

Bible Study - Restored Truth #2 - What and Why Man Is
May 18, 2013

To begin this Bible study on Restored Truth #2 - What and Why Man Is, let us look at a question which might be familiar to you. That question is: Why were you born?

Many know how human beings are born, but very few know why human beings are born? What is the purpose of our existence? This is the fundamental question for every human being who has ever lived on this earth. Sadly, most people go to their graves without ever having this fundamental question answered. It is a troubling question when you don't have the answer. That is why people engage in all types of destructive behavior, why people are motivated to do the things they do. The vast majority of humanity have never understood why they were born and what the purpose of their lives was intended to be

It is truly incredible when you come to realize the billions of people who have ever lived on this earth have done so never understanding the purpose of their existence. The only source to answer the question, "Why were you born?" is found in God's Word, the Holy Bible. Believe it or not this question is ask in the Bible.

In Ps. 8 King David asks: (vs 3) *When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you ordained* (vs 4) *what is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you visit him...* [Verse 4 is really David's way of asking the question "Why were you born?"] (vs 5) *For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor.* (vs 6) *You have made him...[man] to have dominion over the works of your hands.*

Gen. 1:26 *And God said let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.* (vs 27) *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them...*[Men and women are created in the image of God. The word God in verse 26 in the Hebrew is Elohim. It means Gods, in the plural. Notice-] *And God said let us 'Us' refers to more than one.* Turn to Hebrews 1 and we will find out who 'us' consists of.

Heb. 1:1 *God who, at various times and in various ways, spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets* (vs 2) *has in these last days spoken to us by his Son whom he has appointed heir of all things through whom also he made the worlds.*

As we saw in the Restored Truth #1, John 1:1 shows God consisted of God the Father and Jesus Christ. At the time of Genesis 1:1 it was God and the Word.

The word 'image' in Genesis 1:1 means to shade. It refers to a phantom, a resemblance, or a representative figure. It can also refer to an idol, but that is not what the context of the verse is. It is talking about a representative figure of what God looks like. The word 'likeness' refers to a resemblance, a model, a shape, or likeness. In Restored Truth #1 we also looked at the image of God by reading Revelation 1.

Rev. 1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. Having turned I saw seven golden lamp-stands. (vs 13) And in the midst of the golden lamp-stands was one like the Son of man clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girded about the chest with a golden band. (vs 14) His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire. (vs 15) And his feet like fine brass as if refined in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.(vs 16) He had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

Clearly, when we look at mankind, we know that man has a head; man has eyes; man has arms; man has feet; man has a body. As we are going to see the only thing really lacking in man's creation was the countenance because mankind does not shine like the sun in its strength. What we are reading about here is Christ in His glorified state.

Notice what is said to Noah after the flood. Noah has come off the ark, the flood is over, notice what God says to him in the second half of this verse. Gen. 9:6 *Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.* God made man. So man was created in God's image, in God's likeness.

Let's go back in God's re-creation of the earth, to Day 5 and notice a principle in regard to the animals. Gen. 1:20 *Then God said...[That's Elohim] let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens. (vs 21) So God created sea creatures and every living thing that moves with which the waters abound according to their kind, and the winged bird according to its kind; and God saw that it was good (vs 22) and God blessed them saying be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. (vs 23)So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. (vs 24) And God said let the earth bring forth living creatures after its kind, cattle, and creeping things and beasts of the earth each according to its kind; and so it was. (vs 25) And God made the beasts of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw it that it was good.*

This means if you have a male and a female cow, they are going to produce offspring. They are not going to produce horses. They are going to produce more cows. That is the way it is in God's creation. Animals produce according to their own kind. Dogs bring forth more dogs. Cats bring forth more cats. Eagles bring forth eagles. The word 'kind' simply means species.

Notice what God intended for both animals and mankind. Gen. 1:22 *And God blessed them...*[Referring to the sea creatures and the birds] *saying be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters of the seas and let birds multiply on the earth.* Look at the first part of verse 28 and see if this instruction is any different in what God says about man.

Gen. 1:28 *Then God blessed them...*[Referring to mankind] *and God said to them be fruitful and multiply fill the earth and subdue it.*

There is a distinction. God wanted both animals and mankind to multiply, to reproduce, except man was given the responsibility or charge over the creation.

The key thing to understand is that God doesn't change. His plan doesn't change. When God says He is going to do something, He sticks with it. He doesn't care how much opposition He faces, or how long He has to wait. What God says He is going to do, He is going to do. God's purpose in the multiplying of animals and mankind on the earth didn't change after the flood. One could think it did, or would, considering the grief and sorrow God felt because of the wickedness mankind had descended to before the flood. But notice what He says.

Gen. 9:7 *But as for you...*[Referring to Noah and his family] *be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it.* If we turn back to Genesis 5, we are going to see a clear biblical example of mankind recreating himself.

Gen. 5:1 *This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man he made him in the likeness of God. (vs 2) He created them male and female and blessed them and called them mankind in the day they were created. (vs 3) And Adam lived 130 years and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.* When children are born to their parents, when it says they are in their own likeness and image, it is referring to the general look of the parents. In many cases children actually do look like their parents. You will hear it said so-and-so looks just like his mother, or, so-and-so looks just like her father. When it talks about image and likeness it talks about parts of the body, the head, torso, feet, etc.

Let's delve into a verse which takes some time to go through. This verse is the summary verse which tells us what man is.

Gen. 2:7 *And the Eternal God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being.*

Notice it says 'and the Lord God formed man'. The word 'formed' in the Hebrew carries the idea of taking something and squeezing it into shape, to mold something into a form as a potter, especially as a potter.

Let's look at a biblical example of this word in action. Isa. 64:8 *But now, O Eternal, you are our Father. We are the clay and you our potter. We are the work of your hands.* Of course, if we go back, we will see where the potter is being questioned. The clay is talking back to the potter. Don't make me that way. Make me this way. God is the one who is in charge. He determines what the thing He is creating will look like. We are the clay and He is our potter. The word 'potter' here is the same word in Hebrew as formed in Genesis 2:7.

It says man was formed of the dust of the ground. In the Hebrew the word 'dust' refers to dust as powder or something grey in color. It could also refer to clay, the earth, or mud. The word 'ground' is really where you will find out what the color of the dust was. In the Hebrew the word 'ground' refers to soil from its general redness. This word comes from another Hebrew word which means to show blood in the face, or to flush, or turn rosy. In other words, the word Adam means just that, red clay. God named the first human being for what he was made of. Dust comes from the ground. Dust is what mankind is made of. The ground refers to where the dust came from. Gen. 2:19 *And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air.* Did you notice the phrase— out of the ground? That is the same ground Adam was created from. Animals have the same makeup and composition as human beings. Both came from the dust of the earth. Back to verse 7.

Gen. 2:7 *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils.* To breathe here means to puff in various applications, to inflate, to blow hard, scatter, kindle, expire. There are other definitions, but the word puff applies here.

There is a prophecy for the future connected with the Feast of Tabernacles and the second resurrection (Rev, 20:12). This is the vision of dry bones Ezekiel was given.

Eze. 37:9 *Also he said to me prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, thus says the Lord God come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain that they may live...[understand Ezekiel started out this vision looking at a valley of dry bones and the bones being connected together. Then over the bones were put the muscles and over the muscles was put the skin. These were human beings, but they weren't alive. They were just clay models] (vs 10) So I prophesied as he commanded me and breath came into them and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.*

We understand this picture is part of a tremendous scene given in Revelation 20 in regard to the books (the Bible) being opened, as well as the Book of Life (Holy Spirit), to people who never had the opportunity to truly understand God's Plan prior to their deaths. This is topic of resurrection will covered in a future Bible study.

Let's notice some things here in regard to Genesis 2:7. In the phrase 'breath of life' the word life is a different Hebrew word, but it has a very similar meaning. It refers to a puff. It can also refer to wind, being angry, or vital

breath, which is the application here in Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37. The word 'life' means to be alive, strong life, or a living thing. This puff of air generates life in human beings.

If we go back to Acts, the Apostle Paul in talking to the Greeks on Mars Hill in Athens understood very clearly the concept of the breath of life and how important it was in the creation of man. We read this in the previous Bible Study.

Acts 17:24 God who made the world and everything in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands. (vs 25) Nor is he worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything since he gives all life, breath, and all things. Paul clearly understood the importance of the breath of life.

Mankind is not the only part of God's creation which had the breath of life. This is before the flood. Notice what Noah was told. *Gen. 6:17 And behold, I myself am bringing the flood waters on the earth to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life, everything that is on the earth shall die.*

There is a reason why sea creatures are not included as being killed during the flood. Sea creatures don't have the breath of life. Their systems are designed differently. They have to live in water. If it walks on the earth, it breathes. This breath is the breath of life. Let's be very clear. It's the breath of human life and animal life.

This point comes into play a bit later in this Bible study. There are a couple of other points about the existence of mankind which need to be touched on in here, but only briefly because these topics will be covered later in this Bible study series.

There are two things in this Bible study dealing with human life. One is the fact that life is in the blood, which applies to both human beings and animals. Animals are being specifically talked about in this scripture, but it does have a connection to human life as well.

Lev. 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood. I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls...[For your lives] for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. (vs 12) Therefore I said to the children of Israel no one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood. (vs 13) Whatever man of the children of Israel or of the strangers who dwell among you who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out the blood and cover it with dust. (vs 14) For it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, you shall not eat the blood of any flesh for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.

Blood serves a very important part of human life. The breath of life gives charge to the blood. It is oxygen that oxidizes the blood which is carried throughout the body. It is important for us to establish this point in discussing who and what is man.

There is another very important point to discuss in broader detail is the spirit in man. 1 Cor. 2:9 *As it is written eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man those things that God has prepared for those that love him...*[Paul is talking about an element of knowledge not available to human beings through the five senses.] (vs 11) *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of man which is in him. Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God...*

So what is the spirit of man? The spirit of man is not something you can reach out and physically touch. It is what gives human beings their intellect, their ability to reason and communicate with one another, their ability to connect with others. If we didn't have the spirit of man in us we would all be like dumb animals, operating on instinct. 1 Cor. 2:11 *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of man which is in him. Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*

There are two different spirits described in I Corinthians 2:11; the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. (vs 14) *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him. Nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.* The spirit of man enables human beings to connect with God through His Spirit. This spirit is an important part of man's creation. God wanted Adam to connect these two spirits in Garden of Eden by eating from the "tree of life."

Once God formed Adam in His image, He breathed into Adam the breath of life and Adam became a living being. Read about this process in Genesis 2:7. In the King James Version, the word 'soul' is used to describe what Adam was created as. This is not a good translation of the original Hebrew. Living being better describes what God created human beings to be. In the Hebrew the word 'soul' as written in the King James Version, refers to a breathing creature, or that which breathes. It can refer to a human beings or animals.

Gen. 1:20 Read how the word soul, or as it is called in the Hebrew nephesh, is used. *Then God said let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures...*[Nephesh is the word used for creatures] *and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the heavens.*(vs 21) *So God created great sea creatures and every living thing [nephesh] that moves with which the waters abound...*[We see this word used again for land animals] (vs 24) *Then God said let the earth bring forth the living creatures [nephesh] according to its kind...*

God's word makes clear that human beings and animals are both living beings. The Bible considers both to be nephesh. What is the difference then, between man and animals? The "spirit in man."

Notice what God told Adam would happen, if he didn't follow God's instructions. Gen. 2:16 *And the Lord God...[Or the Eternal God] commanded the man saying of every tree of the garden you may freely eat. (vs 17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat for in the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.*

God created man with the possibility of dying. God didn't say Adam was going to die. He said, if Adam partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would surely die. The word die in the Hebrew means just that, to die, literally or figuratively.

What is death? Death is the cessation of all bodily functions. When a person dies they no longer can speak; they can no longer think; they can no longer eat; they can no longer go to the bathroom; they can no longer walk. They can no longer do anything. So why do people die?

God provides the answer, read it for yourself. Eze. 18:4 *Behold, all souls are mine...[Or all nepheshes, all lives of human beings] the soul...[Or the life] of the father, as well as the soul...[Or the life] of the son is mine. The soul who sins shall die.*

Human beings die because of sin. To understand why human beings die requires defining sin.

What is sin? 1 John 3:4 *Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.* [The King James reads] *Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.*

What law? The Ten Commandments. If you break the Ten Commandments, God's Law, you are a sinner.

Rom. 3:23 *For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.* Every human being who walked on this earth has sinned. The only exception in Jesus Christ. Heb. 4:15

Heb. 9:27 *As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.* It is appointed for human beings to die one time.

When a person dies, the book of Ecclesiastes is very clear about what happens. Notice what Solomon says about the dead.

Eccl. 9:5 *For the living know that they will die...[Get prepared, it is going to happen to you. This is a reality of life. It's the way God designed life if you sin. This is not an effort to be morbid. This is an effort to emphasize what God's word says about death] For the living know that they will die...[Conscious of this fact] but the dead know nothing. They have no more reward. The memory of them is forgotten.*

The dead know nothing. There is no consciousness in death. Notice what happens to a human being after death.

This occurs after Adam and Eve had partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God means what He says. Gen. 3:17 *And God said unto Adam because you have decided to heed the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you saying you shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake. (vs 19) From the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground...[That is the same ground Adam was created from] for out of it you were taken, for dust you are and to dust you shall return.*

From the first half of this Bible study, it should be apparent what man is. But why, why did God create man in His image? For what purpose was man created? Go back and re-read God's intent for creating man.

Gen. 1:26 *Then God said let us make man in our image according to our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air and over cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. (vs 27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female he created them.*

Being created in the image of God gave mankind the potential for being able to become something more. There was a potential God created in man. What was that potential?

The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 8 which opened up this Bible Study. These verses show us something in regards to the purpose of man and the potential God created within man. Heb. 2:6 *But one testified in a certain place saying...[The one who testified was King David] What is man that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man...[More accurately 'son of man' because Jesus Christ is not being talked about] or son of man that you take care of him. (vs 7) You have made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of your hands...[Notice-] (vs 8) You have put all things in subjection under his feet...[Psalms ends right there. The writer of Hebrews continues on] For in that he...[God] put all in subjection under him...[man] He left nothing that is not put under him, but now we do not yet see all things put under him...[So clearly there is more to the purpose of creating man. There is more to the story] (vs 9) But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels...[Just like man was made a little lower than the angels] for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God might taste death for everyone...[This describes an important purpose for Jesus Christ coming to earth as a human being. What did the death of Jesus Christ lead to, or make possible?] (vs 10) For it was fitting for him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

Mankind was created with the potential of being able to become full-fledged members of the 'God-kind'. Another way of saying this is that every human being has the potential to become full-fledged members of the God family.

Hebrews 2 tells us exactly what the real purpose of mankind's creation is. But we must understand Adam's sin cut mankind off temporarily from having a relationship with God. When this happened it created a barrier between God and His human creation. This barrier had to be removed before a relationship between God and human being could move forward together. Jesus Christ had to come to earth to remove this barrier. He had to pay the death penalty for the sins of every human being.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...*[Notice the family relationship here. God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son] *that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.* Everlasting life is not something human beings have now.

Paul makes it very clear there is more to life than this physical existence we were born into. Notice a question Paul asks. 1 Cor. 15:35 *But some will say, how are the dead raised up?...*[How are the dead raised up? This question implies there is more to life than just death, to live 'x' number of years on this earth and die. How can the dead be raised up?] *and with what body do they come?*

When somebody is raised up from being dead, what kind of body do they have? We know what body they had at the time they died. We know what they looked like. We know who they were in that regard. But Genesis 3:19 is very clear, the dead go back to the dust of the ground. If somebody is going to be brought back from being dead, what body are they going to have? This is question Paul is asking.

1 Cor. 15:42 *The body is sown in corruption...*[Referring to the physical body which decays and breaks down over time] *it is raised in incorruption...*[This refers to a perfect spiritual body] (vs 44) *It is sown a natural body...*[Which is the physical body we have today] *It is raised a spiritual body...*[This takes you to Revelation 1 and the description of Christ resurrected] *There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.* (vs 48) *As was the man of dust so also are those who are made of dust...*[We are just like Adam] *and as is the heavenly man so also are those who are heavenly.* (vs 49) *And as we have born the image of the man of dust...[Notice-] we shall also bear the image of the heavenly man.* We have the potential to be like Christ.

The words 'shall also' are future tense. We are looking at something that is going to happen in the future, in the near future. Paul is very specific here human beings were never created to remain physical. They were created with the potential to become full-fledged members of the God family.

Notice what Paul says in the book of Romans. Rom. 8:5 *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh...*[In other words, people are pursuing their own desires and the things they want to do, fulfilling their carnal lusts and their nature] *But those who live according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* (vs 13) *For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live...*

The connection between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God will be examined in greater detail in a future Bible Study. This connection is key for understanding the purpose of why man was created. Rom. 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God.*

Paul is not talking about future, he is talking about people being led by God's Spirit now. However, it must be understood those being led by God's Spirit are not yet born into the God family. They are begotten members of the God family just like a child is begotten by its parents and has to grow in the womb of its mother for a period of forty weeks. A child in the womb of its mother is the child of its parents, it is their begotten child. When it is delivered and born into this world, it becomes a full-fledged member of the family. It is the same way, spiritually speaking for those being led by the Spirit of God. These members of God's Church we are now begotten sons of God. Nevertheless, they are still sons of God and will be born into God's family at Christ's return. I John 3:1-2

There are no perfect human families in this world. Every human family has its problems, weaknesses and imperfections. But God's family will be perfect. Rev. 21:7 *He who overcomes shall inherit all things and I will be his God and he shall be my son. (vs 8) But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death...*

Everybody is appointed to die one time, but when God resurrects you and gives you your opportunity to know His truth, this is your opportunity to become part of His family. If you reject this opportunity, God will put you to death a second time, from which there will be no resurrection back to life. God doesn't tolerate sin in His family. God's Church needs to start developing this same attitude of not tolerating sin. Even though we live in a world filled with people who sin and have to contend with sin on a daily basis, God's Church should never tolerate it.

It is important to understand what man is not. There are many explanations in this world as to the meaning and purpose of life. Various individuals are always coming out in interviews and writing books about their 'after death' experiences. These people want it understood there is life after death. This world has hundreds of religious beliefs offering various explanations on the meaning of life. In the world of traditional Christianity people are taught human beings have an immortal soul. This means they already have eternal life within them during their physical lives on the earth.

Where did this teaching come from? It goes back to the Garden of Eden. Gen. 3:1-4 In traditional Christianity under the influence of the Catholic Church, we can for ourselves their explanation on who what and why man is.

Catholic Catechism:

Section 362 - The Catholic Church writes and believes:

The human person created in the image of God is a being at once corporeal (Which means physical and material) and spiritual. The biblical account expresses this reality in symbolic language when it affirms that "Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being." Man whole and entire is therefore willed by God.

Section 363 – Deals with the concept of the soul.

In the sacred scripture the term soul often refers to human life or the entire human person. But soul also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God's image. Soul signifies the spiritual principle in man.

Section 365 – Deals with the concept of soul and body coming together.

The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the form of the body. i.e. It is because of its spiritual soul that the body, made of matter, becomes a living human body. Spirit and matter in man are not two natures united but rather their union forms a single nature.

Section 366 – Deals with what the Catholic Church teaches about man.

The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God. It is not produced by the parents, and also that it is immortal. It does not perish when it separates from the body at death. It will be reunited with the body at the final resurrection.

In light of these teachings some questions need to be ask:

- Does the Bible speak in symbolic language in describing what and why man is?
- Does the word soul have anything to do with the "innermost aspects of man?"
- Does the Bible describe man as an immortal soul?

To these three questions the Bible answers: NO, NO and NO!

Yet, this is what people of this world are taught. This is why millions of people in Catholic and Protestant churches around the world believe when you die, you either go to heaven or you go to hell. Nothing could further from the truth. The truth is a dead person simply returns back to dust. Gen. 3:19

Whilst the concept of the immortal soul was not brought into the Church of God after Mr Armstrong's death, this teaching was certainly on its way to being established. Under Joseph W. Tkach's leadership the WCG began to corrupt the meaning of the image of God and the purpose for the creation of man.

First, let's look at how the WCG corrupted its teaching on the image of God. In an article titled *Three Historic Views* in the May/June 1994 issue of the Plain Truth magazine, the author lists three possible teachings regarding the image of God.

Scholars have long debated the meaning of the expression 'image of God'. One view is the ability of humans to think, reason, and to make decisions. A second suggestion is our capacity to have a relationship with God. A third perspective is the responsibility of dominion that God has given humans over the earth.

Notice, these views are what scholars believe the image of God represents. Since no definitive understanding can be gained from each view individually, combining these views together can provide the best explanation.

Perhaps the best understanding of the image of God is a combination of these three perspectives.

The word 'perhaps', never had any place in Paul's mind when he wrote: 1 Thes. 5:21 *Test all things. Hold fast what is good.*

Perhaps does not equate to testing, abstaining and accepting. Paul is saying here look at everything which comes your way. Prove it, test it, see if it stands the scrutiny of God's word. If it does, hold fast to it. If it does not, stay away from it. Do any of these three scholarly perspectives deal truthfully with the image of God? Do these perspectives take into consideration God has a head, eyes, ears, mouth, body, arms, legs, fingers, toes? No!!! None of these perspectives, which were sent out to the brethren of God's Church, teaches anything about the image of God.

Paul says in 2 Tim. 2:19 *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands having this seal, the Lord knows those who are his. Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.* There is no room for 'perhaps' in the spiritual lives of God's Church.

If information presented doesn't match the Bible test, God's people have a responsibility to get away from it. The word 'sure' in the Greek refers to something that is stiff, solid, or stable. Does 'perhaps' fit that definition? Of course not. Understanding God's word cannot be symbolic in nature. It must be rock solid. It must be built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. The word 'perhaps' reveals an inability on the part of scholars to understand what the Bible really teaches about the image of God.

Let's now examine how the correct teaching of why man was created was corrupted by Mr. Tkach and his administration.

Before moving on, please note these Restored Truth Bible studies will follow a specific format all the way through. First, you need to know what the truth is. Second, you need to know the counterfeits given to undermine God's Truth. And third, you need to know how these counterfeits infiltrated God's Church.

The only way God's Church can stand against false teaching which undermines God's restored truths is to know what God's Word says and means. This allows you to effectively swing the double-edged sword of God's Word and cut through the counterfeits brought in to deceive you.

Notice what Joseph Tkach Sr. wrote in the July 22, 1991 edition of the Worldwide News in regard to human beings having the ability to become the sons of God.

One of our old catch phrases, which we have not used for many years, (He is very happy about that.) "We are to become god as God is God" is an example of a statement that went beyond the biblical revelation.

That was said in 1991. Notice now what he said two years later. This time in the Pastor General's Report which was a publication for the ministry. Mr. Tkach wrote the following in the July 27, 1993 edition.

The teaching we once held that the destiny of human beings is to become gods is not one we can support theologically.

This is interesting. Two years earlier, he said it went beyond biblical revelation. Two years later, he is said, it can't be supported theologically. Why theologically? Because theologically looks at understanding the Bible based on the explanations of men, not based upon what the Bible says.

Notice what Christ said to the Jews in a very confrontational situation, with regard to whether or not human beings can become sons of God. John 10:31 *Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him...*[Notice the Jews took up stones again to stone him. This was not the first time they wanted to kill Christ] (vs 32) *Jesus answered them many good works I have shown you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me?* (vs 33) *The Jews answered him saying for a good work we do not stone you, but for blasphemy and because you, being a man, you make yourself God.* (vs 34) *Jesus answered them is it not written in your law, I said, you are gods?...*[That is a quote from Psalm 82:6] (vs 35) *If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken (vs 36) do you say of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world you blaspheme because I said I am the Son of God?*

Clearly, Christ had no problem calling Himself the Son of God. Why should it be blasphemous for those in God's Church to say they are sons of God? Begotten now, and soon to be born when Jesus Christ comes on the clouds of heaven at the 7th trumpet.

1 John 3:1 *Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God...* [Mr. Tkach was wrong. The Bible is clear human beings can become gods, children of God, sons of God] *therefore the world does not know us because it did not know him...*[Which is what we can say about Mr. Tkach. He didn't know God; or if he did, somehow he forgot what he learned] (vs 2) *Beloved, now we are children of God...* [That matches exactly with Romans 8:14] *now we are children of God. It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.*

The Bible is very clear what the image of God means. It is also very clear what God's Church in the future will be. God is a family, and those God has called into His Church have the opportunity to become part of that family, if they hold fast and endure to the end.

In his sermon titled *Mission of the Philadelphia Church Era*, given on December 17, 1983, Mr. Armstrong was very clear about what and why man is.

Now the next thing that is restored to the Church - What and Why Man Is. What is man? Why did we come to be on the earth? The Sardis Church didn't know. Man was made from the dust of the ground. Man was made with one spirit and he needs another spirit, the Spirit of God, which unites him with God and is the impregnation of God life in him and he will be born of God.

"He (or she) who has an ear, let him (or her) hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

[Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)