
THE IMAGE OF GOD: DIFFERENT VIEWS

Doctrine of Man
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DEFINING THE IMAGE

- Theologians have conceptualized the image of God in several different ways.
 - As we looked at last week, some distinguish between the *image* of God and the *likeness* of God (cf. Gen 1:26). At the risk of oversimplifying, some theologians consider the image as something a human *is* and the likeness is something a human *does*.
 - While the Reformed tradition recognizes ontological and ethical aspects to the image, it typically has not distinguished between God's image and likeness in this fashion.
 - The Reformed tradition often uses the language of archetype/ectype.
 - The human being as an ectype of God himself, the triune God, who is the archetype.
 - The ectype extends to man's entire being: his ontology as well as his ethical capacity.
- There has been a change in humanity that was brought about through the Fall into sin. We must negotiate what that change entails and whether or not it has led to a loss of the image.
 - Prior to the Fall, the image of God consisted of true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness along with dominion over the created order.¹ However, this image has been affected by sin.²
 - The image of God has been affected and lost in some since with the Fall into sin. However, there is another sense in which human beings retain the image of God.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW

- Roman Catholic theology teaches that man continues to be the image of God after the Fall. However, their definition of the image differs from other traditions.
 - The Catholic Catechism teaches, "Of all visible creatures only man is 'able to know and love his creator.' He is 'the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake,' and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity."³

¹ *Institutes*, II.2.12.

² *Institutes*, I.15.4, II.12.17; *Commentary on Genesis 9:6*.

³ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), §356.

- To look more closely at human constitution, Catholic theology further teaches that man is a body-soul unity.
 - The Catholic Catechism: “The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual.”⁴
 - But this constitution is described in terms of higher and lower orders, and these aspects are in conflict with one another. There is a natural pull or tendency in man toward self-love.
- To counteract this problem, God must give a supernatural gift to man.
 - The supernatural gift given to Adam after he was created is called the *donum superadditum* (super-added gift).
 - Therefore, Roman Catholic theology teaches that man retains the image of God, because the image of God only includes his natural constitution.
- Problems with this Roman Catholic view:
 - First, this formulation of the image of God seems to entail that God made man deficient. God had to provide a gift that fixed part of his creation.
 - Second, the image of God proper is unaffected by sin. What man has lost in the fall was his super-added gift.

THE LUTHERAN VIEW

- Lutheran theology rejects the Catholic teaching of concupiscence and the *donum superadditum*.
 - Catholic theology teaches that man retains the image of God entirely.
 - Lutheran theology teaches the reverse: that man has lost the image of God entirely.
- This view results from the Lutheran identification of the image of God with original righteousness.
 - This, however, cannot account for the teaching of Gen 9:6, and James 3:9.
 - These passages do not merely teach that man may once again recover the image of God. They teach that man present exists in the image of God.

THE PELAGIAN VIEW

- For the Pelagian, the image of consists in rationality, free will, and dominion over the creatures. None of these aspects are lost after the fall.
- Moral agency is part of the image of God, but moral excellence is something that must be acquired by man.
- He obtains this excellence through rational voluntary choice. Man is therefore not created in a positive righteous state. He was created morally neutral.

⁴ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), §362.

THE IMAGE OF GOD WITH REFERENCE TO SIN

- Genesis 9:6—Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.
 - Genesis 9:6, which is *after* the Fall into sin, seems to presuppose that man *continues* to be made in the image of God.
 - Man was made in the image of God and retains that image. Consequently, murder is worthy of death, because man *continues* to be made in the image of God.
 - The language is identical to Genesis 1:26. There is no *substantial* change in man’s fundamental identity as image of God.
- James 3:9—With [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.
 - James has been teaching about the danger of sinning with the tongue.
 - Verses 6–8—⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.
 - It’s unfitting that we would bless our God and Father with the same organ we use to curse people.
 - The argument is not simply that it’s a contradiction to use the tongue to bless and curse *in general*. It turns specifically on the nature of man.
 - Man is made in the likeness of God. It’s much more forceful when we recognize that James emphasizes this contradiction.
 - It’s ridiculous that we would bless God and with the same tongue curse his image.
 - As a result, James 3:9 teaches that fallen man continues to be created and bear the likeness of God. This conclusion is further strengthened as we turn to 1 Cor 11:7.
- 1 Corinthians 11:7—“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων); but woman is the glory of man.”
 - The phrase εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων is particularly instructive for our present concerns.
 - The language Paul uses is borrowed from the Old Testament.
 - The LXX of Gen 1:27 translates אֱלֹהִים בְּצַלְמֵם as κατ’ εἰκόνα Θεοῦ.
 - Paul uses cognates of these very words to describe man’s existence as created.
 - ὑπάρχων is a present active part masculine nominative singular from ὑπάρχω.
 - This implies an abiding and continuing present reality. Man is or remains the image of the invisible God.

- This present participle requires that we understand fallen man to retain the image of God. Man, even after the fall, is the image and glory of God.
- Yet some theologians would suggest that we consider the intended audience of this epistle.
 - Since it was written to the Corinthians, a group of Christians who experience the sanctifying work of the Spirit, what can be said about their retention of the image of God may not be said for unbelievers, in whom the Spirit is not working to conform them to Christ.
 - Granted, this epistle is written to Christians. However, Paul’s argument transcends the distinction of believer and unbeliever.
 - Paul uses the language of Genesis 1:27, which refers to a covenant-historical period prior to the fall, and therefore prior to any ethical category that distinguishes between believers and unbelievers.
 - Paul refers to what is common to humanity. His argument is rooted in the original creation, not the new creation brought about through redemption.
 - This passage is perplexing on several levels, but the conjunctions and prepositions help to clarify Paul’s intent.
 - 1 Corinthians 11:8–9—⁸ For man was not made from woman, but woman from man (ἀλλὰ γυνή ἐξ ἀνδρός).⁹ Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man (ἀλλὰ γυνή διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα).
 - There’s a distinction made between from (ἐκ/ἐξ) and for (διὰ) in verses 7 and 8.
 - The initial οὐ γάρ of verse 8 links Paul’s statement with what he established in verse 7.
 - So that verse 8 (that woman is from man) is *based* and *founded* upon the historical reality of the original creation of man.
 - In other words, in terms of creational *origin*, woman is “from” (ἐκ) man. She was created from Adam’s rib (Gen 2:21–23).
 - The initial καὶ γὰρ οὐκ of verse 9 introduces another implication of Paul’s statement in verse 7.
 - In terms of creational order or purpose, woman was made “for” (διὰ) man.
 - This is not a statement about ontological inequality, but one of roles, which for Paul bear even upon cultural matters such as the appropriateness of types of dress.

- Paul’s statements about the creation of man and woman refer to an abiding reality.
 - The way that man and woman were created continues to be significant today—even in the midst of changing cultural particulars.
 - Therefore, Paul’s argument seems to rest on the affirmation that man continues to exist in the image of God.
- Some interpreters have taken these verses to mean that men are created in the image of God, but women are not.
 - Once again, Paul makes a point about creational origin and purpose.
 - This need not contradict the clear teaching of Gen 1:27, which states explicitly: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; *male and female he created them.*”
 - In 1 Corinthians 11:7, Paul is not concerned *first and foremost* to describe woman’s relationship to God; he is concerned to describe woman’s relationship to man.
 - Given our exegesis of Genesis 9:6, James 3:9, and 1 Corinthians 11:7, we can conclude that man and women retain the image of God after the fall. That being said, other texts suggest that the image of God has been lost through the fall.
- Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10
 - Ephesians 4:24—and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.
 - Colossians 3:10—and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν,
 - Whereas Gen 9:6; James 3:9; and 1 Corinthians 11:7 emphasized what is the *same* regarding the image of God pre- and post-fall, Eph 4:24 and Col 3:10 focus on what is *different*.
 - Both Eph 4:24 and Col 3:10 clearly speak about the renewal of the image of God. If that’s the case, then something must have happened to it.
 - These texts are similar in several respects.
 - First is the emphasis upon the “new.” τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον and τὸν νέον [ἄνθρωπον is implied] focus upon the New Creation.
 - Paul makes this point in 2 Cor 5:17—Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις). The old has passed away; behold, the new (καινὰ) has come.

- The new creation is brought about through the redemptive work of Christ and the Spirit’s application of his work to believers.
- Second, Paul emphasizes the divine archetype according to which man is created.
 - By speaking of a “likeness of God” in Eph 4:24 (κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα; lit: “created according to God”), he refers to an original reality or state of creation.
 - Likewise, in Col 3:10, Paul speaks of a new ἄνθρωπος which is being renewed (τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον) after the image (κατ’ εἰκόνα) of its creator.
 - The renewal of this image *recovers* something previously held.
- Ephesians 4:24 looks to the ethical effects of the New Creation.
 - It results in ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.
 - The ἐν with the dative describes the sense in which believers are recreated. They are recreated ethically with respect to righteousness and holiness.
- Colossians 3:10 focuses on the epistemological effects of the New Creation.
 - Note that these are also bound up with ethical renewal. Paul is not speaking of a different type of New Creation but a different aspect of the application of redemption.
 - This renewal is εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν. It imparts a knowledge that was formerly held with respect to man as originally created, but was no longer present after the fall and prior to the New Creation.
 - It is not knowledge in general, but knowledge according to the image of the Creator.
 - Paul speaks of a similar renewal in Eph 4:23—“ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds” (ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν).
 - Therefore, if a renewal is necessary to recover this knowledge, then it must have been lost in some sense.
- To combine the teaching of Eph 4:24 and Col 3:10, redemption restores true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, which are ectypes according to the divine archetype.
- The Scriptural data demands that we affirm two truths: (1) man retains the image of God after the fall, and (2) man has lost the image of God in some sense.
 - This introduces several important distinctions we find in our theological tradition regarding the image of God:
 - Broad/narrow
 - Moral agency/moral excellence

- Generic/specific
- Metaphysical/ethical
- In one sense, man retains moral capacity and moral agency. Yet, in his sin, man no longer possesses true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. He has lost the narrow sense of moral conformity or excellence.