

Chapter 32

Here are the headlines again

At the end of a news broadcast it is usual for the main items to be summarised, whether their content has been good or bad, reminding listeners of that day's headlines. Often they are left downcast or anxious about what has happened, or is likely to happen. A newscaster who once tried to give only good news failed in the attempt and was replaced. We have been considering the best possible news and it still applies every day whatever is happening in the rest of the world. To be reminded of the loving purposes of God is to be filled with wonder and thankfulness for the past and great hope for the future. We are given the best of news that will never be withdrawn or replaced.

The image created

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ¹

The image spoiled by enemy tactics

The serpent said to the woman, 'Did God really say...?'

The woman said 'God did say, "You must not eat of the fruit...or you will die."'

'You will not surely die,' the serpent said.

When the woman saw that the fruit was good...pleasing...desirable... she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised they were naked.

The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden, and they hid.

Then the Lord said 'What is this you have done?' and banished them from the Garden of Eden. ²

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way. ³

The image made visible

[Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.⁴
‘Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus...The Holy Spirit will come upon you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.’⁵

The offer of restored relationship...

‘Mary...will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins...’⁶

...restored at a price

For what the law was powerless to do...God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering...⁷
...the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all...He committed no sin....⁸

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.⁹

The offer not recognised by all

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.¹⁰

The offer accepted by some and their relationship restored
Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.¹¹

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls out, ‘*Abba*, Father’.¹²

Enemy action will try to threaten the image...

I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ...for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.¹³

...but it can be renewed

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.¹⁴

The full image slowly being restored

...you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.¹⁵

For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.¹⁶

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...¹⁷

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.¹⁸

One day the likeness will be complete

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face...¹⁹

Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body...²⁰

And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so we shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.²¹

In this hope we keep looking ahead

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.²²

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.²³

The image fully restored

...we know that when [Jesus] appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as [Jesus] is pure.²⁴

Thought for each day

That is not the end of the news as further reports are expected at any time. Everyone hoping to receive them must remain connected, and stay tuned. It is God's great intention to restore us to his image. With the help of his indwelling Spirit we will gradually come to know more of life to the full, as promised by our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived it.²⁵

Perhaps the words of this hymn could shape your daily prayer that God would be continually transforming you to be more like Christ, fulfilling God's great intention for you as you walk with him:

*May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By his love and power controlling
All I do and say*

*May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through his power*

*May his beauty rest upon me
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only him*

(Kate Barclay Wilkinson, 1925)

References

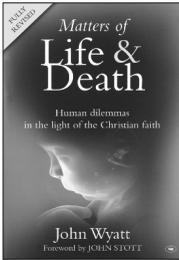
1. Genesis 1:27
2. Genesis 3:1-5, 6-13, 21-24
3. Isaiah 53:6a
4. Colossians 1:15
5. Luke 1:30-35
6. Matthew 1:21
7. Romans 8:3
8. Isaiah 53:6b
9. 1 Peter 2:22- 24
10. 2 Corinthians 4:4
11. John 1:12
12. Galatians 3:26, 4:6
13. 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14
14. 1 John 1:9
15. Colossians 3:9-10
16. 2 Chronicles 16:9
17. Romans 12:2
18. 2 Corinthians 3:18
19. 1 Corinthians 13:12
20. Philippians 3:20-21
21. 1 Corinthians 15:49
22. Hebrews 12:2-3
23. Philippians 3:12
24. 1 John 3:2-3
25. John 10:10

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

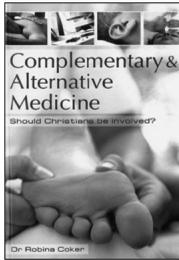
(Ephesians 1:17-20)

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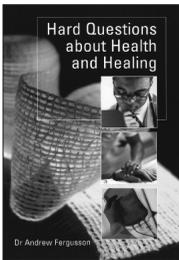
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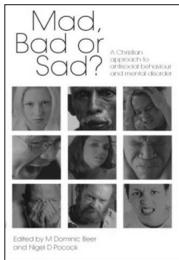
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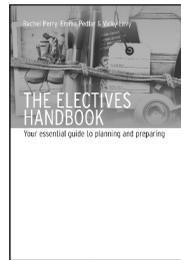
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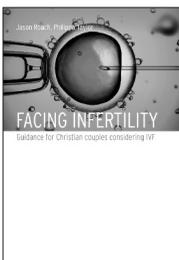
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The Doctor's Life of Faith

'Am I what I wanted to be?'

'Am I on the right track?'

'What's life all about anyway?'

When life is hard or our plans run into the ground, these questions quickly arise. But perhaps these are the wrong questions. We should be asking, 'Am I the sort of person *God* intended me to be?' 'What is *God's* intention for my life?'

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Janet Goodall draws on her experience as a paediatrician in the UK and Africa to show how this life-transforming plan will spur you on to live a life that is pleasing to *God*. She shows that though we will face many trials along the way, the glorious result will be worth it.



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