



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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BUILDING BLOCKS OF FAITH - PART 3 : "Understanding Man"

June 19, 2005 Study 6 : "Man's Nature"

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

"Building Blocks of Faith" deals with the basic Christian beliefs. The studies will be kept as simple as possible. Those who are considering following Jesus will have the main issues of the Christian Faith explained. New Christians will gain an insight into what God has done in their life ... and why. Older Christians need to revisit the basics from time to time in order to check that what they are building is consistent with the blueprints! Part 1 of the Series was "Three Little Words" - Grace, Mercy & Peace. Part 2 - 2 Studies on "Understanding God"

Part 3 is titled "Understanding Man." Today we will see what the Scriptures teach about our Human Nature. Next Sunday Pastor Jennifer will be leading a Study on "Fallen Man." I will conclude Part 3 with a Study on "The Nature of Sin and its Consequences."

INTRODUCTION TO TODAY'S STUDY

Raelians believe that all the ancient prophets (Jesus included) were aliens and that the human race is the product of alien DNA mixed with "pre-human" life forms. On the other hand, evolutionists believe that all life came by chance from a primeval "DNA Soup." From the simplest of living structures, through a process of mutation & adaptation, all life evolved, including mankind.

We may safely discount the Raelians. **That leaves us with an Evolutionary Man:**

- A Product of blind, spontaneous processes of nature,
- Captive to his environment,
- Programmed by the traits inherited from the evolutionary process,
 - Living a life without any ULTIMATE purpose or significance,
 - and whose only end is OBLIVION.

Or is there another alternative?

"And God said, "let us make man in our image" So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female, he created them." Gen1:24, 27

A. MAN'S NATURE

1. PHYSICAL : Fashioned from dirt : *The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground.* Gen2:7a

Our bodies : around 65% water, a fair bit of carbon and an assortment of other minerals that really wouldn't be out of place in the garden - (The Hebrew for "man" - *adam* - is derived from the Hebrew for ground - *adamah*)

Energised by the life : *... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.* Gen2:7b. See also Gen1:30

With all other living creatures we have similar "BUILD" and NEEDS

2. SPIRITUAL : Made in "God's Image" Gen1:24, 27 (See above for the text)

What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

The following verses have to do with Jesus and have the context of "before creation." They tell us, in part, what "God was like" & from them we may suggest in what ways we are "made in his image."

Mt13:35 *"I will utter things hidden from the creation of the world"*
Jn17:24 *"..you loved me before the foundation of the world."*
Eph1:4 *"He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy & blameless."*
Ti1:2 *"... which God, who does not lie, promised from the foundation of the world."*
1Pt1:20 *"He (Jesus) was chosen before the foundation of the world."*

These verses suggest : Communicating, relating, purpose, morality, planning.

Because we are made in the image of God : we possess:

Self-consciousness; we know we EXIST and want to know why.

Cognition : the ability to rationally PROCESS information.

Intelligence : the capacity to LEARN from what we know and branch out in new directions.

Consider the short list of skills in Gen4: 19-22 - creative diversity, without a priority of "usefulness."

:"raise livestock play the harp and flute ... forge all kinds of tools"

As to our "physical" nature, we share a COMMON mortality with the rest of the created order.

But as to our "Spiritual" nature, we stand UNIQUE in the created order.

This contrast supplies the key to Man's complex nature; Eg.

We need material things, but are never satisfied with material things alone.

B. GOD'S PURPOSES FOR MANKIND

1. To GOVERN the earth, and care for it. Gen1:28; 2:15

"... fill the earth, subdue it. Rule ..." "... in the garden to work it and take care of it."

Man is to be involved in creative, productive ACTIVITY and responsible STEWARDSHIP.

2. To RELATE to others. Gen2:18, 24

"It is not good for man to be alone." "...shall leave and be united..."

Man is created for COMMUNITY; a network of committed and free relationships

3. To ENJOY God's fellowship & presence. Gen3:8-9

"And God walked in the garden in the cool of the evening

.... the Lord God called to man, 'Where are you?'"

Psalm 8 begins by placing man alongside God's majesty and the vastness of the universe. In that context, *"What is man that you are mindful of him?"* (v4)

Assessed in DIMENSIONAL terms, man is an insignificant speck of dust.

But in RELATIONAL terms, God has given man a high status; *"crowning him with glory and honour, making him ruler over the works of your hands ... such is their (as male & female) God-given dignity.*

There is a Jewish proverb which calls for two cards to be read to gain self-knowledge.

The one reads, "I am a worm." The other reads, "For me the stars were made."