

Anthropology  
The Study of Man

Introduction

1. Much of what we know of man can be found in the first few chapters of Genesis
2. We are going to look at:
  - a. The Origin of Man
  - b. The Nature of Man
  - c. The Ultimate Purpose of Man

A. The Origin of Man

1. When we speak of the origin of man, we are not merely speaking of when or how he came to be but why he came to be; origin gets to the reason and purpose for His existence
2. In the simplest sense, man was created by God (READ Genesis 1:26-27):
  - a. We were created **DELIBERATELY** by God:
    - 1) To do something deliberately means to do it with intention and will
    - 2) Everything we see in Genesis 1-2 screams that God created with deliberation and intent out of His own will
    - 3) This is emphasized not only by the repetition of the phrase, “**Then God said...**” which occurs 11 times, but when we get to v. 26: “**Let Us make man...**”
  - b. We were created **DIRECTLY** by God:
    - 1) The world would have us believe that our existence came about merely by random chance as a result of long, evolutionary processes
    - 2) Unfortunately, many Christians have been deceived into believing the lie of evolution, or some modified version of it like theistic evolution
    - 3) These false teachings suggest that God was either not involved directly with the origin of man, or at best involved in some indirect way (e.g. simply guiding evolution)
    - 4) But the Bible declares unequivocally that our creation was a direct act of God:
      - a) Go back to Genesis 1:27: “**God created man...He created him**”
      - b) There’s no greater description of this that Genesis 2:7-9 (READ)
      - c) Genesis 5:1-2: “**This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.**”
      - d) Paul repeats this in 1 Timothy 2:13: “**For Adam was formed first, then Eve.**”
  - c. We were created **UNIQUELY** by God:
    1. What does it mean to be unique?
      - a) To be unusual or extraordinary
      - b) To be rare or one of a kind
    2. There are tons of things that make us different or stand out in all of God’s creation, but one thing makes us truly unique; we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26a & 27:

**“Let Us make man in Our image, according to our likeness...(27) God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him...”**

- a) We’ll discuss what this means in more depth in a few minutes when we talk about the nature of man
  - b) Out of all living things, we are the only ones God made in His image
- d. We were created **PURPOSEFULLY** by God:
- 1) What I mean by this is that God created mankind for a purpose
  - 2) Look again at Genesis 1:26: **“...and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”**
  - 3) Now, look at v. 28: **“God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**
  - 4) We find in these two passages mankind’s primary purpose (in a general sense); that is we are to **REPRODUCE** and **RULE** over God’s creation:
    - a) The first three commands in v. 28 relate to **REPRODUCTION**: be fruitful, multiply, fill:
      - These same three commands were given to the sea-dwelling creatures and birds in v. 21-22 so that they would multiply and fill the seas and skies
      - You might have noticed that immediately before God issued these same commands to man that He emphasized their biological differences which is precisely what allows us to reproduce and fulfill God’s command (v. 27): **“male and female He created them”**
      - This is repeated in Genesis 5:2: **“He created them male and female and named them Man in the day when they were created.”**
    - b) The remaining two commands relate to **RULE**: subdue and rule:
      - The word for subdue is generally used in a negative context (e.g. bringing something into bondage), but it being used here in the sense of using something for one’s benefit; the NET notes suggest, “harness [the Earth’s] potential and use it’s resources for your benefit” like cultivating crops, mining minerals, using trees for construction, domesticating animals, etc.
      - The rule means to exercise dominion over
3. Why is how we came to be (our origin) important to us?
- a. We didn’t come about by random chance; we were made by God **DELIBERATELY**
  - b. We’ve not a product of evolution—even some false God-directed form; we were made by God **DIRECTLY**
  - c. We are not just animals with no more value than any other creature; we were made by God **UNIQUELY** and bare His image
  - d. Lastly, our lives have meaning and **PURPOSE**:
    - 1) In a general sense, we were created by God to glorify Him by filling His creation and ruling over it on His behalf, something even the unsaved can do
    - 2) In a specific sense, we were created by God to glorify Him through worship and obedience, something only the saved can do

## B. The Nature of Man

\*\*I'm going to address three aspects of the nature of man

1. The first is that we have a **MATERIAL** nature (e.g. a physical body):
  - a. God created Adam and Eve with physical bodies (READ Genesis 2:7 & 21-25)
  - b. Every human since then has been conceived with a physical body (READ Psalm 139:10-16)
  - c. Even Jesus, the God-man, had a physical body (John 1:14): **"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us..."**
2. The second is that we also have an **IMMATERIAL** or non-physical nature:
  - a. There are two primary views when it comes to our immaterial nature:
    - 1) Trichotomists believe that we are made up of three distinct parts: body, soul, and spirit
      - a) They cite passages like 1 Thessalonians 5:23): **"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."**
      - b) And Hebrews 4:12: **"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."**
    - 2) Dichotomists believe we are only made up of two parts—material and immaterial—and that soul and spirit refer to same thing (e.g. body and soul/spirit):
      - a) They cite passages like Luke 1:46-47: **"And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."**
      - b) Isaiah 26:9: **"At night my soul longs for You, indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently."**
      - c) Job 7:11: **"I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul."**
    - 3) So, which is it? Are we two parts or three?
      - a) The dichotomist position is more widely accepted among scholars because the bulk of the Biblical evidence supports it better than the trichotomist position
      - b) The reality is that the Bible uses many words to describe our immaterial nature including not just soul and spirit, but heart, mind, and even strength (Mark 12:30): **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."** (heart=emotions; mind=intellect; strength=will)
      - c) Each of these words refers to our non-material nature but from a different perspective or nuance
  - b. Our material and immaterial natures were never intended to die; rather, death is a result of sin; Dustin will address these in more depth in his sessions on hamartiology and soteriology:
    - 1) God warned Adam of this in the garden (Genesis 2:16-17): **"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."**
    - 2) We know that the LORD was talking about both physical death and spiritual death here:

- a) We see a reference to physical death in Genesis 3:19: **“By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.”**
  - b) Paul ties spiritual death to Adam in Romans 5 saying that **“through one man [Adam] death spread to all men, because all sinned”** (12)
- 3) The good news is that God has made a way through faith in Jesus Christ to restore both our bodies and our spirits so that we can live eternally
3. The third and final aspect of the nature of man is that we are made in **GOD’S IMAGE AND LIKENESS** (RE-READ Genesis 1:26-27):
- a. There are two primary views describing what it means to be made in God’s image:
    - 1) One view is that we share certain communicable attributes with Him like a will, intelligence, reason, rationality, wisdom, speech, and moral attributes like goodness, love, mercy and justice
    - 2) Another view is that being made in God’s image has less to do with the attributes we share with Him and more to do with function—i.e. ruling over His creation
  - b. However, there’s a third view which holds that our physical appearance reflects God’s glory, and in the case of Adam and Eve that they might have even had luminous bodies before the Fall:
    - 1) Dr. Robert Pyne writes about this in his chapter in Understanding Christian Theology (he was a Professor of Theological Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary back in the 1990s)
    - 2) There’s support for this view among at least two 4<sup>th</sup> century Church fathers, John Chrysostom and Syrian theologian Ephraem who claimed that Adam and Eve didn’t need clothes and had no shame because they were clothed or clad in the glory of God, but after they sinned some element of God’s glory was taken away from them, and as a result they realized they were naked, became ashamed, and ultimately were covered up by garments
    - 3) Biblical Support:
      - a) The words **“image”** and **“likeness”** are almost always used in the OT to refer to physical resemblance:
        - This is exactly what we find in Genesis 5:1-3 (READ) when Adam’s son Seth was born; when Seth was born you could see that he resembled Adam
        - So, the most natural way to read Genesis 1:26-27 is that when God created Adam and Eve, they resembled Him in some visual way and based on some passages we’ll cover in a moment this likely means they reflected His glory
        - Now as to whether Adam and Eve had luminous bodies, the Bible doesn’t specifically say that they did so it’s pure speculation
        - However, the reason some speculate that they might have is because God’s glory is often revealed through radiant light (e.g. around His throne in heaven, when Jesus revealed Himself to Saul on the road to Damascus, etc.)
        - We also have the example of what happened with Moses after he encountered God on the mountain (READ Exodus 34:29-35)—if Moses’ face glowed after meeting with God, it’s not unreasonable to think it could have been true for Adam and Eve who were in the Garden with God

- If they did, it likely stopped after the Fall because...well, look at us; we don't glow
- b) The Bible also states directly that mankind has been endowed with God's glory:
- Psalm 8:3-6 (READ): notice that David wrote when God created man He made him a little lower than God and crowns him with glory and majesty, two words that generally describe God
  - Paul also wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:7, "**For man ought not to have his head covered, since he is in the image and glory of God...**"—this is specifically referring to men here and in the context of praying in church, but doesn't discount women being made in God's image since that it stated directly in Genesis 1:26-27
  - Notice that both of these are in the present tense meaning that even fallen mankind still in some way still reflects God's glory
  - Though, it's been but muted to some degree; Dr. Pyne referred to this as "Defaced but not erased; tarnished but not destroyed" (p. 682)
- c) One thing I want to cover has to do with why God might have chosen the specific physical form that He did for our bodies to reveal His glory:
- READ Ezekiel 1:26-28, 8:1-4, and 40:1-4: what we see in all three of these visions is that God's glory is revealed in Jesus in a pre-incarnate human form
  - We also see Jesus appear multiple times in pre-incarnate human form throughout the OT: to Hagar (Genesis 16:9-13), Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18), Jacob (Genesis 32:24-32), Gideon (Judges 6:11-24), Sampson's mother (Judges 13:2-33), and Daniel (Daniel 3:23-29)—in the instance with Sampson's mother, He appears in a radiant human form described as "**the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome**"
  - When Micaiah (1 Kings 22:19) and Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1ff) saw the pre-incarnate Christ in their visions they describe Him "**sitting on His throne**" suggesting He resembled human form
  - Most claim that the reason Jesus appeared in human form in the OT is because it's something we can understand and it foreshadowed His incarnation; this is certainly possible
  - However, I wonder if it's just as probable that the form God used for our bodies existed in some sense first in the image of God (e.g. the pre-incarnate Christ as seen in Ezekiel), and God used that as the model for us because it reflected His glory
4. Why is understanding the nature of man important to us?
- a. We are not just lumps of clay destined to return to dirt; we are both physical and spiritual beings originally designed by God to live forever with Him—something that is now only available through redemption by grace through faith in Jesus Christ
  - b. Our physical lives—our material bodies—have value and worth because we bear the image of God; it's the reason why God said, "**Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.**" (Genesis 9:6)
  - c. As His image bearers, we were designed to reflect His glory and that is something we are still to do, even more so as Christians; we are to "**glorify God in [our] bodies**" while still here

- on earth (1 Corinthians 6:20) and will ultimately continue to glorify Him through our resurrected and glorified bodies for all eternity
- d. And this leads us to the ultimate purpose of man

### C. The Ultimate Purpose of Man

1. We've already addressed the general purpose of man from Genesis 1: to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it and rule over it
2. However, there is a higher/ultimate purpose:
  - a. In 1646-47 (during the Reformation), a group of Scottish and English theologians from the Church of Scotland and the Church of England wrote the Westminster Catechism to flesh out and codify what they believed (e.g. a statement of faith)
  - b. Many still consider it one of the best and most accurate summaries of what the Bible teaches
  - c. It was designed as a way of memorizing doctrine and structured in a question/answer format with 107 questions
  - d. The very first question is "What is the chief end of man? In other words, What is his ultimate purpose?"
  - e. The answer: "A man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."
3. God did not create us to simply fill and rule over His creation, but to glorify Him and enjoy Him for all eternity:
  - a. As we've already discussed, we glorify Him in part because we are made in His image, but we also glorify him by what we do:
    - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:31: "**Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**"
    - 2) Romans 15:5-6: "**5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**"
  - b. We are also to enjoy the Lord:
    - 1) Psalm 5:11: "**But let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy; and may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You.**"
    - 2) Psalm 23:6: "**Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**"
    - 3) Psalm 32:11: "**Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.**"
    - 4) Psalm 64:10: "**The righteous man will be glad in the LORD and will take refuge in Him; and all the upright in heart will glory.**"
    - 5) Psalm 68:3: "**But let the righteous be glad; let them exult before God; Yes, let them rejoice with gladness.**"
4. What's remarkable is that glorifying God and enjoying Him has been made possible not because of anything we've done, but because of everything God's done for us (READ Ephesians 1:2-14; 2:1-10)