



Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 4 – THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

LESSON 76 – CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE – JOHN MACARTHUR, PGS. 399-451

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY – WAYNE GRUDEM, PGS. 439-528

UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED, ALL SCRIPTURE TAKEN FROM THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION. COPYRIGHT © 1982 BY THOMAS NELSON, INC.. USED BY PERMISSION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Created by God

- ▶ Man exists because God created him.
- ▶ Let there be, vs. let Us make (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26).
- ▶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” – Gen. 1:26
- ▶ And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” – Gen. 2:18
- ▶ This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. – Gen. 5:1

Created by God

- ▶ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. – Gen. 1:27
- ▶ He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. – Gen. 5:2
- ▶ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. – Gen. 2:7-8
- ▶ God's direct creation of man is affirmed throughout Scripture (Psa. 100:3; Matt. 19:4; James 3:9).

Created by God

- ▶ There are significant implications in the direct creation of man by God:
- ▶ 1. Humans do not exist in a vacuum – the starting point for understanding man is knowing God created him. In Him we “live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:24, 28).
- ▶ 2. Direct creation by God means that man is not God. Mormon leader Lorenzo Snow taught, “As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be.” This is false. God was not man until Christ took on humanity to redeem us. Man can never be God. Hosea 11:9 says, “For I am God, and not man.”

Created by God

- ▶ 3. As a created being, man is obligated to submit to His creator, God. Man is not free to do whatever he desires. He is bound by his nature as are all beings, and he is bound by God's will. The truth is that men have exchanged the truth of God for a lie in our desire to be free of our accountability to Him (Romans 1:25).
- ▶ 4. Man has a unique role in God's creation. Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
- ▶ 5. Man was created to give God glory (Isaiah 43:6-7).

The Image of God

- ▶ The term for “image” means “likeness” or “representation.” It refers to something patterned after the original, a copy. Man was created to function as God’s representative, acting from His authority to have dominion and care over creation.
- ▶ The image of God does not mean men are divine, but there are significant truths to be found in our creation in His image.
- ▶ 1. The image of God is affirmed for all persons – male and female alike.
- ▶ 2. Even after the fall, all people still possess the image of God (Gen. 5:1-3).
- ▶ 3. The image of God explains mankind’s need to live in a relationship with others (just as the Triune God is three persons in one, enjoying perfect communion with one another).
- ▶ 4. The image of God is connected to man’s task to rule and subdue the earth.

The Image of God

- ▶ How is man made in God's image? What exactly does that mean?
- ▶ 1. The image is part of man, not just something he does.
- ▶ 2. The image is also something men do (ruling, subduing, etc.)
- ▶ 3. The image is seen best in man's ability to have relationships with others and the world around him.
- ▶ 4. Since man is made in the image of God, he is able to exercise dominion and experience relationships.
- ▶ Image is also linked to personhood and personality – thinking and reasoning.
- ▶ Grudem says, "Every way in which a man is like God is part of his being in the image and likeness of God."

The Image of God

- ▶ Ontologically – man is a living, personal, self-conscious, active being with personality. He is a complex unity of soul/spirit and body. God is spirit (John 4:24), and He grants a spirit to man, and the bodily component of man is related to the image of God.
- ▶ Volitionally – man has a will and the ability to select between various choices. He can discern right from wrong.
- ▶ Intellectually – man has a rational mind, is aware of himself and his environment, and others. He can think logically and critically, possessing memory, imagination, creativity, and language skills for communicating and understanding the thoughts of others.

The Image of God

- ▶ Emotionally – a human experiences a wide range of emotions and feelings. He can both laugh and cry and can experience multiple emotions at once.
- ▶ Relationally – man is equipped to participate in relationships with God and with other people. Jesus said that the greatest commandments are to love God and to love others (Matt. 22:36-40).
- ▶ Functionally – man has what he needs to fill, rule, and subdue the earth of God's behalf and for His glory.

God's Image through Time

- ▶ Creation: man, including both male and female, is created in the image of God.
- ▶ Fall: man violated the Creator/creature distinction by attempting to act autonomously and rebelling against God. The image of God was marred but not lost. In relation to God, man is spiritually dead and bound as a slave of sin. In relation to other people, man is plagued by tension, pain, conflict, frustration, and hard work.
- ▶ Incarnation: Jesus is the perfect image of God, manifesting the image exactly by perfectly loving God, loving people, and exercising authority over nature.

God's Image through Time

- ▶ Salvation: those who belong to Jesus through saving faith have become new creatures, and by their love they display the restored image of God, although imperfectly before final glorification. Sanctification is the process whereby we are made more and more into the image of Christ – restoring the image of God in every part of our being.
- ▶ Christ's Return: Christians will be glorified and made like Jesus, perfectly exhibiting the image of God forever.

The Dignity of Bearing the Image

- ▶ It amazes us to realize that when the Creator of the universe wanted to create something “in His image”, something more like Himself than all the rest of creation, He made us.
- ▶ This gives us a profound sense of dignity and significance as we reflect on the excellence of all the rest of God’s creation.
- ▶ We are the culmination of God’s infinitely wise and skillful work of creation.
- ▶ Every single human being, no matter how much the image of God is marred by sin, or illness, or weakness, or age, or any other shortfall, still has the status of being in God’s image and therefore must be treated with the dignity and respect that is due God’s image bearer.
- ▶ The value inherent in all human life is rooted in our creation by God, having been made in His image and likeness.