

Humanity: Image of God, III

We have two tasks for this lesson, the first of which is to grade our quiz. I am sure you would like to do that. I told you why I quiz: in order to help you read carefully and learn. Usually, despite the pain of it, students say that goal is accomplished; they do learn better even as they wince when they miss some answers.

True or false, according to Hoekema. It is important to remember this quiz is according to him and not according to us. I will tell you when I disagree with him.

1. In Genesis 1:26, “let us make man in our image, after our likeness,” the expression “after our likeness” is only a different way of saying “in our image.” True, according to Hoekema page 13. (I will give you the pages on which these answers are found.)

2. When one kills a human being, one does violence to God Himself. True, found on page 16. This seems to be the point of the prohibition against taking human life in Genesis 9:6, which is regarded by Christian theologians and ethicists as the biblical foundation for capital punishment.

3. The Fall has totally obliterated the image of God in human beings. False, found on page 20. It may be neater to say the image was present at creation, totally lost in the Fall, and restored in Christ. This is neater, but it is not biblical, so we hold to a theology that is not as tidy. We talk about the image being terribly marred but not effaced because of Genesis 9 and James 3. Fallen human beings still bear the image though we have to qualify that statement in some sense. We can say more about that even as we pull things together today.

4. It was only because humanity had been created in the image of God that the second person of the Trinity could assume human nature. True, found on page 22. How fitting it was for God the Son to become a human being since human beings had been made in God’s image in the first place and since the Son is called, in Scripture, “the true image,” “the very image”; “the image of the invisible God.” Colossians 1 uses that very language.

5. According to the New Testament, the goal of redemption of human beings is that they may be fully conformed to the image of Christ. True, found on page 24. One of the perspectives from which we should view the image of God being restored in human beings is indeed Christ as the image. That seems to break into two subsets, one of which is this notion that He is the goal and we will be conformed to the image of Christ. It is a great encouragement for us.

6. We should primarily conceive of the image of God as static. False, found on page 28. There is a static element to it, also called substantive or structural. But there are also dynamic aspects as well.

7. The image of God is an un-losable aspect of humanity; it is part of human essence and existence. True, found on page 32. This can give motivation for society to not make provision for severely retarded persons or to practice euthanasia. I am not saying every situation is simple or that it is always immediately obvious how these people are a blessing to those who love them. But in a Christian mindset, such persons can be a blessing even as they draw love from others. Many have testified of the return on their time and energy to loving family members and others whom they take into their homes and care for and love in that way. Furthermore, such persons can sometimes teach us things about the

image of God. If we define it chiefly in rational terms, Down syndrome children, who can be really long on love, can teach us quite a bit about love.

8. According to Irenaeus, both the image and likeness of God were lost in the Fall. False, found on page 33. This is the beginning of a distinction that led to some serious problems in the development of Roman Catholic medieval theology.

9. Thomas Aquinas taught that the image of God is found primarily in God's relations to His fellow humans. False, found on page 36. He taught it is primarily in human rationality.

10. According to Calvin, fallen humanity is still an image-bearer of God. True, found on page 46.

11. According to Calvin, the renewal of the image of God is completed in this life. False, found on page 48; it is not completed until the resurrection from the dead.

12. Unlike Carl Barth, Emil Brunner held to the historical Fall. False, found on page 52. They both denied it and that raises serious questions. They were trying to avoid problems, but when we get to the doctrine of sin, my own contention will be that they create more problems than they solve. We will talk about that because it is common today to deny the historical Fall or simply never talk about original sin and instead emphasize actual sin. We are glad that people admit actual sin. Two world wars and other major conflicts since have pretty much dispelled the old liberal notion of the perfectibility of human beings, but there is explanation in the Scriptures as to where sin came from. We were not made as sinners. We were made upright and we fell. It is an important point that we will work with more in the next section of our course.

13. Brunner correctly found love to be central in the image of God rather than reason or intellect. True, found on page 57 of Hoekema's book. Agreement depends on how you define your terms. Both of those would be very important elements, in my own estimation.

14. According to Berkouwer, the image of God consists of who humanity is and how it functions. False, found on pages 64 and 65. He rejects the traditional notion and is concerned only with function. That is an overreaction, in my estimation. In the end I am going to argue for retaining all three aspects that we introduced last lecture—substantive, relational, and functional aspects of the image. This means the three historical views become aspects of the truth.

15. We must include the human body as part of the image. True, according to Hoekema's page 68. I will allow it as long as we qualify this statement. We will talk about that later on when I pull things together and summarize. God does not have a body so there is not an exact correlation, and yet we only see the image through other human beings being embodied. Berkhoff says it best when he says, "The body is the fit instrument of the image." And already Calvin was thinking in that direction, which shows some of the influence of the Renaissance on his own thinking. I will allow for the bodily aspect of the image, or the body being involved. I would not find the body per se being the image, but the incarnation of Christ would certainly lead us in that direction.

16. The image of God includes both humanity's structure, which I call substantive, and its functioning. True, found on page 69. Hoekema correctly puts those two together, though I think he errs in this next point.

17. Humanity's structure is primary to the image of God and its functioning is secondary. I would personally answer that question true. Tony Hoekema answered it false, found on page 73. You are not grading the quiz according to me or you, but according to him; so the correct answer is false. You may, like me, feel this position seems illogical. If he means you take an approach as Dr. Newman does and count data, then we do find more data for the functional and relational aspects than the substantive. But I do not think that is what he means and, according to how we think, it makes no sense to me to talk about function being primary and structure being secondary. We are, and because of who we are we function and we relate. Now at this point students have always protested and said, "Are not these things all inseparable?" My answer is yes. But in terms of the way we think and our thinking about the way we think, the whole area of epistemology, our theory of knowledge, our structure, or substance, is primary and our roles and relations are secondary.

18. We learn nothing about the image of God in human beings by studying Christ whom Scripture calls the image of God. False, found on page 73. We learn much.

19-22. I tried to have mercy on you last time and tell you what was coming for this question. List the three-fold relationship into which God has placed humanity. To God, to fellow human beings, and to creation are the three answers. I will take synonyms such as to God, to the deity, to the Trinity, to other human beings, fellow man, to creation, or to nature. This answer is found on pages 75-80 with page 80 summarizing the three.

22. Adam and Eve reflected the image of God sinlessly and obediently before the Fall. The answer is true, found on page 82. We do not think enough about Adam and Eve before the Fall. They are our prototypes and they can help us dispel some real faulty notions, one of which is to err is human, which is a derangement. Sin is a terrible attack on the way God made us in the first place. It is a terrible distortion and as they came from their creator's hand and as long as they lived before they fell into sin, our first parents imaged God very well indeed.

23. Due to the Fall, the image of God in humanity, though not destroyed, has been seriously corrupted. True, found on page 83. We are going to explore most of these things in our time today.

24. The renewal of the image of God in humanity is solely the work of the Holy Spirit; we have nothing to do with it. False, found on page 86. Throughout his writings, Hoekema shows a healthy concern for divine sovereignty and human responsibility and holding those things together. As a Calvinist, he does not hold those things as equally ultimate. Sovereignty is ultimate—God is God—sovereignty does not nullify, but rather establishes human responsibility.

25. The renewal of a human being in the image of God is a process that continues as long as the person lives. True, found on page 91. I emphasize in teaching the doctrines of perseverance and apostasy the importance of not just basing our Christian lives on moments in time. You can look at specific moments in the lives of the greatest heroes in the Bible and see terrible images. Think of David with Bathsheba or Peter denying Christ. So do not judge your Christian life or anybody else on the basis of a moment. The whole story is what matters. In any particular moment, it may not look like we are doing too well in our image restoration project, but overall, I hope that we are better friends, husbands, wives, parents, children, employers, or employees than we were 10 years ago, and better worshippers and servants of God as well. That is the way it ought to be. There are different aspects of salvation; some are instantaneous, some are progressive; this is a progressive way of looking at salvation.

26. It is possible, though rare, for the image of God to be brought to completion in this life. False, found on page 91. I say it without malice, but the teaching of perfectionism is false teaching. I cannot say it any plainer than that. I have no bad feelings toward my brothers and sisters who would teach perfectionism, but they are wrong.

27. The fact that man and woman together reflect the image of God will still be true in the life to come. True, found on page 98. I have a couple of different versions of this quiz, one of which says, “Man and woman together constitute the image of God.” The answer is true, but we better stop and think a little bit because there is a potential clash between that statement—which is one of the aspects of the relational dimension of the image—and the previous statement that Jesus Christ is the image of God. Christ did not marry so we cannot deny the image to single persons. Sometimes marriage can be presented as if a man is completed when he is married, which implies something is wrong with him when he is single. Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 7 apply today that some are called to singleness that they might serve God in dangerous situations and so forth. We need not belittle that possibility. You say, “Could not Jesus image God in His relations to other men and women apart from marriage?” Of course, we are social beings in that sense. But we have to be careful as to the way we say it and the implications we draw.

28. A proper appreciation of the doctrine of the image of God should rule out racism. True, found on page 100. I enjoy how both Millard Erikson and Anthony Hoekema make applications to contemporary life.

29. Before the Fall Adam and Eve had very positive images of themselves. True, found on page 103. I should mention that before Hoekema got a doctorate in theology, he acquired a master’s degree in psychology. This education is evident in the section about self-image, which some of my students have criticized that it does not belong in this book at all. Others have really praised it. I am glad it is there and I am not a psychologist. In terms of evaluating what he says theologically, I think he does very well. He has a footnote near the end in which he cites a book about a fine Christian man who says that proper Christian self-image is no self-image at all. I agree with Hoekema that this is unrealistic. Our goal in life is not to scrutinize ourselves all the time; we cannot help but have a self-image.

30. A truly spiritual Christian will have no self-image at all. False, found on page 110. My other version of the quiz points to the fact that one can have a sinful self-image in terms of one’s image being too high or too low. One question states, “There was a two-fold perversion of humanity’s self-image after the Fall.” The answer is true, found on page 104. I found that very encouraging. And here is another one that is not on your quiz: “The Christian self-image means looking at ourselves in the light of God’s gracious work of forgiveness and renewal.” True, of course, found on page 111. I found that part really brief, but very helpful indeed.

31. Man and woman together are the image of God. True, found on page 97. But I have a little caveat: Christ alone is the image of God as well.

Some questions asked include: “Are not spiritual gifts given when one is saved?” Yes. “Do not unsaved people have natural gifts?” Yes. “Is there not often times an enhancement of one’s natural gifts along with giving of spiritual gifts when one comes to know the Lord?” Yes. And it is hard to sort it all out; the total product is probably impossible to sort out what is natural, what is spiritual, and what was latent and just came to flower because now the person is living for God and so forth.

We are working with the biblical data pertinent to the image of God. I have more historical and theological information now at my disposal from your reading and quiz taking. We said from the Old

Testament the main thing we learn is the fact that we were made in the image of God. We are not really told what it is in the Old Testament, but we can look back from the new with better understanding and we can discern more. We began a discussion of the Pauline doctrine of the restoration of the image of God in Jesus Christ. Along the way, we distinguished three aspects. Substantive or structural views of the image see the image in what we are. Relational views of the image say the image is not what we are, but how we relate to others. Functional aspects of the image say the image is not chiefly in who we are or in our relations, but rather in the roles that we play. Let us go with that little review.

From Colossians 3, one of the “renewal of the image” passages in Paul, we learned that the image is renewed in knowledge in salvation in Christ. We thus postulated that if the renewal of the image has to do with knowledge, there must have been a knowledge component of the image in the first place, which correlated with Genesis 1, 2 and 3. Indeed, Adam and Eve were made by the Lord able to relate to Him and to one another by using their minds. We made the point that the reason is not just abstract rationality or the ability to think, but rather we saw relational and functional notions bound up with it in its very context in Colossians; and we emphasized it is the ability to think God’s thoughts and to do His will and to understand what He wants us to do and to love Him with our minds and our lives. We go to Ephesians 4 for a second Pauline passage. These are the two passages that have led the church historically to affirm the substantive aspect of the image. I agree completely with the church’s instincts in these regards. That is why I take time and work with these passages in detail. Ephesians 4:17-25 says,

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. [Notice the effects of sin on the human mind.] They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with the continual lust for more. You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you have heard of Him and were taught in Him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Application follows: “Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor.” Paul had exhorted his readers not to live as the unsaved do. The believers to whom Paul writes had not been taught to live in an ungodly manner when they learned of Christ in the Gospel. On the contrary, these Christians were taught to live a holy life. Part of the early Christian discipleship was encouraging the converts in living for the Lord. Paul uses three infinitives in verses 22 and 24 to teach the importance of this new godly living, which replaces the old manner of life. They could be viewed as a compound direct object. You were taught to put off, verse 22; to be made new in the attitude of your mind, verse 23; and to put on the new self, verse 24. The three infinitives could be showing what they were taught. Another way of viewing them is in verse 21: “Surely you heard of Him and were taught in Him in accordance with the truth that is in Christ Jesus.” Namely, the truth that you take off, that you are made new and that you put on. So it is not really that important for our purposes in terms of doctrine, but in terms of linguistics, the three infinitives either form a compound direct object to the verb “you were taught” in 21 or they form a compound appositive to the word “truth”; that is, they function as verbal nouns further explaining what that truth was.

Colossians 3:9-10, the passage we studied last time and this passage, Ephesians 4:22-24, illustrate well Herman Ridderbos’ distinction between the indicative and the imperative. Now those are moods for the Greek language, but he is using them in a much broader way. For example, the indicative is the mood

that one uses in common discourse to explain the way things are. The imperative, of course, is that which one uses to impress one's will on somebody else as in "close the door"; it is a command. In the former passage, Colossians 3, Paul tells the Colossian believers what has already happened to them. He says, "You have taken off the old man and have put on the new." In the passage at hand, Paul exhorts his readers to take off the old ways and put on the new. In one passage he says it has already been done and in another passage he says to do it. I have a preacher friend who says that in the pulpit you cannot possibly talk about indicative and imperative, so instead he tells his people the "done passages" and the "do passages." The indicative is the "done passages"—what has already been done. The "do passages" are the imperative. We need to make that kind of application in ministry. This is the pattern in Paul's thought. He often speaks in the pattern of the Old Testament, which he carries over to the New. The Scripture often speaks of what God has done in Christ for His people. Paul speaks in the indicative, "done" passages. In another context, Paul will exhort the people of God to do the very things which he has said in other places that God has done for them. This is the imperative, the "do passages." There is no contradiction here. It is Paul's way of teaching the Christian life, which is based upon the saving work of God because we do not save ourselves. The "done passages" are the foundation of the Christian life—namely that Jesus has died and risen again to save us. But upon that foundation the Lord tells us to go ahead and live for Him. Also, this indicative-imperative contrast is Paul's way of showing not only that the Christian life is based upon God's saving work, but also that the people of God are actively involved in the Christian life. God's free salvation becomes theirs and they experience it by living in the light of what God has done for them. So we are already new and we are to live in the light of that newness.

In verse 22 Paul tells his readers to take off, as clothing, according to their former way of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to its deceitful desires. Skipping ahead, the readers are told to rid themselves of their sinful, pre-Christian lifestyle with its deceitful desires. Maybe some of you can remember examples, if you were adult converts, as I was. I distinctly remember in coming to know the Lord that I had certain mental things going on that I could let go. I had different patterns of being very careful of what I said—I had to apologize for having lied in the past—but it was a wonderful freedom to let my guard down. Maybe others can experience that. That is exactly what he is talking about here. There is no more cause for deceit. Paul further teaches, "And be renewed in the attitude of your minds." Paul calls for a renewal in their mental attitude. The present infinitive may be interpreted as indicating progressive action. They are to be continually made new in their thinking.

The third infinitive is found in verse 24: "they are to put on the new man," which, according to God, was created "in true righteousness and holiness." This is the place we are very interested in because of our subject of the image of God in humanity. This speaks of the new spiritual creation in Christ Jesus. The new creation, contrary to popular understanding, is, first of all, a corporate concept. Compare it with an earlier passage in Ephesians where Paul says, "God makes of the Jew and the Gentile one new man"; it is corporate. It is, first of all, an image for the Church. It does have individual applications. Of course, the corporate never rules out the individual biblically, but watch out for a tendency on our part to read the Bible in a terribly individualistic way. When we miss the fact that it is a corporate book in both testaments, our church life suffers accordingly. It is, first of all, a corporate book addressing Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New Testament. Secondly, it does definitely speak to us as individuals. I understand the expression "the new man, which has been created" to be very similar to the expression in Colossians "to the new man according to the image of the one who created him." Although the words "image of God" are not specifically mentioned here, I understand the verse to speak of that concept. I am arguing with a concept without the words for the following reasons: first, because of the close parallelism to the Colossians passage. Second, because the use of the verb "I create" or "to create," *ktizo*, in both passages, is used to refer to the new creation. Third, because most importantly, the phrase

“according to God” approximates “according to the image of God.” If you look at the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Genesis 1:27, I think perhaps that is where Paul is getting this expression, “according to God,” from. And it looks like shorthand for that expression, “according to the image of God.” This is not a private opinion of mine; Mitton, a commentator, agrees. The word here in Ephesians differs from that in Colossians 3:10, but clearly the meaning is intended to be the same. F.F. Bruce adds, “The phrase ‘according to God’ means ‘in the image of God.’” I thus understand Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10 to speak of the same topic: the recreation of human beings in Christ Jesus according to the original image of God in humanity. In this passage we learn that the new man was created according to God “in righteousness and true holiness.” Here comes my reasoning now, extrapolating back, since the restoration of man and woman in Christ, which accords with God, involves righteousness and true holiness, the original *imago dei* must have included the same. If this is correct—and I believe it is—we learn of a moral aspect of the original image of God in humanity. Man and woman were made like God in original purity. Let us test this on the basis of the early chapters in Genesis. This comports with Genesis; it fits well with Genesis where Adam and Eve lived in fellowship with God before the Fall. They were not innocent or neutral beings, as is sometimes said. Only holy beings could live in fellowship with a holy God.

We will talk about some ramifications of this in our next lecture. I will just say now that, although human beings after the Fall are sinful, the fact that those words even pertain to human beings exactly demonstrates what I am talking about. To call a human being sinful is to affirm that we were made in the image of God, that we are moral beings rather than immoral beings, because moral beings can become immoral beings—at least it was true of human beings, and even of angels, those who fell. Apparently, the angels who did not fall are locked in and cannot fall anymore.