sparks did not glow.”

What does that mean? In the image and after the likeness of God ...

- Kidner ... When we try to define the image of God, it is not enough to react against a crude literalism by isolating man’s mind and spirit from his body. The Bible makes man a unity: acting, thinking and feeling with his whole being. This living creature, then, and not some distillation from him, is an expression or transcription of the eternal, incorporeal creator in terms of temporal, bodily, creaturely existence—as one might attempt a transcription of, say, an epic into a sculpture, or a symphony into a sonnet. Likeness in this sense survived the fall, since it is structural. As long as we are human we are, by definition, in the image of God.
- Morris ... But the crowning point of creation is human life. Like the animals, humans were formed from the ground, given provision of food, and blessed with fruitfulness. But humans are far more than animals. The text shows that human life was set apart in relation to God by the divine plan (“let us make man”), by the divine pattern (“as our image”), and by the divine purpose (“let him have dominion”).
- Morris ... In any case, there can be little doubt that the “image of God” in which man was created must entail those aspects of human nature which are not shared by animals—attributes such as a moral consciousness, the ability to think abstractly, an understanding of beauty and emotion, and, above all, the capacity for worshiping and loving God. This eternal and divine dimension of man’s being must be the essence of what is involved in the likeness of God. And since none of this was a part of the animal *nephesh*, the “soul,” it required a new creation. However, this does not exhaust the meaning. We must also deal with the fact that man was made in God’s image as well. That component of man which was “made” was his body and soul. In some sense, therefore, even man’s body is in God’s image in a way not true of animals.

