

Bible Doctrines 1

Session 6 - Anthropology (*Creation, Characteristics, Pattern, and Transmission*)



I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
Psalm 139:14

Christian Anthropology is the study of humanity from a Christian/Biblical perspective.

I. The Creation of Man

a. Faith required (*for any view*) -

i. Atheistic Evolution

- (1) Evolution is a theory based on **naturalism** (everything comes from natural causes) and precludes any supernatural intervention by God.
- (2) It is the major modern scientific theory that depends on time and chance. It is based on mutations and the “survival of the fittest.”

ii. Theistic Evolution

- (1) Theistic Evolution is a theory based on **naturalism** and **limited supernatural** intervention by God.
- (2) It attempts to bridge the gulf between Evolution and Creationism by means of “divine sparks of life” and “divine jumps” across species.

iii. Creationism

- (1) Creationism is a theory based on **biblical revelation** and the sole **supernatural** creation of God. It is based on the literal interpretation of the Bible. At least 17 times in Genesis, God is said to be the Creator as well as numerous times throughout the Bible (Ps 8; 104; Mt 19:4-6; Heb 11:3).
- (2) The Bible clearly states that God created man in His image from the dust of the ground (Gen 1:27; 2:7).
- (3) Heb. 11:3 - *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

b. Facts

- i. God’s Word is absolute truth and authoritative (John 5:47)
- ii. Events of Genesis happened and could be cataloged on a calendar and a map. These records were not myths or legends. (Ex. 20:9-11; Matt. 19:4-6)

II. The Characteristics of Man's Creation

- a. It was planned by God (Gen. 1:26) - man was not an afterthought, but the result of deliberate forethought on the part of the Godhead (Ryrie, 189)
- b. It was direct, special, and immediate (Gen. 1:27; 2:7)
 - i. Gen. 2:7 - reinforces the idea that man was a special creation from inorganic materials
 - ii. It involved two facets - dust/breath - man was formed and animated by God
 - iii. Gen. 2:21-23 - Eve was also formed by God

III. The Pattern for Man's Creation (1:26-27)

- a. Man was created in the "image" and "likeness" of God - no sharp distinction between the two
 - i. The terms don't refer to any physical resemblance.
 - ii. The terms, "simply informed the original readers that man was like God and in many ways would *represent* God... (i.e. - Let us make man to be *like* us and to *represent* us)." (Grudem, 443)
 - iii. The biblical author "seems to be attempting to express a very difficult idea in which he wants to make clear that man is in some way the concrete *reflection* of God" (Leitch, "Image of God", 256).
- b. The meaning of the Concept
 - i. The Corporeal View - the image of God relates to the material and immaterial aspects of man
 - ii. The Noncorporeal View - connects the image of God to facets of personality - moral likeness, dominion, the exercise of will, and intellectual faculties (ability to speak, organize, etc.)
 - iii. Combination View -
 1. Man's body is included in the image of God. Man is a unitary being (body and soul) and his body is an essential vehicle for expression of fellowship with God and will become a future spiritual body as well.
 2. To be created in the image of God is to be a living being. In Acts 17:28-29, Paul argues that we are God's offspring, and since we are living, He must also be.
 3. Man is a living being that is like God with both intelligence and will that enable him to exercise dominion over the world (Gen. 1:28).
 4. Adam was created to have unhindered fellowship with God.
 5. Summary - the image of God included the totality of his being as living, intelligent, determining, and moral (Ryrie, 192) + spiritual nature, dominion over the earth, creativity, and immortality...in essence, the more we know about God and man the more similarities we will recognize (Grudem, 443)

c. Ramifications of the Concept

- i. When sin entered the human race, the image of God was not lost. *It was defaced but not erased.*
- ii. Unsaved still retain the image of God...see next point.
- iii. Biblical evidence includes; this image of God was the basis for capital punishment (Gen. 9:6), the headship of the man is based on it (1 Cor. 11:7), James exhorts not to curse another man based on it (James 3:9). These passages would not have basis if it were erased.
- iv. Regeneration and sanctification serve to renew the believer to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18, Col. 3:9-10, 1 John 3:2).

IV. The Transmission of Man's Being

- a. The preexistence theory - all souls exist prior to their embodiment at conception
 - i. Some argue for the external existence of souls
 - ii. Some believe all souls were created at one time (somewhere there is a soul bank)
- b. The creation theory - teaches that God creates the soul at the moment of conception or birth and immediately unites it with the body
 - i. Aligns with Scriptures that say the soul comes from God (Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:9)
 - ii. Argues that immaterial cannot be transmitted by the material
- c. Traducianism - the soul is transmitted along with the body through the process of natural generation (pro-creation) and both originate at the point of conception
 - i. Heb. 7:10 - indicates a rational and moral act on the part of unborn Levi
 - ii. Gen. 2:1-3 - states that God rested on the 7th day because Creation was finished
 - iii. Theologically, creationism theory puts God in the position of creating a sinless soul and placing it in a sinful body.

Application

1. According to Scripture, what should be the major purpose of your life?
2. How does it impact you that you are more "like" God than any other creature in the universe?
3. How does the image of God in others impact how you view and treat them? How does this change the way you think and act towards those who are much older or younger than you, look different from you, or are weak or unattractive?
4. How does the *imago dei* impact one's perspective on abortion?