

Systematic Theology, Lesson 16: Anthropology: The Doctrine of Humanity, Part 1

1. Introduction: the importance of the doctrine of humanity
 - a. “Our beliefs about human nature and the role of grace determine the course of our theology like the rudder on a sailboat. An errant turn here and we shall run aground, endangering the gospel itself.”¹
 - b. What happens when we make an “errant turn” with the doctrine of humanity?
 - i. The *origin* of humanity: if we don’t believe humanity is _____ by God, what are the implications of this for life?
 1. Ethics
 2. Morality
 3. Value of life
 - ii. The *fall* of humanity: if we don’t believe humanity is _____, what are the implications of this for life?
 1. Pelagianism
 2. Behaviorism
2. The Creation of Humanity
 - a. God directly and immediately created humanity in his image and likeness (*imago dei*).
 - i. **Gen 1:27:** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.²
 - ii. **Gen 5:1b:** In the days when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.
 - iii. **Gen 9:6:** Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

¹ Robert A. Pyne, *Humanity & Sin: The Creation, Fall, and Redemption of Humanity* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 170.

² Unless otherwise indicated all Scripture references are to the New American Standard Bible.

- iv. **Col 3:10**: and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.
 - v. **Jas 3:9**: With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God.
 - vi. **GCBC Statement of Faith**: We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness.
- b. What does it mean to be created in God's image and likeness?
- i. Unfortunately, the Bible is not _____ about what it means to be created in God's image and likeness. Therefore, much discussion has taken place throughout the history of the Church attempting to answer the question of what the image of God in man entails.
 - ii. The Scripture uses two different words: image (e.g., **Gen 1:27**) and likeness (e.g., **Gen 5:1b**). Though these two words have different nuances, most evangelical scholars believe the basic concept is the same because of the interchangeable nature of usage (see verses above).
 - iii. Image and likeness refer to _____ and _____. **Gen 5:3**: "When Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth." Image and likeness mean, then, at minimum, we resemble and represent God.
 - iv. Image and likeness is both something humanity is and something humanity does.
 - 1. Who humanity *is*:
 - a. Moral creature:
 - i. **Eph 4:24**: And put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.
 - ii. **Col 3:10**: and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.
 - b. Relational creature:

- i. **Gen 1:26:** Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image . . .”
- ii. **Gen 1:27:** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

2. What humanity *does*—dominion (rule):

- a. **Gen 1:26:** Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
- b. **Gen 1:28:** “God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

c. What happened to the image of God after the Fall?

i. Several post-Fall verses teach that man retains the image of God:

- 1. **Gen 9:6:** Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.
- 2. **1 Cor 11:7:** For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is in the image and glory of God.

ii. How did the Fall impact the image of God in man? The Fall _____ the image. This is implied by verses that instruct Christians to become *like* God.

- 1. **Rom 8:29:** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.
- 2. Thus, the purpose of the Christian life, in a very real sense, is for the original image of God at creation, which was marred at the Fall, to be restored to its original state.

iii. Jesus is the image of God perfectly.

1. **Col 1:15:** [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
 2. **Heb 1:3a:** And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.
- d. Why did God create humanity?
- i. God did not create humanity because he was lacking in anything, for God is self-sufficient.
 1. **Acts 17:24-25:** “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things.”
 2. **John 17:5, 24:** “Now, Father, glorify Me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. . . . Father, I desire that they also , whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”
 - ii. God created humanity for his own glory.
 1. **Isa 43:7:** “Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”
 2. **Rom 11:36:** For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
 - iii. Thus, since God created us for his own glory, our purpose in life is to fulfill the reason for God creating us: to bring glory to him.
 1. **1 Cor 10:31:** Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
 2. **Rev 4:11:** “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

3. **GCBC Statement of Faith:** We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, . . . and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world.

3. The Constitution of Humanity

- a. Nature of humanity: are human beings two parts or three parts? Two basic answers:
 - i. Dichotomy: humanity is soul/spirit and body
 - ii. Trichotomy: humanity is soul, spirit, and body
 - iii. Arguments for dichotomy:
 1. Scripture uses “soul” and “spirit” interchangeably. Examples:
 - a. **John 12:27a:** “Now My soul has become troubled.”
 - b. **John 13:21a:** “When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit.”
 - c. Also compare: Gen 41:8 to Ps 42:6 and Heb 12:23 to Rev 6:9.
 2. The immaterial and material parts of man can be separated:
 - a. **2 Cor 5:6-8:** Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.
 3. The Scriptures emphasize the unity of man’s immaterial and material parts:
 - a. **Gen 2:7:** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”
 - b. **2 Cor 4:16:** Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

- c. **Jas 2:26:** For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.
 - iv. Objection to dichotomy: if dichotomy is true, why does the Bible use two different words for the immaterial part of man: “soul” and “spirit”?
Answer: soul and spirit are different in *function*, not *substance*.
 - v. Summary: humanity is a _____ .
 - vi. Why does this matter? Counseling.
- b. Origin of the soul: where does the soul come from?
 - i. Traducianism: both body and soul/spirit are derived from the sexual union of a man and woman.
 - ii. Creationism: only the body is derived from the parents and the soul/spirit is directly created by God at fertilization.
 - iii. Arguments in favor of traducianism
 - 1. God breathed into man the breath of life (soul/spirit) *one* time. **Gen 2:7:** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
 - 2. God ceased from his work of *creation* after he created man. **Gen 2:2:** By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.
 - 3. The image of God in man, an *immaterial* aspect of man, is passed from Adam to Seth by Adam not directly by God. **Gen 5:3:** When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.
 - iv. Arguments in favor of creationism
 - 1. At creation the body is from the earth, whereas the soul is directly from God. **Gen 2:7:** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (cf. Num 16:22; Ecc 12:7; Isa 42:5; Zech 12:1; Heb 12:9).

2. Creationism is more consistent with the nature of soul than traducianism, namely, the soul is immaterial and cannot be reproduced in a lab.

v. Solution

1. The Bible is not clear, so it should be left a mystery.
2. Furthermore, both theories have flaws.

vi. Implications

1. For the hamartiology: doctrine of sin.
2. For human personality: how do you explain non-material human personality traits?