

"You and Your Beliefs"--Anthropology, part 2

Note: Last week we began with part 1 of Anthropology but did not have time to finish that material. This week we will begin with a brief review and then pick up where we left off...

Review: The Doctrine of Man, part 1

There is great confusion in our world today concerning who *man* is.

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*

a. Man is the **product of evolutionary chance**.

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

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. The Bible answers five key questions about Man for us, in Genesis 1-3...

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

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

1:27 "So God created man"

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.

New Material:

That's where we left off last time. Now we're ready for an important question... *What makes 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)

Keep in mind, man's "worth" is not inherent but *derived*. Only God possesses inherent worth, and consequently only God is worthy of worship. Man is significant because God has declared that man is His image-bearer.

E.g.—Think of a flag. If I burned the American flag in front of you, would it upset you? Yes. Would that be because the flag possesses inherent worth? No. I could burn an ordinary white sheet in front of you and you might think I was strange but you wouldn't be upset with me. The flag's materials don't make it special. What it represents is what makes it special.

Man is God's image-bearer. To destroy a human being is to attack the very reputation of God. That's what makes abortion and euthanasia so grievous.

Our world goes to two dangerous extremes. One is to say that a human being is no different than an animal (as evolution teaches). The other is to say that a human being possesses infinite worth and thus worthy of worship (that's the way some parents look at and treat their children, as though the world revolved around them—but the world isn't supposed to revolve around anyone except God Himself).

This is critical to see. How you view man (your anthropology) affects the way you approach parenting, the way you view the care of the elderly, the way you respond to reports on the evening news concerning the slaughter of people in other countries, and on and on.

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)

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