

Text: Gen. 1:26 - 2:3

Title: "What is man?"

Time: Jan. 16, 2022

Place: NBBC

Introduction - "What is man?" is a question posed 5 times in the Bible and more often than that in the world in which we live. Perhaps David put the question in its most eloquent form when he says in Ps. 8:3-4, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" "What is man?" David understood the importance of this question, and he also understood the correct answer (v. 5): "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor." Man is not god nor a mere animal.

Today, men still ask the question, but they have seriously failed on the answer. According to today's evolutionary scientific establishment, man is the product of millions of years of strictly natural processes involving genetic mutations and natural selection. He is therefore merely a form of animal, with no greater intrinsic value than other animals. The view justifies abortion, euthanasia, and racism in the minds of many today.

Writing for the Council for Secular Humanism, evolutionary naturalist Richard Dawkins complained openly that the biblical view of man involves a gulf between mankind and animal that is "fundamentally anti-evolutionary." He criticized the view as "speciesist to the core" because "you can kill adult animals for meat, but abortion and euthanasia are murder because human life is involved" [http://www.secularhumanism.org/library/fi/dawkins_18_2.html, accessed 11/2/2007].

In 2007 evolutionary theorist Oliver Curry published a study in which he postulated that the human race will eventually diverge into two different species through evolutionary processes. Reporting on the study, a BBC News article explains, "The descendants of the genetic upper class would be tall, slim, healthy, attractive, intelligent, and creative and a far cry from the 'underclass'

humans who would have evolved into dim-witted, ugly, squat goblin-like creatures" [http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6057734.stm, accessed 11/2/2007]. The relationship between an evolutionary view of man and Hitler's Nazi-fascist master-race doctrine is a well-documented fact of history.

Clearly, man loses much when he loses God's answer to the question, "What is man?" I want us to organize God's answer to this question around three points this morning.

I. Man is the creature of God (1:26).

A. The triune God of the Bible made man (v. 26, "Let us"; "our image" = v. 27 "His own image"). Imposters must be rejected.

Illustration: One of my kids' favorite movies is Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang, the story about the widower inventor Caractacus Potts, who developed a car that could fly and float. At one point in the story, the villain Baron Bomburst, who hates children but loves cars, captures the car along with the inventor's father, Grandpa Potts. Grandpa was not the inventor and knew nothing about the car, but his mistaken-identity status as the inventor kept him alive in the laboratory of the baron who demanded that he fix the car. The day is saved when the true inventor shows up and does just that. For a time, Grandpa's mistaken identity made him an imposter inventor.

Application: When it comes to the creation of man, the world has demonstrated a proclivity for faith in an imposter inventor. Macroevolution is the religious dogma that states that natural processes of genetic change observable today (called microevolution) have the capacity to produce changes in a kind of animal given enough time. No one has ever seen this happen in a laboratory, but the idea is still given the imprimatur of science through a case of mistaken identity. The scientific establishment mistakes the abilities of microevolution as macroevolution by giving both the same name, *evolution*. The observable processes of genetic mutation we see today are by a leap of faith given power they do

not possess, the ability to create and program new genetic code. Genetic change is based on information code. The more complex the form of life; the more complex the code. The changes we see within a kind of animal today can rearrange existing genetic information, but it cannot introduce new genetic information.

The leap has often brought an embarrassing crash-landing to the scientific community. Java Man, Piltdown Man, Nebraska Man, Rhodesia Man, Peking Man, Neanderthal Man, and Cro-Magnon Man have each failed to function as the evolutionist's missing link between ape and man. Each has been determined to be either a hoax, a mistake, an ape, or a human.

B. God made man supernaturally (*created* (1:27) is an act only God can do – it is something strictly supernatural – cp. *the Lord made a new thing* (Num. 16:30); finished in 2:1 precludes an ongoing creative process either natural or divine).

Application: There is no compromise possible between an evolutionary view of man and the Bible's view of man. God did not use natural processes to make man in His image; He supernaturally created man.

Illustration: The Dawkins article I quoted from earlier was actually an attack on the Vatican's compromise between evolution and the creation of man. This Roman Catholic idea says that man evolved from apes and that somewhere along the way God infused a human soul into him. The Vatican argues that science gives us the first understanding, and religion gives us the second. Religion deals in a different realm according to this view, a realm focused on "morals" and "values," not science.

Dawkins's response correctly demonstrates that this kind of compromise is not logically feasible: "More generally it is completely unrealistic to claim . . . that religion keeps itself away from science's turf, restricting itself to morals and values. A universe with a supernatural presence would be a fundamentally and qualitatively different kind of universe from one without.

“The difference is, inescapably, a scientific difference. Religions make existence claims, and this means scientific claims. The Virgin Birth, . . . the Resurrection of Jesus, the survival of our own souls after death: these are all claims of a clearly scientific nature. Either Jesus had a corporeal father or he didn't. This is not a question of ‘values’ or ‘morals’; it is a question of sober fact. We may not have the evidence to answer it, but it is a scientific question, nevertheless. You may be sure that, if any evidence supporting the claim were discovered, the Vatican would not be reticent in promoting it.” Dawkins is absolutely correct on the nature of the question, “What is man?” Science and religion must agree on the answer. There can be no compromise between different answers on the basis of two realms. Dawkins’s false religion and false science are wrong; Scripture’s true science and religion are correct.

C. God made man very good (1:31).

Application: This verse marks the 7th time God assesses His creation as good, but it is unique because here the word *very* is added. Creation without man is good, but creation with man is very good. Ps. 139:14 says, “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” We need to develop an appreciation for the way God made us. This is not self-esteem; it is God-esteem. Alternatively, when we complain about the way God made us, we are reflecting a low opinion of God. Whatever is not very good about man today results from man’s fall, his sin (Genesis 3).

II. Man is the image of God (1:26-27).

Illustration: *Image* is a broad term, and so is *likeness*. For instance, we are told in Scripture that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), but we know that we are not the image of God in this same sense. Christ is the image of God, which created all things, and we are the image of God, which are elements of the things created.

Think about the difference between seeing the image of a president on a coin (see Mark 12:16-17), and seeing the image of the

president in an interview on TV. The same word *image* can be used to describe what we are seeing in each case, but they are clearly different kinds of images. In regard to the coin, the president need not be there for us to see this form of his image. In regard to the interview on TV, the president must be there for us to see this form of his image. Christ is the second case. He is the image of God because God is there incarnate. We are the image of God because we share some characteristics that make us like God, even though He is not there.

One commentator gave a comprehensive list of unique characteristics of human life (Leupold quoting Koenig): 1. man's countenance which directs his gaze upwards; 2. a capacity for varying facial expressions; 3. a sense of shame expressing itself in the blush of a man; 4. the ability to speak; 5. immortality; 6. self-conscious reason; 7. the ability to discern between good and evil (note that mask mandates inhibit the first four of these).

Yet as useful as a list like this is, we must understand that it is not the characteristics that give mankind his image, but the image that gives him these characteristics. The image is God-given. A human may lack one or more of these characteristics, but a human will never lack God's image. Rather than listing a number of characteristics that make us like God, the early chapters of Genesis indicate three special consequences of the image of God in us.

A. God's image in man requires cherishing human life (9:1-7).

Application: You may have had some sausage with your eggs this morning. That is ok. The pigs and cows that were slaughtered to make that sausage did not bear the image of God. Thousands of abortions will occur every day this year in the United States. God must judge our country for this. The babies who lose their lives in this slaughter do bear the image of God.

B. The image of God in man requires cohabitation of heterosexual partners in the bond of marriage (1:28; 2:18-25, 27b-28a).

Application: Both men and women are equally bearers of the image of God. Because the image of God constitutes the ground of the value of our life form, both male and female are equally valuable. They have different roles, but not different values. This value and these roles are both objective results of the Creator's work of creation. When our role becomes a subjective choice, whether we are valuable does too. When the roles are lost, so is the value.

In regard to mankind made in the image of God, multiplication is a responsibility that we bear before God (1:28, contrast vv. 24-25). He has told us exactly how to do it (2:24): in the one-man, one-woman, monogamous, and covenantal bonds of holy matrimony. Dogs can run around the neighborhood and have puppies with whatever dog they happen to find on that particular day. People are not designed to do it that way. They bear the image of God.

C. God's image in man requires a moral choice (1:28, 2:15-17).

Application: Animals live according to instinct. Man must live according to moral principle and choice. We will not be judged on whether we followed our natural instincts, what feels good, or even what we thought was the rational thing to do. We will be judged on whether we have chosen to obey God's law. The record shows that we have not. God's image in us has been marred by our sin. We are fallen creatures in need of a Savior.

III. Man is the object of God's blessing (1:28-2:3).

A. Man has a God-given position of authority over nature (v. 28, "fill the earth"; "subdue it"; "rule").

Application: We hear a lot today about how wonderful the world would be without man. The view that nature is pristine until man comes along and infects it is prevalent in our society today. Nature is good; man is bad. Natural is good; man-made is bad. Those ideas have an element of truth, but they miss the point.

Sin is what is bad for nature, and sin happens to come to nature by way of man. But make no mistake about it; nature needs the

filling, the subduing, and the dominion of man in order to thrive. Scientific endeavor, medical research and treatments, farming and development of natural resources, all of these things are God-mandated activities for man on earth. They are not some kind of violation of a more pristine existence apart from man.

B. Man has a God-given provision in nature (v. 29-30).

Application: Have you ever noticed that God gets all the blame for the hurricane that wipes out a city like New Orleans, but never the credit for the sunny day that follows or precedes it? I deal with contracts for plastic bottles, and they normally have what is called a "Force Majeure" paragraph that describes what happens to the business relationship when a catastrophe happens, and the contracts often call these catastrophes "acts of God." Yet far more bountiful than the catastrophes God has sent as a result of man's fall and sin's curse are the incredible provisions He blesses us with each day as a result of His gracious provision in man's creation. We have a lot more to be thankful for than complain about when it comes to the acts of God in nature.

C. Man has a God-given rest that supersedes nature (vv. 1-3, the role of Sabbath rest in the life of the believer – Heb. 4:9).

Application: God wasn't tired on the seventh day. He rested to illustrate an important principle of the habitation for life He had just finished creating. This principle states that the key to true rest is cessation from work or faith (Heb. 4:1-3, 9-11). The point of the Sabbath is not that we now have more regulations that define a series of good works that are necessary to accomplish, but rather that we have to cease from rules and regulations and good works. We need to have faith. Now while it is true that the Sabbath-keeping became a matter of good works in the 10 commandments for the Jewish people, it did so to prove that men are sinners and cannot work for salvation. The only Sabbath-keeping that remains today is the Sabbath-keeping that has always been the key to man's spiritual rest – a cessation of works and simple faith in God's provision (Heb. 4:9-11).

What a contrast the Sabbath is with the doctrines of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest taught by naturalistic macroevolution. The ultimate purpose of God's creation is that He might share His Sabbath rest with man.

Conclusion: Have you entered into that rest from your own works to trust in the work of your Creator? Will you reverence Him as your Maker and reject the seducing spirits and doctrines of demons in our age that tell us otherwise? Will you see the image of God in your fellow man and seek to help him remember his Creator before it is eternally too late?

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching