

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 5, Pauline Restoration of the Image of Christ, Col. 3:9-10

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the doctrines of humanity and sin. This is session number five, Pauline Restoration of the Image in Christ, Colossians 3:9-10.

Welcome back to biblical learning, e-learning.org, our study of the doctrines of humanity and sin, that is, theological anthropology and hamartiology.

We're working with a doctrine of humanity, specifically the major theme of the image of God.

Let us pray. Gracious Father, thank you for your holy word. Thank you for giving us your holy spirit and regeneration, as well as illumination, so that we might understand your word. Open our eyes that we might behold wonderful things in your law, in your word. Teach us, encourage us, correct us, and lead us in your everlasting way. We pray through Jesus Christ, the mediator. Amen.

We're studying the image of God. A little review is needed before we go to the Pauline texts that speak of the restoration of the image. We did a brief treatment of historical theology in which we concluded that each of these views is partially right. The traditional view of the Christian Church is found in the early fathers, in the Middle Ages, we cited Thomas, and in the reformers. Calvin has it that the image of God is primarily in the soul, and it's an endowment, that is, it's structural or substantive, and the major aspect of this is the human mind, the ability to think.

I'm going to qualify that when we study Colossians 3, 9, and 10. I'm going to say it's not merely the abstract ability to think, but it's the ability to think in the service of God, but for now, cognition. It's an endowment by God to human beings, and it's part of our makeup; hence, it's substantive or structural.

You say structural sounds like the human body. Actually, the soul and the mind were emphasized, not the body, although Calvin could say, agreeing that primarily the image is in the soul, and it's this endowment of reason. As a matter of fact, he even had a broader view.

It's human integrity, with all of our faculties and things working together, and the fall disrupted that, but Calvin said even though it is primarily in the soul, we see sparks of it in the body, and that was really very illuminating because today we would say, it is

demonstrated in the body, although it's not the body per se. So, substantive or structural views involve our human makeup, especially spiritual makeup, especially knowledge, a functioning mind, cognition, and the ability to know God, understand his word, and obey him. Functional views, number two, are much more recent.

I'd say that in the late 19th or early 20th century, perhaps emphasized, look, right there in the text of Genesis 1, dominion is there. The emphasis is not on our endowment and makeup; it is on what we do. It's our function, and of course, the major functional role was having dominion, which is there in the Genesis text.

I think this is a genuine insight. I wouldn't say it's what the image is, but it surely is involved in the image. There are functional aspects to it.

The third, Leonard Verduin, wrote a book emphasizing this. The third aspect is relational. Substantive or structural, functional, relational views of the image emphasize exactly what the name indicates: our dealings with God, our environment, and our fellow human beings. The major aspect here, of course, is love.

Loving the Lord with all we have in our neighbor as ourselves, as rooted in the Old Testament. Jesus brings those two ideas together in Matthew 22, for example, and although these views have been somewhat set up against each other, and the 20th-century types thought they were more enlightened in rejecting the older substantive view, I think really all three are involved, as you'll see. I just wanted to have those ideas in your mind.

The image is in our mental makeup. The image is in our roles and functions. The image is in our relationships.

I think all those contain an element of truth. I forgot a name yesterday. It was Mark Knoll who wrote *The Closing of the Evangelical Mind*. He is an outstanding evangelical Christian historian. I started at Wheaton, and ended up at Notre Dame, or something like that. I knew another famous scholar in history.

After his doctorate, he applied to so many schools, and he said the only one that would take his Christian testimony seriously was Notre Dame. And he rose up and up in that. Evangelical Protestant, not a Roman Catholic, openly.

And he rose up and up in that school and had a great... And here I've done it again. I'll maybe get his name if it comes. So, one more thing before we get to Paul is, I meant so, those are the historical views.

It's too quick a summary, actually. Another important way of looking at this is that we're going to bring all these things together in a subsequent lecture when we

summarize the image of God. But we need to get the data and information in the table before we can summarize.

The redemptive-historical view of the image is important. The grid of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation is helpful for many, many doctrines. And it is so for the image because Adam and Eve were created in the original image of God.

We'll learn from some Pauline texts that actually involved being created in the likeness of the true image, which is Christ, and thereby his incarnation. The way was paved because human beings were made in his image from the beginning. But our first parents, Adam and Eve, were created in the original image of God.

We'll flesh that out with Paul, but that is the starting point. In the fall, the image was not effaced completely, but it was damaged. It was tarnished.

It was blurred, if you will. So, Genesis 9, and James 3 present post-fall, not first Paul, post-fall human beings as still being in the image of God. Capital punishment is grounded in the notion that you're made in the image and you can't kill the image bearer.

That's an attack on God, Genesis 9. And likewise, Paul, sorry, James, in warning teachers that their judgment will be more severe, says many dangerous things about the tongue. You say, well, he says one positive thing, with the tongue we praise our God and Father, James 3. It's true, but if you finish the sentence, it's not really a positive thing. And with that same tongue, we curse human beings who are made in the image of God.

That's post-fall as well. So, original image, creation, tarnished image, marred image is Hoekema's word. Tony Hoekema, Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*.

It's a wonderful book. I'm indebted to him. If you want more on the historical theology of the image, he's got a whole 50-page chapter on that.

The image is tarnished. It is not lost. Human beings are still human.

I've sometimes heard a presentation of trichotomy, which I will oppose when we get there. Yes, there's a difference sometimes in scripture between soul and spirit, but not an ontological difference. They aren't different parts of our makeup.

And some who teach that have actually said unsaved people don't have a spirit. Well, I'm sorry, that would make them less than human. And that's wrong because fallen sinners are still created in the image of God.

It's tarnished. It's not the same. It's tarnished because Paul teaches in Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4 that in Christ, the image is gradually restored.

It's restored because it was ruined to some extent. So, the original image, marred image, tarnished image, and renewed image are in Christ. When God applies salvation to us, that is, by virtue of union with Christ, joining us spiritually to his Son and all of his benefits, we begin a lifelong renewal in the image of God.

It never is perfected in this life, but its state of being marred or tarnished is reversed in real measure. Yet, the perfect image does not await the eschaton. Original image, fallen image, marred or tarnished image.

The progressively renewed image in Christ and in the consummation, the perfected image of God. So, all the things we'll say in conclusion about the image will be perfected in that day. So, it's another way of looking at final salvation in more of its glory because we will wonderfully image God, which reminds me, the image of God or *imago dei*, to use the Latin catchword, words, is a noun, but it is helpful sometimes to make it into a verb.

We image God. That's especially helpful for the functional and relational views, but I think it works really well. We are made in the image of God, structurally, substantively, as holy creatures, as thanking creatures, and more, as creatures endowed with creativity, for example, and wonderful gifts from our maker.

But we also then image God as we perform our roles for his glory by his spirit and as we relate to him, one another, and the world. Enough review. That is the disease of the professor.

Perpetual review. Number one, we said, is that the Old Testament teaches the fact of the image in Genesis 1, 26 to 29. It doesn't tell us what it is.

Oh, it talks about dominion, and I think that is at least a result of the image, and it says male and female. It tells us we're like God in some way or another. We saw the words image and likeness are synonymous and aren't to be separated as Irenaeus did, and Roman Catholic theology followed him in a way that was not helpful, that is, retaining much of human intellect, not affected by the fall.

Oh, that's wrong. If Paul singles out one area for the effect of the fall, it's the so-called noetic effects of sin, the effects of sin on the mind, darkened in our understanding, foolish, making idols, on and on like that. He frequently speaks in those terms.

So, after the fact of the image of God in the Old Testament, we move to the Pauline doctrine of the restoration of the image in Christ. Two texts, and we'll look at them in detail. Colossians 3:9, and 10 is our first text.

I'm going to work with the context, with the Greek, exegesis, and then drawing theology out of the passage. Because unfortunately, this is not always done, and that is a mistake because these Pauline texts are relevant to the image. The line of reasoning goes like this.

Paul tells us the image is renewed gradually in Christ, in believers. Well, if it's renewed, it must have needed a renewal; that is, the fall affected it, and if it's renewed, then it's regained, at least in measure. The larger context emphasizes the believer's union with Christ.

In his death, Colossians 2:20 says, if with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to its regulations? Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, according to human precepts and teachings. These, indeed, have an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they're of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. Every time I see verse 21, I cannot help but laugh.

I see this picture of women with the long white dresses down to the floor, from the neck to the floor, and that works fine for me, and they have a banner that they're holding, and the banner says, do not handle, do not touch, do not taste, and they are against alcohol. It's a prohibition banner, and the sad thing is, Paul is quoting the heretics' teaching, but it seems to me most Americans probably didn't even know. Oh, my word.

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world. There's actually debate as to what that means. Does it mean the ABCs of this world and its makeup? Does it speak of the realm of the demonic? However you'd parse it, it ends up involving the dark side and the dark forces, all right? We died to that stuff.

How did we die? We died in union with Christ, but not only so, 3:1 of Colossians, if then you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. I'm juggling a lot of stuff here at once. We will make it work.

The larger context emphasizes believers' union with Christ in his death, Colossians 2:20. Also, 3:3 doesn't say with him, but you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Obviously, they're alive physically, and the meaning is they died with Christ. His resurrection, 3:1. His ascension, 3:3. Just a bigger context.

You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. As a matter of fact, you're with him at God's side. And even we're joined to Christ in his second coming.

When Christ, who is your life, appears, Colossians 3:4, then you also will appear with him in glory. You say we died with Christ, we're buried with Christ, we're raised with him, we ascended with him, we sat down at God's side, at his right hand with him, in a sense, and we're coming again with him? Wait a second. Is that confusing us and Christ? No, it is not confusing.

It's simply talking in biblical language. Ephesians 2 is quite clear. Only once does Paul say it.

Ephesians 2:6, God raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Have a friend who fought a particular sin, much of his Christian life, and that verse set him free. He said, when temptation comes knocking at my door, he says, heck with you, temptation.

I'm not sure what language he uses. Maybe it's stronger. I don't know.

It's not my business. But I'm seated with Christ at God's right hand. You can't touch me.

And he has gotten great freedom from that notion. Anyway, Colossians 3:4, when Christ, who is your life, appears, appearing and hear the verb to appear, plainly a second coming language, you also will appear with him in glory. Paul does not confuse us with Christ, but it relates us to him in terms of union with Christ.

Our identity is so wrapped up in our relationship to Christ and in union with him that our identity as God's sons or daughters, our identity as persons united to Christ, will not be fully manifest until Jesus comes again. When he appears, we will appear with him in glory. That is marvelous.

Anyway, that's the bigger context. We've been spiritually joined to the son of God so that the benefits of his saving work have become ours. Therefore, believers are to consider their bodily members as dead to sins since they now have been joined to Christ.

Verse 5 of Colossians 3. I'm working toward 9 and 10. Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Believers are to consider their bodily members dead to sin because we died with Christ.

As a matter of fact, God's wrath will come upon unbelievers on account of such sins. Verse 6, on account of these, the wrath of God is coming. Before their salvation, the Colossians, Christians, the Colossian Christians committed these sins.

Verse 7, in these you too once walked, lived, when you were living in them. Besides putting away the sins of verse 5, the believers in Colossae are exhorted to also put aside the sins of anger and evil speaking. Verse 8, but now you must also put away not only, shall we call them gross sins, common to pagans, verse 5, but more refined Christian sins if you will.

They're equally condemned, but now you must put them all away, anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. I'll tell a story on myself. I was not a Christian in high school.

I switched from baseball to tennis my sophomore summer before my junior year. I scratched my way onto the tennis team as the last person to make it, but I worked hard, and I rose up the ladder, never up to the very few, but I got to the top doubles team and even whacked, beat a couple of the guys ahead of me because I was a scratcher, scrambler, and I wouldn't give up. But I will never forget our number one player, Ronald Stowe, who said something like this to me once, and he wasn't nasty.

I think he probably was a believer. I didn't know because I wasn't. He said, my father really appreciates how hard you play tennis, he said.

He could have been, he was being kind. I wasn't a great player. I did play at a small college and got up to number two, but I still wasn't great, but I was pretty good.

I was just working at it now, but he says, but my father doesn't appreciate what comes out of your mouth sometimes. I heard him. I heard him.

Switched to college. I had come to know the Lord. I had transferred from Rutgers University to Philadelphia College of Bible.

It was called in those days; my college and seminary have new names. Anyway, it was a good place for me. I found a wonderful wife, Mary Pat.

I was grounded in Greek. It did me a lot of good. I was acquainted and introduced to all parts of the Bible.

I was taught even a system of the evangelical system of theology, classical dispensationalism. Anyway, it was all good. It was all good.

I was mentored by May Stewart, a wonderful philosopher and Greek professor who, without knowing it, launched me in my career of teaching. We had a co-ed tennis team. As a matter of fact, I met my wife on this team.

She finally quit because she would occasionally beat a guy from another school, and it wouldn't do him well. She was a great field hockey player. Just great.

Never played it before. She's a better athlete than I am. Don't tell her I said that, but she is.

She's a natural. Anyway, one day, we were having practice. She ripped her pants and hid behind the building.

The other woman who was on the team came out and said Mary Pat ripped her pants. I was the only one with sweatpants. She borrowed my sweatpants, washed them, and handed them back to me.

That's where we met. That's a true story. She calls it a love match.

Anyway, that's how we met. In that environment, we played in different schools, small schools just like ours. My partner, who was really good, the number one guy, he and I were undefeated as devils except for one school that could beat us.

Anyway, it was a particular school with a coach who was a Christian man. We got to be friends. I was a Christian at this time, and I didn't hide it.

After I dispatched his guy quickly, I was on the sidelines, and he said, I want to tell you something, he said, that I appreciate about you. He says, not only a pretty good tennis player beating my guy like that, he says but I like the way you open your speak with your mouth. I was stunned.

I was stunned. I liked the way you honored God or something like that. What? I was doing nothing deliberately.

I wasn't even aware of that change in me, but it was beautiful. And I gave God the glory as I do now. Anyway, God works in us, and he changes us.

And the Colossians are not only to put away gross sins, so to speak, verse five of chapter three, but also I'll call them Christian sins that is of speech and anger, evil speaking in anger, verse eight. Here, we come to our verses on the renewal of the image. Verse nine: do not lie to one another because you have taken off the old man with his practices deeds, and you have put on the new, obviously ellipsis in both Greek and English, the new one, the new man who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.

Let's see how close the ESV is to the Greek text. Do not lie to one another. Seeing that, that's perfectly fine.

I think it's causal because, but that's fine. You have put off the old self. It's literally man with its practices, and I put on the new self, man or self is implied, which is being renewed.

That is correct. It is progressive. It's passive and progressive, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

Here, there's no Greek and Jew circumcised, uncircumcised, or burying Scythian slave free, but Christ is all and in all exegesis. Specifically, the Colossian believers are not to lie to one another because taking the participle as a causal circumstantial participle. So Max Zurich in his wonderful book, *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples* and the NIV, because they've taken off as clothing is the imagery, DBAG two, page 83, the dictionary, lexicon 83, because they've taken off the old implied sinful man with its sinful implied practices.

A further reason is taking another participle as a causal circumstantial participle, too. Another reason for not returning to their former ungodly life of lying is given in verse 10. And because you put on as clothing, dictionary page 264, the new man who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created him.

The Colossian Christians have had a change of clothing, so to speak. They've taken off the old man and have put on the new. See the note on Colossians 3, 9, and 10 in the NIV study Bible.

The two causal participles, *apektus saminoi* and *endusaminoi*, are to be understood together. Each influences the meaning of the other. To use linguistic terminology, they stand in paradigmatic relation to one another.

They influence each other. That is, the taking off is only fully understood with the putting on, and the putting on is only fully understood with the taking off. The Colossians have put away their old self with their sinful lifestyle and have begun to live a holy life.

The new man is being renewed. There is a divine, and it's a so-called divine passive. Nobody in the world thinks it's anyone but God who's doing this renewal, right? It's a divine, divine passive.

Compare J. P. Louw and Nida, *Semantics of New Testament Greek* 67-68. There's a divine and ongoing remaking of the believer in Christ. Ongoing, a progressive present tense.

C. F. F. Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament on Colossians*. At this place, there's a divine and ongoing remaking of the believer in Christ. We find here the Pauline theme of recreation.

He follows Isaiah; almost every New Testament idea comes from the Old Testament, and Paul delights to use the language of Genesis 1 and 2 to speak of Christ as the recreator who initiates the new creation of God. Now, the new creation of God will only be fully realized at the consummation, but it has begun because Jesus is alive. Regeneration is part of this new creation, and so Romans 8 can say we have eternal life.

That's part of the new creation. In mortal bodies, that's part of the fallen creation. But the day is coming, 1 Corinthians 15, when we will have eternal life in immortal bodies.

Immortal, incorruptible, powerful, glorious, spirit-dominated bodies. Paul delights to use the language of the first two chapters of the Bible to speak of Christ as the recreator who initiates the new creation of God. Christ is the second Adam who gives life to his people through his resurrection from the dead.

See Herman Ridderbos, *Paul, an outline of his theology*, pages 78 to 86. The renewal, this divinely wrought, progressive renewal, affects the way human beings think. He's being renewed in knowledge.

I take the preposition *ace* here to denote a reference to a person or thing, and it could be translated for, to, or with respect to. This renewal of one's thinking, this renewal is with respect to knowledge, a renewal in knowledge. This renewal of one's thinking is, and here's the key to the whole deal, according to the image of the one who created him.

The one who created him is, Pauline speak, for his creator, or God. Therefore, a Christian is one who's being renewed according to the image of God, his creator, in knowledge. Whew.

That's how I think theology ought to be done, carefully from the Bible. Peter O'Brien agrees in the *Word Biblical Commentary*. Ah, dear Peter O'Brien.

He got in trouble for plagiarism. I do not think he even intended anything, but he did, and some of these works are out of print now. But anyway, he correctly said, after the image of the creator ought to follow, which is being renewed.

The text would then read since you put on the new man who's being renewed according to the image of the one who created him in knowledge. It is possible to

vary some of these details, but they need not be retained by us right now. Since this renewal accords with God's image in humanity, and since the renewal is a renovation in knowledge, knowledge must have been an aspect of the original Imago Dei.

Do you follow? The renewal is wrought by God and progressively in the life of the believer, and it is specifically said to be with respect to knowledge. If the renewal of the image is according to knowledge, then the original image must have involved knowledge. I agree with O'Brien and Lossa in their Hermeneia volume, who regard that knowledge spoken of here as referring to an earlier verse in Colossians, the ability to recognize God's will and command.

Lossa deserves full quotation quote, the knowledge can neither be defined as morality nor be identified with conformity to the image. Rather, as a consequence of both, it is knowledge of his will, Colossians 1:9. He wisely sees in the same book the word knowledge used in a little more expanded way to speak of the knowledge of God's will. Here's what I'm trying to say.

The knowledge in which we are progressively renewed in Christ is cognition, but not pure cognition. It's not an abstraction. It is both an abstraction and a concrete idea that goes with it.

It is not merely cognition. It doesn't preclude that. Rather, it is the ability to think put to the service of God is exactly the knowledge of his will, Colossians 1:9. Here comes the theology from this text, Colossians 3:9 and 10.

Human beings, namely Adam and Eve, came from the hand of their creator, able to think. He was able to love God with his mind by obeying him. Adam was able to understand and obey God's propositional revelation that prohibited him from eating the forbidden fruit, Genesis 2:16-17. He didn't say, oh, no, he understood God.

He was later culpable because he had understood God. Adam was able to name the animals in Genesis 2:19 and 20. He was able to use language as Eve was and to respond intelligently, as seen in verse 23 of chapter 2 of Genesis.

Thus, there is a cognitive aspect to the image of God in humankind. This is structural or substantive. It is part of our makeup.

After the fall, human reason was darkened and human beings used their minds to engage in the sins of Colossians 3:5 and 8 and 9, so-called gross sins and Christian sins, as I've labeled them. Compare Cain's slaying of his brother in Genesis 4, the chapter after the fall. And the sinful condition of humankind before the flood.

Oh, my word, is it the nastiest verse in the Bible? Every inclination of thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. Gasp! When one is savingly united to Jesus Christ, he

begins a lifelong process of sanctification and gradual growth in practical holiness. Part of this is having our thinking conformed to the will of God.

In context here, putting away falsehood and the other sins mentioned above. Compare Romans 12:2. I beseech you, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. So that's body.

Romans 12:2, mind. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. It's an overlap.

It doesn't mention the image of God, but it does pertain because of the teaching of this passage. In this way, we are being renewed in the knowledge according to the image of God. In our next lecture, work with Ephesians 4:22-24, because likewise, I'll devote some time to doing it carefully.

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