

Doctrine of Human Behavior and Consequence

Lesson 2 – God's Intention for Man

Genesis 1:26-27 – 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.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

The Hebrew term for *image*, פָּסָלֶם (tselem), means a representation, physical likeness, and/or functional role. Humans are made in His likeness, and we are created to behave in a way that reflects God's rule with harmony.

I. The Character of God and Delegated Authority in Creation

To understand human behavior as God intended, we must begin with the source of all authority: the character of God. Sovereignty is God's right and power to administer His creation according to His plan. God's sovereignty is always consistent with His attributes. Scripture reveals a God whose rule is characterized by the following traits, which humanity was created to emulate as His representatives.

1. Sovereignty – Psalm 103:19 – "The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all." God has the absolute right to rule. His authority is the foundation for all delegated human rule; humanity, as His representatives, was called to take responsibility for creation with dignity.

2. Rational – Isaiah 1:18 – "'Come now, and let us reason together,' Says the LORD." God is a God of reason, and His rule is never arbitrary but is based on His truth. Human behavior should be guided by objective doctrinal knowledge rather than subjective emotions or speculation.

3. Orderly – 1 Corinthians 14:33 – "for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." God's administration is organized and consistent. As image-bearers, humanity was called to maintain order, mirroring the orderly nature of the Creator's household.

4. Righteous – Psalm 145:17 – "The LORD is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds." God's actions always align with His perfect character. Righteousness is the standard for all human evaluation and conduct, ensuring our behaviors align with God's principles.

5. Justice – Deuteronomy 32:4 – "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He." Justice in God's rule means every action is evaluated fairly and correctly. Human stewards are called to exercise justice, which is a godly standard of evaluation in our dealings with others.

6. Patient – 1 Timothy 1:16 – "Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life." God's rule is characterized by long-suffering and

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perfect patience. We emulate this by being gentle and peaceable, allowing others time to grow and respond to truth rather than being pugnacious.

7. Mercy – Titus 3:5 – "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." Mercy is the withholding of deserved judgment. As representatives, we are called to be merciful, the intention of God for humanity to show compassion and provide for the needs of others, regardless of their failures.

8. Grace – 1 Timothy 1:14 – "and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." Grace is providing unearned favor. Humanity was to take the grace of God and emulate that in relationships, providing favor without any requirements.

9. Well Intended (No Animosity) – 1 Timothy 2:4 – "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God’s rule is motivated by the ultimate well-being of His subjects. Humanity was intended to function in the same manner, working for the benefit of each other, without any selfish or hidden agendas.

10. Impartial – Acts 10:34 – "Opening his mouth, Peter said: 'I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,'" God does not show favoritism. To represent Him correctly, humanity must avoid looking at the outer portrayal, treating all people with the inherent dignity they possess as fellow image-bearers.

When God created humanity, He did not create another animal; He created a representative to manage His creation using these traits.

Genesis 1:28 – God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'

Humanity was designed to be the living representation of God on earth, functioning as His delegated sovereigns through four specific responsibilities:

1. Rule: **רְדָה** (radah) – to rule, have dominion, or manage
2. Subdue: **קָבֵשׁ** (kabash) – to bring into or maintain order

Genesis 2:15 – Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

3. Cultivate: **עֲבַד** (abad) – to work, serve, or develop
4. Keep: **שָׁמַר** (shamar) – to guard, maintain, or preserve

Many of these character traits are evident in the context of sin and the fall. What we must understand is that God never changes, and His character was not developed but is rather revealed to humanity despite sin.

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II. Jesus Christ: The Perfect Man and Heir of the Earth

While the first Adam failed to maintain the functional representation of God through sin, Jesus Christ entered history as the "Last Adam." He is the perfect image-bearer who demonstrates exactly how a human is supposed to rule and behave under God's delegated authority.

Jesus Christ did not come only to die; He came to qualify as the King who will literally inherit and rule the earth. His rule is not characterized by the self-serving tyranny seen in fallen human governments, but by the perfect attributes of the Imago Dei.

Isaiah 9:7 – There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

As a human, Jesus lived in total alignment with the truth of the Father. He modeled the "servant-leadership" intended in the garden. His future rule in the Millennial Kingdom will be the ultimate display of human behavior restored to its proper function.

Isaiah 11:6-9 – "And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea."

Jesus Christ rules with a "rod of iron; His justice is immovable, yet He is "self-controlled and humble." He is the Prince of Peace who subdues the chaos of the curse and restores harmony to the creation. By observing Jesus, we see that the pinnacle of human behavior is to manage His domain with integrity, objectivity, truth, and self-sacrificial love.

III. Restored Humanity: Co-Heirs and the Age of Ages

The ultimate result of the believer's life is not merely to "go to heaven," but to be conformed to the image of the Son so that we may fulfill our original destiny as rulers of God's creation. Because of grace, we have already obtained favor and are placed into the family of God as heirs. But the hope is not only to be restored and freed from sin

Romans 8:18-21 – For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

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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.

Our identity in Christ is the beginning of the restoration of the *Imago Dei*. In the coming Millennial Kingdom, believers will be made like Him and inherit as co-heirs with Christ, exercising delegated authority over the nations. This responsibility even extends beyond the physical realm into the spiritual realm.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 – Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters in this life?

The Greek for *judge* is *κρίνω* (*krinō*), which means to judge, govern, or exercise oversight. This reveals that the restored image-bearer is destined to provide righteous oversight for the entire created order, both earthly and heavenly.

This restoration reaches its absolute fullness in the Age of Ages, the New Heavens and New Earth. There, the original mandate to "rule" and "keep" is made eternal.

Revelation 22:3-5 – There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

In the final state, we will reign not because of our own merit, but because we are the restored pinnacle of creation, fully reflecting the truth and character of God. Understanding the restoration gives us insight into God's intention and what we will be. Humanity was intended to live and behave as kings and judges. When we function in alignment with this reality, we find the peace and contentment God intended for His image-bearers from the beginning.

Conclusion

In the end, humanity's story arcs back to God's original design, where we stand as His image-bearers, entrusted with stewardship over creation. Though sin disrupted that harmony, Christ's perfect obedience restores us to our intended role, conforming us to His likeness. This calls us to embody those divine traits. Even though we are infected by sin, we should strive to have our behavior emulate God's character in our daily lives.

As we await the full realization in the millennial kingdom and the new heavens and earth, our present behavior serves as a representation in our fallen world. We manage our spheres of influence, from personal relationships to responsibilities, with the same integrity and self-sacrificial love that Jesus modeled.