

IMAGE AND DOMINION

In Genesis 1:26 we are told that God created man with two main aspects. First, man was created in God's **image**. This word image is an important word in the Bible. To say that man was created in the image of God means that **man was created according to God**. The image of God is Christ (2 Cor. 4:4). Therefore, man was created according to Christ. Second, God committed His **dominion** to man. God gave man dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of heaven, and over all the earth. Dominion refers to the kingdom. It is the divine kingdom. Image and dominion are the two main aspects of God's creation of man. Image is for the **expression of God**, and dominion is for the **authority of God**. Man was created to express and to represent God. To express God requires God's image; to represent God requires God's authority.

ONLY BY GOD'S LIFE

We must realize that these matters of image and dominion can never be accomplished without **God's life**. Simply to have the outward form of God's image and authority is insufficient. If man is to express God and represent God, he needs God's life. **Without God's life we are utterly unable and unqualified to express Him and represent Him**. We need the life of God. Therefore, immediately Genesis 2:9 mentions the matter of life. After God had created man in His image and had committed to him His authority, He placed man before the tree of life, indicating that man must receive God as life in the form of food. God presented Himself to man in the form of food. After creating man, God presented Himself to man as **food** so that man could take Him in. Eating is the best way, even the unique way, of taking something into us. At the beginning, God wanted man to take Him in. If God could get into man and become man's life, man could spontaneously express God. As a result of expressing God, man would also be qualified to represent God. If we are able to express someone, we are also able **to represent him**. **Representation comes from expression**. The man who expresses God is qualified to represent God. This was God's intention for man from the beginning.

A kingdom is the totality of a certain life. If there is no life, there is no kingdom. For example, without the vegetable life it is impossible to have the vegetable kingdom. We do not speak of the chair kingdom, the stone kingdom, or the brick kingdom, because these things have no life. If a certain life exists, **that life with its activities** constitutes a kingdom. The human life constitutes the human kingdom, the vegetable life constitutes the vegetable kingdom, and the animal life, the animal kingdom. **If there is life, there is a kingdom**. Satan has the satanic life. **When this satanic life comes into man, it becomes the satanic kingdom**. The kingdom is an outgrowth of the family. There must be plant and animal families before there can be plant and animal kingdoms. There cannot be a kingdom without families. First, there are individuals; then the individuals are formed into families. When the families are put together collectively, they become a kingdom.

When the Lord Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and scribes, calling them serpents and a brood of vipers (Matt. 23:33; 12:34), He did not speak in a light way. He was saying that Satan was a serpent, and they were all the **offspring of the serpent; Satan was the father, and they were all his children**. Their father was the serpent; therefore, they belonged to the serpent family. In John 8:44 the Lord Jesus also told the Pharisees that their father was the devil.

The serpent came into man first by tempting him to take his thought. God had told Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest they die (Gen. 2:17). But the serpent came in to raise a question: **“Did God really say?”** The satanic, serpentine thought first entered the human mind. Second, the man stretched forth his hand and ate of the tree of knowledge. In this way the serpent, the evil one, entered the human race. First, Satan entered man’s mind; second, he came into man’s physical body. Because of this, the human mentality is awful. **Man’s mind is evil and terrible because it has been fully occupied by the evil serpent.** Also, the human body has been corrupted with all kinds of lusts. The Bible tells us that the lusts are in man’s physical body (Gal. 5:24; James 4:1). Man’s body has become flesh. It was created by God as a body, but after it was poisoned and corrupted by Satan, it became flesh. The created body was good, clean, and pure; the flesh is evil, dirty, corrupt, and full of lusts. Satan came into man. Therefore, man now has a defiled body and a corrupted mind.

When Satan came into man, man not only became sinful, but his inward constitution was also corrupted with the satanic element. Both the outward conduct and the inward nature were defiled. We need many negative words to describe this corrupted man. All that man is and does is corrupt. **Whether he loves or hates, man is full of the poisonous element of Satan. Man has been inwardly constituted with Satan and has become a satanic thing. Man has been mixed with Satan. He is still man, but man mixed with Satan.** Man was mixed with Satan to such an extent that the Lord Jesus called the Pharisees serpents (Matt. 23:33). Apparently, human beings are still men. They appear to be ladies and gentlemen as they walk down the street. Actually, in the eyes of God, they are serpents. **This is not a matter of outward conduct; it is absolutely a matter of the inward element, the inward nature**

After Satan came into man, man became Satan’s family with Satan as the father. In John 8:44 the Lord Jesus told the religious leaders that Satan was their father. First John 3:10 says that some people are the children of the devil. Satan is the father, and these people are his children. **The family begins with the father. When the family is enlarged, it becomes a kingdom.** The satanic kingdom comes from the satanic family, and the satanic family comes from the satanic life. Have you ever considered that **the fallen human race has become Satan’s family?** Satan is a father, and all the fallen human beings are his children. Satan generated a family, and this family has been formed into a kingdom.

This is altogether a matter of life. To be a part of the kingdom of Satan requires the life of Satan. **If you did not have the devil’s life, you could never be a child of the devil.** Do not think it is easy to be a child of the devil. Most Christians today simply neglect the matter of life. If

you rob a bank, you need a bank robber's life. If you do not have the robbing life, you can never rob. Can you teach or force a bird to bark? Regardless of how much a bird may try to bark, it cannot because it does not have the barking life. The same is true about lying. To lie you need the lying life. It is impossible to lie without the lying life. Chairs cannot lie, because they have no life. However, it is easy for human beings to lie because they have the lying life. Parents do not teach their children to lie. On the contrary, they charge them not to tell lies. Nevertheless, they still lie. They do not have to be taught to lie, because they have the lying life. Where did this lying life come from? It came from Satan, the father of lies. All men speak lies because they have Satan's life.

We were initially Satan's family, and **eventually we became his kingdom**. I have used this illustration to convince you further that **the kingdom is not merely a dispensation or a sphere. It is the totality of a certain life**. The kingdom of God is simply the totality of God's life.

A MATTER OF LIFE

In the last chapter of the Bible there is a throne (Rev. 22:1). This throne is for the kingdom. Out of the throne proceeds the water of life, and in the water of life grows the tree of life with fruit to feed and leaves to heal. This is a matter of the kingdom. The kingdom is altogether a matter of life. In Genesis 1 and 2 the image of God and the dominion of God required the life of God. In Revelation 22 life proceeds out of the throne of God to produce the kingdom, which expresses God and represents Him. Look at the New Jerusalem. God's image and dominion can be seen there. Revelation 21 and 22 are the fulfillment of God's intention shown in Genesis 1 and 2. The kingdom is a totality of life, and life comes out of the throne to produce the kingdom. The essential matter is this—the kingdom is altogether a matter of life. **Without life there is no kingdom. If there is life, there will surely be the kingdom**

CHILDREN, LIGHT, AND SALT

We are the children of God because we have the life of God. To God we are children. **To the earth we are the salt (Matt. 5:13). To the world we are the light** (v. 14). Salt kills germs and removes all the corruption. Light swallows up darkness. As God's kingdom and God's children, we are the salt that kills the corruption of the earth, and we are the light that swallows up the darkness of the world. This is the function of the kingdom of God. As salt, we will eventually heal the earth. The tree of life produces leaves, and these leaves heal the nations (Rev. 22:2). This is salting. We are the salt to the earth, and we are the light that swallows up all the darkness. Wherever the kingdom of God goes today, corruption will be killed, and darkness will be swallowed up. However, this is a corporate, not an individual, matter. Together, we are salt, and we are light.