

The Baptist Faith and Message

Article 3 – Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

If the Bible was not written to people, if you were not people, what would you know about people just simply from what Scripture teaches about people? Imagine if you were an angel and all you knew of people was what the Bible said about people. What kind of picture of human beings does the Bible paint?

To angels human beings would appear like amphibians. We are part animal and part spirit. We can function in the physical world because we have a body, but we can also function in the spiritual world because we have a spirit, a soul. Everything else in all of creation is only one or the other. But as human beings we are amphibious in that regard.

In theology the study of man is known as anthropology. This is like cultural anthropology like you may have taken in school, but it is biblical anthropology. What does the Bible have to say about anthropos?

Job 7:17 – What is man that you make so much of him?

Psalms 8:3-4 – What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

Why do you seem to make so much of and spend so much time on humans as opposed to chimps, or elephants, or iguanas?

Psalms 144 - Oh lord what is man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him

Illustration: Adolph Hitler

have you ever wondered why he did the things he did or how could he have possibly done those things?

Infiltration Albert Speer – chief architect of the Nazi Regime. Director of Armaments during the war.

He said he was hypnotized by the Nazi leaders' charisma. Albert Speer says that Hitler would gather his inner circle around him at night and they would all listen to the Führer spinning these glorious tales about the future of the Third Reich and how millions of non-Germans, Russians, Poles, Jews, Gypsies would be sacrificed for the greater good of the master race.

“We need not feel any pangs of conscience, we will not even enter the Russian cities. They all have to die completely. We will raze Moscow and St. Petersburg to the ground. It makes absolutely no difference to me what methods we use, they all must die. We will kill a ridiculous 100 million Slavs. If anyone speaks of taking care of them, he will be put in a concentration camp right away. There is no room for pity only icy coldness”
Adolph Hitler as quoted by Albert Speer

“And yet, on the same day we would then listen to Hitler’s cheerful stories in his headquarters. I can still hear him saying, ‘I love people so much. I find it insufferable when a car drives through puddles, splashing people along the road. It’s especially mean when it splashes poor peasants going to church in their Sunday best. I wouldn’t want to see anyone suffering or to hurt anyone. Beauty should have power over people. We want as far as humanly possible to avoid anything that harms our fellow men. I never enjoyed maltreating others. In the after life I enter there will be the most illuminated spirits of all time.’”

Two quotes from Hitler the same night. He enjoyed architecture, he enjoyed the pleasure of painting. He was an artist.

Imagine a man who could say all these things on one and the same day. But we did not see the perversion. We actually believed in Hitler’s vision. “I don’t know...I guess I’m just colossaly human”

Hitler magnified the struggle within all humans. He spent millions of dollars on art, hospitals for children, building affordable cars for the people, but yet coldly stuffing out millions of people’s lives. Somebody like Hitler takes that dichotomy to incredible proportions, but that same tension lives within all of us. And you know what I’m talking about.

We all know the right things we should do, but so often don’t do it. Let’s understand from Scripture, and from this article how and why we are this way.

I. Man is UNIQUE from all other creation (very good, Gen 2:7)

Man is the special creation of God...the crowning work of His creation

The evolutionary worldview would view humans as simply another species within the animal kingdom, but anyone can recognize there is something vastly different from humans and even the most intelligent animals.

II. Man was CREATED in God’s IMAGE – Gen 1:26

...made in His own image -- imago dei

A. Creativity.

How can it be that we are created in the image of God when God is Spirit? He does not have a physical body that we can see, he is spiritual. So when the Bible says that we are created in God’s image, it doesn’t mean we were created to look like him physically. How can we be the image of God if God has no image? It must mean that we are the image of God in a non-physical way. What are the characteristics that we as humans share with God that no other creature shares with Him? The first one is creativity.

Illustration: Kids love to build things with mud. Build forts. Tinker toys. Adults ceaselessly create complex things. You don’t see that in any other species.

God is filled with boundless creativity. When you look at the universe, the world, you must surely recognize his creativity. When you look around this room.

B. Higher THOUGHT

Other animals can think, but they are not capable of higher thought like humans.

Illustration – killing hogs. this may sound morbid, but we could have three pigs in the same pen that we are going to kill. You can walk up to one with a gun, shoot it and it drops to the ground. The other hogs, just look at it as if nothing out of the ordinary just happened. then I could walk up to one of the other hogs, gun in hand,

and even though they just saw me shoot the first one and it's life is now gone, the other two don't have the capacity of rational thought to put the two things together, the cause and affect.

If you watch cartoons, or disney movies, then animals are made out to be able to rationalize and deduce and reason, but that is not the case at all. Syntax among elephants. "You fetch trainer." "trainer Fetch You."

They can't research cures for diseases, or design skyscrapers, or write books, or create complex musical scores or overtures.

C. Altruism – moral, ethical.

Knowing the difference between right and wrong. Animals don't have a moral center. We recognize that innately as humans that there are some things that are right and some things that are wrong. It's not just trained behavior.

My dog knows it's wrong to jump up on me when I go in the backyard. Not because he has a moral center, but because he knows he gets thumped in the head when he jumps up on me.

Survival of the fittest. If the neo-darwinians are right and if the over riding law that governs our existence is survival of the fittest, then it would be a part of our nature to want to kill the weak. But its not. It's part of human nature to help the weak. Hitler, as evil as he was, still had moral impulses, ethical desires, and a sense of Altruism.

the only explanation

D. We are a Spirit designed for God's indwelling

We are an imprint of God. Like a handprint on wet cement. Because we were created in God's image we have the capacity as his imprint to be indwelt by God. He's comfortable dwelling in you as his image and his likeness.

III. Man was created with GENDER – Gen 1:27; 31 (male and female...very good)

He created them male and female...The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation.

Up until this point in creation, everything that God made he declared as good, and with man it was very good. But what was not good was that man was alone. (2:18) Don't miss the significance of that statement. In His creation of man he recognized that though creating a being that was to image forth his glory, to be a reflection of himself was very good, but when it came to the needs of the man for companionship, none of the created animals could meet that need. Could God have created another man for Adam's companionship? Sure, but that was not His design. He specifically created the genders for the purpose of meeting one another's needs for companionship, enjoyment, pleasure, and procreation. That's God's design, and it is very good. AMEN!

IV. Man was created in INNOCENCE(Gen 2:25)

In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice.

What does it mean to have a free will? It means to have a will that is not inclined or bent or influenced one way or the other. A free will is a will that can choose to act or not act according to its own desire or inclination. The question is, we recognize that Adam and Eve possessed a will that was free, but do we? What is the major inclination of the heart of man in his fallen state?

V. Every Human Is a SIN-AHOLIC

By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin.

I use the word sin-aholic because that word, “sinner,” has been incumbered with so much baggage that people equate the word sinner with someone who has done a particularly evil or heinous crime. We get the idea sometimes that a sinner is a bad guy as opposed to a good guy.

I like to use the word sin-aholic. Of course you’ve heard of an alcoholic. There is the organization “Alcoholics anonymous.” That 12 step program has changed the lives of millions of people and their success is due in large part because they require people to admit their weakness. You introduce yourself how? My name is Troy, and I’m an alcoholic. You may have been clean for 30 years, but if you are still part of AA, then you would introduce yourself as an alcoholic because deep within you, you are bent and driven towards alcohol. By admitting that they are alcoholics they are also admitting that they are powerless to resist it in and of themselves.

A sin-aholic is someone that deep within them they are bent and driven towards sin. By admitting you are a sin-aholic, you admit that you are powerless to resist sin in and of yourself. We are in need of a higher power to overcome our addiction. It happened when our ancestors rebelled against God for the first time. They got a little taste of sin and they became addicts. From that point on you and I and all of our ancestors are sin-aholics.

Understanding this aspect of our nature as human beings is crucial to understand the complexity of who you are. As a human you know the right thing to do. You have God’s moral law as a part of your reasoning. But you do the exact opposite. You’re like a genius alcoholic.

ROMANS 7:14-25

whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin.

And as such we are incapable of fellowship with God, of seeking God, of desiring God. Romans 3:10-18. That leaves us with a major problem.

VI. God To The RESCUE *Romans 5:6; Eph 2:4-5*

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

When God saves you, when his grace is come upon you and you receive a new nature, replace the old sin nature, he is creating that new nature for a purpose. And the purpose is the same as what he originally created humanity for – to be a reflection of His glory. We are to bear his image, his stamp, his imprint on our lives. Though the act of salvation happens at once and is secure in him, there is a process of recreating us into the person that will more effectively reflect the Glory of God.

We are to be what the moon is to the sun. – **Col 3:10, 2 Cor 3:18**

VII. God Hates RACISM

The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

The first item to understand in this discussion is that there is only one race – the human race. Caucasians, Africans, Asians, Indians, Arabs, Jews, etc. are not different races. Rather, they are different ethnicities of the human race. All human beings have the same physical characteristics (with minor variations of course). More importantly, all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). God loves the

entire world (John 3:16). Jesus laid down His life for everyone in the entire world (1 John 2:2). The “entire world” obviously includes all ethnicities of humanity.

God does not show partiality or favoritism (**Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34**), and neither should we. We are to “love our neighbors as ourselves” (**James 2:8**).

In the Old Testament, God divided humanity into two “racial” groups: Jew and Gentile. God’s intent was for the Jews to be a kingdom of priests, ministering to the Gentile nations. Instead, for the most part, the Jews became proud of their status and despised the Gentiles. Jesus Christ put an end to this, destroying the dividing wall of hostility (**Ephesians 2:14**). All forms of racism, prejudice, and discrimination are affronts to the work of Christ on the cross.

Jesus said in Matthew 25 whatever we have done to the least we have done to him.

Racism, in varying forms and to various degrees, has been a plague on humanity for thousands of years. Brothers and sisters of all ethnicities, this should not be! May **Galatians 3:28** be completely realized, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

The most common excuse I’ve heard to justify this sin is, “Well that’s just the way I was raised, I can’t help it.” Is that a valid excuse? Apply that rationale to any other sin and see how it works - “I’m a homosexual because that’s just the way I was raised.” “I physically abuse my kids because that’s the way I was raised.” “I’m an alcoholic because that’s the way I was raised.” **James 3:8-10**