



## Lesson 69

### Giving and Receiving

- **Anthropomorphism**
  - What is anthropomorphism?
- **Giving and Receiving**
  - Made in God's image
  - Adam and Eve, giving and receiving
  - Sun and moon, giving and receiving
  - Summary of giving and receiving
- **God Giving and Receiving**
  - God giving to the angels
  - Jesus receiving from God
  - God receiving in creation
- **The Female and Male Characteristics of God**
  - Jesus as a female
  - Why God is usually portrayed as male
  - God has both characteristics

John the disciple says, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:18). Jesus even says, “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and the holy angels.” (Luke 9:26). What is the same in both of these verses? Jesus and God are referred to as “he” or “him”; these verses say they are male: the Father and the Son. When we refer to God we always say “he”. In this lesson we are going to examine the pronouns referring to male and female. We are going to see if these words (and really all the words referring to God in the Bible) are totally accurate and if not, we are going to try to understand why they say what they do.

## **Anthropomorphism**

### **What is anthropomorphism?**

What does Anthropomorphism mean? Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics, behavior, or emotions to animals, objects, or spirits. The concept sounds simple, but it’s a bit more complex. This is because Anthropomorphism is a part of personification, it’s not to be confused with personification. Both concepts are the same but there is a subtle difference between the two. Simply, personification is the act of giving human characteristics to something non-human. Anthropomorphism is making animals, spirits, and objects as if they are human (in character, appearance, or behavior). For example, “the computer refused to start” is personification, you are imagining the computer has human emotions. “The computer said ‘I won’t start till you plug me up’” on the other hand is anthropomorphism; the computer is literally talking like a human. Both are similar and have the same concept but anthropomorphism is more literal, giving things physical changes, while personification is more imaginary. For this lesson we are going to be focusing on anthropomorphism rather than personification.

# Giving and Receiving

## Made in God's image

“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 the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Genesis 1:26,27. Genesis chapter one is when God created Adam and Eve. It says that He created both men and women in His image.

## Adam and Eve, giving and receiving

We want to understand why God made Adam and Eve- what God was trying to teach with male and female. To see one of those points we can look back at Creation. God made Adam first, as we know, then, “the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, ... And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman,” (Genesis 2:21,22). Here we see two important characteristics: one is to give and the other is to receive. God took one of Adam's ribs and made Eve out of it, so Adam gave a rib and Eve received it. God created Adam and Eve in this way to make the point about giving and receiving.

## Sun and moon, giving and receiving

Another example of giving and receiving is the sun and the moon. The sun and the moon were made to give light in the day, and in the night, but they do that in different ways. The sun is a burning ball of gas, it is so hot that nuclear fusion takes place. Because of nuclear fusion, photons are released at the surface of the sun, and photons are what light is made of. In other words, the sun produces light. On the contrary, the moon doesn't produce light because it's not burning like the sun is. The reason we can see the moon at night, and in the day if you look hard enough, is because it is reflecting the sun's light to earth. So this is an example of giving and receiving, the sun gives the light, and the moon receives (and reflects) it.

## Summary of giving and receiving

So from the previous paragraphs, we can see two aspects; we can see the aspects of giving and receiving. Men represent giving while women represent receiving. We saw that from the story of creation. Adam gave Eve his rib and she received it and was thereafter created. The other example we saw was from the sun and the moon. The sun gives light and the moon reflects it. Those are the two examples we talked about on giving and receiving.

# God Giving and Receiving

## God giving to the angels

An example of giving and receiving can be seen in Heaven before earth was created. God the Father gave life and light to all the angels, including Lucifer. Lucifer was the first covering Cherub (*Patriarchs and Prophets* 35.3) and had the closest place of any angel to the presence of God. Lucifer was also an archangel (ST September 14, 1882 par. 9) like Michael. Christ, Michael, was God but He was also an archangel. Because of this, when Christ outwardly assumed His position as God Lucifer got jealous. So in a way we can see here that not only did the angels receive from God but Michael did also because He was an archangel. In Heaven we can see God as a giver and the angels as receivers or God the Father as a giver and Michael (Christ) the archangel as a receiver.

## Jesus receiving from God

An example of God receiving is in John chapter 8. John 8:26 and 28 says, "I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him."<sup>28</sup> Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." Here Jesus is saying that He doesn't do or say anything He wants, He does what God tells him. This is an example of God receiving; we saw how God can give, and now we see that God can receive. Jesus is God so when Jesus receives what to say and do, we are being taught that God can receive. But it was God that gave what Jesus received, so God receives from God? That has to be the case, we are just humans so we have nothing to give God, the only way God receives is when it is self-given. So now we know that God can both give and receive.

## God receiving in creation

From creation, we can see God has a receiving aspect. An example of that is from Matthew 23. While Jesus was speaking to the people and disciples about the Pharisees, He made an analogy between Himself and a mother hen. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matthew 23:37. He said He would gather them together like a hen would gather her chickens. Another example that we can look at is in Deuteronomy 32:9-11 which says, "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:". Verses 9-11 compare God to a mother eagle that protects and cares for her young. Those are just two examples where God compares Himself to animals in nature who receive from Himself. So from the perspective of nature, God receives.

# The Female and Male Characteristics of God

## Jesus as a female

We have seen what Adam and Eve represent. Adam (male) represents giving and Eve (female) represents receiving. We have also seen that you can see the giving and receiving model in the Bible. We saw that Christ can be a receiver. So does that mean that Christ can be represented as a woman? Yes, and we see that in the Old Testament, in the book of Proverbs. Chapter 1 says, "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:" (Proverbs 1:20). Wisdom is a woman. Throughout the book of Proverbs whenever Solomon uses anthropomorphism with wisdom he makes it a woman. The word wisdom, in Proverbs, is the Greek word Sophia. In chapter 8 wisdom is again made a woman. In verses 22 and 23 she says, "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." She goes on to talk about how she was there at creation. Ellen G White says in *Patriarchs and Prophets* 34.1 that verse is Christ speaking. So we can see that here, in Proverbs, Jesus is portrayed as a female.

## Why God is usually portrayed as male

God is usually male in the Bible. If we were to turn to any verse in the Bible that is talking about God, the chances are that it will most likely refer to God as "He, Him, etc." And in only a few verses, like the one in Proverbs will God be referred to as "She, Her, etc." This is because God is usually giving; we saw how giving is male and receiving is female, based on Adam and Eve. So since God is usually blessing (or cursing) the church, which is giving, God is usually referred to as a "He." We also know that the Bible is sexist and that also influenced how God was referred to; but in this study, since God is almost always giving, God is almost always described as a "He" in the Bible.

## God has both characteristics

God has both male and female characteristics. First off, He created both Adam and Eve in His image. That means that not only was he like Adam, a male, but he was also like Eve, a female. God also doesn't just give. He also receives. A man gives, and a woman receives so God has both characteristics. Then we saw His female characteristics in nature when he compared Himself to mother hens and mother eagles. Lastly, we saw that He can be represented by Sophia. We understand that in a man dominated world He would be represented as a man, but God is not a man. Neither is He a woman. God is neither a man nor a woman- He has the characteristics from both.

In summary:

## Anthropomorphism:

Making non-human things into humans.

God created both Adam and Eve in “His”  
image, and they have different  
characteristics.

Adam	gave a rib to	Eve
The Sun	gives (reflects) light to	the Moon

Male  
=  
giving

Female  
=  
receiving

## Examples of God giving and/or receiving:

God the "Father"	gave to	the angels in Heaven
Christ on earth	received from	God the "Father"
Christ represented as female animals	received from	God the "Father"

God represents "Himself" by both male  
and female people to us, humans.  
But God has no gender.

Sophia in  
Proverbs  
(female)  
=  
Christ

God in most  
of the Bible  
(male)  
=  
God/Christ

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