

**Systematic Theology for the Local Church**  
**#67-68—Anthropology—IV-V<sup>1</sup>**  
**The Commission and Its Equipment**

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Helpful for the studies in biblical anthropology are House, section 46, and Reymond, 415-430.

One of the fundamental questions of our existence is, “Why are we here?” Many thinking people through the ages have pondered this, and some have arrived at answers that others accept to various degrees. But the Bible—and particularly the first three chapters of Genesis—is the only source for satisfying answers to questions such as this. Human beings exist and are on this planet because God had certain specific purposes for them.

In fact, God, human beings and the earth are tied together inseparably. God created the earth as the arena for the creation of people and for the outworking of their responses to Him. The early chapters of Genesis record that the first human beings were formed from the earth, worked on and with it and would return to it. Romans 8:19-22 teaches that when Adam and Eve fell, the earth was affected. Finally, when God brings about the full glory of the redeemed, the earth will be refashioned, too (Rev. 21:1-5).

As we scan human history, one of our conclusions has to be that the events found in worldwide records cluster around two focal points: our relating successfully to the planet and our relating to each other on the planet. The provision of food, control of disease, development of transportation, as well as negative events such as loss of life in earthquakes, disasters at sea and snakebite, are all examples of the former. Problems involving human interaction are evidenced in the rise and fall of kings and kingdoms, the events associated with legal enactments (the Magna Charta, the U.S. Constitution) and crimes. We might conjecture that the negative examples shed little light on our purpose for being on earth. However, when we are given enough information, they turn out to fit perfectly into a picture that has its roots in the first three chapters of the Bible. In fact, we cannot understand history itself without understanding why we are here and what has happened to us along the way in our relation to God. God’s placing us on this planet with responsibility for it—and that includes the earth and all living matter—is the key to history. Perhaps saying more than he realized, Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), German naturalist and explorer, concluded, “World history is incomprehensible apart from world government.”<sup>2</sup>

### **1. A key source of information**

A careful reading of the early chapters of Genesis leads to this conclusion, among others: we do not have all the information we would like to have about the beginnings of people and the earth. We wonder how much time elapses between Gen. 1:1 and events at or after the time of the flood, where names of people and places begin to match existing extra-biblical records. Where was the garden? Exactly what were weather conditions like and how did they differ from those of today? How much did Adam and Eve know about God? What did newly created living and inanimate objects look like? Not only are there many points where interpretation is difficult, there are apparently many intentional gaps in the flow of information.

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Erich Sauer, *The King of the Earth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 16.

But in a sense we are asking the wrong question. Yes, it is right to ask questions of the Bible. But in this case there is a missing observation: the purpose of the first two chapters of Genesis is not to give a detailed and scientific report (although we must assume that the Bible will not contradict science), but to provide a rationale for our existence on this planet. Only enough historical detail is given to provide an adequate setting for the more important spiritual issues. Erich Sauer, a perceptive German writer, says:<sup>3</sup>

The chief and essential interest of the creation-narrative is a spiritual one. Its real concern is not to give a report about cosmogony but rather a manifestation of revealed truths, not to give a *history* of creation but to testify to its *meaning*.

I would not say at all that the details that Genesis does give are not historical. But the main purpose of Scripture here is to move us to the great steps God takes with human beings.

Even a casual reading of Gen. 1-2 will yield the fact that the events of creation lead to the appearance of Adam. Yet he comes on the scene as frail, alone, and shaped from the huge earth he stands on. His first job is to name the animals as God parades them past him, and they obviously outnumber him. Almost as an afterthought (it was, of course, always in the plan) God gives him help in the form of an alternate human being. From this we gather that Adam needs assistance: even before sin enters the picture he is set over against his environment.

In a literary sense it is the very fact that he is outnumbered that immediately sets up a conflict. Somehow this solitary individual has to pit his equipment against everything around him. If we read honestly and naively, we would ask, “Will he make it?” (It is significant that in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century we often wonder if we will destroy the whole planet, including humanity). And yet we sense that Adam will succeed, because, although he seems weak, he has not been neglected. God has made him like Himself in some ways, and has given him a special commission. We have to conclude from the text that God must think he can make it. In fact, God simply tells him to go ahead and live successfully. Survival doesn’t seem to be an issue from God’s standpoint.

These and other factors lend support to the conclusion that the creation account is centered on human beings. They are the goal as well as the focus of God’s mighty acts, the “head and crown of all visible, created beings.”<sup>4</sup> We should not be surprised that even a Nietzsche would say, “Man is the reason for the world.”<sup>5</sup>

## **2. The commission**

We should look carefully at God’s initial interaction with Adam. After creating him, God gave him a specific two-part responsibility (Gen. 1:28): (1) produce more human beings and (2) bring the earth under control.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

The second element has more spiritual significance than the first, and we might conclude that increasing in number would be a means toward achieving the subjugation of the earth. In any case, the main import of this commission is that Adam and Eve and their descendants are to be rulers of the earth—kings, in a

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<sup>3</sup> Sauer, 50.

<sup>4</sup> Sauer, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Sauer, 49.

sense. Contained within the mandate is permission to utilize innate abilities as well as external means to bring this to pass. All the seeds of culture, science and technology are here. God gave the earth to the human race to administer, and to do it in his place. This commission is part of the crowning point of creation (the sixth day, 1:31: “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.”) and concludes God’s creative activity. Galileo’s words concerning an instrument fashioned by human beings are to the point:

O telescope, instrument of much knowledge, more precious than any sceptre! Is not he who holds thee in his hand made king and lord of the works of God?

Psalms 8 provides us with further insight into God’s purpose in creating human beings, presenting God’s activity poetically, but agreeing with the emphasis of Genesis.

<sup>1</sup> O LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory  
above the heavens.  
<sup>2</sup> From the lips of children and infants  
you have ordained praise  
because of your enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.  
<sup>3</sup> When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
<sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him,  
the son of man that you care for him?  
<sup>5</sup> You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
and crowned him with glory and honor.  
<sup>6</sup> You made him ruler over the works of your hands;  
you put everything under his feet:  
<sup>7</sup> all flocks and herds,  
and the beasts of the field,  
<sup>8</sup> the birds of the air,  
and the fish of the sea,  
all that swim the paths of the seas.  
<sup>9</sup> O LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

In this psalm we are tiny and insignificant compared to the heavens. Even though the psalmist knows that God made us, he wonders how God could have any interest in us. Yet in the order of living beings we are positioned just below the angels, and, in fact, given glory and honor that they are never said to have. These endowments are explained in v. 6: the glory and honor consist of being established as ruler over the earth—over everything! We might ask why the psalm concludes in v. 9 by turning from our position to God’s. It must be because the plan of our ruling on the earth is something that brings glory to God. Though we are kings on the earth, God is still greater. We should never forget he has commissioned us to act under him. We are kings, yet weak without God’s help.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. The equipment to carry out the commission

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<sup>6</sup> See Sauer, 143, where he discusses our possession of kingship in spite of our impotence.

The result of God's creative activity on the sixth day was a being made in the image and likeness of God. Like our Creator, we have intellectual ability, make moral and ethical decisions, operate in the spiritual realm (although he is a pure spirit being—we are not) and are social beings (for God this is seen in the love among the Persons of the Trinity and his love for sinners). Righteousness may also be part of the image. Although interpreters have debated the possible differences between the "image" and the "likeness," there does not seem to be a great distinction between the two.<sup>7</sup>

If these were the components of the image and likeness before the fall, we should ask what their condition is now. Clearly we still have at least some of these qualities, as suggested by 1 Cor. 11:7 ("A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man."). But because of the fall we can never utilize these capacities to their fullest without distortion. We cannot, for example, operate well at all in the spiritual realm, whereas Adam could speak to God directly. Adam displayed intellectual ability during his first task, that of naming the animals. Many feel that the most brilliant individuals since Adam display minds that are only shadows of his.

However, Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:9-10 suggest that parts of the image undergo renewal in the believer:

and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

<sup>9</sup> Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator

If, as some believe on the basis of Eph. 4:24, righteousness and holiness were part of the original image of God, then certainly they were lost. But the believer regains them at salvation, when he is declared righteous—meeting God's standard for holiness—and as he grows in actual holiness, becoming more like Christ. It is part of the great and gracious plan of God that since the fall he has been in the process of making some individuals like the perfect, unfallen human being, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus Rom. 8:29 reveals God's new program since the original makeup of human beings was so terribly distorted by the fall:

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Colossians 3:10, which speaks of the new self as "being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator," apparently describes our ability to interact with God in the spiritual realm, gaining understanding of those things that are beyond a person's comprehension if he doesn't know Christ.. Thus we can become more like him because, in part, we can think like he does.

It is significant that the Bible nowhere records that anyone who faces eternal separation from God ceases to be a person with the attributes of the image (aside from holiness). People will still have spiritual, moral, intellectual and social capacities in the state of endless punishment, and having them without fulfillment will make people's condition even more miserable. For example, the Bible gives no indication that any individual will have contact with another after death. If this is so, this lack of fulfillment of the social capacity will in itself be a source of torment. Perhaps we could even say that eternal punishment will consist in part of being denied the opportunity to fulfill in any way the elements of the image and likeness of God. Thus, the most basic human capacities will be unfulfilled, with resulting torment.

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<sup>7</sup> For a summary, see Charles L. Feinberg, "The Image of God," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 129 (1972), 235-46.

Obviously, understanding the basic makeup of human beings as created in the image and likeness of God has great significance for interpreting the behavior of people in any age. We should not be surprised when we discover that a person who is denied adequate social interaction, especially human love, as a youth, manifests patterns of distorted behavior in life. From another standpoint, we should realize that good health and the ability to live normally (as much as can be done since the fall) depend on an understanding of how God made us in His image and likeness. It is there in the Bible for us to see and understand.

There is another piece of equipment that we possess from creation: language, the ability to interact with other human beings and with God. Many animals have signaling systems: honeybees, dogs, chimpanzees, etc. But only people have an information system that utilizes a small set of signals that can be combined in an infinite number of ways to produce an infinite number of different messages. This capacity is so unique to human beings that we would not be far from the mark if we suggested that it was tied up in some way with the features that are part of the image and likeness of God. It may be that our language ability has been given to us to enable us to communicate primarily in the spiritual dimension. Sauer puts it this way:

The spiritual nature expresses itself chiefly in man's power of speech. Speech is the direct self-revelation of the human spirit . . . . Classical writers tell how the Greek philosopher Socrates met a young man who devoted himself to ideological and moral problems and who had been hoping to be further stimulated by meeting Socrates. But contact with this intellectual "giant" so overawed him that he scarcely dared to open his mouth to speak, or to ask a question. So they walked side by side for a while without conversation. Then Socrates suddenly broke the silence and said kindly but briefly to his young companion, "Speak, that I may 'see' you."<sup>8</sup>

This ability to communicate the most significant elements of our personal existence corresponds to our need to interact with the One responsible for that existence. The very fact that human language possesses the capacity to speak about things that are displaced from us and concern abstract, non-visible entities, argues for its source in a God who designed us to have fellowship with him.<sup>9</sup>

Although we may not initially think of it as such, the creation of human beings in the form of two sexes constitutes equipment for carrying out God's commission. We should note several significant theological points:

1. Mankind consists of male and female (Gen. 1:26-27); the most immediate implication of this is that neither is complete without the other (see 1 Cor. 11:8-12). Many marriage problems would be avoided if people lived in the light of this simple biblical principle.
2. Woman was created as a helper (Gen. 2:18); this implies first that Adam would have to work, and second, that he would need assistance; God provided the perfect assistant.
3. She was made from the man (Gen. 2:21), and so enjoys the closest communion with him, and he with her.
4. God's intention is one man for one woman to be together. Although God permitted polygamy in His own purposes during the Old Testament period, it is clearly not His ideal. Further, the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical union between the two (Gen. 2:24) is such a fundamental part of their existence that we have to view divorce as a terrible disruption of the divine order.
5. Careful attention to the details of the creation of male and female should immediately lead us to rule out homosexuality as having any legitimate part in the purpose of God for the sexes. Romans

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<sup>8</sup> Sauer, 141.

<sup>9</sup> See Robert E. Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse* (New York: Plenum, 1983), 353-56; Gordon H. Clark, "Special Divine Revelation as Rational," in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F.H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 41.

1:24-29 describes homosexuality as unnatural, a perversion, depravity and a kind of idolatry. In short, it is at odds with God's created order.

Although the human body is not part of our resemblance to God, since God is a spirit being, it is part of our God-given equipment to carry out our commission on earth. It is tied directly to the earth by its composition and destiny (Gen. 3:19). It is significant, then, that after death we receive a new body, one suited for eternal spiritual existence.

One of our main perversions since the fall touches our acts of worship, which should be to give the Creator/Commissioner/King of the universe his due. Since the fall we have, out of keeping with our position under God, directed our worship toward three other focal points—ourselves, nature and Satan and other fallen angels (demonic worship). Part of our worship of ourselves involves undue attention to the human body, either our own (narcissism) or those of others (lust). Both are perversions of true worship of God (see Rom. 1:21-32). Along with worship of nature, they are simply examples of our bent toward giving homage to anything but the only deserving Object, our Creator. In contrast to some pagan philosophies, the Bible teaches that the body itself is not evil, as witnessed by the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ possessed one just like ours yet never sinned and had no sin capacity. But the body can obviously be used to serve sin, and the Bible exhorts the believer to direct its actions toward serving God (Rom. 6:13). In this capacity the body is a channel for the outworking of the image and likeness on this earth.

There has been much discussion over the centuries concerning the relation between the human soul and spirit, as well as with other nonphysical aspects. Do the soul and spirit have mutually exclusive functions? Does the Bible indicate capacities for the heart and mind that overlap those of the soul or spirit? The dichotomist views man as consisting of two basic parts: soul and spirit on the one hand, and body on the other. The trichotomist holds that soul and spirit can be validly distinguished. In general it appears that Scripture most often speaks of the spirit as that part of a person that participates in life with God. The soul, on the other hand, seems more to connect us with the everyday aspects of life as human beings. But the fact that the same activities can be predicated of the soul and spirit and that the heart (in 1 Pet. 3:15 it is used of the spiritual life) and mind can also be involved in some of these functions, argues against either of the above views. For example, in Lk. 1:46-47 Mary exclaims, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." The best view is that we possess many capacities within our immaterial natures, a view that has features in common with both the dichotomous and trichotomous view.<sup>10</sup> This appears to do justice to the variety present in the biblical material.

Another oft-disputed area concerns the transmission of the nonphysical side of humanity. Does God create a new soul, spirit, etc., when each individual comes into existence (creationism), or has he simply set into motion, as part of human reproduction, those processes that bring new immaterial capacities into existence along with new bodies (traducianism)? What is clear from Scripture is that immaterial natures do not exist prior to union with human bodies, as some ancients held, and many hold today (Mormons, reincarnationists). In the final analysis, the distinction is not crucial for one's system of theology, but both views seem to have an element of truth. God is certainly responsible for the creation of each new life, yet the human race possesses certain nonphysical unifying features. The pollution inherited from Adam is passed from parent to child and it is certainly to be associated with our nonmaterial side. Perhaps we could compare the issue to God's role in connection with weather on this planet. Does He directly control or create each thunderstorm, or are they the result of ongoing forces that he set in motion long ago? Both sides are true. And certainly he participates in some way in the creation of each new human being's immaterial properties, while the process is the result of his establishment of regulative forces during the creative week of Gen. 1 and 2.

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<sup>10</sup> See Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody, 1969), 32; Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, revised by Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 161-62.

The following table summarizes the relation of some of the components of the image and likeness to various points in biblical history and the history of individuals who obtain salvation. The body, not part of the image, is included for comparison. A “+” indicates the presence or restoration of a feature. A “-” indicates loss.

### Human Components Through Time

	Pre-fall (Adam)	Post-fall	Salvation	Death	Final State
Righteousness/ holiness	+	-	+	+	+
Knowledge of God	+	-	+	+	+
Moral capacity	+	+	+	+	+
Rational capacity	+	+	+	+	+
Language/communi- cation capacity	+	+	+	+	+
Body	+	+	+	-	New kind

#### 4. The effects of the fall

Although they occupy only a small portion of the totality of written revelation, the tumultuous events of Gen. 3:1-24 bear witness to a colossal perversion of God’s initial plan for human beings. Every problem, every distress, every shortcoming in life can be traced to the transgression in the Garden and subsequent judgments. We all bear the results of the fall and live with the changes to our own selves and our relations to other human beings, to nature and the whole earth and to God.

The existence of fragmented and ill-functioning personalities demonstrates that the fall damaged that object of creative activity who was designed to be a king on the earth. Instead of dominating his surroundings, he is a slave to his own fears, to an easily distorted conscience and to a sin-capacity that cannot be turned off. We cannot do what we ought, or even what we know we should.

We hardly need to give proof that our basic relation to each other is skewed. Adam and Eve once lived in perfect harmony without shame over their differences. But now our differences are such a point of contention that one of the major features of the reversal of the fall in Christ consists of God’s introducing a new unity. In Christ we are made members of each other, with the result that all of us, male and female, are obligated to put each other first. In fact, we are to exercise the same self-denial toward every human being we come in contact with.

Our place as royalty over the earth has seen incomplete, even perverted fulfillment. Although we can make great strides in science or medicine, for example, we can use the very same discovery for great beneficence or for horrifying destruction, as in the case of harnessing the atom for use in radioactive diagnostic procedures or for the annihilation of masses of people made in the image and likeness of God. In Rom. 8:22 the physical earth seems almost to be weeping for restoration of the original created state of affairs, while showing the effects of a single momentous act:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

We cannot even reciprocate its personified concern but instead turn to our globe and its parts as objects of our adoration. One of the grossest perversions of God's original intent occurs when we worship the realm we were to administer for God—including its trees, animals and source of light—instead of the Creator who made them (Rom. 1:21-25).

A classic biblical example is the creation and worship of the golden calf, as recorded in Ex. 32, an event that occurred in the midst of far-reaching revelations from God. Perhaps most amazing is the fact that Aaron, whose high-priestly office had just been explicitly described, led in that perverted worship. Of course, the Bible clearly shows that any such worship of nature is associated with demon worship, since Satan so easily turns distorted allegiance toward himself. Thus we become slaves—spiritual slaves, the worst kind—of nature and everyday life. This is expressed in pantheism, where the world is God; in animism, where animals or inanimate objects are viewed as having consciousness and by extension are viewed as gods; and in evolutionism, where development of life forms makes nature a glorious realm and makes human beings the pinnacle of an eons-long process, an error that actually tends toward worship of mankind.

It is important to remember that evolutionary views, which deny God's direct creation of human beings in his image and likeness, lead to absolving individuals of their responsibility toward God. The human race is an accident, the product of nature's "wisdom" (not God's), not a royal race placed on earth to rule it as kings for God.

One contemporary view sees the universe as proceeding through a series of forms, from a small size with infinitely great mass, to stages where expansion proceeds until the energy responsible for such motion dissipates and the universe shrinks again. It is interesting that astronomers may appear to proceed with careful scientific investigation, reasoning from effect to cause, until they come to origin issues:<sup>11</sup>

An oscillating universe has the satisfying property that it does not single out any particular point in space-time as a "creation". In this picture, the universe does not need to be created, because it has always existed. It is infinitely old and will continue infinitely far into the future, periodically going through a fireball stage.

It is not difficult to see that chance and matter (wherever it came from!) are substituted for a creating God. In fact, the above paragraph, from a recent college textbook, seems to be a polemic against creation views.

So we worship all the wrong objects, demonstrating little of the nobility we were originally endowed with. We casually take human life, whether in individual murders, war, or abortion, demonstrating the lowest regard for what God brought into existence at the crowning-point of his creative work. We should not be surprised that the first murder occurs in the biblical record in Gen. 4, immediately after the fall: the stage was set for it before Cain and Abel were born.

The misuse of what was entrusted to us, and the abomination of worshiping it instead of God, are pointedly summarized by Erich Sauer:<sup>12</sup>

Thus man's vocation to nobility, which was made known to him in Paradise, has also an earthly and moral aspect. Man should not be a *tyrant* over nature. He should not misuse it by senselessly destroying beautiful landscapes, by the predatory exploitation of field and forest, by harnessing the strength of animals so ruthlessly, that it becomes sheer cruelty. Equally he should not become

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<sup>11</sup> William H. Jefferys and R. Robert Robbins, *Discovering Astronomy* (New York: Wiley, 1981), 414.

<sup>12</sup> Sauer, 84.

a *slave* to nature—through pagan deification of nature, through the vague, modern enthusiasm for nature in pursuing gold and possessions as though true happiness were dependent on the possession of material goods . . . . Let us not forget that the whole creation waits for *our* perfecting.

Of course, all of these sinful acts demonstrate that our most basic disruption since the fall has to do with our relation to God himself. All that he offered us—fellowship with himself, developing dominion over a perfect earth, idyllic relations with others and a personal wholeness none of us can imagine—has been lost, and with it the initial opportunity to be all we could be before Him.

## 5. The restoration

That the story does not stop there is but cause for amazement and thanksgiving. The cross-work of Christ not only reverses the fall, with its blight on humanity and its future, it more than makes up for it. Although not all will enjoy this reversal, those who do will be the recipients of a gusher!<sup>13</sup>

The incarnation is at the heart God's method for restoring our fortunes. Where the first human being failed, the perfect, ideal Person will not, indeed, cannot. As far as our position before God is concerned, he has determined in his wisdom to deal with the whole human race on the basis of the acts of two human representatives. The Lord Jesus Christ is described as (1) the last Adam, since there are no further significant individuals as far as determining our destiny by representation is concerned, and (2) the second man, stressing the fact that God only needs two to establish our basic relations with him (1 Cor. 15:45-47):

<sup>45</sup> So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"<sup>a</sup>; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. <sup>46</sup> The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.

There can be no question that this perfect human being bears an uncorrupted image and likeness, since there is no sin in him. By looking at the Lord Jesus Christ as he lived on earth, we get a good idea of what Adam must have been like, although Adam did not possess the attributes of deity, with the ability to do miracles. In many places the New Testament holds Jesus up as our example (Heb. 12:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:21-24). He is all that we can and should be.

In what must be regarded as the most significant ironic turn in human history, God restores what Adam lost through a second, superior human being (joined with deity, of course). The crucial difference in terms of performance is that whereas Adam was able not to sin, but chose to transgress, Jesus was not able to sin, and so could not fail any test that came to him. He thus demonstrated that He was the perfect and ideal human being. This doctrine is particularly described in Heb. 2:5-18, where, interestingly enough, the original commission to control the earth is adduced in poetic form through quotation of Ps. 8:

<sup>5</sup> It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. <sup>6</sup> But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? <sup>7</sup> You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor <sup>8</sup> and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. <sup>9</sup> But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor

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<sup>13</sup> See S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "Romans 5:12—An Exercise in Exegesis and Theology," in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 316.

because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.<sup>10</sup> In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.<sup>11</sup> Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.<sup>12</sup> He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.”<sup>13</sup> And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.”<sup>14</sup> Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—

In short, the writer to the Hebrews explains that we will not see everything put under *our* feet until everything is put under *his* feet. But we should not dismiss the crucial fact that to accomplish this Jesus did one thing that Adam could not: he died as an acceptable substitute for those ruined through Adam (v. 9). The result for him is glory and honor (v. 9), now simply awaiting their full manifestation. This same passage further recalls primeval events when it describes the crushing of the power of Satan (vv. 14-15). Finally, in what should be a precious teaching for every believer, the application of Christ’s sacrifice and victory is portrayed as a union of siblings (vv. 11-14); we regain what was lost by our father through One who is our Brother, who knows what it is like to live under the curse, but has the riches to buy us out of slavery. Romans 6:1ff describes how God connects us with Christ, who is to God what we could not be. God views us, joined to him, as if we had not failed to reach the original commission.

We should note one further step in this sequence of the restoration of our fortunes. The victory does not come easily, and although the cross sealed Satan’s defeat, he will resist until permanently put out of the way (Rev. 20:10).

<sup>10</sup> And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

As his end draws near, he will attempt to duplicate the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as the ideal human being by installing his own king over the earth, the false messiah of Rev. 13. In a disgusting parody of the reign of the perfect human being, the “man of sin” (2 Thess. 2:3) will present his false claims for control of the earth. But his career will be short-lived, and the true King of the earth and universe will appear personally to present his credentials and punish all pretenders, as in Rev. 19:21:

<sup>19</sup> Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.<sup>20</sup> But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.<sup>21</sup> The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

That perfect human being has been described this way:<sup>14</sup>

He is, as the Son of Man, the unique one of our race. He is the true Man, the goal of all human history. He is the Representative of mankind itself, the embodied pattern of true humanity. In Him not merely isolated aspects of human nature but the whole of human nature in all its Divinely willed truth and purity receives its perfect expression.

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<sup>14</sup> Sauer, 99.

## Questions for Further Study

1. Colossians 3:10 speaks of a restoration of knowledge through Christ. This must refer to the ability to understand the things of God, something very natural for Adam before the fall. Although this is not purely intellectual in nature, what does this restoration imply about the Christian's mind versus the mind of one outside of Christ, part of the world's system with its way of thinking?
2. Although the body is not part of our resemblance to God, it is part of our identity as individuals. Make a chart showing our relationship to the body throughout life, as well as after death. What is the purpose of resurrection? Consult works on cults, world religions and world views and determine differences from the biblical teaching on the body. Does this seem to be an area of significant perversion?
3. Provide examples from Scripture of misplaced worship (in addition to specific passages given in the study). Why kind of error/perversion do they demonstrate?
4. Give some examples from life in the world in which there is misplaced worship.
5. Give some practical ways in which the human role as King of the earth shows in everyday life how it has been damaged.
6. What corrections/repairs will Jesus make as the true King of the Earth?

## Running compilation of key definitions

1. Systematic theology: The organized presentation of all that the Bible teaches about God and His works.
2. Exegesis: The actual practice of studying or interpreting a document or other message to determine its meaning.
3. Context: Context in a document or utterance is the surroundings of a portion of a word, a word, or a group of words.
4. Bibliology: The doctrinal study of the nature of the Bible.
5. Biblical authority: The quality inherent in Scripture by virtue of which human beings are completely answerable to its content.
6. Revelation: The information about Himself given by God to human beings.
7. General revelation: God's disclosure of Himself, available directly to everyone, given through means other than dreams, visions, direct words and Christ Himself.
8. Special revelation: The disclosure of information from God that is not available directly to all human beings.
9. Inspiration: A term applied to the Bible denoting that it is the product of God's creative activity, figuratively breathed out from Him (2 Tim. 3:16); applies to the process of recording Scripture, not specifically to the people involved; actually, *expiracion* would be a better term to reflect the concept of 2 Tim. 3:16; the result is *inerrancy*.
10. Textual criticism: The science and art of attempting to discover the original text of a literary work for which the original document does not exist. It is especially important for biblical studies, and the foundational endeavor to all subsequent investigation of the Scriptures.
11. Canon: Transliterated from a Greek Word meaning 'standard'; as used of the Bible, it refers to books authenticated as possessing divine origin and therefore authoritative; the Jewish canon consists of thirty-nine books, the Protestant of sixty-six and the Catholic of eighty (including apocryphal books).
12. Inerrancy is a term applied to the Bible, although not specifically found in it; it denotes that the Bible, as originally written, possessed no humanly induced deviations from the message God intended to be recorded and that it is true in every respect; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:19.
13. Infallibility: Although some assert that this term has a different meaning from inerrancy, the two terms are, for purposes of biblical study, synonymous; the Bible is infallible because inerrant, and inerrant because infallible.
14. Illumination is the teaching ministry of the Spirit of God that imparts understanding of the message of Scripture to the believer; not to be confused with inspiration, which in the Bible is used of the work of God in giving Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16); 1 Jn. 2:20; Jn. 16:13.
15. Spirituality: God is not physical, but immaterial, incorporeal, invisible and alive.
16. Self-existence/Aseity: God exists independently of anything else. He is self-existent.
17. Immensity: God is infinite in relation to space.
18. Eternality: God is infinite with regard to time.
19. Simplicity: God is not a plurality and cannot be looked at as divisible into parts.
20. Pure actuality: There is nothing about God that is potential. He is not unfinished in any way.
21. Necessity: God is uncaused and exists because he must exist.
22. Immutability: God is unchanging and unchangeable.
23. Impassibility: God is incapable of being changed or disturbed by what he experiences and is incapable of suffering.
24. Transcendence: God and the world are distinct; he is not part of the world, and the world is not part of him.
25. Immanence: God is present in the world.
26. Infinity: There are no limits to God's person and his perfections.
27. Omnipotence: God can do whatever he wills.
28. Omniscience: God knows everything there is to know.
29. Omnipresence: God is present everywhere in his creation
30. Holiness: God is morally pure and separated from all moral evil and sin.
31. Goodness: A quality that describes or includes his love, benevolence, mercy and grace
32. Truth: God's person, actions, knowledge and revelations correspond to reality
33. Love: God's continual communication of himself to his creatures.
34. Benevolence: God's goodness toward his creatures.
35. Mercy: God's goodness toward those who are helpless.
36. Grace: God's goodness toward sinners.
37. Glory: The greatness of God's perfections.

38. Trinity: There is only one true God, existing as a single Being comprised of three Persons who are equal in every way, yet distinct in their tasks and relations to humanity.
39. God's decree: The decree of God is his plan for the universe that includes all things and is certain to come to pass.
40. Providence: God's care for and upholding of his creation.
41. Sovereignty: God's control over his universe.
42. Christology: The study of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
43. Incarnation: The joining of deity and humanity in one person forever. The word is based on the Latin word for flesh: the Lord Jesus Christ is God joined with human flesh.
44. Pre-existence: Used of the Son, it means that he existed before Bethlehem.
45. Theophany: An appearance of God.
46. Christophany: An appearance of Christ.
47. Priesthood: The system that God established to remedy the problem of alienation between a holy God and sinful human beings.
48. Son of God: A name for Jesus that describes his deity and his approval by the Father at the resurrection.
49. Son of Man: A messianic name for Jesus that emphasizes his humanity backed by deity and his role of taking humans to God through suffering and humiliation.
50. Messiah: A transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning 'anointed one'; used of the expected national deliverer of Israel; the linguistic equivalent of Greek *christos*, 'Christ'.
51. Efficacious grace: Efficacious grace is the working of God in an individual that cannot be thwarted and that leads that person to faith in Christ. It is also described as effective calling and irresistible grace.
52. Regeneration: Regeneration is the unseen and unfelt work of the Holy Spirit that overcomes depravity and brings spiritual life and the capacity to please God and exercise faith.
53. Spirit baptism is the nonphysical act of the Spirit of God that places a believer in the Body of Christ and makes him a partaker, along with all other believers, of the work and merits of Christ; should be distinguished from filling, sealing, and indwelling; cannot be felt or noticed, and hence must be appropriated by faith; there is no warrant in Scripture for assuming a second act of God for power, a 'baptism,' after salvation.
54. Sealing is a guarantee that the believer will persevere in Christ all the way to entrance into heaven, when God completes his work of purchasing the individual. It begins at the moment of salvation when the Father places the Holy Spirit in the believer for permanent indwelling. It is unseen and unfelt and should result in praise and obedience to the Spirit.
55. Indwelling is the spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit in every individual who has placed personal trust in Christ as Savior. Described in Jn. 14:17, this is the basis of His other ministries to the believer, such as sealing, anointing and filling and establishes the believer as a part of the spiritual temple that God is building today.
56. The filling of the Spirit is 1) A constant characteristic of a believer's life that consists of regular control by the Spirit that produces Christlikeness through Scripture; 2) A special enablement at particular times for service during the first century.
57. A spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service.
58. A cessationist (with regard to spiritual gifts) is a person who holds that the miraculous gifts are not present in the Church today as part of God's plan.
59. A continualist (with regard to spiritual gifts) is a person who holds that the miraculous gifts are present in the Church today as part of God's plan.
60. An angel is an individual, personal spirit being originally created by God to assist him in his plan for saving the elect.
61. The cosmos is Satan's organized spiritual system, in rebellion against God.
62. A demon is a fallen angel that is free to assist in carrying out Satan's plan of opposition to God.
63. Biblical anthropology is the study of what the Bible teaches about the nature and purpose of human beings.