

Basic Christian Doctrine #7
THE DOCTRINE OF MAN, Part 1

Psalm 8:4

“What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?”

INTRODUCTION

To understand what God has provided for man, it is important to have a knowledge of man’s nature and need. Without being exhaustive I want to, as simply as I can, outline the main feature of man’s origin, history, and destiny. And I will do so under the three key words:

- 1) Creation
- 2) Degeneration
- 3) Regeneration

1) MAN’S CREATION

Out of all His works man takes the highest place in God’s creation. Man as the crowning work of God has faculties that no other creature or creation of God possesses. Man alone has the ability of:

1) Seeing God in His Work.

Rom. 1:19-20: “Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

2) Tracing Evidences of His Wisdom.

Psalm 104:24: “O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions...”

3) Marveling at His power.

Psalm 150:1: “Praise the LORD!... Praise Him in His mighty firmament!”

4) Appreciating His Goodness.

Psalm 33:5: “He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”

Note three things about man’s creation:

1) Man was created by a divine, direct, and definite act of God (Gen 1:1; 2:7).

Gen. 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Gen. 2:7: “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.”

At death, the body travels back by quick stages to its natural element.

Gen. 3:19: “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

2) Man was created in God’s own image.

We are made in God’s image, we are not God. This means that God made us with many intellectual and moral similarities of Himself. While there are striking

resemblances between God and man, there are also many differences. “Man is like God, as shadow is like substance.”

Sin defaced the divine image in man, and estranged man from the holiness of God. Christ came as the perfect man, “the express image of God” (Heb1:3). But restoration to the full likeness of God awaits those who have been redeemed by Christ.

2 Cor.3:18: “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 by the Spirit of the Lord.”

What is meant in the bible when it says that man was made in God’s image and likeness? (Ge.1:26-27; 9:6; 1 Cor.11:7; James 3:9)

To be made in the image and likeness of God means to have moral and spiritual resemblance to God. By sinning, man lost the God-like innocence with which he was created. This perfect moral likeness, lost by the fall, is restored by grace.

3) Man was created with a three-fold being.

We have a tripartite being, made up of spirit, soul, and body. There are those who believe that man has a dual nature of spirit and body. They treat soul and spirit as identical and not separate and distinct elements. While it is a fact that spirit and soul are sometimes used as interchangeable terms, in the majority of cases they are used as separate and contrasted terms. (Heb.4:12; 1 Thess.5:23).

Man’s body then was formed from the lower elements; the divine spirit was breathed in – and a living soul resulted from the union of the first two, the body and the spirit. Justin Martyr, an early church father and theologian spoke of man’s threefold nature in this way, “As the body is the house of the soul, so the soul is the house of the spirit.”

APPLICATIONS

- 1) Have you thought much of God’s purpose in creating man? (1 John 1:1-4; Col.1:27; 2 Cor.3:18).
- 2) How has God’s glory as seen in man’s creation affected your devotional life? (Psalm 139:13-15).

This outline was prepared by Pastor Joe Jacowitz
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Reference: Dr. Herbert Lockyer