

TRINITY FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Cardiphonia

Sounds of the Heart: Reflections on the Christian Life

The Majesty of Man: the Good News, Bad News, Good News Human Saga

**Timothy M. Shorey
2008**

**“So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.”**

Genesis 1:27

Series Introduction

This *Cardiphonia* series is presented to provide *pastoral counsel with pastoral heart* for today's Christian. This is part of my intentional pastoral commitment to serve more effectively the theological and character growth of those in my care. I've created this medium to help shine more of *the whole counsel of God* into your hearts.

With its title derived from two Greek words—one meaning *heart* and the other *sounds*—our *Cardiphonia* series expresses the *heart sounds* of the pastoral leadership of Trinity Fellowship Church. In the course of life and ministry, pastors hear God speak through Word and circumstance, and gain perspective for the lives of those entrusted to their care. As they meditate on God's Word and care for God's people, God places within their hearts passions, burdens and joys that are intended for God's church. The *Cardiphonia* booklets attempt to serve both the pastoral team and the congregation of TFC by transferring such joys and concerns from our hearts to yours.

I offer this series in *faith* that God will bless any truth it expresses *and* will guard His church from any error that might creep in. I present it with the prayer that it will help provide more spiritual food for the Lord's flock in ways that will bless and strengthen those I love. May the blessing of God rest upon you as you hear these heart sounds expressed.

Yours in Christ,

Tim Shorey
Senior Pastor
Trinity Fellowship Church

The Majesty of Man

Introduction

As long as humans have existed, we have searched to know the meaning of our existence. It's one part of being human to wonder what it *is* to be human. It is also one part of why the Bible was written to answer that ageless question. In the following I seek to present the Bible's first answer to humanity's quest for identity and self-understanding. I hope to present a brief glimpse of what Man¹ is, as created and seen by God, and as described in His Word.

The Majesty of Man in the Creation Account

In Genesis 1 and 2 we see the early chapters in God's story about Man. Here we see God making Mankind, creating male and female with a majestic role on earth and making them the objects of His perfect and infinite love. The creation account unveils this majesty of Man in at least three ways.

Image Bearer of God

Genesis 1:26, 27 says: *“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

God Casts His Shadow

The Hebrew word translated *image* speaks of a shadowy resemblance, or a likeness. It also refers to that which represents another. Human beings were created so that God could cast His shadow onto the earth. We are God's silhouettes, created shadowy representations of God, placed in and over all His creation. We are made in God's image and after His likeness. God designed us to be His visible representation on planet earth for all of creation to see, value, respect, and enjoy.

¹ Regarding my use of the terms *Man* and *Mankind*, please see the appendix.

Many of us know of God's prohibition regarding graven images (Exodus 20:4, 5). The key word here is *graven*. God's fierce denunciations of human attempts to make images graven to represent Him should not be read as fierce opposition to images of God themselves. The reason the Creator forbids all human attempts to create representations of who He is and of what He is like is because only God has both the knowledge to design an *adequate* image of Himself, and the creative power and skill to pull it off. Man is stamped with the *Imago Dei* (image of God), the only image of God made and endorsed by God Himself. Humans come with a tag attached: "Genuine image of God. Made, inspected and approved by the living God."

Perhaps this explains why God's heart raced a little faster when He finished making Man than it did when He finished making everything else. There's a distinct difference between His evaluation of the rest of creation, and His reaction following the creation of Man (compare Genesis 1:25 and 1:31). The former was good, the latter was *very good*. When God saw what He had made in Man, He was especially pleased.

Seeking Understanding

For centuries Christians have wrestled with the significance of Man as the *image of God*. All agree that humans are like God, reflecting His character and representing His role, but it's been very difficult to fine tune a definition of the *Imago Dei* beyond these obvious facts. Man has:

- An *intellectual* likeness to God (we think, reason and speak in ways similar to God)
- A *moral* likeness to God (we have a sense of right and wrong, a conscience built into us that approves of what is good and disapproves of what isn't)
- A *relational* likeness to God (we have the capacity to love, fellowship, commune, and share intimacy with others, and with God)
- A *positional* likeness to God (we are *lords* of creation in a way that mirrors God's rule over the universe)
- An *immortal* likeness to God (we were made with the capacity to exist forever)

It is not difficult to build a biblical case that being made in God's image involves each of these facets of truth. But while all of this is involved in what it

means to be made in the image of God, there appears to be more. To one degree or another, angels and animals possess these characteristics, yet only *humans* are said to be made in the image of God. There's no hint in Scripture that angels are made in the image of God even though they share in these qualities. This means that there must be an additional *something* involved in the created glory that all humans enjoy.

He Whom God Loves

There's a mysterious created quality in Man, something only vaguely revealed by God, which is uniquely God-like and God-loved. This quality makes us utterly unequalled in the whole created realm. Whatever it may be, this attribute gives humans transcending and unique glory, and bestows on Man a capacity to exist in living and loving relationship with God. Whatever this characteristic is, it constitutes Man as “he whom God loves” in a special way.²

Our Hearts Are Restless

Adam and Eve had this indefinable “something” in full and perfect measure. We do not. Today, a combination of sin and spiritual short-sightedness has diminished our experience of all it means to be made in God's image and intended for His love. It is this frustrated capacity for relationship with God that depresses Solomon in *Ecclesiastes*. Suffering from spiritual myopia, Solomon was bewildered by life *under the sun*. He found all earth-bound life meaningless. Consequently, he suffered from an acute case of what some have called “homesickness for God”—an irrepressible longing for something more, something beyond, something transcending, something from—and something of—another world.

While in this state, Solomon shows an early sign of spiritual recovery and restored human meaning when he writes that God has “put eternity into our

² “*What the full meaning of man's God-likeness is cannot be determined until all that man and God are is known. Man as man—complex physical/spiritual being—in his wholeness, not his parts, is like God. It is not enough to say he reasons, nor is it enough to say he is addressed, for Satan, too, reasons and is addressed. Our definition of the Imago Dei must be broad because the only sure statements we have about the imago are broad. The definition I offer is this: The Imago Dei is that in man which constitutes him as he-whom-God-loves*” (John Piper).

hearts” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Here is a man reconnecting to the eternal; an awareness of something within him that was transcendent. We know that Solomon is close to full recovery when he concludes later that Man’s ultimate purpose in all things is to relate rightly to God in reverence and obedience (12:13). This is Man coming to his senses and returning home to God. Solomon’s experience parallels Augustine’s, expressed famously in his prayer: “Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

I would conclude that the image of God in Man is all that we have described above, plus this inexpressible quality that first makes humanity yearn for God’s attention, affection, and care, and then makes us, by infinite Divine grace, able and willing to receive it, and therein to rest.

Lords of Creation

The majesty of Man is also seen in that he is created as *lord of creation*. The language of Genesis 1:26-30 is clear. Creation was given to mankind to be his dominion, to supply his needs, and to please his heart (2:9). Genesis unpacks this significant truth by revealing four roles given to Man.

Man Rules Creation

First, *Man rules creation*. This is simply what the words *dominion* and *rule* mean. They speak of authority. Man’s role is to rule; to bring creation’s power and resources under human authority and to bend creation’s knee to serve the good of all. Of course God does not mean for this dominion-authority to be abusive or destructive. He intends it to be a responsible and benevolent rule.

Man Names Creation

Second, *Man names creation*. Genesis 2:19, 20 reveals Man performing one of his first tasks as lord of creation. He names the animals. Scientists still do this today. Which of us has forgotten the mind-numbing pain of Biology 101’s Latin names for various species? (Why always Latin, I don’t recall. In fact the only thing I do recall from that experience was the pain!). Still, those who knew best came up with names that fit.

Throughout history the act of naming has been a right of authority (parents name their children), and an essential means of maintaining order. Imagine a world without names. Man wouldn't reign; chaos would. Think about trying to give directions to a traveler who wants to go to a town without a name by roads without names to visit a family of eight, all without names. He'd never get there. And if by some miracle he did, he'd have no way of keeping everyone straight when he did.

Without names we'd all know almost no one, go almost nowhere, and organize hardly anything. Hence the naming of people, places, animals, and things is an act both of legitimate authority and of wise and benevolent rule. *Lords label*. It's part of Man's majestic role to exercise that authority.

Man Tends Creation

Third, *Man tends creation*. Genesis 2:15 presents another dimension of Man's majestic role, one that balances those that have come before. Adam was placed in Eden to keep the garden. The Hebrew word for *keep* means to tend and take care of; to cultivate and care for, so as to help something be productive and fruitful. Man is here to tend the earth so that it might be beautiful, bountiful and blessed for the duration of his planetary stay. We are our planet's keeper.

Man Celebrates Creation

Finally, *Man celebrates creation*. In Genesis 4:20-22 we read of early Man carrying out his mandate to rule the earth through the invention of tools, the development of farming and agriculture, and the creation of musical instruments. This fascinating glimpse into man as the image bearer of God and lord of creation fleshes out his mandate to rule the world and have dominion over it. In verse 20 Man develops the care and use of earth's creatures for human good. In verse 22 Man creates tools to manipulate earth's resources for human use. And in verse 21 he creates musical instruments to *celebrate* earth's events, blessings, sorrows and life for human joy.

This cultivation of earth's resources through the invention of tools, and this celebration of earth's seasons, sights, and sounds through the composition of music further images the creative and joy-filled God who made us. Through art, discovery, and song humans celebrate the life and beauty of God's world.

We express part of our gifted image bearing status when—like God—we create and sing and paint and compose and dance and craft and invent.

Of Prodigies, Impairments, and Human Potential

From time to time we are told of child prodigies who at early ages are capable of extraordinary abilities. Here are a few examples:

- **“Jon” is a six year old “human calculator” able to calculate complex problems in his head *and* (even better!) tell jokes in classical Greek.**
- **“Zerah” is a nine year old who can multiply six digit numbers in his head.**
- **As a four year old, Mozart could play complex musical pieces from memory and do so faultlessly, with great “delicacy” and feeling.**
- **“Adam” is a three year old who can read, write, speak several languages and compose music.**
- **“Jay” received a full scholarship to *Julliard* when he was 10, and by the time he was 12 composed five full length symphonies. He is said to have potential equal to Mozart. “Music just fills my head and I have to write it down to get it out”, he says. Often he hears more than one composition going on in his head at the same time.**

What are we to make of such prodigies, or of geniuses of more mature years? What are we to make of the woman who multiplied two random 13 digit numbers in less than thirty seconds in her head, taking at least half that time *just to give the answer*? Are these people freaks of nature? I don’t think so.

Geniuses and prodigies are not humans with short-circuiting or crossed wires; they are humans with their wires very much connected, and in peak performance mode—at least in one or two areas of human ability and skill. They are not examples of what humans do when something is wrong; they are examples of what humans would be able to do if everything was right. They demonstrate the wondrous potential of the human mind. They reveal the creative splendor and latent skills of the human creature.

In a different but equally profound way, one can often observe God’s image with vivid clarity in those who experience impairments of varying severity. Some of the most compassionate, affectionate, cheerful, life-loving people one will ever meet—people who seem to have an irresistible beautiful quality to

them—are people with severe impairments of mind or body. God’s image often shines brightest in the weakest and frailest among us.

In the end, these are not really *impaired*, they are *improved*. They are not made *less* human by their weakness; they are made more fully human, because they image attributes of God more clearly than all the rest of us. Theirs is not a handicapped humanity, but a majestic and beautiful humanity.

In all likelihood, Adam and Eve—as Prototypical Man—possessed latent artistic skills, brilliant thoughts, creative juices, tender affections, compassionate instincts, and life-loving and humor-creating passions equal to all those of all the prodigies and all the impairment-enriched humans of the world. Take all the wondrous ability, creative genius and prodigious talents of the human race and put them into one person and you have Adam. You also have what he and Eve and all who have come after them would have been had sin and rebellion *not* entered into the world. You have the majesty of Man.

Worshiper and Friend of God

We see the majesty of Man most profoundly and affectingly in his creation as *a worshiper and friend of God*. Genesis presents God and Man in both a Creator-to-creature and in a Friend-to-friend relationship. This is the uniqueness of Man in the image of God.

A Day of Worship

Man as worshiper is implied in Genesis 2:2, 3 where God establishes a one-day-in-seven rhythm for rest and worship. God created one day a week to be holy—set apart both for rest and for God. From the dawn of time, God commanded that not one week go by without time consecrated specifically for physical rest and God-ward focus.

Worship through Obedience

Man was also made to *worship through obedience*. In Genesis 2:16 God assumes His role as Lawgiver—of which James tells us there is only One (James 4:12). God is the king; Man is the subject. God is in charge; Man is to obey. God is above; Man is beneath. God *reveals* His moral character and will

by giving His Law; Man *reflects* God's moral character and will by obeying that Law.

There is a God, and I Am Not He

While it is true that Man is gloriously *like* God, he is *not* God. All Hindus, Buddhists, and New Age mystics who imagine that Man is one with the One, and that we are part of God and are to seek oneness of being with Him, need to lower the human pedestal a bit. Having observed the stunning grandeur of nature and potential of man (which are real, for we are *like* God) these faiths have exaggerated our status to suggest that we *are* God.

Someone has wisely and humbly said: "There are two things about God that I know for sure: one, there is a God, and two, I am not He." Fellow humans and mortals, we need to run from self-worship. God is alone. God is above. God is transcendent. Let God be God and Man be Man. J.I Packer says it well: "We are like God, but He is not like us."

It is enough to be like God. Let's be happy being Man. We get to image Him, worship Him, and serve Him. It is wondrous and majestic to be made like God and for God. But when we grasp for something that isn't ours we lose what is. Let's not pretend to be God, and become fools in the exchange. Genesis 3 and beyond tell us of the tragedy that ensues when Man wants what he cannot have. Let's let God be God, and everything else be what it is. We are worshipers; He is the worshiped. Herein is our glory: to know God as He is, and to be given the good sense before Him to stand in awe, bend the knee, and lower the head.

A Friend of God

We also see Man's majesty as *a friend of God*. The language of Genesis 3:8 is that of friendship, communion and love. This verse implies that God appears in some kind of physical form. The references to *walking* and to the *cool of the day* conjure thoughts of physical activity and sensation. Perhaps this is the Son of God in a body similar to the one He would later indwell in the Incarnation.

God appears in the garden looking for Adam and Eve, looking for His image-bearers, looking for those He had made to share in His friendship and love. He appeared in a body so that Adam and Eve could do what friends of God should do: walk, talk, commune, fellowship, laugh, share, love—all in the company of their Creator. Adam and Eve as image bearers of God and majestic God-like creatures were made to walk with God as no other creatures were. And they had an eternity before them in which to know Him even as they were known by Him.

This is who Man is and that for which he was made. From the truth that Man is made as God’s worshiper and as His friend, we learn that God did not intend for Man to be an island of independent, self-serving humanity. Rather, God made Man to enjoy relationship with his Maker and to relate to Him with reverence and love. The world was made to be a place where God and Man were together in perfect fellowship forever.

Some Implications

Genesis 3 presents the next chapter of the human story. Soon after his creation, Man’s glory and majesty turn to tragedy and sorrow. Sin enters the picture and seriously affects the whole created order, destroying everything in its path. We will think more on this later, but my purpose now is simply to start at the beginning as we try to conceive of Man.

No true understanding of human existence and meaning can ever be formed if it does not begin with the words *majestic image-bearers of God*. Much else may and most certainly *must* be said about Man’s depravity, Man’s sin, and Man’s present desperate state apart from Divine intervention in grace through the God-Man, Jesus Christ the Restorer. But we must begin with Man as glorious, and Man as God-like, if we would know the truth of what once was, what may still be, and what is yet to come.

Man as image-bearer, lord of creation, and worshiper and friend of God is Man as he was made and intended to be. This is also Man—male and female—as we must see him or her when we look in the mirror at ourselves, across the table at our spouses, into our arms at our children, or anywhere else at our neighbors.

The Unique Value of Human Life

The majesty of Man affirms the uniqueness and value of human life, and it affects the way we treat all others in our lives. Any creature stamped with the likeness of God shares at least something of the dignity of God. This is not a cause for human pride; it is a catalyst for human praise. Let's be clear here: the value of human life is extrinsic rather than intrinsic. As those who bear God's image we do not have any value from within ourselves, but only from outside ourselves. Our value is from above, not from within.

The worth of a photograph is not found in the paper on which it is imprinted or even in the ink of which the picture is made. The value of a photograph is in the worth of the one whose image is created on the paper and with the ink. My many prominently displayed pictures of my wife are valuable, not for their paper or ink, but for their subject. Gayline gives her value to those pieces of paper; they have no value in themselves. The paper has value only because it bears her image.

This distinction is critical if we would escape the ever-present snare of self-worship. Let's be careful how we exalt Man in his image-bearing status. We'd do well to avoid celebrating how special and wonderful we are without making sure to add that all our worth and value is really God's—stamped into us. The point of our image bearing status is not that we can feel good about ourselves, but that we can feel very good and amazed about God. We are shadowy photographs of God, made to bear His image, not so that we can glorify the photograph's paper and ink, but so that we can glorify the One whose image it bears. God didn't make Man so Man can celebrate Man. God made Man so Man would remind Man to celebrate God.

Nevertheless, let me make something else clear. I do value and cherish my pictures of Gayline. They have more value than nearly all the other sheets of paper in my life (excluding only the pages of my Bible). Now if I attribute value to pictures of Gayline, what am I to think of all the *human photographs*³ of God walking around? These are no ordinary sheets of paper. They have value

³ My analogy of a photograph should not be misunderstood to suggest that God has some kind of physical form of which we are a picture. I speak of a *human photograph of God* only to express the fact that when people look at people, they can see a representation of the character and being of God.

beyond all telling. All human life is of value. All human life no matter how young or old or sick or weak or imperfect it might appear is valuable and sacred, for it bears the image of God. Every human being, born or unborn, regardless of age, color, ethnicity, gender, IQ or physical condition, is to be treated with respect, care and love for each one has the stamp of God's image within.⁴

A right view of the majesty of Man will produce a strong pro-life ethic toward all men, women, and children, not as a political issue for debate, but as a passionate way of life. Those who really *get this* will not be content to vote against abortion; they will be impassioned to be *for* people—renouncing all anger, hatred, slander, gossip, ill-feeling and heart-malice toward all other human beings, and choosing instead the way of love.

The Ultimate Purpose for Human Life

The majesty of Man also answers our longings for purpose and meaning. In their quest for meaning, people have always sought answers for these two questions: “Who am I, and why am I here?” In answering them we must face two truths squarely without any make-believe.

First, if there is no God and if we are not made in his image, we have no real purpose or meaning in life. Our society is filled with fairy tale believers: people who deny that God exists and that we are anything more than King Kong's more highly evolved cousins. Yet these very same people claim (it is not too much to say, they *believe*—in one extraordinary leap of faith) that we still have transcendent significance and purpose. In recent years, pseudo-intellectuals

⁴ Wayne Grudem writes: “Every single human being, no matter how much the image of God is marred by sin, or illness, or weakness, or age, or any other disability, still has the status of being in God's image and therefore must be treated with the dignity and respect that is due to God's image-bearer. This has profound implications for our conduct toward others. It means that people of every race, deserve equal dignity and rights. It means that elderly people, those seriously ill, the mentally retarded, and children yet unborn, deserve full protection and honor as human beings. If we ever deny our unique status in creation as God's only image-bearers, we will soon begin to depreciate the value of human life, will tend to see humans as merely a higher form of animal, and will begin to treat others as such. We will also lose much of our sense of meaning in life”

have ruled that faith in a Creator is primitive wishful thinking, but then have proceeded to create even more fanciful wishful thinking in its place.

Where does meaning come from? Can we create it or imagine it? Do our fleeting deep thoughts or brilliant ideas or artistic accomplishments or athletic feats or X-Game thrills or acts of kindness or moments of fun or raptures of love have any *real* meaning to them? Or are they nothing more than momentary sensations with no transcendent value?

The issue is not whether we *feel* or *want* life to mean something, but whether in fact it *does* mean something. Does life—in fact, truth and reality—have significance, or does it not? The only way we can answer that question with a rational *yes* is if there is a God who has made Man for a purpose, with meaning, and as someone that really counts.

If Man exists as no more than a cosmic accident, no more than an evolutionary mutant, no more than a random combination of chemical actions and reactions existing for absolutely no good reason, and with no real purpose, then everything about him amounts to nothing. He's no longer Man; he's only man. His life is nothing more than a "short day's journey from nothingness to nothingness"⁵. There you have it: the bald truth.

But if there is a God and if He has made us in His image, then all our hearts' longings for significance are both explained and satisfied. If this be true—and all the evidence points in that direction—then life matters and human life matters greatly.

I am here and I am here for a reason. I am here to rule the created order and to mirror God's moral, intellectual, relational, and positional likeness. I am here to be a worshiper and friend of God—the true God and His only Son whom He has sent. I am here to mirror God's image, to tend God's world, to

⁵ Believing and saying this, the atheist Ernest Hemingway grew bored and despondent after many years of adventurous and riotous living. In the end this is what he believed when he took a gun, and took his own life. One thing can be said for Hemingway: he at least practiced what he believed. He believed there was no God, and he lived like it. He connected the logical dots: if there is no God there is no meaning. He would have laughed at the delusion that humans can create meaning for themselves. He knew that if God is dead, meaning suffers a similar fate. You can't have the latter without the former.

sing, paint, and celebrate God's creation, to be God's friend, and to worship God's glory.

The Good News, Bad News, Good News Saga of Man

“In one way Man was to be haughtier than he had ever been before; in another way he was to be humbler than he had ever been before.

In so far as I am Man I am the chief of creatures.

In so far as I am a man I am the chief of sinners.”⁶

Grand and Grim

The human story is one both grand and grim, leading to potential grandness again. It is a good news, bad news, good news saga if ever there was one. The good news is that Man was made in the image of God in great splendor, honor and God-like virtue. He was made to be the Creator's moral and regal shadow cast over planet earth. He was made as lord of creation, and friend and worshiper of God. This news is very good, but it turns very bad.

Some Very Bad News

The bad news is that Man has fallen from glory and virtue, and the fall is great. After Genesis 1 and 2 comes Genesis 3. Man is no more an accurate moral image of his Maker. He's a sinner who fights against rather than fellowships with God. Man is no more a lord over a *cooperative* and *friendly* creation. Nature fights back. Tornados, typhoons, tidal waves and tumors all remind us that nature is cursed; it was cursed when Man fell (Romans 8:19-22).

Everything from dandelions to dentists' chairs reminds us that the physical realm suffers under the effects of the fall. Nature is not nearly so willing to bend its knee to Man as it once was in Eden. The power of creation, once ready to be harnessed for all that is good, is now often unleashed against us. The Garden has turned into a war zone; Eden into a cemetery.

⁶ G.K. Chesterton

It Gets Worse

The worst of all news is that Man who was made to be a worshiper and friend of God has turned traitorous and idolatrous instead. He has betrayed God, committing “cosmic treason”⁷. We have become enemies of God bent on doing our own will. As a result God has set His wrath on us, and has had no option but to determine judgment against all our sin. Made to walk in His love, we are born instead, under His wrath (Ephesians 2.1-3).

Good News Again

No better news could ever be heard than this:

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”⁸

Following the good news of Man’s status as image bearer and the bad news of Man’s treason is the good news of God’s salvation. Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God became Man to die *in the place* of Man, that Man might be rescued from his fallen state, and restored to the glory and fellowship of God.

“[This] concept of substitution [in the place of] may be said to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting Himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices Himself for man and puts Himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man alone.”⁹

⁷ R.C. Sproul

⁸ Romans 5:6-11

⁹ John Stott

Here is the gospel of grace.

He Tasted Death for Everyone

The writer of Hebrews captures the *good news, bad news, good news* saga with vivid clarity when he describes how the glorious Son of God *tasted death* in place of us, that we might experience glory in the company of Heaven:

“It has been testified somewhere, “What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.” Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.” And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.” Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”¹⁰

Bringing Many Sons to Glory

Through His vicarious death on the cross, Jesus bore our sins and the wrath they deserved, so that we might triumph over sin, death and hell, to join Him as He *brings many sons and daughters to glory*. This glory is the glory we once had in Eden. It is the complete restoration and glorification of all who repent of their treason against God and believe in His Son as Savior. This glory is

¹⁰ Hebrews 2:6-15

Redeemed Man, reinstated as full and perfect image-bearer of God, lord of creation, and best of all, friend and worshiper of God.

A Final Word

It is this good news, bad news, good news saga that reveals both the nature and destiny of Man. It defines our identity, our condition and our hope, thereby leading us to the essential purpose of life. I am convinced that there can be no ambition more worthy or quest more important than to discover all that this means.

Immortal Horrors or Everlasting Splendors

There are two options in the human experience, and two destinies to which they lead. Those who continue their treasonous opposition to God never discover the good news that follows the bad. For them it is good news, bad news, worse news. But those who pursue God and Truth find glory and immortality (Romans 2.7).

“There are no ordinary people. You have never met a mere mortal, Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations, these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit -- immortal horrors or ever lasting splendours [sic].”¹¹

My friend, you must take your pick. I recommend that you make the pursuit of a relationship with God and of the full restoration of His image the singular focused passion of your life. Look to Christ who is the perfect Image of God (Hebrews 1:3) and you will find both the One who can rescue you from your fallen condition and the only One who can restore you to your intended glory. There is nowhere else to turn, no one else to trust, nothing else for which to live, and no other destiny worth having.

¹¹ C.S. Lewis

Appendix

Mankind or Humankind

I should explain my less than politically correct use of the terms *Man* and *Mankind*. Today's prevailing practice is to replace the long-used *Man* or *Mankind* with the generic *Human* or *Humankind*. This is a verbal concession to feminist concerns and a well-meaning reaction to what certainly has been widespread patriarchal arrogance through the centuries. It has become standard terminology in nearly all references to the human race and discussions of gender-related issues. While I have no opposition to the terms *Human* and *Humankind*, and would use them in certain contexts, and while I stand against all forms of true patriarchal arrogance and machismo chauvinism and abuse, I have biblical/theological reasons for retaining the use of *Man* and *Mankind* as normative descriptive terms for the human race.

A biblical reason for retaining the use of *Man* and *Mankind* is simply that God started its use. In Genesis 5:1 God calls the human race "Man". The Hebrew word is *adam*, which is both the proper name of the first man and the Hebrew word for the adult male. Rather than choose a gender-neutral term to describe the human race, God selects the Hebrew word for *males* or *men*. This suggests that God's perspective is that in some way, the word *Man* is the right word to use to describe *all* human beings, whether male or female. Those who argue against the patriarchal use of *Mankind* should first reckon with the fact that God is the One who started the practice.

I suspect that God's reason for this choice of words is *revelatory*. He does this to reveal early hints of a rich biblical/theological truth that would be progressively developed throughout the rest of Scripture. I believe that the biblical concept of *patriarchal representation* of the human race (expressed in the terms *Man* and *Mankind*) is divinely connected to a broader theme of *representation* that is central to the entire Bible and even to the gospel itself. Throughout the Bible, groups of people are represented by individuals, those individuals usually, if not exclusively, being *men*. For example, in ancient Israel men represented their families, their clans, and their nation before God in various contexts and times (e.g.-Num. 1:2-19, 44).

Another example is that of Adam himself. One of Paul's main points in Romans 5.12-21 is that Adam represented the human race, and as a result, when he sinned all died in him. This motif of *representation*, by men in general, and by Adam in particular, is illustrative of and parallel to, the representative work of Christ in behalf of his people in the gospel.

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:18, 19) .

“As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

Adam represented the whole human race before God; Christ now represents all his people before God. He is our representative Head. We stand in Him.

This headship/representation motif does not end with the work of Christ, but receives ongoing living parable expression in the marriage relationship. Christ's representative relationship with us and the idea of our union in Christ are meant to be mirrored in the husband's relationship to the wife, and in her oneness with and in him (Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3). The relationship between man and woman in marriage was created to reflect the relationship between Christ and the church. As the head of the Church, Jesus Christ represents the church, and the church stands in Him, so the head of the wife and home, the husband, represents the wife, and she is to stand in him. Thus I would argue for the retention of the patriarchal male representative terms because they are intended by God to communicate these truths about His relationship with us.

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