

The Work of Christ

Models of seeing the work of Christ

1. Redeem, Restore, Renew
 - a. Redeem = fix what is broken
 - b. Restore = reinstate, put back where it naturally belongs
 - c. Renew = instill a new characteristic through the refining process
2. Prophet, Priest, King (Lord & Savior - which do you experience first?)
 - a. Prophet – revealer
 - b. Priest – reconciler
 - c. King – ruler
3. Son of Man, Son of God (Human/Divine attributes of His work)
 - a. Humiliation - incarnation (descending, life in conflict with rulers, death)
 - b. Exaltation - resurrection, ascension, second coming (glorification)
 - c. God had to become man to redeem man - only God can save, and only man can pay the penalty for man's sin (substitutory atonement theory-OT sacrificial system)

The need for Christ

1. Creation - by Design/Image of God
 - a. Purpose of Sabbath rest - God to enjoy His creation (man being the relational apex of creation & relation with God)
 - i. POINT - Rest finds its meaning in relationship to God (Creation charts from Dr. Gordon Hugenberger)
 - b. Image of God - the essence of intimacy with God and His very own self-expression by design
 - i. Gen 1:26-27 - male and female in partnership also with each other
 - ii. POINT - we are created for eternal & relational purposes of God (Acts 17:25-28)

Perspectives on “Image of God”

- Image as Spiritual essence - most popular view, we are spiritual beings that find the core of our essence in the spiritual nature (defined by rational capacities, moral faculties, and will)
 - Problem - limits image to non-physical, creates duality in essence of being. Was Jesus image of God only in spiritual nature - or wholly?
 - What does the physical image reflect of God?
 - Son - enfleshed in space & time - ascends to heavenly places (beyond space & time still enfleshed)
 - If God is above time, and the spiritual body is ultimately eternal, could the Son have always owned a physical body?
- Image as dominion - rule over creation, vassal kings (God’s representatives to creation), human authority deriving from God. Cultural mandates.
 - Problem - limits essence to function, being tied to doing. Whereas Genesis 1:26-27 seems to speak to creation of identity in general

The Personhood of God, pt 7 – the Work of Christ

- Image as Righteousness (Luther) - moral faculty defines humanity. We are created holy, pure, good. Sin destroys this image, redemption restores it.
 - Problem – image of God, and therefore to some degree intimacy with God, is defined by works
 - Image as Human Sexuality (Karl Barth) - creative process, in relational context of man and woman. Relationship and procreation defines essence.
 - Problem - all animal kingdom shares this to some degree
 - SUMMARY - may be best to understand how all of these aspects contribute to larger picture that our being (human nature - physically & spiritually) is tied as an image (Hebrew = Selem “image according to the original”, ‘d’mut “analogical resemblance”) to God. Not part of us, but rather we as beings are the image of God. A visible representation of God in the physical world (ambassadors, reflection, children, etc.).
 - Existence of a soul/spirit through which self-consciousness, knowledge, and application can be determined
 - Morality, lost and renewed
 - Dominion as God’s representatives over environment exercised through the physical body/self
 - Capacity for eternal life
- c. “Image” implies a separation between the creator and created.
- i. Reflectors of God, not God. (mirror is not the picture it reflects)
 1. We will always reflect something (good or bad), and given the image of God we will always reflect something of God's being
 - ii. BUT we are also not mirrors, we have being, so reflecting God must speak to essence of existence (mirror analogy only goes so far).
 1. Image = similarity (likeness, characteristics only found in God are in us), sonship (in ancient world a son "reflected" his father). We are what we reflect. We reflect what we worship (God or self)
 2. Object of worship defines who we are. We become like what we desire to become
 3. This brings us back to the idea of the “logos” (seed bearer)
 - iii. Col 1:15-20 - JESUS IS IMAGE OF GOD (there is mystery here between the creator/created... visible/invisible... divine/human... theanthropic relationship!! (more on this later)
 1. Firstborn of creation - prototype of imago dei, God's self expression (visible representation of the invisible, Son-God's created expression-enfleshed)
 - a. Firstborn was the heir, rights
 2. Incarnation brings what is invisible visible. Idolatry attempts to make what is visible into God
 - iv. This mystery extends to us - Col 1:26-27
 1. No coincidence that this “mystery” starts with Christ in beginning of chapter 1 and ends the chapter with the mystery in us

The Personhood of God, pt 7 – the Work of Christ

Summary –

Image implies separation in personhood from the Father, but cannot imply on its own a separation from the essence of the God (b/c Christ is also called the image of God).

In what way are we in the image of God, how is it different from Christ?

- a. Christ has the fullness of the deity
- b. But we are to grow in the fullness of Christ who is the fullness of God (see also Romans 8:29-30)

Thought for future class discussions: In what way does Christ represent us (and who we are becoming) in the mystery of the divine, human relationship?

- a. What is the separation between Creator and created as the created exists in the fullness of the Creator's self-expression?
- b. Theanthropic - God/Man implies a relationship of mutuality (100%/100%) that can exist between the divine and human
- c. 1 Cor 15:20-24 – first fruits of the incorruptible seed implies the seed produces second and third (etc)...fruits. Is this merely talking about the resurrection as a quantitative life (eternal) or qualitative life (state of being)?

Assignment:

Re-read Genesis 1-2 and review lecture notes above. Answer the following questions in short answer form (paragraph or two each).

1. What do we know about God that can inform us about what it means to be truly human (as God intends, designed)?
2. What do we know about humanity that can inform us about who God is (how does the mirrored image reflect the substance)?
3. How would you explain our identity, meaning, and purpose to someone who felt they lacked it?