

Man: 'Who Are We, Anyway?'

by Greg Herrick

We are created in God's image, but the Fall resulted in depravity, and we are being restored to the image of God through Christ.

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Psalm 139:13, Romans 3:9, 1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Corinthians 15:49, Ephesians 1:11, Colossians 1:15, James 3:9

Topics: "Human Nature", "Image Of God"

Description

Greg Herrick preaches on the creation of man in God's image, emphasizing the unique privilege and responsibility it entails. He delves into the theological implications of being made in God's likeness, touching on ruling, personal knowledge of God, morality, righteousness, holiness, and capacity for relationship. The sermon also explores the fall of man, sin, and the impact on the image of God, highlighting the state of humanity post-fall, the essential nature of sin, and the ongoing renewal into Christ's image. Herrick concludes with reflections on the dignity and depravity of humanity, urging listeners to consider how these concepts affect their lives and relationships.

Transcript

Let us make man in our image, in our likeness (Genesis 1:26)

Meditation: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made!

Some Introductory Thoughts

1. As an introduction to this doctrine, read Psalm 139:13-16. What does David say regarding how he was created by God and what that means to him?
2. Why were we created by God? Read Ephesians 1:11-12; 1 Corinthians 11:1, and Philippians 4:4. How would you summarize these verses? What does it mean to glorify God and rejoice in him?

It All Started...

1. Some people think we were the chance outcome of blind evolutionary forces.2 But the Bible has other ideas on this important matter. Read Genesis 1:26. Who's idea was it to bring man into existence? What does this mean for people who feel that they live alone in a purposeless and lonely world?

2. God created many different living things according to the Genesis creation narrative (Gen 1-2). What is unique about man? Read Genesis 1:26-27.

3. What do you think "image" and "likeness" mean? Some thoughts: Theologians have wrestled long and hard with this question because the answer to it impacts how we think about Christ's saving work, ethics, and other important matters. Some have argued that the image refers to man's capacity to rule, since ruling is mentioned in connection with the image in Genesis 1:26. Others, on the basis of passages such as Colossians 3:9, have argued that the image relates to personal knowledge of God. Still others argue that it relates to morality, righteousness, and holiness (see Ephesians 4:24). Finally, some have suggested that the image relates to man's capacity for relationship. The truth probably lies in a combination of all these things. Every way in which man is like God, while maintaining the necessary and obvious Creator-creature distinctions, is what is meant by "image"--at least in its broad canonical context. Man, in his pre-fallen state, is so much like God that he can adequately, under His care and direction, represent him (Psalm 8:3-8). It is very important to realize this because in so doing we will hold together the twin truths of privilege and responsibility.

4. Broadly speaking, what two "elements" did God unite in the creation of man, according to Genesis 2:7? How does our physical body relate to being created in God's image? Is it the vehicle through which we express our likeness to God (cf. Romans 6:12-14; 12:1)? How do you think the NT doctrine of the resurrection of the body relates to God's work of restoring us to the image of God (cf. Phil 3:20-21)?

5. What does Genesis 1-2 and Psalm 8:3-9 teach you about your privileged place in creation? What do God's command and warning in Genesis 2:16-17 teach you about what goes along with such high privilege?

The Fall of Man, Sin, and the Image of God 1. Read Genesis 3:1-6. Who was behind the serpent according to 2 Cor 11:3; Revelation 12:9 and 20:2? 2. What was the serpent attempting to do when he said to Eve: "Did God really say....?" Why do you think he used a question rather than a direction statement? 3. What insinuations is the serpent making about God in 3:5? 4. What are some of the catastrophic results of the Fall? Read Genesis 3:7, 8, 10, 12-13, 16, 17-18, 22-24; 4:8; 5:5ff. 5.

Read Romans 3:9-20. What is the state of humanity after the fall? 6. What, according to 1 John 3:4, is the essential nature of sin? Why is John's definition better than saying that sin is "selfishness" or something like that? What are some sins outlined by Jesus in Matthew 15:19 and Paul in Romans 1:29-32 and Galatians 5:19-21? 7. Read Genesis 9:6-7 and James 3:9. Does the image of God persist after the fall or did the fall destroy it completely? Note: Some theologians refer to it as the image of God effaced, but not erased.

Thus there are probably two words which capture well the state of man under sin: Dignity and Depravity (i.e., sinfulness). 8. Read Colossians 1:15. Who is the image of God? 9. According to Romans 8:29 and Colossians 3:9 into whose image are we being renewed and transformed? 10. When will this transformation into Christ's image be complete? See 1 Corinthians 15:49. Meditation: What Does This Mean for My Life? The Issue of Dignity 1. To what is our dignity connected? 2. Does everybody possess at least some dignity, no matter what the extent of their sin?

How should we then treat people (cf. James 3:9)? 3. How does a person's dignity relate to sharing the gospel with them? 4. What are some ways that you can demonstrate to others that they have dignity and worth in both God's eyes as well as your own? The Issue of Depravity 1. What does depravity mean and

how does it affect our dignity as those created in the image of God? 2. What are some ways that people express their fallenness or depravity? Can you group some of them into relational styles and how people feel this helps them deal with the pain of living in a fallen world (and their own sinfulness)?

For example, Denial (i.e., hiding, refusing responsibility, and therefore being unfaithful), Anger, Demandingness, Codependence, etc. Be careful not to over "psychologize" the faith; we are viewed predominantly in scripture as spiritual/ethical and relational beings not autonomous, mostly psychological entities. 3. How do we communicate the idea that some sins are more acceptable than others? How do we think God feels about this? 4. One particular problem that many Christians have is an inability to relate well to others with whom they disagree.

Is this sin? Why or why not? When does it become sin? How does it relate to the issue of fear and Adam and Eve's response in Genesis 3:8-10? 5. What do you think it will be like to live in perfect bodies with the image of God completely restored? In other words, what do you think our experience of heaven will be like? I am thinking particularly of the relationships we will enjoy there. Read 1 Corinthians 13:12.

2 For a damaging critique of Darwinian evolution, see Phillip E. Johnson, Darwin on Trial, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993).

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