

Men are Images

October 21, 2012 ~ “Christian Materialism #3” ~ Gen 1.26-28

Majesty of the Matter

- ❖ We know intuitively that this sentence is of great importance
- ❖ God has just finished creating all things after “**their kind**” (10 times)
 - ✧ Dogs & cats ~ cows & sheep ~ lions & bears ~ frogs & salamanders
 - ✧ Eagles & robins ~ whales & marlin ~ tyrannosauruses & stegosauruses
- ❖ Each creature was created from a type (a template) in God’s mind
- ❖ Then God created man ~ after a different kind
 - ✧ After His own kind ~ after Himself
 - ✧ God created man in His own image
 - ✧ The template for man is God Himself ~ not something from in His mind
 - ✧ We are “images of God” walking the earth
- ❖ “**How can this be?**”
 - ✧ How can we properly image God?
 - ✧ How is it possible for God to even have an earthly likeness?
 - ✧ Isn’t God completely distinct from His creation?
 - ✧ Even in our righteous original state how can man image God?

History of Thought on Man Made in God’s Image

- ❖ This question of exactly how we “**image**” God intrigues theologians
 - ✧ Men have studied this topic for centuries ~ for millennia
 - ✧ Perhaps you’ve studied this yourself ~ perhaps you know how we image God
- ❖ The next CVP class is entitled “**History of Theology**”
 - ✧ It will probably highlight doctrines like: Trinity, Jesus as the God-man, creeds
 - ◆ I doubt it will focus on men as images of God
 - ✧ But our message today may follow a similar path
 - ✧ We’ll consider common & uncommon ideas c/man made in God’s image

Xition: We’ll begin with the two key words ~ image & likeness

“Image” & “Likeness”

- ❖ Best commentary on the Bible is the Bible (*other references*)
- ❖ Despite the importance of this doctrine there aren't many references (**10**)
 - ✧ **Q:** “**The Old Testament references to the doctrine of image of God in man are tantalizing in their brevity and scarcity.**” ~ “*The Image of God in Man*” ~ DJA Clines
 - ✧ **4 OT** references (**Gen 1, 5, 9 & Ps 17**)
 - ✧ **6 NT** references (**Rom 8, 1 Cor 11, 15, 2 Cor 3, Col 3, Jam 3**)
 - ✧ 3 more **NT** references but only with Jesus imaging God (**2 Cor 4, Col 1, Heb 1**)
- ❖ The first question is how do these two words relate to one another?
 - ✧ Are they just synonyms ~ or does likeness qualify image in some way?
 - ◇ Likeness used alone only twice: (**Ps 17.15 & Jam 3.9**)
 - ◇ Image used alone 6 times:
 - **Gen 9.6, Rom 8.29, 1 Cor 11.7, 1 Cor 15.49, 2 Cor 3.18 & Col 3.10**
 - ◇ Image and likeness used only twice together: (**Gen 1.26-28 & Gen 5.1-5**)
 - ✧ How do these two words relate to each other?
 - ◇ For the most part they appear to be synonyms
 - Much as how soul & spirit are used synonymously
 - ◇ In **Gen 5 c/birth of Seth** likeness appears to qualify image
 - ◇ **Q:** “**The double expression, “in our image, after our likeness,” must then mean: after our pattern, so that he may resemble us. The latter word is intended to modify the former.**” ~ “*Creation & Redemption*” ~ Regin Prenter

Fringe Views Dealt With

- ❖ As I said this concept has been studied for 2,000+ years ~ some odd ideas
- ❖ Some have fallen by the wayside ~ I'll review 6 of them

1. Image Pertaining Only to Males ~ (**females excluded**)

- ❖ Read **Gen 1.27** ~ Some say the male and female portion excludes image
 - ✧ There is some support for this view ~ **Read 1 Cor 11.7-9**
 - ✧ But then all Scripture references would have to support this ~ they don't
 - ◇ **Gen 9.5-7** instituting capital punishment would exclude women
 - ◇ Women would not be included in **James 3.9** warning c/tongue
 - ◇ **Col 3.9-11 & Gal 3.26-28** parallel (**Col** refs image & **Gal** refs men/women)
 - ✧ A Christian Polygamist website advocates this view

Xition: The next also relates to gender . . .

2. Image Must Include Man & Woman ~ (Karl Barth)

- ❖ Only an odd rendering of **Gen 1.27** can achieve this
- ❖ Declaration of Seth as being image & likeness of Adam undermines it
- ❖ But . . . oneness of marriage does image God
 - ✧ Friends & family image God as well
 - ✧ Everyone tries to limit the image, anchor it to one thing
 - ✧ This is the tyranny of the OR . . .

3. Image Cannot Include Man's Body (Corporeal Excluded)

- ❖ This is not so much a fringe issue ~ many theologians have and do hold to it
 - ✧ Sure seems to be a carryover from Greek Platonic thought
- ❖ But even dead bodies are treated as persons (i.e., they image God)
 - ✧ My message on creation vs. burial (2010) delved into this somewhat
 - ✧ **Mt 28.6** ~ Angel said, "He is not here, He is risen."
 - ◆ Mary had asked, "Where have you taken him?"
 - ◆ The reference was to the body of Jesus . . .
 - ✧ Either the body is part of what makes us human or it's not . . .
- ❖ If only the spirit of man images God ~ why would angels not be better suited?

4. God Must Have a Physical Body Too ~ (Mormon error)

- ❖ If we image God ~ and our body is not excluded ~ then God has a body . . .
 - ✧ Simple deductive reasoning . . .
 - ✧ III: Mormonism ~ (Billy Graham endorsed Romney – Mormonism not a cult)
 - ✧ We must ignore lots of Scripture to embrace Mormonism (*politics not worth it*)
- ❖ Scripture is filled with body characteristics of God
 - ✧ arm, nostrils, ears, mouth, etc..
 - ✧ These are anthropomorphic references of God
 - ✧ This is partly how God has condescended to man ~ to allow communication
 - ✧ God gave us our senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch) to be like Him
 - ◆ We act as if because God doesn't have a body he can't see or taste or smell
 - ◆ That's silly ~ He does all of those things far better than us
 - ◆ III: 1st Pirates of the Caribbean movie ~ Captain can't eat the apple
 - ✧ God's spiritual senses include ours, exceed ours, subsume ours

Xition: The last two relate to the words Us and Our . . .

5. Us is Not God the Trinity ~ but God in Heavenly Counsel

- ❖ This counsel includes his angelic principalities
- ❖ But if true, “us” would have to be included as well
- ❖ Jewish scholars wanted to explain away the plural “us” and “our”
 - ✧ They said the “us” included the heavenly counsel
 - ✧ But the angels recused themselves as unworthy . . .

6. Us as God and the Earth ~ (very creative)

- ❖ God includes earth in the “us” and the “our”
 - ✧ God supplied the spirit of Life ~ Earth supplied the dust
 - ✧ Gen 2 extended form of man’s creation explains this view

Resemblance & Representation

- ❖ We’re deep into message . . .
 - ✧ But I haven’t yet defined what it means for us to image God
- ❖ Many theologians speak of two aspects of us in God’s image
 1. Resemblance ~ How we are like God in form
 2. Representation ~ How we are like God in action

Resemblance (form)

- ❖ “How are we like God in form?”
 - ✧ (5 ways we resemble God in form)
 1. **Moral character** (ethical thought and behavior, “right & wrong”)
 - ✧ very different from animals
 2. **Social relations** (one & many, marriage, family, society)
 - ✧ appears to be different than angels
 3. **Spiritual Awareness** (purpose & meaning ~ “set eternity in our hearts”)
 - ✧ animals act on instincts c/future (migrating, hibernating)
 4. **Mental ability** (reason, think, solve, discover, plan, learn, speak)
 - ✧ Animals can do most of these to some degree ~ but very limited
 5. **Physical distinctions** (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch)
 - ✧ Animals too (but man erect – both eyes in front – whites of eyes)
 - ✧ Animals often excel mankind in physical traits (Armstrong doping scandal)

Xition: Next is representation ~ How are we like God in action?

Representation (action)

- ❖ Let's look at it from another perspective . . .
- ❖ We tend to study image from our perspective ~ But what about God's?
 - ✧ He is so far removed from us & our world ~ So far above us . . .
 - ✧ Yet He is intimately familiar with every detail of creation
 - ✧ Jesus didn't need to become flesh to understand creation
- ❖ Adam was God's representative on earth ~ He was god on the earth
 - ✧ Kings in antiquity would create statues of themselves (images)
 - ◇ These would be placed throughout their lands
 - ◇ They were visible reminders of who ruled the land
- ❖ Q: "One does well to separate as little as possible the bodily and spiritual; the whole man is created in the image of God." ~ "The Image of God in Man" ~ DJA Clines
- ❖ Every human is a living, breathing, acting "image of God"
 - ✧ We were created by God as images to fill His land
 - ✧ In antiquity only kings had such honors ~ but all humans enjoy this honor
 - ✧ Christianity is entirely unique c/the respect & honor it bestows upon man

Man's Unique Role

- ❖ Mankind is unique on the earth
 1. We are under God ~ **Gen 1** makes it clear we were created ~ God wasn't
 2. We are beside our fellow humans ~ they "**all**" deserve respect
 3. We are over all of creation ~ we must not sacrifice humans to creation
- ❖ In the fall mankind's ability to fulfill this role was compromised
 - ✧ God punished us with greater effort required & greater pain endured
 - ✧ But He also promised victory over the enemy
- ❖ **Read Psalm 8** ~ Best commentary on the doctrine of image . . .

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,
Be Glory and Majesty,
Dominion and Power,
Both now and forever.

Amen.