

Man: God's Visible Replica and Vice-Regent

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What is man? If we addressed this question to the world at large, we might get one of two answers. Some would tell us that man is an animal. He may be the most sophisticated animal on the earth. But in the last analysis, man is just an animal.¹ Others would portray man as something akin to a little god. Man, they would say, has endless potential and the ability to create his own destiny.² The Bible, however, has a more balanced answer.

On the one hand, man shares much in common with the rest of creation and, in particular, with the animal kingdom. Man was created within the six-day creation week like the rest of creation (1:26-28). He was formed from the dust of the ground to be a "living being," as were the animals (2:7). Man, like the animals, was given the "green herb" as food (1:29). Moreover, mankind reproduces (1:28) like the animals (1:22; 8:17). These facts underscore man's continuity with the rest of creation (*cf.*, Gen. 1:22, 30; 2:19).

On the other hand, the Bible portrays man as *much more than a mere animal*. In several ways the Genesis creation account underscores man's uniqueness *vis-à-vis* the rest of creation. First of all, mankind is God's final work of creation (1:26-28). We might say that creation comes to its crescendo in the creation of mankind. Second, God manifests a special interest in man's creation. God brings the rest of creation into existence with the simple expression, "Let there be" (1:3, 6, 14, 20, 24).³ However, God employs a different expression that underscores personal in...

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