

IMAGING GOD IN HUMAN ACTIVITY*

Introduction

Mankind was created in the image of God

Gen 1:26-27

Evidently this image was not destroyed by the Fall

Gen 9:6; Jas 3:9

Yet it was sufficiently distorted that it must be restored or renewed in regeneration and sanctification

Col 3:10; Eph 4:24

Though the explicit "image" passages in Scripture are only a handful, there are hundreds of passages in which God pictures himself as a human involved in some activity or relationship, thereby suggesting that we image God in various of our relationships and activities

God as Potter, Mankind as Clay

As potter makes clay pots, so God made us.

Isa 64:8; 29:15-16; 45:9

As clay pots are fragile, so are we.

Job 10:8-9; 33:6-7; Jer 19:1-13; Ps 2:9

As potter makes pots for various purposes, so God makes us.

Rom 9:19-24; Jer 18:1-12; Acts 9:15; 2 Tim 2:20-21

God as Farmer, Mankind as Plant

The righteous pictured as healthy tree.

Ps 1:3; 92:12-14; Jer 17:7-8

The wicked pictured as endangered plants.

Ps 1:4; Isa 5:1-7; Ezk 15:1-8; Lk 13:6-9; Mt 3:8-10

God's grace to Gentiles pictured as grafting.

Rom 11:17-24; cp Jn 15:1-9

God as Shepherd, Mankind as Sheep

Shepherd seeks/finds sheep.

Isa 53:6; Lk 15:4-7; Jer 50:6-7,17-20; Ezk 34:11-16

Shepherd leads his flock.

Ps 23:2-3; 80:1; 78:52-54; Jn 10:1-5

Shepherd feeds his sheep.

Ps 23:1-2; Ezk 34:12-15

Shepherd protects from predators.
Ps 23:4; Jer 50:18-19; Ezk 34:12-16
Shepherd will even die for his sheep.
Zec 13:7; Jn 10:11-12; Mt 26:31
Slaughter of sheep
Ezk 34:16-24; see also Mt 25:32-33

God as King, Mankind as Subjects

King has/deserves prestige.
Mal 1:6-14
King rules.
Ps 29:1-11; Ps 47; Dan 4:17,25,37; 1 Tim 6:15
King protects his subjects.
Ps 10:12-18; 74:12; Isa 33:22
Insult against king is rebellion.
Lk 19:11-27; Mt 22:1-14

God as Master, Mankind as Slaves

So common a picture as to be a "dead" metaphor.
Lord, servant
Master deserves honor/respect.
Mal 1:6
Reflected in human master/slave relationships.
Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1

God as Father/Parent, Mankind as Children

Replacement for mother & father.
Ps 27:10
Mothering
Ps 131:2; Dt 32:11; Mt 23:37
God's natural children
Jn 1:12-13; 1 Pet 1:3
God's adopted children
Gal 4:4-7; Rom 8:14-19
We have a family resemblance.
1 Jn 3:1-10; Mt 5:43-48; Jn 8:36-47
God provides as a good father does.
Mt 7:7-11
God disciplines.
Heb 12:5-11

God loves and forgives.
Lk 15:11-32

God as Husband, Mankind as Wife

Is this the point of 1 Cor 11:7?

1Cor 11:7 (NIV) *A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.*

Marriage covenant parallel to that with God.

Jer 31:32; Isa 54:10; Ps 45:10; Eph 5:26-27; 2 Cor 11:2-3

Mutual love and joy

Ps 45:11,15; Isa 62:5; Eph 5:25

Wife's submission

Ps 45:11; Eph 5:24

Bearing of children

Isa 54:1; Ps 45:16

Husband provides, protects.

Eph 5:23; Isa 54:14-17

Breaking of marriage cp to apostasy

Hos 1-3; Jer 3:1,8; Isa 54:6-8; 62:4

Rebellion and Satan's Image

Family resemblance

Jn 8:44; 1 Jn 3:8,10; Mt 3:7

God despises this image.

Ps 73:20

Rebellion as a result of the Fall

Gen 3:16-17; Gen 9:2-3; Rom 8:19-22

Distortion introduced into imaging relations

From upper side:

mistreatment of environment
tyranny by rulers, employers
abuse of children, wife

From lower side:

environment resists
citizens disobey
employees goof-off
children disobey
wife not subject

Conclusions

These images can help us understand God better, esp through experiencing what it feels like to act as God.

These images can help us understand how we should act as potters, farmers, parents, etc.

These images can help unsaved to see God for first time.

*for more detail, see Robert C. Newman, "Some Perspectives on the Image of God in Man from Biblical Theology," *IBRI Research Report* 21 (1984).