

## Lesson Four

# GOD'S CREATION OF MAN AS A THREE-PART VESSEL

### Scripture Reading

**Gen. 1:26**

And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

**Matt. 22:37**

And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

**John 3:6**

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

**Rom. 9:21-23**

(21) Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? (22) And what if God, wishing to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, (23) In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,

**Eph. 3:16**

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

**1 Thes. 5:23**

And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1 Pet. 3:4**

But the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible [adornment] of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.

### Outline

- I Man in God's image and likeness
- II Man—a vessel to contain God
  - A The body
  - B The soul
  - C The spirit

In Lesson One we saw God's marvelous eternal plan. In Lesson Two we saw the selection of the people to fulfill His plan. According to this plan and selection, God then went ahead to create the heavens and the earth for man. Finally, He created man, the center of His creation, in a very special way.

### I. MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE AND LIKENESS

First, in Genesis 1:26, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Here we can see that God created man differently from all other creatures. All the other things that God created were after their own kind. Only man was after God's kind. Do you see how close man is to God? A good way to illustrate how man is in God's image is with a glove and a hand. Man is to God like a glove is to a hand. A glove is made according to the shape of a hand and for the hand to enter into the glove. Man was created according to God's image and after His likeness so that God could enter into him. Do you see how wonderful you are? Only you, among all of God's creation, were made in such a wonderful way. This makes you a "V.I.P." of the universe. You were created as a vessel in the image of God so that you could contain Him and express Him. None of this was by accident or evolution. It was absolutely planned by God in eternity past and carried out in His creation for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose.

## **II. MAN—A VESSEL TO CONTAIN GOD**

Second, the Bible tells us that God created man in His image and likeness as a vessel (Rom. 9:21-23). The purpose of a vessel is to contain something. A bottle may contain something to drink. That is its function or purpose. Man was made to contain God. That is his function or purpose.

However, we are not simple vessels, but vessels of three parts: spirit, soul and body (1 Thes. 5:23). So, we call man a “tripartite” vessel or being.

### **A. The Body**

The first part of man is his body, the physical part. It was created by God from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). Through our physical body, we can live on the earth. We can touch, see, smell and hear things with our body. As you are reading this lesson, you are using your hands to hold the book and your eyes to read it.

### **B. The Soul**

The soul is the psychological part of man. This is you, your person or your personality, and it has three parts or organs: your mind, your emotion and your will. As you are trying to understand this lesson, you are using the organ of your mind. You may get excited about being a man created in God’s image and want to know more. This is your emotion being stirred up. And as you determine to read the Bible to find out more about God and man, you are using your will to make a decision. The soul is the part of man created by God for us to know Him, love Him and turn to Him so we can be saturated with God and express Him.

### **C. The Spirit**

The spirit is the deepest part of man. The Bible calls it “the inner man” (Eph. 3:16) and “the hidden man of the heart” (1 Pet. 3:4) because it is deeper and harder to know than our other two parts. Of all God’s creatures, only man was created with a spirit. Its function is to contact God and to receive Him. Did you know that you not only have a body and a soul but a spirit too? You may never have considered it. If you have never come to God, you have never had to use your spirit. You need your body and soul to exist as a human, but if you have never come to God, you have never used your spirit. Just as our ears are for hearing sound and our eyes are for seeing colors, our spirit is the organ for receiving God’s life and for being one with Him. Hallelujah! What a wonderful spirit God has made within us! With our spirit, we can contact God and contain Him to express Him on the earth. This is exactly what makes God happy and fulfills His eternal purpose in creating man.

Do you have any friends who do not know the Lord or who say that He doesn’t exist? This is because they have never used their spirit to contact God. They are like a blind man who does not believe in colors because he has never seen them. In the same way, some men do not believe in God because they have never used their spirit to contact Him.

As for you, you may know how to use your body very well and how to take care of it properly. You are also going to school to train your mind to know many things and to function properly. But, to be someone fully according to God’s purpose, you also need to learn how to use your spirit to contact God, to receive Him and to contain Him.

## **Questions**

1. In what two ways is man different from all other creatures that God made?
2. Romans 9 tells us that God made man a vessel. Why does the Bible describe man in this way?
3. List the three parts of man and their functions. Give examples of how you use each part.
4. Write a list of seven things you can find around your house that are containers and alongside that write down their contents.
5. How does this illustrate the fact that man is God’s vessel, His container?

## **Further Reference**

See Compendium of God's Full Salvation (LSM), Chapter 1, II.  
or

1. Life-study of John (Lee/LSM), p. 59.
2. Life-study of Genesis (Lee/LSM), pp. 62-64, 67, 129-131.
3. Life-study of Romans (Lee/LSM), pp. 656-658.
4. Life-study of Galatians (Lee/LSM), pp. 401-402.
5. The Glorious Church (Nee/LSM), pp. 8-9.