

# **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 7, Image of God, Robert C. Newman, Synthesis, Constitution of Humanity**

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the Doctrines of Humanity and Sin. This is session 7, Image of God. Robert C. Newman, Synthesis, Constitution of Humanity.

Let us pray. Gracious Father, we thank you for your word, which teaches us that you made us like ourselves in some important ways by making us in the image of God. Give us understanding and insight, and work in us by your grace so that we might image you better in our world, lives, and relationships. We pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

We come to the work of Robert C. Newman. This is a creative proposal.

I have not seen it anywhere else. It seems to really help, especially with the relational aspects of the image. Dr. Robert C. Newman has made an important contribution to the study of the image of God in humankind.

His essay, *Some Perspectives on the Image of God in Man from Biblical Theology*, IBRI Research Report number 21, 1984, helps us to do justice to the teaching of the Bible on this subject. Newman summarizes his thesis, “a very fruitful way of viewing humans as being in God's image is to consider those pictures God gives of himself, which are analogies featuring man in his relationship to other people or to other parts of the created environment. We learn about man and woman in God's image by considering pictures God gives of himself, which are analogies featuring human relationships.”

Here is a summary of some of this. First of all, overview. Humans in relationship to the inanimate, to plants, to animals, to human society, to the family.

Human beings in relationship to the inanimate. Potter and clay. God is the creator, the great potter.

Man, his creature, mirrors God when he works with pottery. Isaiah 64:8. Isaiah 29:15, and 16. Isaiah 45:9. Humans are able to create pots from the clay.

In this way, human creativity is a picture of God's great work of creation. The fact that we have creativity is due to the fact that the potter, capital P, made us like himself in this regard. Related to this idea of creativity is that of purpose or design.

The potter conceives of a pot in his mind and then brings it into being. He fashions it according to his plans. So, God, the great potter, plans and causes his purposes to be fulfilled.

Romans 9:19-24. Another aspect of this picture of God's image in man is that of sovereignty. The potter exercises real control over his clay.

He can do with it as he pleases. So, quote, God, excuse me, it's not a quote, similar to God. The potter and clay picture teaches that the image of God in man involves creativity, planning, and sovereignty.

Once again, God speaks of himself in ways that are analogies to human beings in their relationship to different things. And in that way, we image God. God in relation to the plants, gardener or farmer and plants.

Quote, quoting Newman, the farmer watches over his trees to keep them healthy so that they will provide the fruit for which they have been planted. So, too, God has a purpose for our lives, often referring to it in terms of bearing fruit. All that was from page five of Newman's pamphlet.

Here, man mirrors God in his caring for plants and in his execution of his plans. The different ways a farmer treats good and fruitless plants mirror God's responses to the righteous and the wicked. John 15:1-9.

Ezekiel 15:1-18. Matthew 3:8, and 10. The image of God expressed through this picture involves caring, planning, blessing, and judging.

Humans in relation to animals, shepherd and sheep. The shepherd goes and finds the lost sheep as God does us. Isaiah 53:6. Luke 15:4-7.

As the shepherd leads the flock, so God leads his people. Psalm 23: 2-3. Psalm 80, verse 1. "as the shepherd feeds his sheep by finding them pasture, so God provides our nourishment, both physical and spiritual." Psalm 23:1-2. Ezekiel 34:12-15.

Page six of that Newman pamphlet. As the shepherd protects the sheep from their enemies, so God protects his people. Jeremiah 50:5-10, 18-19. Ezekiel 34:12-16. Psalm 23: 4. John 10: 11-18.

As the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so God will judge between the righteous and the wicked on the last day. Matthew 25:32-33. Man mirrors God in his activities of seeking out, guiding, feeding, and protecting his people. Man, as the one who separates the sheep from the goats, pictures God as a judge.

Man in relation to human society, king, and subject. As an earthly monarch deserves honor, how much more does God the heavenly king? Malachi 1:14. As a king rules over his subjects, so does God.

Psalm 29:1-11. 1 Timothy 6-15. "as a king protects those who are righteous and punishes those who do evil, so does God." Luke 19:11-27. Matthew 22:1-14. Page eight of the pamphlet.

Under this picture, man is like God in being worthy of honor as ruling, blessing, and judging. Man in relation to the family, parent, child, husband, wife. Parents beget or adopt children. God does both. John 1: 12-13. 1 Peter 1:3.

Galatians 4: 4-7. Romans 8:14-19. As children are to be a credit to their parents by their good behavior, so believers are to show a family resemblance to their father, God. 1 John 3:1-10. Matthew 5:43-48. John 8:36-47.

God provides for his children as a good father does. Matthew 7:7-11. Hebrews 12:5-11.

Luke 15:11-32. We mirror God in our having children, in our showing a godly family resemblance, and in providing for our children. The husband and wife relationship mirrors the dynamic relationship between God and his people.

The marriage covenant pictures the bond between God and his own. The wife's to her husband images our obedience to God. Ephesians 5:24.

The couple's joy pictures that of God over his people. Psalm 45:11 and 15. Isaiah 62: 5. A husband's love for his wife pictures God's, Christ's love for the church.

Ephesians 5:25. The husband-wife relationship images clearly the intimacy between God and his own. This picture thus points to the image of God in man as involving God entering into covenant with his people.

God's authority, his joy, his love, and the intimacy of the union between him and his beloved. An interesting ramification of this is that in our, some of these various relationships, in a limited, creaturely way, all human beings know a little bit of what it is like to be God. What it is like for God to be God.

That's a remarkable thing. When we think of our being a parent to our children, it's actually a very convicting thing to think of the way God parents us and how we parent our children, even if we love them and do well overall. It is a very humbling and even convicting thing to compare that to the way God graciously, kindly, sometimes sternly, but always for our good, parents us as his children.

A systematic synthesis. We have worked over the doctrine of the image of God. We have studied many aspects of it.

It's time to pull things together, and I find at least five perspectives helpful for summarizing the biblical teachings on the image of God in human beings. Overview. There are substantive, functional, and relational aspects of the image.

Two. Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God. Three.

We need to take into account the redemptive-historical perspective of the image. The image as created, fallen, redeemed, and consummated. Fourth.

We need to see that the image involves human beings in their relationships to God, fellow human beings, and God's creation. Fifth. The sum total of human beings redeemed humanity has to do with the image.

Male and female. Sixth. And seventh.

In the totality of our being, we image God. Let me carefully work through these one at a time. We've done the spade work.

It's time to synthesize, which is surely one thing systematic theology ought to do. First of all, there are substantive, functional, and relational aspects of the image. These must be held together.

Do you remember when I did a little, very brief survey of historical theology introducing these three concepts? Thomas, Aquinas for the substantive or structural, Verdun for the functional, and Brunner for the relational. I said, ultimately, we're going to try to hold these three together.

I agree with Millard Erickson's statement on page 513 of his *Christian Theology*, "the image should be thought of as primarily substantive or structural. The image is something in the very nature of man in the way he was made." I agree with this conclusion on the basis of our exegesis of the Pauline texts of Colossians 3:9, and 10, and Ephesians 4:22 to 24.

Compare the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 4, paragraph 2, larger catechism number 17, shorter catechism 10, Birkhoff systematic theology, page 204. However, Erickson overemphasizes the substantive aspect. In part, this is due to his failure to incorporate the fruits of biblical theology into his systematic formulations, despite his good intentions.

His handling of the image of God would be strengthened by the inclusion of the redemptive-historical stages of the image given by Hoekema, created in God's image,

his book created in God's image, and the type of material given by Robert Newman. Hoekema is correct in stating that the functional and relational aspects are predominant in scripture. He, however, plays down the substantive aspect.

Hoekema now, Hoekema, Erickson overdoes the substantive aspect. Hoekema is correct. If you count Gnosis, there's more to the relational and functional aspects of the image, more verses pertaining to relational and functional aspects of the image.

However, in my estimation, Hoekema plays down the substantive aspect a little bit, a little too much. A synthesis is in order. Adam and Eve were made like God in their being endowed with cognition to do his will.

They were created in the image of their creator in true righteousness and holiness. Thus, man qua man, a human being as a human being, is a being able to think God's thoughts after him and be able to do his will. Man qua man is a holy being created for fellowship with his maker.

This is the substantive or structural aspect of the image. The Bible also speaks more often, in fact, of the functional and relational aspects of the image. Adam and Eve were given dominion over the rest of God's creation.

They were to model their Lord by being little lords over the earth. They were to relate to God, their fellow man, and the creation in ways pleasing to God. Newman's contribution is to show biblical pictures which describe the functional and relational aspects.

I follow his lead and relate his conclusions on the image of God to the traditional substantive concept along the lines of attribute and manifestation. Substantive and structural emphases on the image are attributes. Functional and relational views of the image are like manifestations of attributes.

I might add the concept of nouns and verbs. Substantive is actually a play on words since, in linguistics, we call something occupying a noun a slot that a noun could occupy or a pronoun, and so forth, it is substantive. So, the substantive view is like a noun, and the functional and relational aspects are like verbs.

The biblical pictures of the image in man's relationships and roles are the results of his being created in God's likeness. God as potter, gardener, farmer, shepherd, king, subject, parent, child, and husband slash wife reflects something of God. Newman's conclusion may be summarized as follows: I'm going to speak of biblical pictures and then how we reflect God.

The biblical picture of potter human beings reflects God in his creation, planning, and exercising sovereignty. So a potter knows a little bit of what it's like to be God in

terms of God's sovereignty, and it's a very it's microcosm to be sure, but nevertheless, because of the biblical analogy, somebody working with that clay is in control. In a similar way, God is in control of his world and of his people.

The biblical picture of a gardener and farmer humans reflect God in God's caring, planning, blessing, and judging. Pulling weeds and helping one understand a little bit of what it is like for God to judge. I don't mean that it does make me chuckle but and it sounds trivial, but that is a powerful concept to me that our mundane activities in a small way, mirror God because of these analogies but because he speaks of himself with those same in those same roles and relations.

God as a shepherd is reflected by those made in his image. We reflect on his seeking out, guiding, nourishing, protecting, and judging of his people. God as king is reflected in humans being worthy of honor, ruling, blessing, and judging.

God as a parent human reflects God in his having children, providing, and disciplining. God as husbands, we reflect God in our entering into a relationship, exercising authority, having joy, loving, sharing intimacy, and fidelity. I might add Robert Newman is a lifelong bachelor.

Recognizing his need to socialize, which was sort of against his natural bent, which was to go to the corner of the library and read all day. He deliberately bought a house and had male students live with him. One of the responsibilities of each member of the house was to cook a meal once a week.

So, he forced himself to enter this social situation, and I commend him for that. Surely, it made him a better human being, a child of God, and surely a better professor. Another important perspective on the image by way of synthesis and conclusion is that Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God.

So, Christology is related to anthropology biblically. He is both the ultimate model and eschatological goal for the redeemed. Jesus substantively is the image of God, and in his incarnation, he perfectly manifests that image.

Erickson steers us in the right direction when he summarizes, "Jesus had perfect fellowship with the Father. Jesus obeyed the father's will perfectly, and Jesus always displayed a strong love for humans." Pages 5, 14, and 15 of Erickson's *Christian Theology*.

May God help us to live like Jesus. He's not, first of all example. He's, first of all, Lord and Savior, but he is our example.

The New Testament, the Bible clearly presents him in that role. Jesus is not only a model but his goal. Believers will one day be conformed to Jesus' image when they put on immortality and glory.

This should give us hope and encourage us not to give up. A third perspective on the image of God in human beings is Hoekema, is teaching us to include the redemptive-historical perspective in our presentation of the doctrine of the Imago Dei. Man must be viewed in these redemptive historical stages at creation after the fall and the image is perverted; after the fall and the image is being renewed in Christ, and the image will be perfected only in the eternal state.

Since this is God's truth about us we must think in these terms to minister to people effectively. I find that fourfold redemptive historical grid, creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, very helpful for thinking through many, many biblical doctrines and concepts.

Fourth, Hoekema accurately says that the image includes human beings in three relationships: to God, to fellow human beings, and to creation.

We reach the same conclusion from Newman's study and from an examination of the life of Jesus, the perfect image of God in the gospels. By God's enabling grace we must grow in our reflection of the image in each of these areas. The next three perspectives are not really separate ones as we will see.

The sum total of redeemed humanity is the largest expression of the relational aspect of the image. Consider spiritual gift passages such as 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and also consider Revelation 5, which speaks of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation being united into one redeemed humanity in the new heavens and the new earth. So, we should open ourselves up to the sum total of redeemed humanity as being the greatest example and manifestation of the three of our relationships, of the relational aspect of the imago dei.

Human beings as male or female a further expression of this relational aspect. Remember Genesis 1, and God made them in his image, male and female he made them. Finally, Hukum claims that human beings in the totality of their being were made in God's image.

That is we're talking about the body. Birkhoff says, quote, we need not look for the image in the material substance of the body. It is found rather in the body as the fit instrument for the self-expression of the soul.

Close quote, page 205. So, I think that's well said. As I said previously, we do not experience the image of God apart from human hands, face, body, a human being ministering to us, loving us, correcting us, whatever is being done.

That's the only way we do experience it, I should say. We don't experience it without a body, without materialization; human beings in their bodies relate to us in that way. From the beginning I said three big topics concerning the doctrine of humanity.

One was human beings as created. The second and longest one we just finished up, the image of God in humankind. The third and final aspect to be covered under theological anthropology, the doctrine of man, is the constitutional nature of human beings.

We want to survey the biblical, the various views, examine the biblical data, both intermediate state passages and trichotomist proof texts. We want to see some passages problematic for trichotomy and then draw a conclusion on the constitutional nature of human beings. First of all, a survey of various views on our makeup, our constitutional nature.

There are these four views, actually three different views. The fourth one is a different take on the second one. Monism, dichotomy, trichotomy, conditional unity, psychosomatic unity, or holistic dualism.

Monism, examples include Bishop J. A. T. Robinson of the Anglican Church and D. R. G. Owen. This view holds that human beings are indivisible. The various parts of human beings of which scripture speaks are different ways of referring to the totality of our being.

According to monism, one must have a body to be human. Thus a disembodied existence in an intermediate state is denied. We will see that the Bible, it's not the Bible's chief emphasis, that would be the resurrection of the body, but the Bible does teach a disembodied existence in an intermediate state and thus monism is wrong.

Now, I should say, monism is definitely the dominant view for modern philosophy and science. There's no question. And theologians agree, of a liberal persuasion agree, and even many evangelicals are capitulating to this monistic anthropology, and I would respectfully disagree based upon scripture, as we will see.

Dichotomy, Charles Hodge, Louis Berkhof. This view holds that man is composed of two parts, two entities, and two constituents. One, a material part, the body, and two, an immaterial part, the soul or spirit.

Trichotomy, Franz Delitzsch is an example of this. It's actually hard to find examples of theologians today who affirm this. This view holds that man is composed of three parts.

One, a physical body. Two, a soul that “is the seat of the affections, desires, emotions, and the will of man.” New Scofield Reference Bible, page 1293, note two.

On 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The soul is the seat of the affections, desires, emotions, and will. Three, a spirit.

This is not only saying spirit and soul are sometimes contrasted, distinguished in scripture, or better words, but that they're different parts, different entities. They are ontologically different. A spirit which quote, knows and is capable of God consciousness and communication with God, close quote.

Excuse me. The most important proof text for trichotomy are 1 Thessalonians 5, 23 and Hebrews 4, 12, both of which we will examine. Conditional unity is Erickson's term.

Psychosomatic unity is Hoekema's term. Holistic dualism is the term of John Cooper, who wrote an important book called *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*. All three of these men, Erickson, Hoekema, and Cooper, hold to a more modern form of dichotomy.

They say it is true that there is an intermediate state in which the spiritual part of human beings go apart from the body. But they say that it's insufficient to merely say that. This view holds that the normal state of man is as a materialized, unitary being.

Erickson 537. This unity is altered at death, where the immaterial part of man lives on while the material part decomposes. This disembodied intermediate state, however, is incomplete or abnormal.

In the future resurrection of the dead, the person will again be unified. So, are there four different views? Not really. Monism, dualism, trichotomy.

This conditional unity or holistic dualism is a species of dichotomy that says we were made; Adam and Eve were made as holistic human beings with body and soul together. That is how we live now, and that is how we will live forever on the new earth as resurrected beings. There is an intermediate state. However, in light of the bible's whole story, that intermediate existence is abnormal and temporary.

So, like monism, this conditional unity emphasizes the unity of human beings, but it does not absolutize that unity and acknowledges that we are of two parts, and yet those two parts are normally unified. An examination of some biblical data. There are passages that teach an intermediate state.

Luke 23:43. One of the criminals, Luke 23 starting with verse 39, one of the criminals who was hanged, railed at Jesus, saying, are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us.

But the other rebuked him, saying, do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation and we indeed justly for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.

And he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And he said to him, truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. Here, Luke promises the dying thief, I tell you the truth today, you'll be with me in paradise.

I remain unconvinced by an exegesis that understands this day as the last day or the like. The text teaches that the forgiven thief would join Jesus later that day in the presence of God. Since their bodies remained on the crosses and were taken down and buried, there must be an immaterial part of human nature that survives death.

I Howard Marshall, *New International Greek Testament Commentary on Luke*, says, quote, Jesus reply assures him, the believing thief, of immediate entry into paradise. Close quote. The thief's journey would match Christ's, who prays Father into your hands.

I commit my spirit verse 43. I also reject an exegesis, which, by a creative movement of a comma, tries to do away with this business. I tell you the truth today, comma at some unknown time in the future, you'll be with me in paradise.

That is not the normal way to read the text. As commentaries on Luke reveal. Philippians 123 is another passage that affirms the intermediate state.

Paul here expresses his desire to depart and be with Christ. I need to read the context. Philippians one.

Paul says, yes, and I will rejoice Philippians 1:19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the spirit of Jesus Christ, this will turn out from my deliverance. He means from prison, as it is my eager expectation and hopes that I will not be at all ashamed but with full courage. Now, as always, Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet what I shall choose, I cannot tell.

I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, but remaining in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith so that in me, you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus because of my coming to you again.

Paul here expresses his desire to depart and be with Christ. In context, he is speaking of departing the body at death since 1 verse 21 contrasts living and dying. 2 verse 22 speaks of continued living in the body, and 3 verse 24 also speaks of remaining in the body.

Paul expected to go into the presence of Christ when he died. His body would be buried in decay. His immaterial part would go to be with the Lord.

Notice that the scripture does say soul and sometimes spirit for our intermediate aspect of human nature and part of human nature that survives death, but it usually does it in a different way. Usually, it uses personal pronouns. Today, you, Jesus told the dying thief, will be with me in paradise.

Philippians 1, I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, which reminds me Christian theology distinguishes between the present state in the body, the intermediate state after death and before the resurrection, and the final state, which follows after the resurrection of the dead. If the intermediate state is better, then the present state is good. It is good to be alive in the body and know Christ.

It is better, I will suggest, for two reasons, which I'll return to in a minute, to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. It is best, good, better, best, positive, comparative, and superlative degrees of adjectives. It is the best to be risen from the dead in glorified bodies and with the Lord forever.

How in the world can it be better to be out of your body in a temporary and incomplete state, in the intermediate state, for two reasons. Number one, all sin is gone. Hebrews 12:23 speaks of the souls of righteous men made perfect.

To die is to be then without sin, and to die in Christ is to be without sin. But the main reason, and it comes through in almost every one of these intermediate state passages, is that the main reason the intermediate state is better for believers than knowing the Lord in the body now is that one moves into the immediate presence of Christ. Today you'll be with me in paradise, Jesus told the dying thief.

I desire to depart this body and be with Christ, and in this life, to be with Christ, which is far better. 2 Corinthians 5, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Jesus is the meaning, of course. 2 Corinthians 5, 6, and 8. So we are always of good courage, verse 6, we know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So, whether we are at home or away, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5, 6, and 8, our third and

final intermediate state passage, here being at home in the body and being away from the Lord is contrasted by Paul with being away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Presupposed here is that human nature is composed of material and immaterial aspects. When one is at home in the body, living in the body on earth, he's not in the presence of Christ in heaven. When a believer departs the body, he goes to be with the Lord.

Plainly, the body he departs does not go into Christ's presence. There's an immaterial part that survives the death of the body and enters into the Lord's presence. Conclusion concerning intermediate state texts.

The passages we have briefly surveyed sufficiently refute the monistic view above. It is simply not true that man's nature is such a unity that a disembodied existence is impossible. It is possible and becomes actual in the intermediate state.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus teaches the reality of the disembodied existence of the saved and unsaved after death. The other place that does that is 2 Peter 2:19. That is a misprint.

I thought it was. It is 2 Peter 2:9. 2 Peter 2:9, not 19. Yet I feel the force, so I affirm an intermediate state.

Yet I feel the force of Erikson's calling the intermediate state incomplete or abnormal. I agree. Our final state is not a disembodied existence, contrary to the opinions of many evangelical Christians.

Here's what we do. We correctly say to be gathered from the body is to be present with the Lord. And then we extrapolate that forever, forgetting that we also believe in the resurrection of the body.

It's a failure of systematic theology in our minds. Our final state will be in glorified bodies on the new earth. In that sense, the intermediate state, the intermediate disembodied spiritual existence, is temporary and incomplete.

Other passages to consider are Revelation 6:9, and 10, where the souls under the altar cry out for vengeance. They were martyred. They're dead.

They're not embodied because they're not raised yet, and yet they're crying out for justice. Acts 7:59. Sounds like Stephen. As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

That certainly looks like his body didn't immediately go into the presence of Jesus in heaven. His body was stoned to death, but he asked Jesus to receive his spirit. Likewise, Hebrews 12:23, which I quoted earlier, speaks of the spirits of righteous men made perfect after death in the intermediate state.

In our next lecture, I should say we will address the trichotomous proof text two of them. 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 4:12. Without these texts, there would be no trichotomy, so it's important to look at them.

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