

**Genesis week 6**  
**Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:6-8; 15-25**  
**God created Man in His Own Image – pt 2**

There are a lot of interesting and controversial issues in the news these days – social, political, economic, moral, geo-political, educational, and cultural issues.

Many of them have some things in common. One common aspect is the spiritual and theological foundation of the issue.

We've heard the expression, "politics is downstream from culture". I would add that culture is downstream from theology. What we see playing out in ANY culture is a result of the dominant theology of the day – it may be good or bad theology. It may be intentional or unintentional theology, but it is some sort of theology, i.e. your view and understanding of God.

This goes back to week one of this Genesis series where I talked about WORLDVIEW.

ALL OF THE interesting or controversial issues have ONE thing in common, and it's something that may not be at the top of our thinking.

**Anthropology**

**1: the science of human beings**

**especially : the study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space and in relation to physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture**

**2: theology dealing with the origin, nature, and destiny of human beings**

All of the issues come under the category of anthropology...who knew?

When I think of well-known anthropologists, which isn't often, I could come up two name – Jane Goodall, whose most famous work was with chimpanzees, and Margaret Meade, whose most talked about bestseller was Coming of Age in Samoa. (anyone read that??)

"Anthropology" isn't usually thought of as a topic of water-cooler, cafeteria, workplace or kitchen table conversation. OR IS IT?

Don't raise your hands but how many of you have had, heard, or read about discussions, debates, or protests regarding men in women's sports, choose the restroom that fits you, binding or tucking, pronouns, gender dysphoria, any number of so-called "phobic" opinions, critical race theory, intersectionality, social justice, parental input in education, or transhumanism?

All of those, and many other current topics, deal with ANTHROPOLOGY and are rooted in some sort of Theology. To the degree that you've thought or said anything about any of those topics, you have engaged in an anthropological discussion AND a theological discussion.

As Christians, we take our study and understanding of mankind from the Bible, and it starts, but doesn't end, in the first two chapters of Genesis.

let's look at a a portion of Gen 1-2

**26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 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."**

... 31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2:18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." ... 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

23 The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones,

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man."

24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

One part of preaching is to exegete the text, i.e. draw out what it means biblically.

Another part is to exegete the culture and apply biblical truth to our day.

Why?

If we are not clear about Creational norms, society will lose that knowledge and someone will begin to declare as normal that which is NOT NORMAL.

Scripture warns us to avoid being 'tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming, but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,... no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart Eph 4:14-15; 17-18

Some might wonder or question the idea of spending time thinking or talking about "Biblical anthropology". DON'T WE HAVE MORE IMPORTANT ISSUES IN OUR LIVES?

Friends, the most hotly discussed, debated, and RELEVANT issues in our culture are rooted in "anthropology." These issues are in the headlines daily as they relate to marriage, family, how parents can relate to their children, how children are educated and catechized in the public square, and how they might be victimized through chemical or surgical procedures that would leave them sterilized for life.

Rosario Butterfield - "Anthropology is the current battle ground on faith issues. If we ignore it, then we are not dealing with biblical truth where it needs to be applied TODAY."

A biblical anthropology helps put things in perspective. It helps bring us off the edge of 'main character energy' so that we don't fall into "main character syndrome." People have been buzzing about "main character energy" for years. But what exactly is it? USA TODAY can tell us...

USA TODAY Main character energy

You know the feeling. You're walking down the street, coffee in hand on the way to run some errands. You catch a glimpse of yourself in a storefront window and check yourself out. You're a star. Own it.

It is what it sounds like- we make sure that we put ourselves in the center of the story. Sadly, it can lead to putting oneself as the main character in everyone else's story.

As those created in the image of God, the creation narrative does seem to put us at the center, at least the center of created beings. The Triune God is at the center of the overall Biblical narrative. But here in Gen 1-2, mankind is given a place of prominence. For a while, Adam has some of that "main-character energy".

God gives him life, a perfect environment to cultivate and keep (2:15). God gave him the task of naming

the animals (v.19-20). But God saw that man="adam" was alone, and that was NOT good. So, God formed a help suitable for him.

Adam named her woman, 'isha' because she comes from man 'ish' (The name Eve comes in 3:20). In 2:22-23 WOMAN enters with 'Main character energy' as indicated by Adam's response. In v.24-25 we have the first wedding- humanity's first relationship – leave and cleave

As we begin to exegete this passage, let's note a few key things:

- The creation of man – male and female- in God's image is the apex of the creation narrative. The six day narrative leads to mankind, in God's image.
- This part of creation gets more attention than any other. In fact there is a reprise and elaboration of the creation of man and woman in Chapter 2.
- God Himself relates to man =Adam in a way He doesn't relate to the rest of the creative order.
- Mankind is given a special place within creation – to have dominion.

CSB WORLDVIEW STUDY BIBLE John Stonestreet, from the Colson Center helps with the question, "WHAT IS A HUMAN?" P. 52

Non-Christian naturalistic worldviews fail to ground the concepts of human dignity, value, and universal rights in anything that goes beyond the natural order. Worldviews such as atheism, Marxism, and secularism deny anything that is spiritual or metaphysical. Because all that is has resulted from natural, mindless physical processes, spiritual beliefs are fantasies that, like all human behaviors, result from chemical processes occurring in the brain.

In this view of reality, there is no Creator and thus no special status to humans. If you feel like you have 'main character energy' in an exciting and meaningful story....SORRY, you're wrong. THERE IS NO MEANINGFUL STORY. This is why we are seeing a rise in mental health issues. The secular belief system is sinking in and people are believing it. IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES, and bad ideas have victims.

Transcendental worldviews, such as Hinduism, certain forms of Buddhism, and New Age, understand all living things to be part of the impersonal spiritual oneness that is ultimate reality. Many of these religions hold to reincarnation, in which to be human is to be merely an expression of life trapped in the cycle of birth and rebirth along the journey to losing individual existence and rejoining the universal oneness to which we all ultimately belong. Humans, according to transcendental worldviews, are "divine" but ultimately not distinct from—and certainly no more valuable than—any other living thing.

Postmodernists deny that humans are able to know who we are. According to this view, everyone is trapped by perspectives shaped by culture. Categories that describe human nature, behavior, or roles—such as male, female, intelligent, leader, upper class, impoverished, antisocial, married, productive, etc.—are socially determined. In its more consistent, thus pessimistic forms, postmodernism despairs that humans can ever find meaning and purpose. In its less pessimistic forms, postmodernism ends in relativism, in which no individual or culture is seen as being better than any other. ("Every man does what is right in his own eyes"; "If it feels good do it"; "You do you" "Seize your main character energy.")

Islam understands God to be so remote and far removed from anything in the universe that he cannot share his attributes. In Islam, humans only relate to God in service, human dignity depends on obedience. Thus, the follower of God and the non-follower do not share equal rights or value.

The Old and New Testaments, however, present an entirely different vision of what it means to be human. First, the creation of humans is the pinnacle of the biblical creation narrative. Of all the things God made, only humans bear his image. Some older and current atheist thinkers, like Friedrich Nietzsche, Peter Boghossian, and Helen Joyce suggest that the biblical vision of man (the image of God) is needed to ground universal human dignity, value, and rights

Biblical scholars offer three different, but complementary views of the imago Dei. The functional view

suggests that humans resemble God in what we are able to do. Like God, humans create, reason, love, and imagine. The 'image of God' remains so that someone unable to reason or create due to injury or disability STILL bears God's image.

The relational view emphasizes the Trinitarian nature of God as the key to understanding humanity. The Bible describes the eternal community that exists between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Unlike in Islam, where the idea of God as Trinity is considered idolatrous blasphemy, God doesn't merely do relationships. He is, by nature, a relationship.

The representative view clarifies the unique role God bestowed on humans in the world. They are to rule over all he made, filling and subduing the earth, effectively continuing the creative work from which God rested (Gn 1:26-31). That God, the Sovereign, made humans sovereign over his world is unique to Christianity.

Unlike most other religious and cultural frameworks of the ancient world, the biblical creation story describes both male and female as representatives of God. Before we meet Eve, the first woman, the Bible is explicit that the status of image bearer applies to both genders (Gn 1:27), and it is a role not shared with the animal kingdom. Still, the Genesis account does not present male and female as identical. They are complementary and correspond to one another. Alone, man is unable to accomplish his God-given task of filling and subduing the earth (Gn 2:18).

Be fruitful and multiply is only possible with the Male -Female distinction.

With woman, God provides help for man who is uniquely suitable and distinct from man (Gn 2:20-24).

(The term 'help' is not negative or a put down. The same Hebrew word is used for God Himself in relation to His people.

Finally and ultimately, human dignity is secured by the incarnation. As C.S. Lewis notes, God becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ, "was the central event in the history of the earth—the very thing that the whole story has been about." C.S. Lewis wrote in Miracles

- As we will see in the rest of scripture, the whole of creation is the backdrop for God's mercy and judgment to be displayed in the story of Redemption. This is what scripture is all about – the display of God's Redeeming grace through sending His Eternal Son into the world to save a people for Himself. In Luke 24:44 Jesus affirms that the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms were written ABOUT HIM.

As scripture unfolds it becomes clearer that the TRUE MAIN CHARACTER is God Himself, and He is revealed visibly through Jesus Christ.

The mysterious reality of the Christian life is that we are brought into the story of Jesus. Col 3:1-4 ...We have died and our lives are hidden with Christ in God.

Jesus is THE MAIN CHARACTER, and we are brought into His Story.

Jesus is the second Adam who obeyed in all ways so that He might redeem us from the sin that is ours in the first Adam. The TABLE before us represents what Christ did to bring us redemption and new life.

We are brought into the ultimate and final wedding at the marriage supper of the Lamb, which is pointed to the Table before us. Here we come to feed by faith on Christ who gave Himself for us.

Marriage is at the beginning of human relationship (Gen 1-2) and it is at the end with the marriage supper of the Lamb.

THE TABLE

Resources:

Christian Standard Bible Worldview Study Bible, "What is a Human?" – John Stonestreet- epub version

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/life/health-wellness/2023/03/08/main-character-energy-explained/11316463002/>

. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZG9\\_lcln7FU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZG9_lcln7FU)

Non-believers, but some interesting insights

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