

UNIT 2: God's Creating Work

Section 12: Anthropology: The Image of God

Systematic Theologies:

Berkof, Boyce, Calvin, Chafer, Culver,
Erickson, Grudem, Lloyd-Jones, Ryrie

INTRODUCTION:

Having discussed the origin and universality of humanity, we now move to a discussion of man as described in Scripture as “the image of God.” There are six verses which expressly announce that mankind is in the image of God. In these six verses the phrase “image of God” is used eight times.

- **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."
- **Gen 1:27** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
- **Gen 5:1** This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.
- **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 Cor 11:7** For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.
- **Jam 3:9** With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

Q1: What exactly does “the image of God” mean?

Q2: What quality or characteristic can be identified as “proof” of God’s image?

Q3: Was the “image of God” affected in the Fall? If so, in what way?

I. The Explanation of Man as the Image of God

A. Word Study

1. Hebrew Terminology:

- a. **צֶלֶם** – “tselem” – 3 references to “image of God” in Genesis (**Gen 1:26-27,9:6**).
 - (1) The term came from the root meaning “to cut, as of a statue or chiseled likeness”
 - (2) **3D images: 1 Sam 6:5** "So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods, and your land. & **Amos 5:26** "You also carried along Sikkuth your king and Kiyyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves.
 - (3) **2D images: Ezekiel 23:14** "So she increased her harlotries. And she saw men portrayed on the wall, images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion,
- b. **דְמוּת** – “demuth” – 2 references to “likeness of God” in Genesis (**Gen 1:26, 5:1**).
 - (1) The word communicates “similitude”
 - (2) **Isaiah 40:18** To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?

- (3) **Eze 1:5** Within it there were figures resembling four living beings. And this was their appearance: they had human form. (**1:5,10,13,16,22,26,28; 10:1,10,21,22**)
2. Greek Terminology:
- a. εἰκών – “*icon*” Gr. term used to translate “image”
 - (1) Only use in the Gospels is when Jesus asks whose “likeness/image” in imprinted on a coin: **Matt 22:20, Mk 12:16, Lk 20:24** – Caesar’s.
 - (2) Paul uses the term quite often: **Rom 1:23, 8:29; 1Cor 11:7, 15:49; 2Cor 3:18, 4:4; Col 1:15, 3:10** (more on these references later...)
 - b. ὁμοίωσις – “*homoiosis*” – Gr. term used to translate “likeness”
 - (1) Only one time in the NT: **James 3:9** With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;
 - (2) We’ll look at this reference later as well...

B. Historical Sketch

1. “image” and “likeness” have been variously discussed throughout church history!
 - a. The question is what is meant by these two terms...
 - b. Here is a great example of how our “anthropology” has great implications on other categories of systematic theology – like “soteriology” and “eschatology”
 - c. Of no small matter is how the two terms are related to one another!
2. Brief Sketch
 - a. The early church fathers were quite unanimous in their belief that the image of God in man consisted primarily of man’s rational and moral characteristics, but some included bodily traits as well...
 - b. Irenaeus and Tertullian drew a distinction between “image” and “likeness” of God, the former describing “bodily traits” while the latter “spiritual nature.”
 - c. **Clement and Origen** drew the distinction on the basis of “image” denoting characteristics of man as man while “likeness” conveyed qualities not essential to man but which may be cultivated or lost – this view was adopted by **Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine**.
 - d. **Pelagius** and his followers believed “the image of God” just described man as endowed with reason (so he could know God), free-will (so he could choose to do good) and power to rule creation (dominion).
 - e. **The Scholastics** (period leading up the Reformation) carried forward a “distinction” between “image” and “likeness” but refined the position. *Image* was in reference to man’s intellectual powers of reason and freedom, while *likeness* described man’s state of “original righteousness.” This later developed into the belief that “image” was granted as a “natural gift” to all men, while “likeness” (original righteousness) was a supernatural gift which served to check the “lower appetites” of man.
 - f. **The Reformers** rejected the distinction between *image* and *likeness*, and considered original righteousness as belonging to the very nature of man in his original creation. **Luther** being a skilled exegete explained *image* and *likeness* to be an instance of Hebrew parallelism...
 - g. **Luther** did not seek to find “the image of God” in man in any natural endowments, such as rational or moral powers, but exclusively in “original righteousness” and therefore regarded it as entirely lost by sin. He responded to **Gen 9:6** by explaining

that the uncorrupted image still exists in God's intention for humans, but is not actually present in them.

- h. **Calvin**, on the other hand, believed the image of God extended to natural and spiritual endowments; both being distorted by the Fall, but only the later (spiritual righteousness) being completely lost.
- i. **Berkhof**, "Socinians and some early Arminians taught that "the image of God" only applied to man's dominion over creation. They saw righteousness not as something merely granted by God, but developed over time. Hence "the image of God" can only be a certain receptivity for the divine, a capacity to answer to the divine ideal, and to grow into God-likeness."

C. Drawing Some Conclusions:

1. As the reformers held, the words "image" and "likeness" are used synonymously and interchangeably, and therefore do not refer to two different things.
 - a. **Gen 1:26** both terms are utilized. **Gen 1:27** only "image." **Gen 5:1** only "likeness" but in **Gen 5:3** both terms are used. **Gen 9:6** uses "image" to convey whole concept
 - b. **I Cor 11:7** "image" and "glory," **Col 3:10** "image" alone, **Ja 3:9** only "likeness"
 - c. **Calvin**, "Repetitions are common in Hebrew, which often gives two words for one thing... God having determined to create man in his own image, to remove the obscurity which was in this terms adds, by way of explanation, in his likeness, as if he had said, that he would make man, in whom he would, as it were, image himself by means of the marks of resemblance impressed upon him."
 - d. **Ryrie**, "No sharp distinction between them can be sustained linguistically... By using these two words together the biblical author seems to be attempting to express a very difficult idea in which he wants to make clear that man is in some way the concrete reflection of God, but at the same time he wants to spiritualize this towards abstraction."
 - e. The conflagration of terms indicates that the image of God in man is similar to God in some way... man is more than a "symbol" of God... he "resembles" God...
 - f. **Culver** provides a great illustration, "In this case *likeness* following *image* certainly explains, enlarges, specifies *tselem* as an image that is not merely representative of God, but actually like Him. The flag of fifty stars and thirteen stripes only *represents* the USA but is not like the USA at all. A two-dimensional map, however, is somewhat like the country, a 3-dimensional raised map even more so. Although both mainly represent, there is real similarity."
2. Man, as created, was made with original righteousness: true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.
 - a. God declares: **Genesis 1:31** God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
 - b. **Berkof**, "Man's original condition was one of positive holiness, and not a state of innocence or moral neutrality."
 - c. **Isaac Watts**, "A rational creature thus made, must not only be innocent and free, but must be formed holy. His will must have an inward bias to virtue: he must have an inclination to please that God who made him; a supreme love to his Creator, a zeal to serve him, and a tender fear of offending him. For either the new created

man loved God supremely or not. If he did not he was not innocent, since the law of nature requires a supreme love to God.”

- d. **Richard Watson**, “[Man] was made holy and happy; he was admitted to intercourse with God. He was not left alone, but had the pleasure of society. He was placed in a world of grandeur, harmony, beauty, and utility; it was canopied with other distant worlds to exhibit to his very sense a manifestation of the extent of space and the vastness of the varied universe; and to call both his reason, his fancy, and his devotion, into their most vigorous and salutary exercises.”
3. The image of God, though, extends beyond man’s original condition to include elements which belong to the natural constitution of man
 - a. While we might not be able to pinpoint one exact quality, this might be the point... man in totality is a representative of God on earth...
 - b. There are three main views of how the image of God is manifest in Man:
 - (1) **Relational View** – the image of God is “experienced” in relationship to God and other humans...
 - o This view largely grew out of a philosophical movement called *existentialism* (a movement that deemphasizes essences/substances)...
 - o Reality is not so much something that is simply there and one accepts but something one creates... Brunner and Barth are famous for this position.
 - o In this view, the image of God is manifest in relationship experienced...
 - o But this has a couple problems:
 - The image of God is universal in all humans, so in what way is the image of God present in those living in hostile rebellion against God?
 - What is it about humans that enables them to have this relationship with God that no other creature is able to have?
 - (2) **Functional View** – the image of God is not something a human is or experiences but something a human does.
 - o This view has gained large support due to the popularity of the philosophical movement called pragmatism, but elements of this view have existed for some time.
 - o The image of God consists in what humans do.
 - o The most frequently mentioned activity is that which is mentioned in Genesis – Exercising Dominion over Creation.
 - o While there is a close connection between “being created in the image of God” and exercising dominion over Creation, there are difficulties with this being put forward as the sum-total of what it means to made in God’s image.
 - Genesis 1 gives no clear indication that “the image of God” should be equated with “the exercise of dominion.” On the contrary, they appear as distinguishable steps. God creates man in His own image, and then gives a command that they exercise dominion.
 - (3) **Substantive View** – the image of God consists in certain characteristics within the very nature of man...
 - o *Moral Aspects*
 - Moral accountability before God.
 - Conscience – “law written on the heart” – sense of right and wrong
 - Ingrained concept of punishment/reward

- *Spiritual Aspects*
 - Immaterial Soul/Spirit
 - Spiritual Life (by God’s gift) allows for relationship to God
 - Immortality – we will not cease to exist... live forever
- *Mental Aspects*
 - Able to reason/think, engage in abstract reasoning. **Grudem**, “No group of chimpanzees will ever sit around the table arguing the doctrine of the Trinity or the relative merits of Calvinism or Arminianism!”
 - Use of complex, abstract language, even from early ages...
 - Awareness of distant future – Ecc 3:11 “He has also set eternity in their heart”
 - Human “creativity” (in the lower sense, obviously only God “creates)
 - Complex emotions, even conflicting ones simultaneously! *Ex) Chess* 😊
- *Relational Aspects*
 - Complex Diverse Community in Marriage, Church, Government
 - Right to Rule over Creation
- *Physical Aspects*
 - Man has been given a “soul/spirit” in which qualities of simplicity, spirituality, invisibility, and immortality exist.
 - Man has powers of intellect, reason, volition, moral choice...
- *Material Qualities*
 - **Obviously** we understand that God is “spirit” (John 4:24), so it is not as if our bodies were duplicates of “God’s body” for He has no body...
 - **NOTE:** Mormons err greatly in this respect, believing God to have a body
 - **But as Culver explains**, “There seems to me full warrant to say that there is something about the human body which is analogous to something in the Godhead. In the process of time God took ‘the form of a man,’ including man’s body.” – Man’s body was created to bear God’s image!
 - Man’s body was created by God as a suitable/fit organ to contain the soul, which is the instrument by which man’s soul interacts with God and Creation.
 - **Ryrie**, “While God is not physical in any way, there is a sense in which even a man’s body is included in the image of God, for man is a unitary being composed of both body and soul. His body is a fit instrument for the self-expression of a soul made for fellowship with the Creator and is suited eschatologically to become a “spiritual body” (**I Cor 15:44**).
 - **Grudem** explains that there are elements of our physical bodies that reflect God’s own character. “For example, our physical bodies give us the ability to see with our eyes. This is a Godlike quality because God Himself sees, and sees far more than we will ever see, although he does not do it with physical eyes like we have. Our ears give us the ability to hear, and this is a Godlike ability, even though God does not have physical ears. Our mouths give us the ability to speak, reflecting the fact that God is a God who speaks. Our sense of taste and touch and smell

give us the ability to understand and enjoy God's creation, reflecting the fact that God himself understands and enjoys His creation, though in a far greater sense than we do."

4. Having been created in God's image, man is set apart from the rest of creation.
 - a. Only man is created specially "in God's image"
 - b. This is NOT to say that the rest of creation bears no resemblance to the Creator, for all of God's works are displays of His wisdom and greatness... Even the scriptures make use of zoomorphism's in describing God (although there are far more anthropomorphism's).
 - c. But in a special and unique manner, man is patterned after God (see qualities above)
 - d. Man is also given "dominion" over the rest of creation by God's design.
 - e. **Psalm 8** For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of David. O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! ² From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease. ³ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; ⁴ What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? ⁵ Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! ⁶ You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, ⁷ All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, ⁸ The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth!

II. The Distortion of the Image of God in Man

A. *The Image of God in Fullness...*

1. Man is different now than when He was originally created and placed in the Garden.
2. Only Adam and Eve before the Fall, and more specially Jesus demonstrated true and unadulterated humanity. All others are distorted, twisted, corrupted...

B. *The Roman Catholic Position:*

1. God gave *dona naturalia* (natural gifts) composed of spirituality, freedom, and immortality, but due to man's tendency to rebel against higher powers of reason and conscience by lower appetites, God added *dona supernaturalia* (supernatural gifts).
2. Among the *dona supernaturalia* were *donum superadditum* of original righteousness (supernatural likeness to God). These supernatural gifts were lost by sin, but their loss did not disrupt the essential nature of man.
3. They explain that man maintained "the image of God" but lost the "likeness of God."
4. Original righteousness did not belong to man in its integrity, but was something supernaturally added. Man was without positive holiness, but also without sin, though burdened with a tendency which might easily result in sin. But the Roman Catholic Church provides "sacraments" to restore righteousness ("likeness")...
5. So after the Fall, man is largely what he was before the Fall. The natural man is now exactly where Adam was before he was endowed w/ original righteousness, though with a somewhat stronger bias toward evil.

6. They teach that human nature is no more afflicted w/ ignorance and weakness, than if it were in a state of [pre-fall] pure nature. This position introduces a whole slew of theological problems and distortions of the scriptures...
7. **Gordon Clark** explains, “Even though the neutral state [immediately after the fall] was soon defaced by voluntary sin, man without saving grace could still obey God’s commands upon occasion. After regeneration a man could do even more than God requires. This then becomes the foundation of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the treasury [of merit] of the saints. If a particular man does not earn enough merit, the Pope can transfer from the saints’ accounts as many more merits as are necessary for entrance into heaven. One horrendous implication of all this is that although Christ’s death remains necessary to salvation, it is not sufficient. Human merit is indispensable.”

C. *The Protestant Position:*

1. Protestants teach man was created in a state of relative perfection, a state of righteousness and holiness. His condition was a preliminary and temporary one, which would either lead to greater perfection and glory or terminate in a Fall.
2. He was *by nature* endowed with original righteousness (as the crowning glory of the image of God) and lived in a state of “positive holiness”
3. Man was warned that if he transgressed God’s command he would die... So while not liable to death, he had the possibility of becoming a victim of death if he sinned.
4. **Berhof**, “It should be borne in mind that man’s original immortality was not something purely negative and physical, but was something positive and spiritual as well. It meant life in communion with God and the enjoyment of the favor of the Most High... The loss of that righteousness meant the loss of something that belonged to man in his ideal state. Man could lose it and still remain man, but he could not lose it and remain man in the ideal sense of the word.”
5. **So the fall of man** marred the image of God, but did not remove it!
 - a. Man maintained the “image of God” in the broad sense: personality, rationality, moral sense, aesthetic sense, and humor, etc (although greatly marred).
 - b. Man lost “the image of God” in the narrow sense – holiness, righteousness, true knowledge of God.
6. This is the basis for “capital punishment” and prohibition of “slander”
 - a. **Gen 9:6** "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.
 - b. **Ja 3:9-10** With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; ¹⁰ from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.
 - c. **Chafer**, “To sin against man either by murder or by slander is reprobable on the ground of the divine image being resident in man. A sacredness appertains to human life. Man must respect his fellow man, not on the ground of kinship, but on the ground of the exalted truth that human life belongs to God. To injure man is to injure one who bears the image of God.”

D. Other Views:

1. Pelagians and Arminians discount the idea of an original state of holiness altogether.
2. They hold that man was created in a state of innocence, of moral neutrality, and endowed with free will so he could turn in either direction.
3. They believe that man determines his character by his own free choice; and holiness can only result from a victorious struggle against evil.
4. **Berhof**, "Pelagians hold man was created mortal. Death did not result from the entrance of sin into the world, but was simply the natural termination of human nature as it was constituted."
5. **SUMMARY: Chafer**, "Both Lutherans and Calvinists subscribe to the highest view of man in his unfallen estate, and to the darkest picture of man in his fallen estate. Romanists, Socinians or Remonstrants, and modern liberals take the lower view of unfallen man and the more flattering view of fallen man."

III. The Restoration of the Image of God in Man

A. Christ as the Last Adam...

1. Christ bears the true image of God!
 - a. **2 Corinthians 4:4** in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
 - b. **Colossians 1:15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
2. He is not an image in the derived sense, but as **Hebrews 1:3** explains, "And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature..."
 - a. While man is a "created copy," Christ is the "essential image"
 - b. **Culver**, "Whatever the *being* of God is, the Son of God is – not by derivation or creation but by nature... In His redemptive work as Last Adam He has made it possible for human beings to recover the lost moral likeness which was possessed by the man of paradise but lost wholly in the fall."
 - c. Christ's holy character is an example of the divine image undistorted by sin!
 - (1) He had perfect fellowship with the Father!
 - (2) He obeyed the Father's will in every detail!
 - (3) He displayed love for His Father and Humanity!

B. Man Redeemed and the Image of God Restored...

1. The story of redemption tells us of God's plan to restore the "image of God" in man.
2. **1 Corinthians 15:45** So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.
3. Relationship with God is restored by 2nd Adam's work of redemption! (**Rom 5**)
4. **Calvin**, "When Adam lost his first estate he became alienated from God. Wherefore, although we grant that the image of God was not utterly effaced and destroyed in him, it was, however, so corrupted, that anything which remains is fearful deformity; and, therefore, our deliverance begins with that renovation which we obtain from Christ, who is, therefore, called the second, because he restores us to true and substantial integrity... The end of regeneration is to form us anew in the image of God."

5. **Sanctification:**
 - a. **Chafer**, “The first creation finds its archetype in *Elohim*, for man was made in the image of *Elohim*. The New Creation finds its archetype in the Son of God. It is into the image of Christ that saving grace brings those who are redeemed.”
 - b. **Ephesians 4:24** and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.
 - c. **Colossians 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—
 - d. **2 Corinthians 3:18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same **image** from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
6. **Glorification:**
 - a. **Romans 8:29** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the **image** of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;
 - b. **1 John 3:2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be **like Him**, because we will see Him just as He is.

IV. Practical Applications of Man as the Image of God

- *List Given by Erickson:*
 1. We belong to God. Since we bear the image of God proper response to Him is obedience, honor, submission, worship, loyalty, love, etc. Jesus explained in Mk 12:13-17 “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s. Give to God what is God’s.” What belongs to God? Since the coin bore Caesar’s image, give it to Caesar. Since we bear God’s image, give ourselves to God!
 2. We should pattern ourselves after Jesus. The image of God in the purest sense is the forming of Christ likeness in us! **Romans 8:29** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the **image** of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;
 3. We experience full humanity only when we are properly related to God. **2 Corinthians 3:18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same **image** from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit
 4. Learning and Work are good. The exercise of dominion preceded the Fall. It was part of God’s original intention for humanity. Work is not a curse, but part of God’s good plan.
 5. The Human is Valuable. Humanity is invested with dignity because God created man in His image. All human life regardless of gender, age, color, nationality is to be valued. Human life is to be valued above plant and animal life.