

Man's Uniqueness

God, as he approached the climax of his work of creation, declared:

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth (Gen. 1:26).

Consequently:

God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them... The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature (Gen. 1:27; 2:7).

While man is a part of creation, he is more: he is unique within the creation. In particular, man is not just another animal. Only of man did God say: 'Let us make...'. Moreover, only of man did God say: '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'.

Whatever being 'created in God's image' entails, at the very least it means that man is rational, and this certainly marks a vital difference between man and animals. Man is governed by reason, animals by instinct. Man is distinct, unique.

In any case, every part of creation is distinct from every other:

God gives [every aspect of creation] a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of

Man's Uniqueness

the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory (1 Cor. 15:38-41).

I repeat, therefore, that man is not just another animal; not even the highest animal: 'There is one kind [of body] for humans, another for animals'. But it goes deeper than that, far deeper. It is not just difference in the body: man and the animal have different bodies, yes, but only man – not the animal – is made in the image of God.

Moreover, a vital aspect of God's purpose in creating man was that he should rule the rest of creation: 'Let them have dominion over' it, was God's decree. Thus man is the most privileged part of creation. He is not just another animal. Unique is the word.