

# **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin,**

## **Session 4, Image of God in Humans**

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the Doctrines of Humanity and Sin. This is session 4, image of God in Humans.

Let us pray. Gracious Father, we thank You for making us in Your image capable of knowing, loving, and serving You. Encourage our hearts, we pray. Work in us and bless our families. We ask through Jesus Christ, the mediator.

Amen. We're studying the doctrine of humanity, we study the origin of humankind, and our third topic will be the constitutional nature of human beings, that is, how many parts are we, but the central topic and the main one as far as the theological anthropology is the image of God. We start with historical theology before going to the Bible because it gives us some background, and there have been distinct views of the image throughout church history.

The predominant view for a long time was the so-called substantive or structural view, that is, the image of God is something in the very makeup of human beings. Now, don't think of body primarily because that is not what the main focus of the structural or substantive view was, but contrary to merely being our function or role or being found in our relationships, the substantive views held that it's something about human beings, qua human beings, that is our very makeup. And the outstanding example was rationality.

God made Adam and Eve with cognition, able to know his thoughts after him, and able to do his will, as we'll see when we get to the two Pauline texts that affirm this idea; supremely, it was thought the image of God is found in human reason. I mean, what other animal can know God and use his mind to read his word, pray to him, and do his will? Thomas Aquinas, the great medieval theologian, is a prime example of someone who affirmed the substantive understanding or structure in our very makeup, our very structure. Again, don't think about the body; think about spiritual structure, if you will, as human beings.

Functional views are much more recent in church history. We're talking about the 20th century, where function is emphasized. The seat of the image is not in human rationality, not in human cognition, not in our ability to think God's thoughts after him and do his will, not in our structure, but rather in our function, in what God made us to do.

And paramount, it is claimed, in the Genesis witness is exercising dominion. God is the Lord with a capital L. Adam and Eve are lords with a small l. They are his vice regents. They rule over the rest of the creation for God, their ruler, their creator.

An example of this is Leonard Verdun, who wrote a book on this very theme, emphasizing the functional view of the image. And it needn't be limited to dominion, it's other roles that we play. Substantive views emphasize our makeup, especially our reason.

Functional views, our roles, our functions, the jobs we perform, especially having dominion. Relational views, perhaps, are the most popular ones, maybe beginning in the mid-20th century. And Emil Brunner is an example here.

Especially love, relationship of love to God, Deuteronomy 6:5, love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and your strength. I probably botched that a little bit and mixed a little Matthew 22 with it, but that's the idea. And then love your neighbor as yourself, we read later in the law in Leviticus.

The essence of the image is not our essence. Do you say this reflects philosophical views? Of course, it does. Many times, theology is the tail that wags on the body, on the dog of philosophy, existentialism.

There's no man's essence; that's absurd, that's nothing. No, no, it's what we are, not what we are, what we do, especially our relations to others. So, the image is found not in our structure, not even in our roles, but primarily in our relationships.

The main relationship would be love toward God, toward the creation, and toward our fellow human beings. I just can't help it, but I've got to point to my conclusions. I think there's truth in all of these.

We'll see the great Pauline texts, Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4, Colossians 3:9 and 10, and Ephesians 4:22 to 24. Indeed, there's a structural or substantive aspect to the image. We were made according to the knowledge of God. Adam and Eve knew God with their minds.

Adam was able to name the animals, for example. They could understand speech. Then, Ephesians both of these, Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4, have passages that speak of the recreation of the image.

Here's how the theological reasoning goes: If the recreation of the image includes knowledge, Colossians 3, righteousness, and true holiness, Ephesians 4, then the original image must have included the same things. I think it's very sound reasoning.

Are we limiting the substantive view to those things? No, but the scripture specifically speaks of our being given the ability to think, especially put to the service of God, not just abstract cognition. And our beings are made holy beings in relationship with God, as part of the very makeup of human beings. In other words, human beings, qua human beings, as human beings, are thinking and holy creatures, at least they were.

There's a moral dimension and there's an intellectual dimension to humankind. Functional views are true. God put Adam and Eve in the garden to tend it.

They were to serve the Lord in the garden. They also had the role of dominion, which was used to describe Verdun's hyphenated clumsy words. They were dominion havers.

Under God, the great Lord and King, they were little lords. And they were to exercise dominion and stewardship, caring for the creation of God and ruling over it in his stead. Relational views, oh yes, oh yes.

There's real truth here, too. That is, the image of God involves a relationship with God, a relationship with fellow human beings, and even a relationship with the world into which God has placed us. So, the historical theology, a brief little summary like that, kind of points us to some truths that we need to demonstrate from God's word.

However, each historical view contains real aspects of the total picture. What about the image of God in the Bible? Of course, again, sola scriptura does not mean that we neglect historical theology. Would we really be better off not to know of structural, relational, and functional views? I don't think so.

I think it's good to know what people have thought before we did. It doesn't mean we have to embrace it, although in this case, I do think there's an element of truth in each of those. Image of God in humankind.

Number one, the fact of human beings' creation in the image of God in the Old Testament, including even after the fall, the image is retained. It's marred, but it's retained. And then, the Pauline doctrine of the restoration of the image, to which I've already alluded in Christ, Colossians 3, Ephesians 4. And then, Christ as the image of God.

Often, that is not factored in here, and that's a mistake. Christ is the true image of God. Looking at the Lord Jesus, we learn, confirm some things we thought about, and even point in another good direction; Dr. Robert C. Newman has a really interesting way of looking at it.

Anthony Hoekema, one of my favorite theological writers now with the Lord, wrote three outstanding books. The one that pertains to this course is *Created in God's Image*, which discusses the application of salvation. The only one besides John Murray's little was it. Were they radio talks? *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*.

Huckabee's book, *Saved by Grace*, is really well done. And then his magnum opus, *The Bible in the Future*, a book on eschatology, a really, really solid book on last things. In his book on *Created in God's Image*, he shows a redemptive-historical view of the image being so valuable.

That is, we distinguish between the original image, the tarnished or marred image after the fall, the gradually restored image of Christ, and then the perfected image on the last day after the resurrection of the dead. I'll revisit all that, but we start out where we should with Genesis 1. The fact of human beings' creation in the image of God in the Old Testament, Genesis 1:26 and 27. I've already read that at least once.

The creation of man and woman by God is presented as the crowning act of God's creation. Let us make man in our image, so God created them, male and female, he created them. Make them in our image after our likeness, so he created them in his image, male and female.

This thesis that the creation of humankind is the crowning act is substantiated by five proofs. One, God made man after the other creatures. The narrative has built up to this as the most important part of creation.

Two, God pronounced very good after his creative work of the sixth day, 1:31, in contrast to the assessment of good in the previous days. Verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25. One more time, the assessment good.

Excuse me, verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25. I feel like the Missouri lottery guy and like a frog, too. Third, God gave Adam and Eve alone dominion over the rest of creation.

Fourth, humankind's creation is more personal. Let us make, rather than previous acts of creation, let there be. Five, and most important for our present concern, man and woman alone were made in the image, in God's image and likeness.

Exegesis. Then God said, let us, cohortative, or we will, imperfect, both are possible, make man in our image. The word also means image, resemblance, or likeness.

Do you mean the word image could mean likeness? Yes. BDB, the lexicon of the Old Testament, 853. According to our likeness.

That word means likeness or similitude. Lexicon 198. God reveals his intention to create mankind.

He does not create until verse 27. With some hesitation, I take the first-person plural pronouns to be an Old Testament anticipation of the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity. My goodness, Bruce Waltke.

I disagree with Bruce Waltke. That is not good. I just disagree with the NIV study Bible in Genesis 126, which interprets the pronouns as God speaking to his heavenly court.

We do the work of creation and make man in their image. These facts seem to preclude a reference to angels. I don't mean to be too strong here.

As I said, Waltke and another way better Old Testament exegetes than I say it is a reference to the heavenly court. As a matter of fact, Waltke messes up my thesis by showing the four other places where it appears in the Old Testament to refer to the heavenly court. So, I'm neutralized.

Either a reference to the heavenly court of God addressing the angels or an Old Testament anticipation, I didn't say teaching of the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity. Image and likeness are Hebrew parallels that are to be taken synonymously. It has not always been done like that.

Irenaeus interpreted them variously and mistakenly. God made his highest creature, man, like himself in some special sense or senses. Senses don't come from the fact that they're two words.

They're synonymous, virtually synonymous, as the lexicon's definition of image, which also included likeness. The word likeness for the second word is demonstrated. But because image and likeness are synonymous, they could refer to one or more things.

The next expression, why you're a zoo, could be taken two ways: as a justify and let them rule, or as an imperfect, in which case the sequence of tenses would be taking nashi as a cohortative and imperfect, which would show purpose or result.

Lambden's Grammar, chapter 27, paragraph 107. That is, in order that they might rule.

BDB indicates that rada, to rule, usually takes the bait preposition, so it is here. The bait preposition marks out the different areas over which mankind is to rule. Sea animals, birds, land animals which walk, land animals which creep upon the ground, and in fact, quote, to rule over all the earth, verse 26.

Genesis 1:27 tells us God went ahead and executed his plan to create man in his image, quote, so God created the man in his image. In the image of God, he created him. An additional piece of information is given: “male and female, he created them.”

This tells us that God made humankind male and female from the beginning. I reject Barth's idea that man's unity in diversity, male and female sexuality, is the image of God. Nevertheless, the verse teaches the equality of man and woman before God, as both are made in his image.

This equality is not incompatible with male headship in the family since Adam named Eve, and she was made from him and given to him as a helper. Nevertheless, this verse should rule out interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11:7 and 9 that would deny the image of God to womankind. I don't know of any such bad interpretations, but if there were so, they're wrong.

God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of the woman; 1 Corinthians 11:7 and 9 does not deny the image of God to females. Goodness, Genesis 1:28 says, quote, God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the creatures, close quote. Adam and Eve were to have children to populate the earth.

Sexuality and procreation were thus part of the blessing of God on their lives. I would argue for the normativity of male slash female sexual relations on the basis of this text, as well as Genesis 2:24, 25. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

Homosexuality is contrary to the creation ordinance of God. In Genesis 1:28, we again encounter the concept of man's dominion. We entitled this section of notes the facts of human beings' creation in the image of God in the Old Testament, or the fact because it's the fact that is emphasized.

We're told little to nothing about what the image actually is. Leonard Verduyn argues that the image consists of man's role as dominion haver Verduyn overemphasizes a good idea, a common failing of scholars.

I cannot say that the image of God in verses 26 to 28 of Genesis 1 consists of man's having dominion. I would say that there is at least a relation between the two. One could say that man's role over the rest of the creation is a result of his being made in the image of God.

One might go so far as to say that the *imago dei*, I haven't even used that expression yet, the image of God, the *imago dei* involves man's having dominion. God made

man like himself by giving Adam and Eve dominion over the rest of the created order. God is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

God made man Lord, small l, over the other creatures. Applications should be made to a high view of human justice; Genesis 9 does that for us, to one's fellow man, and to our ecological responsibilities. Surely, God's people should be concerned about taking care of God's planet.

Genesis 5:1-2 and 9:6. Genesis 5:1-2 merely rehearses the information we've already studied. It need not detain us here.

In Genesis 9:6 God speaks to Noah and his sons after the flood and says, quote, whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. For in the image of God has God made man, close quote. The implication here is that fallen human beings are still, in some sense, in the image of God.

That fact is given as the ground for capital punishment for murderers. Man's in the image of God would not have much weight as the basis for capital punishment if it were only true of man as created and not true of man as fallen. I conclude that Genesis 9:6 presents fallen human beings as being in the image of God.

A substantive view of the image is implied here. To attack another human being is to attack God's image. I note that James 3:9 agrees with the witness of Genesis 9:6 that fallen human beings are still in some sense in the image of God.

It was the famous Dutch theologian G. C. Berkouwer who claimed that the image was totally effaced, totally lost. It's wrong. It is wrong.

It is marred. I once saw an interview with a prisoner that made me weep. Oh, this man was so full of hatred toward fellow human beings it was just sickening.

My heart went out to him because what made it so bad was compared, say, to a rabid animal. We had to put down the rabid dog, right? This is not a dog. This is a human being made in God's image.

And when they interviewed him, he raged. If I get out of this blankety-blank place, I'm going to kill again. Blankety-blankety-blank.

This was so sad. It would be like taking terrible ugly paint and splashing it on the Mona Lisa or taking a sledgehammer to the Pieta or some beautiful sculpture. It was horrible.

One of the things that make human sin, even our sin, so ugly is that. Indeed, we were made to mirror, to image God. James speaks of the fickleness of human speech when

he says, quote, with the tongue we praise our Lord and Father. That's something good, right? Yes.

But if you finish the sentence, it's not something good. And with it, we curse men who have been made in God's likeness. The meaning is our tongues are fickle.

They are capricious. We praise God. We curse God in his image bearers.

We're not told of cognitive or moral aspects of the image of God in Genesis. We shall proceed to a study of the restoration of the image of God in Jesus Christ. The fact that the image needs to be restored implies that the fall affected it.

If Genesis 9:6 teaches that fallen man retains the image, then the New Testament informs us that the imago dei has been tarnished by sin and stands in need of restoration. It is to the New Testament that we'll turn tomorrow. But let me just work with Hoekema's redemptive-historical view of the image.

When I summarize the image, I'll take into account many things. One is this. There are obviously four redemptive historical stages of the image.

God made Adam and Eve in his image. They bore his image. It was not marred.

It was right. It was not perfect in the sense it'll be perfect in the end, incapable of being tarnished. But it was the true image of God.

As we'll see, it was a true image of God, which means even of the Lord Jesus Christ who was to come. In the fall, the image is marred. It is tarnished.

It is not what it's supposed to be. But it's not totally eliminated. That's what makes murder so bad in Genesis 9. That's what makes sinning with the tongue so bad in James 3. Paul teaches us Colossians 3, 9, and 10, Ephesians 4, 22 to 24, of the restoration of the image in Christ, obviously implying a need to be restored.

Then, the restoration itself comes by grace through faith in Christ. That restoration is not instantaneous but lifelong. We are being restored in the image of God in Christ.

To say it differently, in Christ, in union with him, God progressively restores the image of a believer. That is, Christians should grow and should better image Christ 10 years after they were saved than they did when they were first and so forth. And we all have met ripe, mature old saints.

The pastor goes to the hospital to comfort the dear saint dying of whatever it is, cancer, and he does go there to do that. And instead, she comforts him enormously,



just overflowing with the word of God in her life and from her lips. And pastor, is it okay if I recite scripture for you and on and on like that? Oh, that's so beautiful.

Compare that to some cranky old person who doesn't know the Lord. I've known pastors to go deliberately to talk to some guy who just, oh, he's never believed, pastor. Maybe now the Lord, oh no, he's not ready to believe.

Get out of here, you bum, you know, holy smokes. Just bless the man of God. And again, tears come down the face of the man of God because this is somebody made in God's image.

And who knows what went into his demise? He ended up like this, but he ended up like that he did. Still, the pastor's job was to try to present the gospel. And God is good to sinners.

The original image, the marred image, the restored image in Christ, and the perfected image await the eschaton. It is only with the return of Christ and the resurrection of the body that the image will be perfected as it never was before. Wait a minute, never was.

Adam and Eve had the true original image, right? Yes. But it was not perfected in the sense that it was incapable of being tarnished because they did sin. You say, wait a minute, resurrection, that sounds like body.

Oh, it is the body. So, you said before, don't just think of the body when you think of the substantive or structural; that is correct. But I didn't say you don't think of the body.

As a matter of fact, in this life, the only way we see the image of God is as children, as babies and children in the face and hands of our mothers, for example. We never see the image of God apart from a human body. The ultimate expression of the image will indeed include a bodily aspect.

More about that tomorrow. Lord willing, we'll take up Paul's doctrine of the restoration of the image. For now, thank you for your attention to these lectures, and God bless.

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