



[Genesis 1:26-27](#)

(26) And God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth." (27) And God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female.

A Faithful Version

Notice the overall context of these verses. It is the very first chapter of the Bible, and [God](#) is laying the foundation for what will follow. If the foundation is not laid correctly, then the rest of the building is crooked. God is beginning to establish our vision of what His purpose is and where we are headed with our lives, and being what we are, we need to have some insight into what He is. So He tells us immediately that we are made in His image and His likeness.

He contrasts us with the animals. Each one of them reproduces after its kind. And when they reproduce, they look like their parents. They look like each other. God is clearly implying that He is reproducing Himself and that His purpose is that we will be exactly like Him when He is finished with us. Even now, in our physical forms, we are made in His image so that we will have the potential to be exactly like Him.

Virtually every explanation of these two verses begins with an assumption: that God did not really mean what He clearly states.

Verse 26 says the creation of man is about to occur. It is yet future. Verse 27 says that the creation is in the past tense. By the time the statement in verse 27 is done, man is already in His image. It is not future. It is past tense. It is not an image and likeness in progress as in the creation of a character image, but within the context, the image was already accomplished. A physical image and [likeness of God](#) has been made.

Who knows better? The God who authored the Book and the people He used to write

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these things down—or people who are looking at it centuries after the fact and have never seen God or heard His voice, people who are using a combination of Bible verses, metaphysics, philosophy, science, and assumption?

What is the assumption based on? It is usually on men's definition of the word "spirit." They combine that with [John 4:24](#), which says that "God is Spirit." Adam Clarke provides a typical explanation: "Now as a divine being is infinite, he is neither limited by parts or definable by passions. Therefore he can have no corporeal image after which He made the body of man" (vol. 1, p. 38).

That is a direct contradiction based upon an assumption. It is based upon disbelief. Certainly, God does not have a material body, but that does not address the issue. The issue is whether He has a spiritual body, which served as a model for mankind, and whether He has a body that has parts.

This is important because men within the church of God are now telling members that God does not have form in mind at all in this verse, but only character image. This is important to us in understanding the nature of God and getting a correct perspective of the goal and purpose of life itself. They are associating Him with being not much more than the Catholic beatific vision or with man becoming part of a vague, immaterial blob without independence. This would effectively do away with the [doctrine](#) of being born again into a constructive and developing Family of creators.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Image and Likeness of God \(Part 1\)](#)



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