

Jason Upchurch - Systematic Theology - Anthropology - Part 1

Romans 1:1

This morning we are returning to our occasional look at systematic theology. The Bible calls us to know doctrine and for elders to teach doctrine so every few months we take a break from our normal expositional series to look at doctrine.

We've moved from the doctrine of God proper - we call it theology proper - to the doctrine of man. We call this anthropology. The Greek word for man is *anthropos*. And so anthropology is the study of man. And obviously we are talking about the study of man from a biblical perspective.

Many of you probably took some kind of anthropology class in college or high school, maybe it was just a subset of sociology or biology. And usually anthropology in secular education is about as boring as it sounds. You study evolution, which is complete fiction. You study how all kinds of different cultures operate with hierarchies and how they developed tools and food.

I just listened to a book called *Guns, Germs, and Steel* which is basically a secular anthropology recording how various cultures adopted new technologies. To be honest, there wasn't much about guns or steel - a little bit of a let down.

Throughout the book evolution is assumed on almost every page and the book often references other works that it is seeking to correct. Which really means that most anthropologies are just speculation. And if we're honest it doesn't seem to have any connection to life.

Here's the problem though: anthropology class may be boring, but the reality is that secular anthropology has huge effects in our real world.

Let me just mention a few things.

1. Origins. Where did we come from? Secular anthropology, of course, embraces the lie of Darwinian evolution. Humans aren't anything special, certainly not a special creation from the Creator God. They would say we slowly evolved over millions or billions of years slowly gaining increased function. Our current state today is nothing more than an accident of evolutionary chance. We might have just as easily evolved with 4 arms or 8 eyes or breathing water or not have evolved at all.

There are some Christians who attempt to solve the issue by saying that God somehow guided the evolutionary process. Ironically, such compromise doesn't satisfy evolutionists because for Darwin's system to be true it has to be completely based on chance. They scoff at any divine intervention in the evolutionary process.

But it also doesn't satisfy Creationists because that view completely contradicts the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible is anything close to evolution taught or assumed.

So theistic evolution, as it's called, really doesn't make sense or make anyone happy.

When you boil it all down, evolution is a rejection of not only God, but also the special creative activity of God in the Garden of Eden. It calls God a liar and the Bible becomes nothing more than a fictional book. In the evolutionary model, death has existed for billions of years and is certainly not a result of the Fall in Genesis 3 as the Bible plainly teaches.

Evolution means Adam wasn't our representative head, and we don't have a sin nature, there is no guilt and there is no judgement. Most evolutionists believe that we are actually getting better, always progressing.

So anthropology deals with origins.

2. Value. What someone believes about anthropology also tells us our value. Because humans are just a product of time and chance, evolutionists don't view humans as any more valuable than any other animal. Or plant for the matter. They would say we are just advanced animals. And when push comes to shove most secularists would actually say that humans are a problem.

Although we have somehow evolved to the highest level, the world would be better without us. We are a plague on the planet. Most of you know there is a population collapse coming. It's going to hit hard because humans just aren't reproducing at a very high rate. We're not even reproducing a replacement rate.

Well, most secularists don't mind that because it's the killing off of humanity which they're excited about.

That's why most secularists love abortion, love euthanasia. In their view the world has too many people anyway so why not get rid of as many as we can?

If you think that's an exaggeration or just radical, just go look up the YouTube video where Bill Maher defends abortion:

"Pro life [people]...don't hate women they think it's murder and it kind of is. I'm just okay with that, I am. I mean there's 8 billion people in the world I'm sorry we won't miss you - that's my position...Is that not your position if you're pro-choice?" (<https://youtu.be/XQvB55pAFy0?si=VF7w4uAd-JulZR0C>)

Bill Maher has an anthropology. Humans are just like mosquitos or coyotes - the world would be better off without them. So babies are just another brick in the wall, we've already got 8 billion bricks. No one's missing you.

Really, a consistent evolutionist has no way to value human life over dogs or cats or bugs. The evolutionary process strips anyone from having an objective reason to value life. Now, they do value life, but they have to admit that it's just subjective preference. Tons of evolutionists love their wives and kids, but they have no objective way to support their view.

We're all just here by chance. They might say humans are more valuable, but they have no way to defend that morally.

Origins, Value.

3. Gender. Anthropology tells us about gender. We've seen gender madness over the last 5 years where men and women apparently have no idea who they are any more. When someone says "gender is just a social construct" they're making a statement about anthropology. They're making a statement about the human species. And that our gender is fluid and not precisely binary.

This goes against the Bible, common sense, and what everyone obviously knows from simple observation. I think the gender madness is actually a judgment of God on our culture. **Read 24-32**

When people persist in sin, God gives them over to impurity. That's usually sexual sin. If they persist in that, he gives them over to homosexual sin. **Read 26-27**

This is obviously talking about the violation of the natural order. Violating the order that God has established. Homosexual Behavior and desires are a judgement from God on people who I love their sin. But then it goes a step further. **Read 28-32**

God gives people over to a debased mind. That is, their minds are broken so that they do the worst possible things imaginable. That's what's happening right now with gender reassignment surgery and hormone blockers and all the rest. They have a debased mind - the word mean worthless mind. It's a mind that is inverted from reality.

In the OT it's those who called bitter sweet and sweet bitter. Light darkness and darkness light.

These people think that they are doing right, think they are enlightened to God's design in the world. This is the next stage of evolution! In reality they have been given over to their depravity.

4. Race. We've heard a lot about racial tensions over the last few years, but the reality is that it's always been here. And race usually has to do with the color of skin, although there are other factors like language and geography as well.

But usually the idea is that some races are better than others. Here's the problem with that. There are no races. Biblically speaking there is only one race: the human race. All people are descended from Adam and again through Noah.

Acts 17:26: And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allowed periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place.

There's only one race: the human race. We all have one common ancestor: Adam.

Now, there are many cultures and nations and tribes. And these cultures have different strengths and weaknesses. I'm glad I live here and not in Central America or North Korea or a whole host of other places.

But we all descend from one race. We treat all people as though they are made in the image of God.

But someone's view of race affects their ethics. We eat cows and not grandpa because grandpa is not a animal.

We put our injured horse down, and we don't put grandpa down because of anthropology. If given the choice, we save the drowning neighbor, not our dog because our neighbor is more important.

So let's talk about biblical anthropology. What does the Bible say about who we are? **Turn to Gen. 1:26-28**

In Genesis 1 we have the creation of the world. God created the world in 6 days. These are normal, ordinary 24 hour days. Moses says morning and evening, day 1. Morning and evening day 2. So on.

Then Moses clarifies in the 10 commandments that God's people keep Sabbath because: In six days God made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day. We work 6 days and rest because God worked 6 days and rested. We follow his pattern. Why does that matter?

Because:

1. We are creatures. **Read 27**

This might be the most self-obvious thing about us, but we are creatures. God is our Creator. We were created exactly how we are with purpose and design.

Just like God created angels, and birds and dolphins and eagles and daddy long leg spiders. He created us.

Evolutionists believe we're an accident of the universe. We have no special purpose, we have no special design. We have no intrinsic value.

When someone creates something it has intrinsic value because it is linked to its creator.

We're not an accident of evolution. We're not just time and chance and matter. It wouldn't be better if we weren't here. In fact, not only does God love humanity he has commanded us to flourish. **Read 28**

God loves his creation. Every other day of creation he made all these critters - fish and birds and land animals and creeping things that creep on the earth - and at the end of every day he said it is what? Good.

What did he say after he made man? It is what? Very good. **Read 31**

God loves what he has made. And he has made most of his creation incredibly self-propagating.

We've got sunflowers in the field next to us. For every sunflower there are 1000-2000 seeds produced.

We've got wheat in another field. The wheat grain increase is massive. We've got hay over there - hay just keeps growing.

In fact, God calls this self propagation a blessing. And he's blessed all of his living creation with this self-propagation mandate. **Read 11-13, 20-23**

God creation is self-propogating. That's good. He wants that. He wants us to be fruitful and multiply just like he wants fruit trees to be fruitful and multiply and birds to be fruitful and multiply.

God loves his creation so much he wants it to spread and grow and flourish.

And by the way, this creator/creature distinction means that we look to God to tell us what to do and what our purpose is. We look to him and his design to inform us what our life should be like because he has made us and designed us for a purpose.

So we are creatures.

2. Made in God's Image. There's a lot of talk about being made in the image of God, but what does that mean?
Read 24-31

So a few things to point out here.

A. We are not animals. Your average pagan on the street thinks we're nothing more than an advanced gorilla. We're evolved apes or some kind of monkey.

Moses makes a clear distinction here. On day 5 God made all the sea creatures and birds. On day 6 he made land creatures. But he divides them up into 4 categories. Beasts, livestock, creeping things, and man. **Read 24-26**

Man is part of the land creatures, but he is not a land animal. He is made in the image of God. We're not monkeys. We are creatures that are made in the image of God.

B. Rule over creation. This means that man reigns over creation. It's not just that we have the option to rule, we are commanded to rule. We are commanded to take dominion over God's world. We have been given the task of rule over the other creatures.

When people say we should just let wolves roam around our region and whatever they kill, they kill and oh well. No, we protect humans, protect our livelihood and rule over wolves. When people are dying because of lack of water because some frog might be moved because we want to build a reservoir, we build the reservoir because humans are more important than frogs and we are called to dominate - that's the word - dominate the animal created order.

Men, when your wife tells you there's a spider in the bathroom, you are called to exercise dominion.

We are God's vice-regents. We are his stewards of good creation. And to be honest I think we know that. Most men love projects where they feel useful. They love to produce something that they can look back and say they accomplished it. Ladies get together and they can talk for hours and relate. Men don't do that usually for much length. Men get together and do projects together - that's how we relate. Why? Because God made us that way.

We're Adam in the Garden except we have iPhones and firearms and weed and feed and tractors. But the mission is still the same: dominate creation.

Not in a bad way, but in a way that makes the created order better than when we left it. We actually model the pattern we see in Genesis 1. The world is dark and chaotic and God brings it into more and more order. And that's what we are to do as well: we bring creation into more and more order.

It's interesting, with very few exceptions, civilized society on a large scale only flourishes in a Christian context. It's only the Christian moral framework that can build societies that endure without mass bloodshed.

So we're made in the image of God, we're not animals, we rule over creation. What else does it mean to be made in the image of God?

C. We are held morally accountable. This is seen in a couple of places. We see this here in that God gives several commands. He commands humans to take dominion, he commands us to be fruitful and multiply. Commands us to eat and enjoy and take care of his creation.

By the way: Christians should be the best environmentalists - true environmentalists. True conservationists. Not liberal crazies but we are those who will truly give an account for the garden God has placed us in. People should be able to tell that we're Christians simply by how we care for our home and property.

And we'll be held accountable - that's part of what it is to be made in the image of God. He gives us commands, we are called to follow them.

There's not going to be a judgement seat for black widow spiders or eagles or sharks. Piranhas aren't going to face the judgement. No, because we're made in the image of God we alone will face the judgment.

Now, angels will face judgment too. In fact we will judge angels - so they have moral capacity and moral accountability even though they're not made in the image of God. But there is a special aspect of moral accountability because we are made in God's image. **Turn to Gen 9:1-7**

Here, the reason we don't kill other people is because we're made in the image of God. **Read 1-7**

This is after the worldwide flood. This is Noah getting off the ark and sacrificing to God. And God repeats the command to be fruitful and multiply. It's the Garden of Eden 2.0 - Noah has to start all over. Back in Genesis 6 it said that the reason God drowned the whole world was because violence had filled the land. I mean, it must have been incredibly violent for God to destroy everyone on the planet. I also think there was some weird demonic stuff going on with the sons of God.

But nevertheless how does God curb violence? He gives a mandate that whoever sheds another man's blood, by man will his blood be shed. You murder someone, you forfeit your life too.

What's that do? It curbs the murder of people. Why is it bad for people to die according to **Vs 6?** Because we're made in the image of God.

In the Law we find out that if you steal a sheep you have to repay with interest. You're not put to death over a sheep. Or a goat or a bull. Why? Because those aren't made in the image of God. People are made in the image of God.

And so if you delete an image bearer, you get deleted. Why? Because as image bearers God wants us protected. He also wants us to flourish and if we're killing people we can't flourish and multiply and fill the earth.

Turn to 1 Cor. 10. This is the passage on head coverings. Men don't cover their heads when we pray. I was up at camp this week and without fail whenever we prayed the guys took off their hats. Why do they do that? Some people say tradition. Where did the tradition come from? It comes from the Bible.

Why do some of you ladies wear head coverings? Where does that come from? It comes from the Bible. It comes from being made in the image of God.

We're not going to spend a lot of time here, but what I do want you to see is that although men and women are made in the image of God, we are different and that difference - grounded in our being made in the image of God - is why men don't wear a covering on our head and women do. **Read 1-16**

Paul says that whether or not someone wears a head covering is grounded in several things, but **Verse 7** grounds it in the image of God. Men are the glory of God. And women are the glory of men. As one gal said, women are the glory of the glory.

Even our public worship is grounded in the image of God. **Turn to James 3:5b-12**

So James says that there's a hypocrisy that we often commit. We bless God - we praise him - and then we turn around and curse those who are made in his image.

I'd be like praising someone to their face, but then when you see a picture of them cursing them under your breath. We don't do that. Why? Because they and we are made in the image of God and God will hold us accountable.

So we're not animals, we rule, we'll be held accountable. One more for this morning:

D. Related to accountability is Immortality. **Ecc. 3:11** says that God has put eternity in man's heart. We understand that there is something beyond our own life. We can think not just in terms of generations - you will have great, great, great grand kids who never know your name but are your kin. But we also think in terms of eternity.

Tigers don't do that. Beetles don't think about their great great grand kids or how what life will be like after they die. That's a purely human function because we are made in the image of a God who is from everlasting to everlasting.

This is why when we tell people about the gospel they know it's true. They might try to reject it but they know it's true.

If you tell someone that it is appointed for man to die once then comes judgement they know in their heart its true even if they deny it with their lips. God has put that in us. We know there is more to come, we know there is moral accountability to God.

Paul said in Athens: "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." **Acts 17:30-31**

The pagans didn't say "You're crazy, there's no afterlife, there's no judgement, there's no immortality."

No, they knew that. Paul was filling in what they knew intrinsically: one way or another we are immortal. We will live on after this life. We will give an account. We know that because God put eternity in our hearts.

And he gave us hope to face that judgement by believing in Jesus Christ, who is God but also man, who rose from the dead.

Pray