

# **Dr. David L. Mathewson, New Testament Theology, Session 15, Image of God, Part 1**

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This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 15, The Image of God, Part 1.

What I want to do now is consider another theme that is still, I think, related to the theme of people of God, but also is related to a number of other themes, and that is the image of God and the image of God in humanity, and also how that gets fulfilled in Christ and his people. But we spent some time looking at the theme of the people of God and how that theme itself goes all the way back to creation, where God creates Adam and Eve as his first people, with whom he enters into a covenant relationship and commissions them to represent his rule and reign and spread his reign and presence throughout the entire creation. Yet Adam and Eve failed, and we saw that Israel was meant to replace that, or meant to fulfill that, as sort of a new Adam, a new image-bearer.

Yet they fail, and then Jesus Christ comes and fulfills what Adam failed to do and what Israel failed to do. And as the true Israel, as the true people of God, in whom all the promises and all God's intentions for humanity are fulfilled, then those who belong to Christ also become the true people of God. Related to that scheme, which I just summarized from our consideration of the theme of the people of God, related to that scheme and movement and development is the notion of the image of God.

The starting place for the image of God is obviously in Genesis chapters 1, verses 27 and 28. At the end of chapter 1, the first part of the account of the creation, the creation narrative, starts with Genesis 1, verses 26 through 28. Then God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

So, God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them, male and female, he created them. In verse 28, God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply in number or increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

So, in this section, we're introduced to God's creation as the climax and pinnacle of his creative activity. We're introduced to the creation of humanity in God's image. And now, because of that, we want to talk a little bit about what is understood or what is meant by the image of God, and then trace that theme throughout the Old Testament and then into its fulfillment in the New Testament as well.

Now, most commonly, the common theological understanding of the image of God, if you were to pick up a systematic theology book that discusses the doctrine of humanity and discussions of humanity created in the image of God, usually the image of God is understood in terms of human beings created with a moral outlook, with an intellect. They are created to be moral, intellectual, rational, and volitional beings. Going back to the Reformation, this was a common understanding of what it meant to be created in the image of God.

So human beings are moral and intellectual, volitional, and rational, reflecting those aspects of God that are communicable to human beings. And in that way, they're created in God's image. So, part of the debate, though, is whether we should understand image more, what is known as an ontological view of image, that is, these characters that reflect attributes of or qualities of God.

We are meant to reflect God by being moral and intellectual, volitional beings, or whether the image of God is more functional. And that is, it has to do with ruling. So we'll see when we look at this text in a little bit more detail it is intriguing that the image of God, God creating humanity in his image, is in the context of their ability to rule over all of creation.

Now, the first thing to talk about a little bit is what we mean by image. Probably, at the heart of understanding the image of God, or humanity being created in God's image, is to understand the image in terms of reflection or representation. So most likely, however, we understand it, at the heart of being created in God's image is Adam and Eve were meant to reflect or represent God in some way. And again, the debate then is, are they God's representatives more? Should we understand images more ontologically, as far as our makeup and our attributes reflect God, or should we understand them more functionally? Most Old Testament scholars point to the practice of ancient Near Eastern kings of setting up a statue or an image of themselves in the land in their absence, and that image was a reflection of or representation of their rule, of their sovereignty in the land.

That's probably what you have going on in the early chapters of Daniel, where Daniel and his friends are called upon to bow down and worship the image at the sound of music. The image that Nebuchadnezzar sets up is probably a representation of his rule, of his sovereignty over the land. Most would point to that as the appropriate background for understanding the image of God in Genesis chapter 1. So from that standpoint, humanity would be seen as representing God's rule and the reign of God over the land and over the earth.

So then putting that all together, what does it mean to be in the image of God? Are we to understand it more in terms of the fact that we possess knowledge, we have intellect, we are rational, volitional beings, we are to pursue holiness, or should we

understand it more functionally to rule over the earth in God's place? Well, I wonder if we necessarily have to when you put the entirety of the canon together, that at one level, the image of God probably suggests that we are volitional, rational, moral beings, but that this is what is necessary to carry out the commission to rule. So, at least in Genesis, the latter seems to be the focus. In Genesis 1:26-28, I think the latter is the focus, that what it means to be created in God's image is that we reflect and represent. We are representations of God's sovereignty and rule over all of creation.

That is, we are vice-regents, we are God's vice-regents, we are ruling on his behalf, we are ruling as his representative. So again, in the same way, that an ancient Near Eastern king would set up a statue or image of himself as a representation of his sovereignty and rule over the land, human beings are images of God; they are to reflect, represent, and spread God's rule throughout the first creation. So, the ruling function is tied to the image of God in Genesis 1. We are God's vice-regents; we represent his presence and rule throughout all of creation.

But it does probably assume that what is needed to carry out that commission, what is required to carry out that commission, is that we are also volitional, rational, moral beings reflecting God's character. So, in summary, then, Adam and Eve in Genesis 1, at the climax of God's creation of the entire universe in chapter 1, now Adam and Eve are created in God's image, both morally and rationally and volitionally, but primarily functionally as representatives of God's presence and rule over all creation. So, Adam and Eve again were meant to be God's vice regents, and their commission then was to be fruitful and multiply, that is, Greg Beal argues that means to produce other image-bearing offspring who would fill the earth and again spread God's rule and glory throughout the entirety of creation.

Now, to follow the storyline that brings us to Genesis chapter 3, and as we've seen numerous times, Genesis chapter 3 demonstrates how God's intention for humanity to rule over all creation, to be fruitful and multiply, to spread his rule throughout creation was ruined because of the fall, and God's image, most theologians would agree, was not obliterated or destroyed, but at the very least was marred and ruined and required renewal and restoration. And so once more, we see that Genesis 3 is sort of the dividing line in the testament, in the testaments, between how God will restore his intention for humanity in his first creation that now has been affected by and ruined by the fall. How will, in relation to the image of God, we could phrase the question now, how will God restore his image in humanity? How will God restore humanity as his image-bearers to fulfill his commission to them to rule over all creation, to be fruitful and multiply? And one level, then the rest of the Old Testament and into the New Testament, can be seen as answering that question.

When we start to look at the rest of the Old Testament to see how that begins to get fulfilled before we look at even kind of chronologically or canonically some of the

texts, I want to jump ahead to Psalm chapter 8, a Psalm that we've already referred to, but we need to look at again because Psalm chapter 8 is a clear allusion back to Genesis chapter 1 and God's creation of the universe and God's creation of humanity as his image-bearers to rule over all creation. Psalm chapter 8 sort of envisions the ideal Adam and what Adam was meant to accomplish or what Adam should have done and was created to do in relationship to creation. So I'll just read a couple of these texts, but I want you to notice the themes of God's sovereignty over creation, his creative act, and the dignity with which he creates humanity in ruling over the creation in his stead or as his representative.

So, Psalm 8 begins, Lord our God, how majestic your name is all over the earth. So, God's sovereignty over all creation. You have set your glories in the heavens through the praise of children and infants.

You have established a stronghold against your enemies to silence the foe of the avenger. When I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned them with glory and honor.

You have made them rulers over the works of your hands. You have put everything under their feet, all flocks and herds and all the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. Lord our Lord, how majestic your name is on all the earth.

So, Psalm 8 celebrates God's original creative act in Genesis chapter 1 but focuses on the climax, which is his creation of humanity and investing them with honor, majesty, and dignity as those who rule over all the entire creation. Verse 6: you've made them rulers over all the works of your hands, and you've put everything under their feet; putting something under the feet is a demonstration of subjugation or ruling over or subduing. And so, in alluding back to Genesis chapter 1, Psalm chapter 8 again envisions the ideal for Adam and the ideal for humanity as God's image bearers though the word image is not used here.

Clearly, this links back to Genesis 1:26 through 28, which envisions humanity as God intended them to rule over creation. Now again, because of Genesis 3 and because of sin, the ideal of Psalm 8 has been distorted, and one doesn't have to read too far into the rest of the book of Genesis after Genesis 1 and 2, after Genesis 3, to see that that takes place. But moving beyond Genesis 1 and 2 and God's original creative act and intent to establish Adam and Eve as his image bearers who rule over creation as his representatives, we find that Adam's commission then is actually given to Israel.

Now, when we look back at the theme of people of God and once more to show how integrally related these themes are, when we look back at the theme of people of

God we saw that Israel was meant by the selection of Abraham and the great nation Israel that would come from him was selected by, chosen by God to restore and to accomplish and to begin to fulfill what Adam and Eve failed to do in the original garden as his people. And now we see the same thing with the image of God. What Adam and Eve failed to do in accomplishing God's commission to them as his image bearers in Genesis 1 and 3 and Psalm 8 is now transferred to Israel, and that commission is now given to the nation of Israel.

And let me read just a number of texts actually scattered throughout the Old Testament and leading ultimately into the prophetic text as well. But a number of texts actually end up repeating the commission given to Adam in Genesis 1, 26 through 28. I think we've already read a couple of these texts, but we'll read them again.

For example, in Genesis chapter 17, verse 2, in the context of God's promises and the covenant that he makes with Abraham, Genesis 17, verse 2. Then, I will make my covenant between me and you. This is God speaking to Abraham, and will greatly increase your numbers or greatly multiply your numbers. And remember, we see that over and over again in God's promise to Abraham of making him in fulfillment of making a great nation. He will increase his offspring; they'll be more numerous than the stars and the sand of the sea, etc.

So that in verse still chapter 17 verse 6, I will make you very fruitful. I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside, is a foreigner.

I will give you as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you. Again, we could read other texts, but the promise of making Abraham fruitful and causing him to multiply in the land is a direct fulfillment of the promise to Adam back in Chapter 1. And I would argue is part of what it means to be in God's image or to be God's image bearers: chapter 22 and verses 17 and 18 of Genesis.

I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring, all the nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me. So, notice again the multiplication of the increase in Abraham's offspring so that they'll be more numerous than the stars and the sky and the sand of the sea.

Exodus chapter 1 and verse 7 in the context of God preparing to rescue his covenant people out of Egypt or rescue his people out of Egypt to establish a covenant with him so that he will be their God and they will be his people. Chapter 1 and verse 7. I'll read verse 6. Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful, and they multiplied greatly, increased in number,

and became so numerous that the land was filled with them. Leviticus chapter 26 in the context of the covenant formula that we read earlier, but in Leviticus chapter 26 and verse 9 again, we're focusing on the fruitful image, the imagery of being fruitful and increasing and multiplying in relationship to Israel, which seems to reflect the commission given to Adam.

Verse 9. I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your number, and I will keep my covenant with you. Again, God's word to Israel, and then if I can just read a couple of prophetic texts that also seem to resonate with this language of the commission that was made to Adam. Isaiah chapter 51 and verses 2 and 3. Isaiah chapter 51 and again, we've already talked about Isaiah in terms of much of the text of Isaiah, especially the center sections 40 through 55, anticipates a God rescuing and delivering his people from exile and verses 1 and 2 of chapter 51. Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were cut into the quarry from which you were hewn. Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah who gave birth when I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him, and I made him many, or I made him to increase and then in Ezekiel chapter 36 to give just one more reference, there's a number of other texts we could look at but one more reference from a prophetic text in Ezekiel chapter 36 which we've looked at in connection with most of the other themes another text in the context of restoration from exile and God establishing his covenant relationship with his people in verses 9 through 12 of chapter 36.

I'll actually start with verse 8, but you mountains of Israel will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel for they will soon come home which kind of sounds like the Garden of Eden language I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor you will be plowed and sown and I will cause many people to live on you yes all of Israel the towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt I will increase the number of people and animals living on you which both reflect the commission back in Genesis chapter 1 and they will be fruitful and will multiply or become numerous I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before then you will know that I am the Lord I will cause people my people Israel to live on you they will possess you, and you will be their inheritance you will never again deprive them of their children. So, what all these texts have in common, and we could look at others, is reflections of some of them more clearly and specifically than others but I think all of them reflect not only the Abrahamic promise to which some of them are tied but all going back to Genesis chapter 1 where now Israel is to fulfill the commission given to the original image bearer of God and that was Adam. So, Israel is also meant to reflect God's image and spread God's rule and glory throughout the earth, which is what Adam and Eve were supposed to do in the first place.

Another important text that does not necessarily use the fruitful and multiplying language but one that I think still probably relates to the nation of Israel as reflecting God's image doing what Adam was supposed to do and that is a text that we've

already read but I want to read it now in connection with the theme of the image of God and that's Exodus chapter 19 and verse 6 and starting with the verse 5 God speaking to Moses what to tell the Israelites now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant then out of the nations you will be a treasure possession although the whole earth is mine you will be for me a kingdom of priests and I notice that Israel is now to be a kingdom that is they are to rule by becoming fruitful multiplying they are to be a kingdom of priests who will rule over the earth who will spread God's presence and rule over all creation fulfilling the mandate that was given to Adam in Genesis chapter 1 that he failed to do. So again, it appears to me that Israel is now given the commission that was given to Adam. The nation of Israel is given the commission that Adam was given in Genesis chapter 1 to be fruitful, multiply to rule over the earth, reflect God's image, and do again and accomplish what Adam and Eve failed to do because of their disobedience and sin.

Now, obviously, as you know, as the story goes, Israel also failed to reflect God's image. Israel also failed in their commission, and that leads us to the New Testament text. However, one other text to look at that may also, in the Old Testament, reflect the image of God and the fulfillment of Adam's mandate to reflect God's image and rule over all creation is found in Daniel chapter 7. Again, this is another text that we'll look at in relationship to Jesus Christ.

But in Daniel chapter 7, Daniel's vision of a son of man who is a human figure, in contrast to the beastly figures that Daniel sees in his vision, the beasts who represent rulers and kingdoms, those will be replaced by a son of man, a human-like figure, who will rule, whose kingdom will replace theirs. I won't read the whole section, especially the description of the four beasts, but starting at verse 9, at the tail end of his vision of these four beasts who represent kingdoms and rulers, starting at verse 8, While I was thinking about the horns that were on this last beast, there was before me another horn, a little one, which came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like a human being and a mouth that spoke boasting.

And then verse 9, And I looked, and thrones were set in place. So, the throne is a symbol of rulership, kingship, and authority. Thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat.

His clothing was as white as snow. The hair on his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and the wheels were all ablaze.

So, we're clearly in the context of God's reign, God's sovereignty, and His rule, as demonstrated by the throne. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before Him. Thousands upon thousands attended Him.

Ten thousands times, ten thousands stood before Him. The court was seated, and books were opened. Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking from that last beast.

And I kept looking until the beast was slain, and it was destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. The other beasts were also stripped of their authority, their rule, their power, and their kingship, but they were allowed to live for a period of time. And then in my vision at night, I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man.

Coming with the clouds of heaven, He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory, and sovereign power. All nations and people of every language worshipped Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. So what I want you to notice is, in Daniel chapter 7, in this vision of a son of man, I think he sees one, sees a person, that will eventually fulfill the mandate given to Adam. And that is to establish an everlasting kingdom, to rule over all the earth, and to rule over all the nations.

Now, later on in Daniel chapter 7, where Daniel has the vision interpreted for him, it's interesting that the son of man seems to, in chapter 7, the son of man seems to refer both corporately to Israel and individually to a person as well. The author anticipates that corporate Israel, the corporate people of God, will be represented by someone who will enable them to fulfill their function of ruling. So, I think what we find here, then, is a demonstration of the anticipation of a son of man figure, that is an Adam-like figure, who will reflect God's image and fulfill God's intention for humanity in the first place by now receiving authority, receiving sovereign power, and with an everlasting dominion, ruling over the earth, with a kingdom that will last forever and will never be destroyed, like the four beastly powers were earlier on in chapter 7. So, Daniel 7 then leaves us almost with the question, well, who is who is going to fulfill this mandate? Who is this that will bring about God's sovereign kingdom on earth, again in fulfillment of the dominion over all creation that God had intended for humanity in Genesis 1 and 2 and Psalm 8. Now, that brings us to the New Testament, and we want to spend time looking at the New Testament's development of the theme of the image of God.

And the first thing to suggest is, you'll kind of hear this sound like a broken record, this will get repeated so often, but once more, all of these themes, first of all, find their fulfillment, or get focused in the person of Jesus Christ. So, when it comes to the theme of the image of God, first of all, Jesus comes to restore the image of God in humanity by himself doing what Adam failed to do, and what Israel failed to do, by carrying out the commission given to Adam of ruling over the earth and filling the earth. In other words, Jesus comes as the true image of God to accomplish what



Adam and Israel and humanity did not do or could not do because of the sin Jesus accomplishes.

And then we'll see, like other themes, by extension, that those who belong to Christ, the image of God, is being restored in them as well. Once more, what I want to look at is a number of passages throughout the Gospels and then into the rest of the New Testament, some of them being very explicit in their mention of the image of God and some of them being a little bit more implicit, but still, I think, reflecting the image of God language from the Old Testament. The first starting point, a fairly perhaps explicit example, would be Luke's genealogy in chapter 3 of Luke.

Interestingly, in comparison to Matthew's genealogy, which primarily traces back to Abraham and to David, that's how the Gospel begins: Jesus, son of Abraham, son of David, actually the other way around, son of David, son of Abraham. But Luke traces Jesus' genealogy all the way back to Adam. And let me begin by reading verse 23.

Now, Jesus himself was about 30 years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so he was thought of as Joseph. And then the genealogy begins to trace Jesus all the way back to verse 37, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalel, the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, who is the son of God.

So, intriguingly, back in chapter 3 and verse 22, at the end of the climax of Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit descends on him in the form of a dove, and a voice comes from heaven and says, You are my son, whom I love, and with you, I am well pleased. So, Jesus is already established as a son, as the son of God, but now that's linked to Adam, who is also the son of God. So, although there may be a number of things going on here, it appears that Jesus' genealogy links him to Adam to demonstrate that Jesus is the last Adam.

Jesus is now the one who will accomplish what Adam failed to do. Or we might say Jesus will be the true son of God, the true image bearer of God, who will now accomplish what Adam did not do. And then it's interesting: in chapter 4 of Luke, we read of the temptation of Jesus by Satan, in the same way that Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan to sin.

So, Jesus now, in fulfilling the commission given to Adam and fulfilling God's intention for Adam, likewise we saw in the theme of people of God, likewise he will be tested. Yet, unlike Adam and unlike Israel, Jesus will not fail the test. He will pass the test as the true son of God and accomplish what Adam failed to do.

So, Luke 3 and also 4, the first part of chapter 4, with the testing in the wilderness, the temptation by Satan, seems to, at least whatever else it's doing, link Jesus Christ with Adam, Jesus now being the true son of God and the true image bearer who will

accomplish God's purposes that Adam failed to do. Another, perhaps semi-explicit text is found, actually I should say not one specific text, but a theme or a title that is found throughout the synoptic Gospels, and that is Jesus Christ's designation as the Son of Man. The Son of Man, we'll talk more about that when we deal with the theme of Christ or Christology or the person and the work of Jesus Christ later on.

But one of Jesus' favorite self-designations is Son of Man and probably Jesus' title, Son of Man; although he does some things unique with it, it probably goes all the way back to Daniel chapter 7 and verse 14, which we read just a moment ago. So by using the title Son of Man, Jesus claims to be the Son of Man, the exalted heavenly Son of Man from Daniel chapter 7 and verse 14, who fulfills Adam's commission to rule over the entire earth. In other words, even if not exhaustively, at least partially, what is implied in Jesus' title, Son of Man, is that he will fulfill Adam's commission to rule.

He will accomplish what Adam failed to do by receiving an eternal kingdom, by receiving authority, and by ruling over all creation and over all the people of the earth. So again, if not explicitly, at least semi-explicitly, it seems the Son of Man may also be linked to the image of God theme where now Jesus Christ is the true image, the true Adam, who will accomplish the original commission to Adam in Genesis 1 that he ruled, but that he failed to do. A couple of other implicit, we might say, notions or themes that we find in the Gospels in relationship to Jesus Christ is... We'll actually look at this in the next theme we're going to deal with.

I've chosen to deal with this theme after the image of God because they're so closely related. But that is, Jesus clearly indicates that he has come to inaugurate God's kingdom. In fulfillment, we'll see when we get to the kingdom of God, Jesus coming to inaugurate God's kingdom is in fulfillment of the Old Testament expectations of a coming kingdom.

But I would also argue that God's intention to establish his kingdom is ultimately to be seen as a fulfillment of God's intention for Adam to rule over all creation. If you look at the Gospel of Matthew in particular, Matthew presents Jesus Christ as the promised king, as the promised son of David, who comes to inaugurate and fulfill the promised kingship of David, but again, that probably goes all the way back to Genesis chapter 1. And so, implicitly, God's intention to establish his kingdom through Jesus Christ, or implicitly, Jesus Christ bringing to fulfillment the promised kingdom of God, is implicitly a demonstration of God's intention for Adam to rule over all creation. Also, Jesus inaugurated the new creation.

Back in the theme of creation, new creation, land that we discussed, we saw that even in the Gospels, particularly his miracles, his healing, which is a reversal of the effects of sin on the original creation, through Jesus' own resurrection, Jesus inaugurates a new creation, so that in a sense, again, Jesus is the new Adam over the

new creation that brings to fulfillment what the first Adam failed to do in the first creations. Again, through Jesus' own resurrection, through his healing, and through the performing of miracles, Jesus is inaugurating a new creation. And so, implicitly, the fact that he inaugurates a new creation links him to Adam and, again, implicitly to Jesus fulfilling God's intention for Adam as the image bearer of God.

So, to summarize the Gospel evidence, what we see then is that Jesus is the perfect image of Adam, who now fulfills what Adam and Israel failed to do. But now, what we'll see in the rest of the New Testament particularly, although we'll still see some emphasis on Jesus Christ as the new Adam and Jesus Christ fulfilling the commission to Adam, and particularly references to him as God's image, we'll see now that in the rest of the New Testament, that image of God that first was to be fulfilled in Adam now gets transferred to or now gets fulfilled in the people who belong to Christ. So, just as we saw with people of God once more, that Jesus was the true Israel, all God's intentions for, his purposes for, and his promises to Israel find their fulfillment in Christ and then in his people by virtue of belonging to Christ.

Now we'll see, I think, the same thing with the theme of image. So, Jesus is the perfect image of Adam, who fulfills God's intention for Adam and who will fulfill it, but now, it is going to be fulfilled in God's people, who belong to Jesus Christ, the true image of God. The first stopping point, I think, and I think the clearest reference, would be in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and most of the rest of the text that we're going to look at are in Paul's letters, but perhaps one or two other New Testament documents as well.

And we'll end once more with the book of Revelation, which also suggests too that the image of God theme participates in the already but not yet structure. That is, the image of God is already being restored in Jesus Christ and in his followers in anticipation of the consummated restoration and the consummated fulfillment of the Adamic image in God's people. So, in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, in the context of Paul's discussion of the resurrection of both Jesus Christ and believers, the primary topic of 1 Corinthians 15 is not just Jesus' resurrection.

The primary topic is actually the resurrection of all God's people. But Paul clearly refers to Jesus' resurrection because if Jesus himself is raised, as Paul argues, that's the first fruits or the initial stages of more resurrections to come. So, what business do the Corinthians have in denying a future physical resurrection because Jesus Christ himself has been raised? And part of Paul's argument is if death is ultimately to be defeated if the death that came as a result of Adam's first sin, the first Adam's sin and the first creation, if the death that came as result of that, and again read Genesis 3 and subsequent chapters of Genesis where everyone dies, if that death is to be defeated, that requires a resurrection body ultimately.

If our physical bodies are not raised, then Paul is basically saying that death still has the last word. Death still has the final say. But in order for God to defeat death, the last enemy, it requires not just an afterlife, it requires not just an eternal existence of the soul, but it requires a physical resurrection body.

And that's Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15. And it's in verses 45 and following where he discusses Jesus' resurrection in the context of Jesus as the second Adam, who now, in God's image, reverses the effects of the sin of the first Adam. So, starting with verse 45, I'll read the last part of verse 44.

If there is a natural body... By the way, I'm reading from the 2011 NIV. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. And by the spiritual body, Paul does not mean non-physical.

He's still talking about a physical body, but one that is so infused with God's life-giving spirit that it is suitable for an incorruptible existence and an incorruptible new creation. So, if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So, it is written that the first Adam became a living being, the last Adam a life-giving spirit.

The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that, the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man was of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth.

And as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, we will bear the image of the heavenly man, who is Jesus Christ. I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Again, Paul is not denying the resurrection of the body by saying that flesh and blood cannot inherit it. Otherwise, he contradicts himself in the rest of the chapter. Again, flesh and blood are sort of idioms for our perishable, mortal, sin-infected bodies, fallen bodies living in this sphere of existence, in contrast to bodies that are imperishable and suitable for life in the new creation.

But again, notice this language, especially in verse 49. Just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man, who is Christ. So, the implication here is Christ is the true image of God.

Christ himself accomplishes what Adam failed to do, and now we also will bear his image. We also will bear that image in fulfillment of God's original intention for Adam. So, Adam, in the image of God, through his sin, brings death and that which is corruptible.

But now Jesus Christ, as the true image of God, now brings life through the spirit that he gives, brings life, and will bring life. And we will receive bodies that are suitable for an imperishable, incorruptible existence in the new creation. Bodies that are so infused with the life-giving spirit of God that it is fit for the new creation.

That then will be the ultimate fulfillment of being in God's image. So, 1 Corinthians 15 then demonstrates that through the life granted by the spirit, the death brought about by Adam's sin, that situation is now reversed through Jesus Christ's resurrection. Through the Holy Spirit that Christ gives us, we are now transformed and will be transformed in the not yet into his image.

And then verse 49 demonstrates that the image of Adam, who was marred by sin, that we bear will be restored by being in the image of Christ. Again, therefore, reversing the effects of the fall and the effects of sin by receiving the life-giving spirit of God. That is the resurrection which comes by being joined to the second Adam who gives us life.

Now, similar to that, to back up is what we find in the book of Romans. And I won't read this section at length. I'll just read a couple of the verses because we've read it already.

But that is Romans 5:12-21, I think expresses something similar. Romans 5:12-21, as I've mentioned previously, is a lengthy comparison between Christ and Adam. And the idea is that what Adam did through his act of sin, by plunging humanity into sin and death, Jesus Christ now reverses by his one act of obedience, by now bringing about righteousness and life.

But also, the idea seems to be, too, that the act of disobedience of the first Adam is also overcome by the obedience of the second Adam. As chapter 5, verse 14 says, he is the one of whom the first Adam is a type. So that the first Adam in Genesis 1 becomes a type or a pattern that anticipates another Adam, who is the person of Jesus Christ.

So Jesus Christ's obedience, again, not only overcomes the sin, disobedience, and death brought about by the first Adam and his disobedience, but Jesus also comes to accomplish what Adam failed to do. That is, by obeying God perfectly and also by giving life. So once more, it's through the resurrection, it's through the life that Jesus Christ gives through the Spirit that we overcome the effects of Adam's first sin.

And that is by identifying with the second Adam. In other words, Adam's image is restored in us. God's intention for Adam, in Genesis chapter 1, is restored in us by being conformed to the image of Christ.

Who, as the very image of God, is the true Adam, who does what Adam failed to do. This is probably how we should read Romans, chapter 8, verses 28 and 29. Romans chapter 8:28 and 29, we all know verse 28, but sometimes we forget what comes next.

And we know that in all things, God is working for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. What is the good that God is bringing about? Verse 29. For those God foreknew, he predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

So once more, Romans 8:28 and especially 29, should probably ultimately be understood, and is perhaps assuming what we have read back in chapter 5 and verses 12 through 21 with the Adam-Christ comparison, that now the image we are restored, we are in the process of being restored to the image of Christ, who is the second Adam. So once more, what God intended for Adam as his image-bearer ultimately gets fulfilled in Christ, the true image of God, and then by virtue of belonging to Christ, the image of God is restored, not by belonging to Adam, but now by belonging to Christ. Another, I think, crucial text in Paul's letters, particularly in the rest of the New Testament for understanding the theme of the image of God, is Colossians chapter 3, Colossians chapter 3, and particularly verses 9 and 10.

So, verse 9. Do not lie to one another since you have taken off your old self with its practices, and you have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator. That is, the one who created the image. Now, a couple of things to notice, to repeat what I've said before, is this language of old man or new man or old self and new self should not be understood as referring to some ontological part of my being, that there's a new self or a new me, or ontologically something new that is separate from the rest of me.

But instead, in this language of a new self and old self, I actually like retaining the older translations of the new man and old man because it suggests the idea of belonging to our head. So, the old man is Adam, who is our head, and it's me in Adam, belonging to Adam, under the control of Adam, dominated and under the dominion of sin and death. So that the old man or the old self then would be who I am in Christ, who I belong to Christ, under the authority of Christ, within the sphere of Christ's rule and influence, which is characterized by righteousness, life, and receiving the Holy Spirit.

That's the new man. So even this old self, new self, or old man, new man, language seems to reflect, again, Adamic language, a contrast between Adam and Christ. But clearly, the latter part of verse 10, the being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator seems to suggest, I think, seems to clearly suggest that the author is drawing on or alluding back to Genesis chapter 1, and especially 26 through 28, and Adam being created in God's image.

But let me say a couple of things about this. First of all, to me, it's very difficult to not read this statement in Colossians 3, and particularly verse 10. It's difficult not to read it in light of Colossians chapter 1 and verses 15 through 18, where we read the Son, Jesus Christ, the Son, is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

So, through Jesus Christ, through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, becoming a human being, the invisible God is now made visible. So, as God's image bearer, in a sense, as the one who is God's image, it's interesting that Paul does not say Jesus is made in God's image, but he is God's image. As the one who is God's image, he now reflects and reveals the invisible God.

The invisible God is made visible in the person of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God. For in him all things are created, things in heaven and earth. Notice the echo of Genesis chapter 1: in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, now Jesus Christ; it's said of Jesus, in him all things are created, things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible.

Verse 17, he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Verse 18, and he is the head of his body, the church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead.

Reference to the resurrection. So, Christ then, first of all, in Colossians 1:15-18, Christ is the true image of God, both functionally and ontologically. Ontologically, he is God himself; he makes visible the invisible God, he's the reflection of God, he reveals God, but also functionally, he's the one who reveals God, he's the one who accomplishes God's purposes at creation; it's through Christ that all things are created.

But in verse 18 of chapter 1, now Christ is also the inaugurator of a new creation through his resurrection. And I would take it then, and he bears God's image in it: chapter 1, verse 15.

Therefore, Christ reflects the image of God, which Adam and Israel failed to do. So, Jesus is the true image of God, who now, once more, inaugurates a new creation. Jesus is the true image of God in the new creation.

Now, what we want to do next, in the next section of this course, we'll look at how that gets transferred in Colossians 3, how that relates to us being in God's image, and then move on to consider a handful of other New Testament texts that relate to the theme of the image of God.

This is Dr. Dave Mathewson in his lecture series on New Testament Theology. This is session 15, The Image of God, Part 1.