

Finding God on Earth

Genesis 1:1-27

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Just the other day I was sharing with the students in the Academy the following story. I asked the students the following two questions:

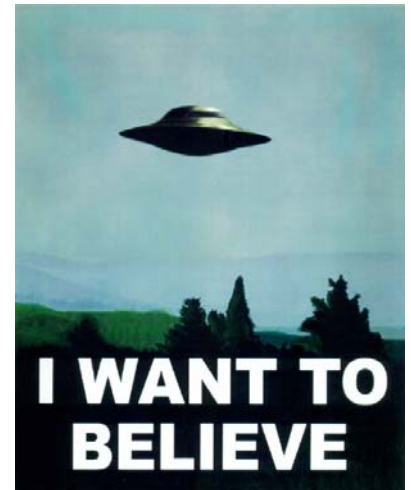
- 1) What does it fully mean to you that you have been created in God's image and likeness?
- 2) What things should logically be expected from someone who is made in God's image and likeness?

I wonder what do others see when they look at us?

Imagine that far out in space, in another galaxy, there is a planet inhabited by intelligent creatures. These creatures and their planet and galaxy were of course fashioned by God who created everything. But they do not know what God is like, though they possess an insatiable appetite to find out more about Him.

Then one day they detect, through their highly developed forms of intergalactic surveillance, the existence of a planet called Earth. They also make initial discoveries about the human beings who dwell there. Immediately, and with intense excitement, they mobilize their resources to build a spaceship capable of sending a delegation to faraway Earth with the specific goal of going there to learn about God.

Why Earth? Because their initial findings have disclosed the record of what God said when He first created human beings on this planet---that He was making them in His own image and according to His own likeness. Such a revelation is absolutely the most thrilling news these alien beings have ever heard. By getting a close-up view of humanity, they will be getting their first-ever glimpse of God.



With the spaceship completed and a carefully chosen delegation ready to embark, great crowds gather to see them off and wish them well.

After a long voyage across several galaxies, the hearts of every member of this delegation beat faster as Earth comes into view. This beautiful blue planet grows larger and larger as they come closer. "Soon we will see man," they tell each other, "the creature God made in His perfect image. We will be able to return home with eyewitness knowledge and understanding of what God is really like."

Slowly and softly their space craft makes it landing on Earth....and the alien creatures step out.

They have landed on a vacant lot in a city (much like whatever city you know best). They leave their spacecraft and walk down the nearest street. The first human being they lay eyes upon is a body sprawled on the curb that they have to step over, a drunk (though the aliens do not know about drunkenness) who is lying there in his own vomit. The aliens try talking to him, but the man only moans and rolls over.

Leaving the drunk behind, they run a corner and suddenly confront two rival groups of young men threatening each other with knives. They have scarred arms and a lifeless stare in their eyes (though the aliens have not learned about drug abuse).

Stunned by this unexpected danger, the aliens turn quickly in a different direction and hear sounds from an open door under a tavern sign, and they enter the safety inside. The few people there ignore them. They have sullen faces as they sit in booths at the room's shadowy edges.

The sound the aliens were hearing is coming from a television set above the bar, and on the screen someone is announcing the "world news." The aliens crowd closer to catch a summary of what is happening all around this Earth. The 'news' they hear is about terrorist bombers and murderers. It is about corruption in business and government. It is about childish and foolish behavior by celebrities in the realms of entertainment and sports.

The aliens stare in shock at the screen, until one of them turns to the others and says, "Let's get off this planet. This place stinks."

With heavy steps they make their way to the spaceship, weighed down by revulsion and disillusionment over this display of God's character. And on their long, sad journey back, they wrestle with their total loss at knowing how to convey this tragic discovery to their loved ones at home.

Of course, you and I know that what they actually learned was not what God is like, but what sin is like. Was there anything wrong, however, in the logic behind their expectation of seeing God on our planet?

No their thinking was entirely correct, as we see more clearly when we carefully read the Scriptures.

Genesis 5:1 (NIV)

¹ This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

Genesis 9:6 (NIV)

⁶ "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

What does it fully mean to you that you have been created in God's image and likeness?

What things should logically be expected from someone who is made in God's image and likeness?

Once again, I wonder what do others see when they look at us?

The Lord continues to be extremely gracious to us. May we be just as appreciative to Him!