

Man in the Fallen State Is in the Image of God

by John Murray

Man in his fallen state is still in the image of God, although it is marred and distorted by sin.

Duration: 50:22

Topics: "Depravity"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker explores the concept of man being created in the image of God. He begins by referencing Genesis 5:1 and 3, which imply that Adam was created in the likeness of God. The speaker argues that these passages have a connection to Genesis 1:26, which also mentions the creation of man in God's image. He further supports this idea by pointing to Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10, which define the divine image. The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing the divine image in humanity and the need for redemption and transformation through God's grace.

Transcript

Let's pray. O Lord, we confess the ruin that we have brought upon ourselves, and the hopeless degradation to which we have descended. We implore, O Lord, Thy grace, so that we may be renewed in knowledge, in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

And do Thou grant that we may direct all our thought to the promotion of that glory of Thine, which we have come short, and which we have violated, so that Thou wouldst be glorified through that transformation, which is wrought by Thy redemptive grace. In Jesus' name. He is met by the image of God in which, and this is rather radical divergence, and of course of the image of God, or whether something which has character that is sin, or this is one aspect in the universe.

Now the thesis I am going to present, that thereof which implies His fallen, can be spoken of as in the image of God. That is my first proposition, or my first thesis. There are passages which imply that man in his fallen state is in the image of God.

And I'm going to appeal first of all to Genesis 5, verses 1 and 3. Genesis 5, verses 1 and 3. Now just listen to what these two verses are. Genesis 5, 1. This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day of God's creating Adam, in the likeness of God made He Him.

In the likeness of God made He Him. Now there is no question, but there is an allusion here to Genesis 1, 26, and has therefore the same import. In the day of God's creating Adam, in the likeness of God created

He Him.

Here you have reference simply to likeness, but there is no problem. This is simply an abridged statement referring to the same fact. Now Genesis 5, 3 reads that Adam was a hundred and thirty years old.

No, no, it's, it's, yah, yahee. And Adam lived, not yahee, but yahee. And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and begat, meaning a son, and begat a son in his likeness according to his image and called his name Seth.

In his likeness according to his image. Now it could be maintained that there is a sharp distinction between the image in which Seth was born and the likeness in which Adam was created. And so the stress falls upon Adam's likeness in contrast with the image and likeness of God in which He was created.

That is the view of certain interpreters, and it can be made to appear quite plausible that one lives in the likeness of God, namely Adam, whereas inversely Adam begat a son in his own likeness according to his image. I submit that this exegesis is arbitrary and harsh for two reasons. Genesis 5, 1, first, Genesis 5, 1 harks back to Genesis 1, 26.

And all that is expressed by both terms in Genesis 1, 26 is implied in the abridged statement of Genesis 5, 1. That's the first point. Now second, in Genesis 5, 3 we have both terms. They're both and several, likeness and image, in form in his likeness according to his image.

That formula is distinctly reminiscent of Genesis 1, 26. And also the word likeness alone, in this case, that the word likeness alone could be interpreted as referring to appearance or features. It becomes difficult to escape the force of the illusion when both terms are used.

And the term image, image in Hebrew or Greek, is not used in the scripture to describe man in his own identity as distinguished from the identity in which he was created. If there is a contrast between Adam's own image in Genesis 5, 3 and the image and likeness of God in Genesis 5, 1, then we have a contrast which is not characteristic of Hebrew usage or Hebrew or Greek usage in respect of these terms, image and likeness. Now, as we shall find out later, all in man is spoken of as being in the divine image.

And consequently, the harshness and the arbitrariness of making a sharp distinction between Genesis 5, 1 and Genesis 5, 3 is virtually confirmed, the harshness and arbitrariness are virtually confirmed by the comparison of Genesis 5, 3 with these other passages. Now we pass on to the next passage, which is Genesis 9, 6. Genesis 9, 6. He who sheds the blood of the man, by the man his blood shall be shed, because in the image of God made he the man. So you can take man monotonously in our translation because the article no doubt appears to be distinctive, who so sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, because in the image of God made he the man.

Because in the image of God made he the man. Now there can be no question, but it is the image of God that makes the shedding of man's blood so grievous and sad. There can be no question, but it is the image of God that makes the shedding of man's blood so grievous and sad.

Now if man is almost completely destitute of the image of God, the divine image, how could the shedding of man's blood be any longer so grievous and sad? Or in other words, if man is now destitute of the divine image, how could his being made in the divine image be assigned as the weak or capital punishment? Genesis 9 verse 6, Inashi, it's a law that applies to all men. The life of fallen man is safe, and if man in his fallen state does not bear the divine, then the ground for the gravity of the offense and the gravity of the

punishment is removed. Consequently, my conclusion is that Genesis 9, 6 clearly implies that man, just because he is man, is made in the image of God.

Assault upon his life is for that reason assault upon the life of God Himself. It is just this, that man's life and identity, man's life and identity are patterned God Himself. Therefore, the assault upon his life is so grievous that the only adequate is the shedding of the murderer's blood.

I don't know how we could escape that inference. Now the next passage is 1 Corinthians 11, 7. The man ought not to recover his head. Being the image and glory of God.

Now here you have a code, a particular term of which we are interested. You might say this cannot have any relevance to the man because it is referring simply to the man as distinguished from the woman. And the reference is to the specific identity of the man, the specific authority of the man as distinguished from the identity and authority of the woman.

There can be no question that here you have a specialized use of the term, a code. Specialized use of that term as applied to the man as distinct from the woman. And this of course must not be interpreted for that reason as conflicted in any way with the other truths derived from Genesis 1. This is why that the woman as well as the man was created in the image of God.

It is simply that we have to recognize here a more specialized use of the word of God. This does not make the passage irrelevant however. Doesn't make the passage irrelevant.

Because it certainly does mean that the man, the man is the image of God. He is the image and glory of God. And certainly means that the man is in the image of God.

Now what Paul is dealing with here is the position that man occupies in the divinely instituted economy. Position he occupies in the divinely instituted economy. And therefore he is initiating a general principle that applies to mankind.

And that it is contrary to the particular position which the man occupies for him to have his head covered. Now if man were completely destitute of the divine image. Completely destitute of the divine image.

How could scripture appeal to this fact that man is the image of God. In support of a certain practice. A practice which bears upon the relationships which men and women sustain to one another in the divinely instituted economy.

Paul cannot be speaking here simply of man as he was originally. And of man regenerated. Surely he is dealing with something that by application regenerated.

I mean this God has his passage. So I think this passage surely has meaning there upon the question. But the underlying assumption of this passage that man is the image of glory of God.

The next passage is James 3.9. James 3.9. Which reads therewith blessed we the Lord and Father. And therewith cursed we the men who are made after the likeness of God. Cursed we the men who are made after the image.

After the likeness of God. Now it would be quite arbitrary to suppose that the men spoken of here are exclusively regenerate men. That who are made after the image of God.

After the likeness of God. It's a restrictive clause. Restrictive clause.

Distinguishing certain men who are made after the likeness of God from men who are not made after the likeness of God. James is indicting the cursing of men. That's the point.

He is bringing an indictment against that practice. Cursing men. It is a general statement and must apply to all such vilifications.

All such vilifications. And therefore it implies that men are made in the likeness of God. And the underlying assumption is to that effect.

Now these passages are sometimes rather superficially dismissed by certain exeges and certain theologians. In the treatment of this question, it is to be admitted that these passages do not deal expressly with the question which we are now discussing. They do not deal expressly with this question.

But they are surely relevant to the question. Because the underlying assumption of these passages, particularly of Genesis 9, 6, 1 Corinthians 11, 7, and James 3, 9, is that the divine image or likeness is predicated on man. And predicated of man in a way that has bearing, has directed upon the conduct of man in the daily economy, which God has established for the regulation of human life and behavior.

That, I think, is altogether important. Relevant to the economy which God has established for the regulation of human life. We can see that particularly in Genesis 9, 6. Because this has to do with the life and behavior of man, to the sin of murder and the penalty placed upon the murderer.

1 Corinthians 11, 7 deals very definitely with an economy of relationship which God has established and 1 Corinthians 3, 9 is directed against the great sin of malediction, of vilification. And the gravity of the offense is pointed at man by showing the utter contradiction between blessing God and cursing man who are made in the likeness of him. The underlying thought of James 3, 9 is to the great offense in Genesis 9, the gravity of murder and the gravity of the offense with which it must be visited, is placed upon the character of man as made in the divinity.

The gravity of the sin of cursing is placed in the identity of man as made in the likeness of God's thought. When we curse man, we are really cursing God. We are contradicting the blessings which we may profess.

So, you see, in a certain sense, these passages are more significant because they initiate an underlying assumption, an underlying assumption which, if you deny it, makes irrelevant the divine injunctions which are given in these respective situations. So I think that it is the biblical position that man in his fallen state must be regarded as made in the image of God, and that really defines his identity as man. Now we come to the dilemma with which we are confronted, if that position is maintained.

There are other passages in the Scripture which define the divine image. They define the divine image, and they define the divine image in terms that are not predictable of man in his fall. And I'm thinking particularly of Ephesians 4.24 and Colossians 3.10. Because when you put these two passages together, it is perfectly apparent that the divine image is defined in terms of knowledge, righteousness and holiness of the Church.

Knowledge, righteousness and holiness of the Church. Now, it is perfectly obvious that these terms do not apply to man in his fallen and regenerate state. And of course the passages clearly refer to the new

creation and to the new man in Christ Jesus.

It is true that these passages do not expressly refer to Adam as created, but do not expressly refer to Adam as created, but refer to the new man that we see. And it is true likewise that they do not expressly define the divine image in which man was created at the beginning. They do not expressly define man as he was created because they expressly define the title of the new man in Christ Jesus.

But we must ask this question. Cannot avoid it. First, in these passages there is an allusion to the image of God in which man was created.

It is the point. And allusion to the image of God in which man was created. And there seem to me to be two or three considerations which require that conclusion, or at least point in that direction, that these passages do have some reference to Genesis 1.26 and Genesis 5.1. And the first consideration is this, that these texts, Ephesians 4.24, Colossians 2.10, these texts do define the divine image.

They do define it because you have, after God, in Ephesians 4.24, kataseon, and in Colossians 3.10, you have katekona, according to the image, from who created it. So kataseon and katekona do refer to the divine image and therefore define that with which the image of God consists. Therefore I say that if such predications, such predications as knowledge, righteousness and holiness, belong to man in his original state, it would be arbitrary and indefensible to exclude them from the divine image referred to in Genesis 1.26. I say it would be arbitrary and indefensible to exclude these predications, these qualities, from Genesis 1.26. Yes? Yes, it would be arbitrary and indefensible for the reason I have just... Do you want me to go back further? Yes, therefore.

Well, you'll have to go back further to get my connection. I don't have this in my notes. The question is, if therefore such predications as knowledge, righteousness and holiness belong to man in his regenerate state or original state.

If they belong to man in his original state, his appearance, because he was created that way, if these belong to man, then it would be arbitrary and indefensible to maintain that these qualities are not included, or these predications are not included in the image of God referred to in Genesis 1.26. That is just saying that since I was created at the beginning in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, these must, these qualities, predications must be included in the divine image. These are the four from before. Divine, the divine image is directly in terms of knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

Second, it is difficult to eliminate from Colossians 3.10 especially Now, allusion to Genesis 1.26. Because Colossians 3.10 reads as follows, remember, And having put on a new man, who is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him who created him. Being renewed unto knowledge after the image of him who created him. And that expression, after the image of him who created, is so similar to what you find in Genesis 5.1, that it would be very difficult to exclude that allusion.

And so you would at least be able to say, you would be able to say this at least, that to exclude from two passages, Ephesians 4.24 and Colossians 3.10, are retrospective references. To exclude them, Genesis 1.26, and therefore to the first creation, would be contrary to the analogy, analogy of scripture usage. And so Calvin's inference is well supported.

Namely, that that which holds the principal place in the renovation of the man, must have held the principal place in the first creation. That which holds the principal place in the renovation of the man, must have

held the principal place in his renovation. Now I'm not saying that the case, the case for defining the divine image which man was created in terms of knowledge, righteousness and holiness of the spirit, is conclusively demonstrated.

I'm not saying that, that it is conclusively demonstrated by these considerations which I have achieved. What I am saying is that to exclude from the divine image those fabrications of Ephesians 4.24 and Colossians 3.10, that is, to exclude from the divine image in which man was created at the beginning, these fabrications given in Ephesians 4.24 and Colossians 3.10 requires arbitrary, arbitrary inference and is not in accord with what we should expect according to the analogy of biblical language.

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