

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Anthropology– Study of Humanity– Part 1 Understanding & Origin of Man

Introduction

- This is one of the most instructive doctrines of the Bible.
 - Used to be called biblical anthropology.
 - Relates to all of the other major doctrines.
 - It is also the study of one-self. The student is the object of study.
- In the first course, we primarily focused on God as the subject matter. Now we will focus on man.
 - Of course, God's role in all subsequent doctrines is still primary.
- Anthropology is also practical.
 - Many in our culture are entirely focused on human problems and concerns.
 - This makes anthropology a good starting point for dialogue with the culture.
 - The fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology, business, medicine, and social science are growing in interest while at the same time we see esoteric subjects like philosophy are on the decline.
- Secular education studies these subjects from a man-centered standpoint, thereby causing their understanding to be skewed since they have a faulty starting point. We can set this right.

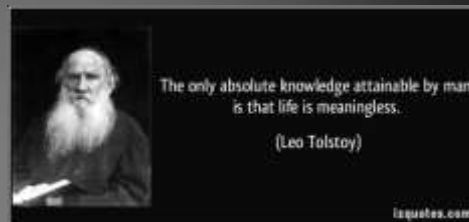
Faulty Understandings

- Faulty understandings are caused by the secular humanist starting point of most people.
- We quickly will look at seven faulty views.
- False View #1: Machines.
 - Industrial Model of Organization.
- False View # 2: Sophisticated Animals.
 - Darwinian Evolution.



Faulty Understandings

- False View # 3: Sexual Beings.
 - Freud & Playboy ever since the 1950s.
 - Sex Saturated Society.
- False View # 4: Economic Unit.
 - Marxism.
- False View # 5: Mindless Forces.
 - Hopeless Atheism.



Faulty Understandings

- False View # 6: Existentialism.
 - Exaltation of Libertarian Free Will.
- False View # 7: Social Beings.
 - Relationships, teams, etc.
- What do all of these have in common?
 - They attempt answer the question of “what is man” by using human assumptions, reason, and autonomy.
 - They do not seek the Creator, but implicitly deny His existence.



The Biblical Understanding

- First and foremost, a human being is a creature of the one and only Living God, and was made in the image of God.
 - Thus, we are not the product of chance, but instead we come from conscious and purposeful design.
- Because we came from the hand of God, there is dignity, purpose, and value associated to our existence.
- Furthermore, the image of God is intrinsic and indispensable from humanity.
 - As a result, we alone are capable of having a personal relationship with the Creator.
 - We were the only creatures created for the seventh day as we can have a vertical relationship with God.

The Biblical Understanding

- There is some truth to some of the false views.
 - For example, we are physical, social, and sexual beings that are at times driven by economic motives.
 - Yet, we are much more than this being comprised of both matter and spirit.
- It is easy to miss the larger picture and fall into error when God is removed from the center of doctrine.
- The Bible offers the most comprehensive understanding of man since it comes from the source of man, God Himself.



Origin of Man

- The Bible offers a brief, yet significant account of creation.
 - Fallen man rejects this.
- God had a clear purpose in our creation.
 - We were created in His image and tasked with co-regency upon the earth.
- Imago Dei
 - The word image is the same word for idol. We are idols of God. This is why idolatry is so offensive.
 - He made us in His image as His representative on earth so that we could worship Him. How offensive when we then go and make an image of what He has created and give honor to it instead of Him.
- The all-wise, all-powerful, and good God created the human race to love and serve Him, as well as to enjoy a relationship with Him.
 - God created a special Garden, put man in it, and then communicated with man through the gift of language.



Genesis 1 vs. Genesis 2?

- Genesis 1:27 spoke of the purpose of man's creation. Genesis 2 refers to the method of man's creation.
- This is why the accounts seem different.
 - They are written from two different perspectives to emphasize two different points.
- Genesis 1 emphasizes the imago dei and the purpose of man.
- Genesis 2 gives details of method.
 - Out of dust; called him Adam (red); placed him in the Garden; made the woman from man.
 - Humanity is a secondary creation. The earth was made first. We are made from the earth (or dust). A clay doll with the breath of life.



The Historicity of Adam and Eve

- This biblical account is cut and dry and very significant throughout the rest of the pages of Scripture.
- In modern times, the question of its historicity has been advanced.
 - The secular world rejects it as a myth or fairy tale, and many who claim to be Christian, as a result, try to explain it away in other than literal terms.
- We will quickly discuss a few views of the historicity question.
- Ultimately, are Adam and Eve historical or parabolic?



Barth vs. Brunner

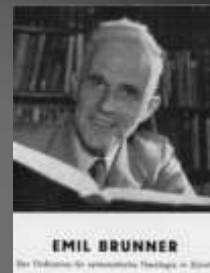


- Karl Barth of the Neo-Orthodox Christian movement (early 20th century) saw it as a possible myth in which the point of the story is what was important, rather than the historicity of it.
- Barth attempted to side-step the question of historicity by saying it wasn't important.
 - A Christian liberal from the same era, Emil Brunner would not allow Barth the courtesy of doing this.
 - Brunner insisted that historicity was important for apologetic and theological questions.



Barth vs. Brunner

- Brunner said holding to a position of historicity causes one to stand against the evidence of natural science and history.
- He believed the simplest solution was to abandon the traditional view.
 - He claimed the biblical account of Adam and Eve was nothing more than a parable.
- He argued a parable makes it more relevant to each of us today and removes the unnecessary offense created by the traditional view.
 - Brunner taught that the “parable” of creation informs us that we are all born innocent, but have a choice between good and evil and eventually choose evil and suffer the consequences.



Consequences of Parabolic View

- If you see the Biblical creation account as a parable, then you have a problem with Paul's argument in Romans 5:12-21 & 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 where he explicitly parallels Jesus Christ to Adam. What Adam broke, Jesus fixed. Well, if Adam was mythic instead of real, Paul's statement makes little sense.
 - President of U.S. and King Arthur example.
 - Real figures do not solve the problems of characters in mythological fairy tales.
- The implications are simple.
 - If Adam was not real, yet Jesus is said to reverse Adam's work, then we must conclude that Jesus also must be a myth that is representative of our inward being.
- Romans 5 says Adam is the father of the human race.
 - As such, he passed on sin through imputation. Death came due to his sin. Sin is not only something we do, but it is a disposition in us.
 - How can we inherit anything from a myth?
- Greatest consequence? It makes Jesus fallible (Matt 19:4-6).

Jesus Held the Historicity View

- Mat 19:4-6 -- Haven't you read," He replied, "that He who created them in the beginning **made them male and female**, (5) and He also said: **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?** (6) So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."
- Bottom Line:
 - If they were merely myths, then Jesus was wrong.
 - If Jesus was wrong, then He was not the all-knowing and perfect God.
 - If He was not God, then His death did us no good and we are still in our sins.
 - The Adam and Eve story connects all of the way through the biblical text, and sacrificing it requires a sacrifice of the entire Bible since it is foundational to everything else in the Bible.
 - Since the Christian faith is dependent upon the Bible, denial of the Bible amounts to a denial of Christianity itself.

