



GRACE

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

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## GOD'S WORK IN CREATION

Part 2

Sermon Notes

*Created in God's Image*

Genesis 1:26-31

December 24, 2006

- I. The Creation of Man [In the Image of God]
- II. The Fall of Man
- III. The Restoration of the Image of God in Fallen Man
- IV. The Implications of this Doctrine

'The gist of the doctrine of Creation is surely this, that man's being, though linked with the divine, is itself essentially not divine, but created, and thus dependent on God, and of a different order from His own being though akin to it.'

Earle Cairns

### I. The Creation of Man [In the Image of God]

#### A. Creation of Man

- Read Genesis 2:7; Genesis 1:26-30

#### B. Image of God

Wayne Grudem correctly states, *The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God.*

- So, what does it mean to be 'Created in God's image'? What is that 'image'?
- Note: the image of God is derived from God. Only God is 'self-existing', self-sufficient, and autonomous [a law unto Himself].

According to Scripture the essence of man consists in this, that he is the image of God. **As such he is distinguished from all other creatures and stands supreme as the head and crown of the entire creation.** [emphasis added] Louis Berkof

## 1. Moral

- ❑ God's character and nature is the moral standard by which we are measured and judged. It is God's moral character, indeed His holiness, which is so clearly revealed in the Law [more specifically, the Ten Commandments] (Exodus 20).
- ❑ As moral creatures [of course, this distinguishes us from other living creatures], we are accountable to God, for He is the moral standard, for our actions.
  - Indeed, we are called to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48).
- ❑ Furthermore, we possess of conscience, knowing right from wrong.

### Romans 2:12-16

<sup>12</sup>For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; <sup>13</sup>for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. <sup>14</sup>For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup>in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, <sup>16</sup>on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

## 2. Spiritual

- ❑ We, as humans, not only have a physical body, but we were created with a spirit.

### Genesis 2:7

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

- ❑ The Hebrew word, here, in Genesis 2:7 for 'breathed' is *ruach*, which can mean 'breath, wind, or spirit.' This 'breath of life' is our 'spirit.'
- ❑ It is our spirit that allows us to communicate with Almighty God; for God is spirit (John 4:24).
- ❑ Further, it is our spirit that gives us immortality [although, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be bodily resurrected].

### 3. Mental

- ❑ As human beings, we also have a mental ability that sets us apart from all other living things.
- ❑ God has given us an intellect that provides us with the unique ability to think and reason logically. As Grudem states, ‘No group of chimpanzees will ever sit around the table arguing about the doctrine of the Trinity or the relative merits of Calvinism or Arminianism!’
- ❑ Along with our unique intellect, God has given us the ability to control our thoughts. ‘We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.’ (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- ❑ Not only do we have a unique intellect, but we have a free will.
- ❑ Often times Reformed believers wrongly deny man’s free will; however, it must be noted that the freedom of our will is always in accordance with our nature. As we inherit Adam’s fallen, sinful nature, we can do nothing to please God, apart from His sovereign, regenerative work, whereby He gives us a new nature – alive with Christ. **Then, and only then, are we ‘free’ to choose that which pleases God.**
- ❑ Our divinely-given mental capacity also gives us a unique awareness of the future. As the writer of Ecclesiastes states, ‘[God] has put eternity into man’s heart.’ (Ecclesiastes 3:11)
- ❑ We are also creative, in our intellectual capabilities. This is evident in man’s love for art, technology, science, music, etc. However, it must be noted, once again, that man is limited in his creative ability, for he, unlike God, can only create out of existing materials. Yet, God and God alone created *out of nothing*.
- ❑ Finally, in our emotions, we bear the image of God.
- ❖ Notice, for example, the Bible’s description of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, as possessing these personal mental attributes:
  - **Intelligence** (John 14:26; John 15:26; Romans 8:16)
  - **Understanding or Wisdom** (Isaiah 11:2; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
  - **Affections / Emotions** (Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30)
  - **Will** (1 Corinthians 12:11; John 3:8; Acts 16:7)

#### 4. Physical

- ❑ God is Spirit (John 4:24) and it is a fundamental error to assert that God has a physical body like man [although Christ in His human nature had a physical body]; however, there is a real sense that our physical bodies reflect ‘something of God’s own character and thereby constitute part of what it means to be created in the image of God’.

Wayne Grudem states, ‘Our bodies therefore have been created by God as suitable instruments to represent in a physical way our human nature, which has been made to be like God’s own nature.’

- ❑ In other words, we see with our eyes [the Bible clearly states that God ‘sees’ although not with physical eyes]; we hear with our ears [God hears, although not with physical ears]; and we speak with our mouths [God speaks, although not with a physical voice/mouth].

Louis Berkhof writes, ‘not as a material substance, but as the fit organ of the soul, sharing its immortality; and as the instrument through which man can exercise dominion over lower creation.’

- ❑ We also must not forget that our bodies will be one day transformed and will be a part of our existence in eternity (1 Corinthians 15:43-34, 51-55).

#### 5. Relational

- ❑ God is eternally relational. This truth is evident when one studies the Triune nature of the one true and living God. God eternally exists as three coequal coeternal Persons, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three are fully God and they are in perfect harmony and fellowship.
- ❑ As such, man was created as a relational creature.
  - Genesis 2:18 states, ‘Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’

#### 6. Exercise Dominion

- ❑ Finally, God commanded man to exercise dominion over His [God’s] creation as His representative, His image-bearer.

#### Psalm 8:6-8

<sup>6</sup>You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;  
You have put all things under his feet,  
<sup>7</sup>All sheep and oxen,  
And also the beasts of the field,  
<sup>8</sup>The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,  
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

## Genesis 1:28

<sup>28</sup>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.”

## II. The Fall of Man

- When Adam fell, sin entered into the human race.

From the *Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*:

Although God created man upright and perfect, and gave him a righteous law, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; Satan using the subtlety of the serpent to subdue Eve, then by her seducing Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, which God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory. (Genesis 2:16, 17; Genesis 3:12, 13; 2 Corinthians 11:3)

They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free.

(Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Psalms 51:5; Job 14:4; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 6:20  
Romans 5:12; Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10)

- Furthermore, through the fall, sin corrupted every aspect of the Image of God in man:

Again, the *2<sup>nd</sup> London Confession*:

Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them whereby death came upon all: all becoming dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. (Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12, etc; Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19)

- It should be noted that **Man did not lose the image of God in the Fall**; rather, **the image of God was corrupted / distorted**.

- Genesis 9:6 states:

<sup>6</sup>“Whoever sheds man's blood,  
By man his blood shall be shed,  
For in the image of God  
He made man.”

- James 3:9 states:

<sup>9</sup>With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

- ❖ This is why we say that we are Totally Depraved, but not Utterly Depraved. In other words, we are not as bad as we could possibly be.

- In these verses it appears clear that, even after the fall, all men [without exception] are image-bearers of God; however, that image is greatly corrupted:

## 1. Moral Corruption

- Adam was originally righteous; yet, when he fell, he became morally corrupt, in desperate need of a Savior.
- We have fallen from our 'Original Righteousness'; and are now sinful in our natural state, for we have inherited a Sin Nature.
  - Louis Berkhof writes, 'The image of God in which man was created certainly includes what is generally called 'original righteousness,' or more specifically, true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. We are told that God made man 'very good,' Genesis 1:31, and 'upright,' Ecclesiastes 7:29. The New Testament indicates very specifically that nature of man's original condition where it speaks of man as being renewed in Christ, that is, as being brought back to a former condition. The condition to which he is restored in Christ is clearly not one of neutrality, neither good nor bad, in which the will is in a state of perfect equilibrium, but one of true knowledge, Colossians 3:10, righteousness and holiness, Ephesians 4:24. These three elements constitute the original righteousness, which was lost by sin, but is regained in Christ...Man's creation in this moral image implies that the original condition of man was one of positive holiness, and not a state of innocence or moral neutrality.'

The 2<sup>nd</sup> *London Confession* states:

From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

(Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21; James 1:14, 15; Matthew 15:19)

## 2. Spiritual Death

- As a result of the Fall, we are born spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1).

Romans 5:14:

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

1 Corinthians 15:22:

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

### 3. Mental Corruption

- ❑ Because of the Fall, our intellect is so corrupted that we no longer use it to know God.

#### Romans 1:20-22:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools,

- ❑ Tragically, in the church today, we rarely, if ever, glorify God with our minds. Anti-intellectualism has infiltrated the church at nearly all levels.
- ❑ Not only is man's intellect corrupted, but so is our will.
- ❑ Adam had a 'free' will in the truest sense (although, still not *absolutely* free, for only God is autonomous and *truly* and *absolutely* free). In other words, Adam, prior to the fall, had the ability to choose that which pleased God. However, since the fall, man's will is now, as Martin Luther wrote, in bondage to sin.

Once again, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *London Confession*:

God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any necessity of nature determined to do good or evil.

(Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19)

Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, but yet was unstable, so that he might fall from it. (Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 3:6)

Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

(Romans 5:6; Romans 8:7; Ephesians 2:1, 5; Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44)

### 4. Physical Corruption

- ❑ Tragically, since the Fall, we often use our physical bodies as instruments of unrighteousness (Romans 1:24 [‘there bodies would be dishonored among them’]; 1 Corinthians 6:15)

## 5. Relational Corruption

- ❑ One of the immediate affects of the Fall was a corruption in relationships.

Genesis 3:15-16:

And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her seed;  
He shall bruise you on the head,  
And you shall bruise him on the heel.

To the woman He said,  
“I will greatly multiply  
Your pain in childbirth,  
In pain you will bring forth children;  
Yet your desire will be for your husband,  
And he will rule over you.”

- ❑ The LORD’s words here reveal, at least in part, the result of the fall in the context of marriage.
- ❑ Men, although called to humbly lead their wives, all too often abdicate the authority and responsibility that God has given them. Yet, other men, in an attempt to ‘assert authority’, fall into controlling, domineering patterns of behavior whereby they lord their authority over their families.
- ❑ Women, on the other hand, as a result of the Fall, often seek to subvert their husband’s authority.
- ❑ Even outside of the marriage context, it seems that it is rare that relationships are ‘healthy.’ The reason is simple: sin.
- ❑ Yet, we observe in the Trinity, functional distinction, even subordination [functionally]; yet, perfect harmony!

## 6. Corruption in Dominion

- ❑ As a result of the Fall, it seems that men have, even among Christians, forgotten that we are **stewards of God’s creation**. All too often, we destroy and abuse His creation for selfish, needless reasons, or simply because we can.

### III. The Restoration of the Image

- ❑ The reality and affects of the Fall points to our need for a Savior who is like us in our humanity.
- ❑ In other words, if the Image of God in us was to be restored, the Incarnation was **absolutely necessary!**
- ❑ Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, was the **perfect Image-Bearer!**

#### 2 Corinthians 4:4

<sup>4</sup>in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

#### Colossians 1:15

<sup>15</sup>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

- ❑ As the perfect Image-Bearer of God, Jesus Christ perfectly demonstrated the aspects of the Image of God. For example:
  - He had perfect fellowship with the Father (John 17).
  - He obeyed the Father's will perfectly. (Luke 22:42) He was functionally subordinate (John 4:34) (John 5:30) (John 6:38)
  - He always displayed a strong love for humans. (Matthew 9:36; 10:6) (Mark 1:41) (Luke 7:13)
- ❑ Therefore, it is through faith in Him and Him alone that the Image of God is restored in us!

❖ **Christ is the second Adam. Through the first Adam, death entered into the world, and the image of God was corrupted. Through the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, the Image of God is restored in all who believe!**

#### Romans 5:14

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

#### 1 Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

#### 1 Corinthians 15:49:

<sup>49</sup>Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

Romans 8:29:

<sup>29</sup>For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

2 Corinthians 3:18:

<sup>18</sup>But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Ephesians 4:24:

<sup>24</sup>“...and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

Colossians 3:10:

<sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him--

#### **IV. The Implications of this Doctrine**

1. As God’s Image-Bearers, we belong to Him (Mark 12:13-17).
2. The ‘Image of God’ is universal – even among non-Christians.
3. The ‘Image of God’ in every man [without exception] gives every human being great dignity, regardless of his or her nationality, occupation, social status, age, etc.

‘The image is something in the very nature of humans, in the way in which they were made. It refers to something a human *is* rather than something a human *has* or *does*. By virtue of being human, one is in the image of God; it is not dependent upon the presence of anything else.’  
Millard Erickson

4. We are in desperate need of a Savior – the man Jesus Christ, who was the perfect man – *the Man* (John 19:5).
5. We experience full humanity only when we are properly related to God through faith in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:18)
6. We should pattern our lives after Christ. (Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 26:39; John 15:13; Romans 8:29)
7. We should strive to glorify God with all of who we are (Romans 12:1-2) – to include our intellect.

<p>❖ <b>Therefore, praise be to God the Father for sending His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the perfect Image of God in to save us and restore the Image of God in us!</b></p>
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