

## In Their Image

Sometimes in our rush to grab life and get “there”, we speed past and miss the treasures the Creator has hidden in our lives. Here is one that tripped me up recently. The Bible says near its very beginning, Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Every time I read that, I understood the main point to be that somehow, men and women reflect something of the attributes of God, and that therefore we have innate worth and dignity. Point taken, move on. The concept left me sort of cold and unmoved.

Apparently there is no punctuation in the Hebrew Torah . So let’s do a little thinking outside the box and take a closer look.

Then God said, “Let us make man, in our image, after our likeness.”

Notice anything different? I did. Now, what hit me with great force was the realization that humans did not always exist. Yes, I know that is obvious. But what I mean is that for a part of the history of time, God existed without mankind and at some point created us.

Then the questions and realizations started flooding in. What was God doing for all the time (maybe billions of years) before He made us? Who was He sharing it with? Why did He decide at that time to make us? What does He want from us? Was it easy for God to create the universes and us? Did He just go ‘puff’ or did He plan and design and think out each aspect of the amazing complexity and beauty of all animals, bodies, DNA, planets etc? Did it require effort?

I will not try to answer those questions but other people have and I would like to let one of them speak if you have a little time. I hope that it help you find your way to **marvel**.

- Pat Murphy.

<snippet – extract>

Standing in the farthest corner of the garden, His back to Lucifer and only dimly visible through the rising mists, was a tall figure. Slowly the figure turned. Lucifer fell to his knees.

Christos walked towards Lucifer until He stopped directly in front of him. Gradually, the white mists faded. Lucifer stared, entranced, at the feet before him. Lucifer stared, transfixed, at the eyes that flashed from hues of blue to emerald to brown. The great King of heaven. Beautiful beyond description.

‘Christos,’ Lucifer uttered in ecstasy.

‘Lucifer,’ Christos whispered. ‘Beloved son of the morning.’

Christos bent down and clasped Lucifer’s face in His strong hands, then closed His eyes and tenderly kissed the raven head as though Lucifer were a child.

Tears coursed down Lucifer’s cheeks, splashing onto Christos’ hands. ‘I am not worthy.’

‘Only One is worthy.’

Lucifer rose to his feet, staring at Christos in adulation. At length Christos spoke. ‘There is a new galaxy we create, Lucifer. You may find it insignificant by angelic standards. It inhabits the galaxy next to Our new universe.’

Lucifer pondered. ‘I have been so busy attending to my work – I must have passed it by on my many journeys into the galaxies.’

Christos smiled. ‘It has not much to attest to it at present. It would not have drawn your attention.’ His voice was soft. ‘We spoke to you many moons past concerning Our desire to create a new race.’

Lucifer nodded in recollection. ‘Yet another?’ He smiled brilliantly. ‘Each new race is as a marvel to me.’ Christos stared at Lucifer for a long moment. ‘A race that is not angelic.’ Lucifer looked at Him inquiringly.

‘Lucifer – Son of the morning, you who watched when I laid the cornerstones of the universe. You who saw Me bind the chains of Pleiades and loose the cords of Orion, who observed Me prepare a channel for the torrents of rain and a path for the thunderbolt. Lucifer – light-bearer: We would create a race in Our image . . . and in Our likeness. . . . the Race of Men . . . ’

Lucifer stood. ‘A race . . . in Your likeness?’ He ran his fingers through the thick locks, strangely dazed.

Christos nodded.

‘We, the angelic host – are we not Your beloved?’ Lucifer moved a step closer to Christos.

Christos smiled compassionately. ‘Light-bearer, the shining one – adored of heaven.’

The seraphim materialized and stood on each side of Lucifer to escort him out of Eden.

Lucifer fell to one knee, clasping Christos’ hand, desperation in his voice. ‘Before I take my leave, anoint me afresh.’

Gently, Christos laid His hands on the crown of Lucifer’s head. Slowly Lucifer rose to his feet. He leaned over and kissed Christos lovingly, first on the right cheek and then on the left. Then he lifted his right hand to his own cheek. On his fingers lay a crimson liquid mixed with the liniment. He lifted his eyes to Christos, perplexed.

Christos stared down at the liquid, then back at Lucifer, a strange and terrible sorrow in His gaze. He was silent for a long moment. ‘Son of the morning, many moons hence when many worlds have long risen and fallen, there will be another garden . . . ’ Christos’ voice was barely audible, ‘ . . . another kiss . . . the Lamb of God will be slaughtered.’

Lucifer opened his mouth to protest, but Christos lifted His hand and Lucifer found himself back outside the gate to the inner sanctum.

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Xacheriel the angelic bio-architect, stopped in mid-stride, his countenance grave. ‘They have to be rigorous in their applications, Jether. The troposphere and stratosphere of Earth’s solar system have to be meticulously calculated for the new race to exist.’ He turned to Jether. ‘We face the challenges of matter at every turn.’

The portal’s automatic voice narrated in modulated tones. ‘Man’s physical brain is comprised of over one hundred billion cells, each with over fifty thousand neuron connections to other brain cells. The structure receives over one hundred million separate signals from the human body every second.’

Jether smiled. ‘Yehovah’s inconceivable marvels!’

Michael placed his palm on a coil. Instantly, a hologram materialized and rotated, zooming in on the prototype’s eye. ‘Over one hundred and twenty-five million rods and cones,’ the narration continued, ‘specialized cells so sensitive that some can detect a mere handful of photons.’

Michael and Jether sped through the infinite, twisting corridors for what seemed like eternities, finally stopping before the vast living, breathing veil that Xacheriel was studying in sheer ecstasy, now completely oblivious to their arrival.

‘DNA,’ Jether murmured in wonder. ‘The building blocks of life. Unimaginable complexity . . . ’

The veil became transparent, and billions of intricate, pulsating code sequences became visible.

‘A three-hundred-billion base sequence!’ Xacheriel’s eyes flashed in exhilaration. ‘A unique program perfectly adapted to each aspect of the new race – making up the human genomic code . . . ’

Michael shook his head in wonder.

‘The instruction set that will carry each one of the new race from one-cell egg to adulthood . . . ’

Jether nodded, transfixed.

‘Ten times two-point-four times ten to the ninth power possible sequences of nucleotides,’ Xacheriel continued, ‘all of which would lead to complete biological malfunction.’ He turned to Michael in awe. ‘Except for this very one.’

‘Created in His image,’ Michael said softly.

‘The human construction book, or an instruction manual, if you like,’ Xacheriel continued. ‘Matter we created for the specific purpose of being a carrier of the code.’

Exhilarated, he held up a DNA fibre in his fingers. ‘No less amazing – two millionths of a millimetre thick.’ His eyes glowed with fervency. ‘Yet the amount of information contained within it is so immense that in the case of human DNA, if the tightly coiled strands inside a human adult were unwound and stretched out straight, they would cover the distance from the newly created planet to its lone moon half a million times!’

Xacheriel spun around to face Jether and Michael. ‘And when coiled . . . ’ He gestured to a tiny receptacle the size of a teaspoon. ‘All the strands could fit in this. Forty-six chromosomes to each of the new race’s living cells. The genotypes of all cells derived from a particular cell will be precisely the same – unless . . . ’ Xacheriel frowned and glowered at them from under his eyebrows. ‘Unless a mutation occurs . . . ’ he declared ominously.

‘Which is, of course, inconceivable,’ Jether added hurriedly.

Slowly the heavy steel door opened.

The three archangel brothers and the two Ancient Ones followed Xacheriel into the outer vault, then through a second door until they all stood in the centre of a smaller inner portal.

All at once, there was a roaring above the portal atrium as the crystal cupola directly over the small assembly opened, and a vast, brilliant chamber of light began to descend. As the angels watched in awe, a figure swathed in brilliant, shimmering light became visible in the centre of the brilliance, suspended two full leagues above the ground.

Charsoc stared as the light gradually settled, magnetized to the descending figure. ‘Man . . . ’ he whispered in awe.

Gabriel stared at the figure, captivated. The prototype, now hovering just above the ground, appeared to be completely covered by a thin, incandescent clayish layer. Gabriel noticed that it was at least a cubit shorter than the angels and had no discernible wings. Its outer layers were created of matter and therefore appeared much duller than the translucent angelic bodies. He could not be sure, but it seemed that the atoms that continually radiated around the angelic host were missing. But it was beautiful. He stared, incredulous. With great difficulty he drew his gaze away to Michael. ‘Its features are flawless!’ His face shone. ‘As the angels . . . ’

Jether bowed his head a moment in reverence. Slowly he opened his eyes. ‘My revered angelic princes, I have mentored and served you throughout the aeons, but I tell you that never in the annals of the First Heaven has there been such a day as this.’

‘A new race . . . ’ Charsoc said in wonder, ‘created in His own likeness . . . ’

‘The race of men are not fashioned as we, the angelic,’ Xacheriel explained, his face shining with rapture. ‘We, the angelic race, are each individually created by Yehovah. Fearfully and wonderfully fashioned. Yet we hold no ability to replicate ourselves.’

‘Yehovah has endowed the race of men with the capacity to create after its own kind.’ Jether turned to Lucifer. ‘As does Yehovah.’

Lucifer averted his gaze from Jether’s.

‘In His image,’ Charsoc whispered.

Lucifer, overcome by sheer fascination, moved nearer towards the prototype. He stared at the features of the man, studying intently the high cheekbones, the strong jaw line, the chestnut hair. ‘It is strangely familiar . . . ’

Charsoc stared at him intently for a long moment. ‘Have you not yet guessed, Lucifer?’

Lucifer frowned.

Charsoc raised his gaze to the prototype, then back down to Lucifer. 'His image is that of Christos.'

Gabriel stared at the prototype, incredulous.

Michael was rapt in worship, exultant, his face shining. Slowly he turned his head to Lucifer, who was staring blindly at the prototype and trembling, his senses reeling with a terrible, searing, violent jealousy.

And it was then, as Michael watched, that Lucifer lifted his head from the prototype. His eyes glittered hard and black, filled with loathing.

He was staring up through the crystal cupola directly towards Yehovah's throne.

- *From the Fall of Lucifer by Wendy Alec*