

"You and Your Beliefs"--Anthropology, part 1

Note: We'll begin this lesson by finishing last week's study of the Holy Spirit, then proceed to the following...

**Tonight: The Doctrine of the Man, part 1**

What is Man? (using the generic term "man" = mankind)

That's the question David asked in Psalm 8:4. What is man? The answer to that question is called Anthropology.

There is great confusion in our world today when it comes to that question. What people think about man has far-reaching implications for life and society:

1. *What New Agers think about man*--Man has the potential of God himself, for man is a "god."

2. *What Secularists think about man*

Discuss: Anyone ever had an anthropology class on a secular campus? What were you told about mankind? Probably something like this...

a. Man is the **product of evolutionary chance**. He is merely a biological blob of cells. There is no inherent difference between Man and the animals. Man is merely more developed, more advanced than animals, but not inherently different.

b. Man is a **neutral blank-slate**. Man's problem is not himself, but his environment.

Bruce Milne, in his book *Know the Truth*, identifies the problems with secular anthropologies, "Secular anthropologies...have failed to answer the ultimate questions: Where did mankind come from? What is our ultimate significance? Where are we going?" (90)

Look at what's happened to the former USSR . Atheistic, Marxism could not answer these questions. That's why the schools are crying out for the teaching of Biblical Values now!

How should we as Christians answer the question, *What is Man?*

Milne again (Milne, 90), "Calvin put it thus: 'Man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating Him to scrutinize himself.'"

The next sentence is critical. Our absolute authority on who man is is *the Word of God*. If you want to know

the truth about who you are you must look to the Owner's Manual, God's Word.

What does God tell us about Mankind in the Bible? If we go "Back to Genesis," we'll see a very different answer from the world's. The Bible answers five key questions about Man for us, in Genesis 1-3...

- I. Where? Man's Origin (1:26; 2:7)
- II. What? Man's Design as Image (1:26, 27)
- III. Why? Man's Purpose in the World
  - A. To Live in Fellowship with God
  - B. To have Dominion over the earth (1:26, 28)
    - 1. Develop the earth (2:15)
    - 2. Name the animals (2:19)
  - C. To Live in Relationship with Others: The Family (1:28; 2:18, 24)
- IV. What Happened? Man's Fall
  - A. Man sinned (3:1-6).
  - B. Man came under the Curse of a Holy God (3:17-19)
    - 1. Alienation from God
    - 2. Alienation from Mankind
    - 3. Alienation from Self
- V. What did God Provide? Man's Hope

Let's take a closer look at God's Word and seek to answer these five questions...

### **I. Where? Man's Origin (1:26; 2:7)**

1:26 "And God said, Let us make man"

1:27 "So God created man"

Gen 1 is the telescopic view of creation. The Big Picture. Scans all 7 days.

Gen 2 is the microscopic view of man's creation on day 6. More detailed.

2:7 "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground..."

Where did man come from? Biological chance? No. The Bible makes it clear that Man is the Creation of God. We're not self-made. We're not the product of some cosmic process.

Key: We exist because God made us.

Discuss: What other passages in God's Word teach about this? List them...

Gen 5:1 "...God created man..."

Ps 139:14 "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made..."

Mt 19:4 Jesus said, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female."

Rom 1:25

I Peter 4:19

The doctrine of creation is so important, for many reasons. Here's one reason. Your anthropology determines your ethics. What you believe about how Man got here determines what you'll believe about how man should live.

E.g.—The Gnostics taught that man is a spirit being, with the body being a prison house, the flesh something negative... Consequently, they taught it doesn't matter what you do with your body since it's bad anyway. Thus, immorality was condoned.

Discuss: Give another examine of how one's anthropology affects one's ethics.

Which brings us to the question... *What does make man different from all other creatures?*

## **II. What? Man's Design as Image (1:26, 27)**

1:26 "...let us make man in our image..."

1:27 "So God created man in His own image"

What does it mean to say we are created in God's image?

--not referring to physical likeness

--in part, it says we have been given the ability to enjoy a relationship with God; He made us a moral creature. He gave us intellect, conscience, personality.

Key: God created man to live in fellowship with Himself. Man was given the significant distinction of being created in God's image. Man alone was given the capacity to know God and to enjoy a relationship with God.

Discuss: What are the implications of saying that we are created in God's image?

Man possesses dignity and worth because Man is image.

Anthony Hoekema, in *The Christian Looks at Himself*, writes about a little boy who put up a banner in his room that read, "I'M ME AND I'M GOOD, CAUSE GOD DON'T MAKE JUNK." (15)

### III. Why? Man's Purpose in the World

Let's notice three reasons God created man, as revealed in Gen 1-2:

#### A. To Live in Fellowship with God

Gen 2:16 "And the LORD God commanded the man..."

God gave purpose to man by revealing His will. Fellowship with God is possible only when we live in obedience to God's will.

#### B. To have Dominion over the earth (1:26, 28)

God gave man a job to do in His world...

1. *Develop the earth (2:15)*

2. *Name the animals (2:19)*

Key: This indicates that "work" is not bad. God created mankind to work, pre-fall. God expected Adam to care for the earth, nurture it, subdue it, use his God-given creative abilities. Have you ever noticed how you "feel good about yourself" after a good day's work?

Discuss: Are there any implications for today? Ecological? Environmental?

#### C. To Live in Relationship with Others: The Family (1:28; 2:18, 24)

1:28 "Be fruitful."

2:18 "It is not good...alone."

2:24 "Therefore shall the man leave..."

There are attempts in our day to redefine the family. To say that two men living together constitutes a legitimate family, or that a family is two women living in a "loving relationship." We're told, "What right do you have to impose your values on someone else? If two men want to marry and establish a family, it's their right, isn't it? You're being narrow-minded for being so intolerant."

And so the rhetoric goes. But the bottom line remains...

God designed the family. God established the family. I have no right to "reinvent" things in God's world. Sociology is established in Genesis.

Why then do men try to do things their own way in God's world? The answer brings us to another question...

#### **IV. What Happened? Man's Fall**

##### A. Man sinned (3:1-6).

We'll see this more when we cover the Doctrine of Sin.

##### B. Man came under the Curse of a Holy God (3:17-19)

1. Alienation from God
2. Alienation from Mankind
3. Alienation from Self

#### **V. What did God Provide? Man's Hope**

Now we are moving from Anthropology into another doctrine, Soteriology, the Doctrine of Salvation. Here's what God provided for fallen man:

##### A. The Promise of a Coming Deliverer for Mankind

Gen 3:15 "...He shall bruise thy head..."

##### B. The Provision for Present Needs

Gen 3:21 "...the LORD God make coats of skins..."

#### **Next Week:**

Q: What does it mean to say that man is depraved?

Q: Is Man still God's Image-bearer since the Fall?

Q: What happens to Man when he is born again?

Q: Does a new man have an old nature? Rom 6-8

Q: What does God expect of Man now?

1. Humility (Micah 6:8)
2. Worship (Jn 4:23-24)

3. Praise (Ps 150)
  4. To know Him (Jn 17)
  5. Reflect His Character (Mt 5:18)
  6. Enjoy Him (Is 61:10; Hab 3:18; Ph 4:4)
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[\[1\]](#) These unedited notes were prepared for use in a Wednesday evening, discussion-oriented Bible study at Wheelersburg Baptist Church in Wheelersburg , Ohio . Although the notes are in draft form, I trust the seed thoughts contained will be used by our gracious God for your edification. –Pastor Brad Brandt