

Observing the Creation of Man

1. Examine Genesis 1:24-31. What is the image of God in man?

Based on the apostle Paul's letters to the Ephesians (Eph 4:24-32) and Colossians (Col 3:8-10), the "image of God" appears to refer to the spiritual, rational, emotional, and moral qualities of God. In this context, man finds his identity by looking *up* at the righteous character of God.

This was God's original created intended "image" for man which changed after the Fall. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, a comparison of Jesus to Adam (1 Cor 15:45-49) is made with the terms "first" and "last" Adam. The significance is apparent, because both Adam and Jesus determine the character of human beings following them; one image is defined after the Fall and the other is redefined by grace.

There is possibly a more literal meaning to this verse. More recent views, based on Hebrew grammar, translate Gen 1:26 as "... Let Us make man *as* our image..." The kings of Ancient Near East cultures used images of themselves to symbolize their power and rule over an area. In this context, God made human beings as living symbols of His power and reign over earth.

This perspective would add a new dimension to the prohibition of making any image of God (Ex 20:4-6), because God had already done so in the divine creation of man; no human effort can make an image of God. This divine creation of man, in the image of God, is why God values human beings so much.

In the context of male-female equality, each individual created by God bears His image, male and female alike, and together would rule the earth as God's representatives and stewards of His creation.

2. Review the 6th day of Creation in Genesis 1:24-31 and Genesis 2:1-25. Examine the events that led to the creation of woman. Was Adam and Woman created equal? What do you make of this partnership?

The creation of man (human beings) was unique and distinct. Mankind's creation was described distinctly from God's other creative acts.

In the creation of man, Adam was created first at some period of time earlier in the day before Woman.

Created from dust, some commentators believe that "dust" is symbolic of some pre-human life form; however, Genesis 3:19 provides ample basis for the literal non-symbolic meaning of "dust." Lexical studies of the Hebrew term "man" indicates a likely association with the Hebrew term for "red earth."

Adam is placed in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and protect it, and God gave him two commands: 1) what he can eat, and 2) what he cannot eat.

In the first negative assessment of Creation, God determines that "man should not be alone." Yet God did not immediately make a helper, and instead brought the animals before Adam, who exercises his own judgment, for naming. In this process, Adam discovered his unique superiority over animals and his need for a suitable helper.

A woman is created from a sleeping Adam, who upon awakening is overjoyed, and instantly recognizes her as his equal and the one who meets his need for a companion. Adam names her Woman in recognition of her cellular similarity and origination from man.

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So were they created equal? Note the paradox: equal but unequal.

1. Woman was created from man, but created for man.
2. Adam welcomes the woman, but names her Woman.
3. Woman was created as an individual, but she learns about herself from Adam.

And when joined as “one flesh,” it is the man who leaves his parents to form a new household with his wife at his side; the wife does not leave her family to initiate the new household. Forming the new household appears to be the responsibility of the man.

So before the Fall occurs, a headship within the relationship of a man and woman is established.

In the partnership of two spiritually equal human beings, man and woman, the man bears the primary responsibility to lead the partnership in a God glorifying direction. It is important to understand this basis for understanding the doctrine of man, because it is referred to later by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:13-14.

References:

1. Piper, J, Grudem, W, eds, Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books (1991), p.99-103.

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