

## **Anthropology (The Study of Humanity) - Part 2**

### **The Image of God (Imago Dei)**

#### **Creation: Made in the Image of God - Genesis 1:26-31**

- What does it mean for humanity to be created in the image of God and after His likeness? Is the image rational? Relational? Moral? Spiritual? Does it refer to the fact that we have dominion over the earth?
- Reflection
  - Humanity has the ability to reflect God's glory in a way that is unique from the rest of creation.
    - We can display the character and nature of God in a unique way.
    - We can have a relationship with God and the rest of humanity in a unique way.
  - "When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." - Genesis 5:3
- Representation
  - Humanity is called to represent God as we exercise dominion over His creation. We serve as His vicegerents.
  - In many Ancient Near East cultures, a king was considered to be a god, or the image/vicegerent of a god. According to the Bible, all of humanity is given this role.
    - We are given dominion over the rest of creation, but not over one another.
    - We are to exercise our dominion in a way that cultivates God's creation.
  - "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." - Exodus 20:4

#### **The Fall: God's Image is Distorted but Not Lost**

- Rather than reflecting and representing God, Adam and Eve rebelled against God. Instead of bearing His image, they sought to take His place. Because of this, the image of God is distorted in humanity, but not lost.
  - "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image." - Genesis 9:6
  - "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." - Psalm 51:5
  - "They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one." - Psalm 53:3
  - "See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes." - Ecclesiastes 7:29

## **Redemption: Recovery and Restoration of the Imago Dei through Christ**

- Christ is referred to as the image of God.
  - “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” - 2 Corinthians 4:4
  - “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” - Colossians 1:15
- Those who trust in Christ are being transformed into His image.
  - “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” - Romans 8:29
  - “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” - 2 Corinthians 3:18
  - See also Colossians 3:10
- When Christ returns, there will be complete restoration of the Imago Dei.
  - “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.” - 1 Corinthians 15:49
  - “Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” - 1 John 3:2

## **Implications and Application**

- Because of the Imago Dei, all people have inherent dignity and worth. So see everyone, including yourself, this way, and treat them accordingly.
  - “With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.” - James 3:9
  - “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations – these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.” - C. S. Lewis
- At the same time, humanity is not ultimate. We were created in God's image to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.
  - “because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.” - Romans 1:25
  - While humanity is unique from the rest of creation, we are still part of creation. We were created on Day 6, not Day 7 (Cf. Revelation 13).
- Let us continually behold the True Image Bearer and be continually conformed to His likeness, so that we might become the people we were created to be.