

The Image of God: The Birthright Series, Part 4

Author's Note: This article is also available in video format on Timothy Alberino's YouTube channel in English [here](#) and in Spanish [here](#), and in audio format on The Alberino Analysis on Charisma Podcast Network.

We have established so far in this series a few important suppositions, namely (a) that the universe did not come into existence simultaneously with mankind and was not created for him but for Christ; (b) that an advanced civilization of highly intelligent extraterrestrial beings (denominated "angels" in the biblical text) preexisted mankind in the order of creation; and (c) that these sons of God are members of a divine family of which our progenitor, Adam, was the youngest sibling and the prodigal son of whom the parable speaks. In this article, I would like for us to consider one of the most misconstrued subjects in Christian theology, the *imago Dei*—the image of God.

The question of what it means to be made in the image of God is rarely resolved with a satisfying answer. Even in the hands of the most competent theologians, the matter seems to have the consistency of pudding. There does appear to be a general consensus, however, that whatever the meaning of the *imago Dei*, mankind is its sole bearer. Popular as this presumption may be, it is not derived from the Scriptures. Rather, it follows from the anthropocentric perspective of the universe, which elevates man above all creation and assigns to him an exclusivity on the trademark likeness of the Creator.

The argument in favor of the presumption is usually framed in the following way: Of all the creatures in the universe, only man possesses the emotional, imaginative and cognitive qualities of the Creator himself. Other intelligent beings

(such as angels) somehow lack that special something that makes mankind uniquely God-like.

The proposition is neither biblical nor logical.

Whether you believe that the image of God represents man's self-awareness, his higher intellect, his rationality, his physical anatomy, his emotional complexity, his creativity or the combination of all these attributes, you cannot reasonably argue—not from the Scriptures, at any rate—that he is the only being in the universe endowed with such. It is apparent in the biblical text that mankind resembles the morning stars, the sons of God, who not only display the very same attributes but seem to possess them to a greater extent.

The breathtaking arrogance of the fallen sons of God and the exuberance exhibited by the faithful sons in heaven demonstrate beyond doubt that they, too, are emotionally complex creatures. The simple fact that they sing and compose music should suffice to evince their creativity. And I think we can say with some degree of confidence that human beings have not cornered the market on intelligence.

In light of these unassailable facts, it is logical to infer that the angelic sons of God are also made in the image of God. Mankind was not merely created to be another creature in the universe, but another son in the family fashioned in the likeness of his elder siblings and bearing together with them the image of their Father.

In the first chapter of Genesis, we are presented with a conundrum that has vexed the minds of Western Christians for centuries; here we find a corporate decree issuing from the court of heaven:

“Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”

(Gen. 1:26b, author's emphasis).

It is often presumed that the plurality of persons apparent in this verse may be attributed to the three members of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are dialoguing amongst themselves. But this concept would most certainly have been foreign to the writer of Genesis, himself a Hebrew with Mesopotamian roots. Whereas an interpersonal dialogue between the triune God is incoherent in the context of the Ancient Near East, a council of gods convened in the court of paradise to deliberate matters pertaining to mankind was a very familiar scene.

When considering the Hebrew Scriptures, it is essential to recognize that they were not written in a cultural vacuum. The Israelites did not descend from heaven; they were the offspring of Abraham who migrated from Mesopotamia. Hence, the Old Testament is laced with Mesopotamian motifs familiar to the people living in the Ancient Near East. The motif of a divine council holding court in paradise is a persistent feature of the biblical paradigm.

As noted in previous installments of this series, the governing institutions of mankind were modeled on the extraterrestrial civilization that preceded us—namely, the kingdom of heaven. Just as our earthly kingdoms have courts and councils, so too the kingdom of heaven. In the same way that our earthly kings preside over their councils, which are composed of the princes and potentates of their realms, so also the King of heaven presides over His council, which is composed of the princes and potentates of His realm. The members of this divine council are referred to as “gods” in the biblical narrative precisely because of their exalted estate, but they are subservient to their King who is above all—the Most High.

That Yahweh sits enthroned above lesser gods, the *Elohim*, is not a controversy among scholars. Gerald McDermott, professor

of religion at Roanoke College, elucidates,

“The idea that there are other ‘gods’ who exist as real supernatural beings, albeit infinitely inferior to the only Creator and Redeemer, pervades the Bible. The Psalms fairly explode with evidence. “=‘There is none like you among the gods, O Lord’ (86:8); ‘For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods’ (96:4); ‘Our Lord is above all gods’ (135:5); ‘Ascribe to Yahweh, [you] gods, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength’ (29:1); ‘He is exalted above all gods’ (97:7); ‘For Yahweh is a great god, and a great king above all gods’ (95:3, my trans.). And so on.”

In a setting suffused with the air of empire, Psalm 82 depicts the King of heaven presiding in judgment over a company of derelict princes who have failed to perform their duties:

God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods [Elohim] he holds judgment:

“How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah. Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” ...

I said, “You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince” (Ps. 82:1-4, 6-7, ESV).

Notice that the members of Yahweh’s divine council are “sons of God.” This is a royal family; just as is it is depicted in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (which we analyzed in the previous episode). These princes of the elder race are regents of the King appointed to govern on His behalf in the far reaches of His kingdom, just as Adam was appointed to govern the earth. Genesis 1:26 depicts the moment the decision was made by the King and His council to create mankind as a member

of the royal family, the ruling class, and to fashion him in the likeness of his elder siblings so that he might perform a function analogous to their own. In other words, all the sons in the family look like their Father and were endowed with a degree of his higher intellect, rational mind, emotional complexity, creativity and so forth so that they might govern on his behalf in the dominions entrusted to them. In fact, the image of God is the very seal of their authority, which is the subject of the next episode.

In summation, as sons in the same family, both the human race and the elder race were made in the image and likeness of their Father, and were endowed with his attributes in order to govern in his kingdom.

If you are interested in the scholarship of divine council theology, I commend to you Michael Heiser's seminal work *The Unseen Realm*. I also delve much deeper into the topic in my own book *Birthright: The Coming Post Human Apocalypse and the Usurpation of Adam's Dominion on Planet Earth*. {eoa}

*Known as a modern-day Indiana Jones, **Timothy Alberino** is a writer, explorer and filmmaker whose inquisitive mind and intrepid spirit have led him all over the earth in search of lost cities, lost civilizations, hidden treasures and legendary creatures. His appetite for adventure was manifest at the age of 18 when he dropped out of high school in Cleveland, Ohio, and moved to the Amazon jungle in Peru. Alberino is an accomplished autodidact and scholarly researcher. After years of rigorous study, he has garnered an expansive knowledge base that allows him to dissertate with authority on a wide variety of topics.*

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