

Man Made in God's Image

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Text: Genesis 1:26-31

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Series: Genesis

Introduction: We are opening our Bible once again to Genesis 1, and the title of our message tonight is "Man Made in God's Image". We are in a series in Genesis entitled "The Battle for the Beginning".

Illustration: Have you ever grabbed a thread in your clothing or in a baseball and wished you hadn't?



Our society today is unraveling for one main reason, they have rejected Genesis 1. They have rejected their Creator and His ways for their own ways. We are seeing our society unravel in every way possible.

The FAMILY is unraveling!

We are going to look at "God's Plan for the Family" next week, but I can tell you that because people have rejected God's way for their own way, the family is unraveling.

Without God there is Ultimately No Meaning to Life

Just about every moral and spiritual battle we are facing today has to do with the first chapter of Genesis. Are we here today by the direct plan of Almighty God or no? If not, then there is no meaning to life and we are all an accident. I am not using caricature of those who deny God.

Bertrand Russell, the twentieth centuries foremost atheistic thinkers said as much.

“Unless you assume a God, the question of life's purpose is meaningless”.

– Bertrand Russell

Russell was a consistent atheist. He believed that there was no ultimate purpose in life. Without God, everything is random chance. Outside of this being impossible because of the radical complexity of life, it is also very depressing!

If there is no God, then there is ultimately no justice, no reward, no good, no bad, and

absolutely no purpose.

But I am here to remind us all that the Word of God is true, and that we were all created in the image of God!

Genesis 2:7 says, “then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”

God said in **Genesis 1:26**, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”. We were made in the image of God. We have purpose and meaning in life. If you deny that, then you unravel civilized society as we know it, and you give way to every evil at the core of our society.

Naturalism is the view that every law operating in the universe is merely natural as opposed to supernatural, moral, or spiritual. Mathematics teaches us that zero plus zero equals what? Zero! Naturalism teaches us that nobody plus nothing equals everything.

There is a lot of reason in the natural person to battle against the existence of God and His creation of the universe. If God exists, then all men are accountable to Him.

Naturalism leads us to reject God’s order of creation, which leads to chaos. Think about it. God created all things to function in a certain way. If we do not function according to our divine directions, we are going to be very confused. We need to realize who designed us and how He designed us. Actually our text today says that God created man to reflect Him and bear His image.

Let’s look at **Genesis 1:26**, “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

We find that man is made in God’s image, that we are to behave in a certain way, we have a stewardship over the earth. We are different from the animals, we are made in God’s image.

I want to propose to you tonight that everything that is wrong with world today is because of a rejection of God, and specifically, a rejection of man’s accountability to God.

I. **Consider that there is the Battle for Human Life and the assault of ABORTION.**

Let’s look at **Genesis 1:26**, “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that

creeps on the earth.”

Today, because of the rejection of Genesis chapter 1, there is a battle in the homes. Mothers are taught that a child in the womb is not completely human. The justification for abortion involves the **de-humanizing** of the baby. They like to use words like fetus and embryo to take you away from the humanity of the baby. Indeed, human life is de-valued because a human is seen as no greater than an animal.

1.2 million abortions are performed every year in America. 42 million worldwide, every year. If Genesis 1 is rejected, then there is nothing wrong with abortion. Furthermore, there is no ultimate value in life. We are all just animals. But the Scriptures teach us otherwise.

God’s purpose in making us in His image included intelligence and an eternal destiny. Animals do not have intelligence or souls that are eternal (Ecclesiastes 3:21). Though man is fallen, he indeed still retains God’s image.¹ Man reflects the image of God in having dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26). Man by his very make up reflects God. In distinction to animals or any other creatures on the earth we can consider many attributes show the image of God in man.

Certainly the more man leaves the paths of God the more animalistic he becomes. The closer man is to God, the more he reflects his image. For instance...

- Man has **personality**, like the God who created him. As persons we are rational, we have an appreciation for beauty. We have creative abilities. The only thing Rover wants with your art work is to tear it apart! He’s an animal. Aren’t you glad you were made in the image of God?
- Man is **rational**. We are intelligent human beings, not non-reasoning, non-rational animals. We are different from animals. When’s the last time you had a philosophical discussion with your dog? Aren’t you glad you were made in the image of God?
- Man is **moral** – he knows right from wrong This includes holiness, wisdom, goodness, truth, love, grace, mercy, patience, and righteousness. Aren’t you glad you were made in the image of God and that you reflect His moral attributes?
- Man is **accountable** - he will give an account to God for all he does. We will “all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10).
- Man is **valuable** – he is loved by God, the Creator became the Redeemer and Savior of man (John 3:16). **Psalm 8:4**, “what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” He cares for us!
- Man’s life is purposeful and **meaningful**. The human race is at the center of God’s universe. God will destroy everything in the created universe except mankind and the angelic race. Everything else will go completely out of existence.

We’ve heard of the Apocalypse according to John and even Peter in 2 Peter 3.

¹ Genesis 5:1, 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:23-24

Let's look at the Apocalypse of Jesus. This is exactly how it will happen. Jesus is the final authority.

Mark 13:24-25, “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.”

John tells us that the heavens will “roll up like a scroll” (Revelation 6:13-14). Peter says in **2 Peter 3:10**, “the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed”.

The eternal plan of God does not include your animals or any of the created order. Out of all of it, God only redeems mankind.

Only of man does God say in **Jeremiah 31:3**, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.”

Aren't you glad you were made in the image of God?

II. Consider the Battle for Human Dignity and the assault of ANIMAL RIGHTS

As I said, the more we leave the paths of God, the more animalistic we become. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is well known for its stance that animal rights are equal to (or more important than) human rights. They maintain that killing any animal for food is the moral equivalent of murder. You can see how the farther away our culture goes away from God, the more absurd its reasoning will become.

One of the first things that God tells us about man is that he is superior than animals. He is intelligent and he is to rule over them, and utilize them for God's glory.

Look at **Genesis 1:27**, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Ingrid Newkirk, PETA's controversial founder, says, “There is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights . . . A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.” Newkirk told a Washington Post reporter that the atrocities of Nazi Germany pale by comparison to the killing of animals for food: “Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses.”

John MacArthur wrote this: “If a human being is nothing more than an animal in the

process of evolving, who can argue against the animal-rights movement? ... If we really evolved from animals, we are in fact just animals ourselves. And if evolution is correct, it is a sheer accident that man evolved a superior intellect". MacArthur's conclusion is correct he says that if you take God out of the equation, mankind has no dignity, no value and no ultimate purpose.

The truth of the matter is, that according to **Genesis 1:26-28**, mankind is made in the image of God.

We were made with a purpose. To believe that ordered universe has appeared by chance is utterly absurd.

Look at the complexity of the *universe*. Astronomers understand how the stars are arranged in such beautiful order, that even though there is such an immense number, they are perfectly ordered.

But look even at the *earth* we live on. It is the perfect distance from the sun. If it were any closer, we would burn up. If we were farther away, the earth would be too cold to sustain life.

Think of the complexity of the human eye, or the human hand. Think of the universal laws of logic, laws of science, and the laws of morality. The order and complexity are amazing!

It would take more faith than I have to believe all the order around us evolved from some ball of gas in the universe six billion years ago. You know order never comes from chaos unless someone puts it together. What if you took your watch off your arm, and took it totally apart and stuck the pieces in the sack and you shook the sack for six billion years? What are the chances of you after six billion years pulling out a watch that is not only ticking, but on time? I don't have enough faith to believe that!

III. Consider the Battle for Human Purpose and the assault of NATURALISM
(Genesis 1:1, 26-27). "In the beginning God created". He created me in His image!
That gives me purpose and meaning!

The Religion of the Day is Naturalism

Naturalism: the view that every law operating in the universe is merely natural as opposed to supernatural, moral, or spiritual.

Man was made by the direct act of God, and therefore each person has a purpose. No one here is an accident. We were all created by God.

The belief of naturalism, that is that everything evolved and came to be by chance without the help of God, is the popular religion of today, and it leads to utter despair.

- **Carl Sagan**, a very well known atheist and scientist of the twentieth century said this, “Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves”. Sagan knew that something was wrong in the universe, but his atheistic worldview only led him to despair.

Truly, if the universe is all there is, and all there ever will be, and if there is no one to give an account to, then there is no personal Creator to whom humanity must give an account. If there is no ultimate law giver to whom we give an account, then all morals are groundless, and there is actually no morality. Who says something is wrong? What makes you better than me?

If there is no God, then we ultimately have moral chaos.

- One of Darwinism’s earliest advocates was **Thomas Huxley**. He gave a lecture in 1893 where he argued that evolution and ethics are incompatible. He wrote that “the practice of that which is ethically best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence.” In other words, murderers and dictators win if we follow the story line of evolution and the “survival of the fittest”.

So there is a battle for the beginning. The battle for morals is found in Genesis 1. If there is no God, then as Thomas Huxley intimated, there are ultimately no morals.

IV. **Consider the Battle for Human Worth and the assault of RACISM** (Genesis 1:29-30). The modern ideas of racism come right from the rejection of God and the adoption of evolution. Adolf Hitler was a proponent of the idea of social evolution. His understanding of a superior “Arian” race came right out of social Darwinism. Hitler believed that it was not immoral to get rid of the Jewish race. He destroyed the handicapped and the mentally disabled. This is the moral result of life without God.

In contrast to this, Genesis 1 teaches that man is the crowning creature of God’s creation. He has dominion over all.

Hebrews 2:7, “You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor”.

Genesis 1:29-30 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.”

Is racism foolishness? Yes! The person who does not acknowledge that he is created by

God is condemned in the starkest of terms—“The fool says in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1; Psalm 10:4). When a human being refuses to acknowledge His Creator it leaves him without a sense of accountability which in turn often leads him to many sinful behaviors (Romans 1:20-21).

But if man was not created by God in God’s image as a being exalted above all creation then he really has no greater purpose than trees and animals. Someone expressed it this way, summarizing the philosophy of Carl Sagan, and most modern atheists:

“It doesn’t matter if you are terminally ill or a terrorist. You are going to die, and that is the end of it. Life, then, is meaningless. Nothing you can do will make a difference. When you die, you won’t even remember who you were here, and in a short time, no one else will remember you either. Life has no meaning—it never did. It doesn’t now, and it never will. It’s just time and death.” – Summary of the philosophy of scientist Carl Sagan

V. **Consider the Battle for God’s Goodness and the assault of MORAL**

RELATIVISM. We read in **Genesis 1:31**, “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

God made all things good. There was no sin or curse when God made it. The only accounting for the mess in the world today is the rebellious heart of man.

The most popular moral philosophy today is moral relativism. It can be summarized with: “If it feels good do it”. Or how about this: “It’s not right for me but it’s ok for him or her to do it!” Moral principles in today’s world are said to be mere preference.

If God is taken out of the picture, there is no good or evil, there is only moral relativism.

Isaiah 5:20 says, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil”.

Conclusion: There is a battle for the beginning today. It is unraveling the very fabric of our society. Without God there is no meaning, no morality, no family structure, no one to say something is right or wrong. There is chaos. I’m thankful that we can say tonight, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. And I do have a purpose, you have a purpose. We were created in the image of God to glorify Him!

Let’s close by reading **Colossians 1:16**, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”