

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 of Biblical Doctrine covers *Man and Sin*. During this Fall season we are covering only a portion of *Man* (83 pages), about 10%!

Last time we introduced our study and briefly looked at the reality that *Man is Created in the Image of God*. **Gen. 1:27** testifies –

²⁷ And **God created man in His own image**,
in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.

“**Image**” if you recall, carries the idea of *representation* and thus man operates as *God’s representatives and mediators* on earth, placed by God as a *vice-regent* over creation on God’s behalf.

What it emphasizes is the *purpose* of man, *created to work*, intended to be productive in his stay here on earth.

Today I want to continue to answer the question posed by the psalmist in **Psalms 8:4** –

⁴ **What is man** that You remember him [*ESV* “mindful of him”],
And the son of man that You care for him?

What is man that the Creator of the universe, of the stars in the heavens would *remember* him, *care for* him?

God *cares* for him; The Heb. term פָּדַד (pā-qāḏ) is sometimes translated “to visit.” God *visits* man and alters his destiny! God visited Sarah and altered her life forever (**Gen. 18:14**). In doing so, displayed concern for Sarah. The piercing question in that visit: “*Is anything too difficult for Yahweh?*”

No matter how *frail* and *insignificant* man may be, God intervenes and sets in motion the plan for his or her life.

Did you know that He has a purpose for your life? Jesus, in His high priestly prayer, prayed in **John 17:3** –

³ “And this is eternal life, **that they may know You**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Our objective in this life is *to know God*, the only true God and the way to know Him is *to know Jesus Christ* whom was sent into the world, not to judge the world, “but that the world might be saved through Him” (cf. **Jn. 3:17**). To know God is to have eternal life.

This the most wonderful privilege that can ever come to us, have eternal life. *Do you possess eternal life?*

Here we are discussing about man and I am reminded through the psalmists words, “what is man that you remember him, and the son of man that You care for him.” *Is not amazing* that God would send His only begotten Son, that “whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (**Jn. 3:16**)? What is man?

Well, man is made in the image and likeness of God. Our response is that of praise, glory, and honor to our God.

C O N T E N T

For the remainder of our time I want to address second facet of man:

1. Man is Created in God’s Image
2. The Constitution of Man

THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN

This second facet of man deals with the components *or* elements man possesses. The five common terms include *body, soul, spirit, heart*, and *conscience*. For the rest of our time we will be examining each one of these.

BODY

Man possesses *a material element*. His constitution includes *a physical component*. We reflect back to **Gen. 2:7** –

⁷ Then Yahweh God formed man **of dust from the ground** ...

Dust is that loose earth/soil that the Lord used to form man. We often call this physical component a “**body**.” Just as the creation is material, so does man possess a material element.

God made this physical body with purpose. Turn to **Gen. 1:26, 28** –

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, **so that they will have dominion 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.”

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.”

One purpose was *to rule/have dominion over* the material world [we discussed this a bit in our last study] and the other was *to procreate*.

God made every living species with the ability to reproduce.

Back in **Gen. 1:22**, He told the sea monsters and every living creature that moves, “*be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.*” He commands the same with Adam and Eve (cf. **Gen. 1:28** – “*be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth*”).

We read in **Gen. 2:24** –

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

God’s design, from the very beginning was for *a permanent monogamous* (i.e. having only one wife) *relationship* between a man and a woman.

It was not good that Adam was alone and so Yahweh made him “a helper suitable for him” (**Gen. 2:18**). Part of the help was to procreate, propagate the human race.

Even after the Fall, after the Flood, after the Covenant God establishes with Noah, He commands Noah and his son in **Gen. 9:1** –

¹ And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them,
“**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.**”

It is sad today that marriage, even among Christians is looked at *primarily and only for* companionship. But Gen. 1:28 and 9:1 remind us of God’s love for humanity, creating us with the ability to *procreate* and thus produce more image-bearers.

It is kindness of God that God made a man and a woman to partake in the joy of fulfilling this purpose.

The psalmist reminds us in **Ps. 127:3** –

³ Behold, children are an inheritance of Yahweh,
The fruit of the womb is a reward.

Sadly children are not seen as an inheritance/blessing. Sadly marriage is not held in honor among all (cf. **Heb. 13:4**). What’s worse, the marriage bed is defiled and sexual immorality is a badge of honor in this pagan society.

For the Christian, the body becomes the residence of the Holy Spirit. Paul asked the following in **1 Cor. 6:19** –

¹⁹ Or do you not know that **your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit** who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

“**Sanctuary**” or temple is defined as “a place or structure specifically associated with or set apart for a deity, who is frequently perceived to be using it as a dwelling, *temple*.”¹

¹ “ναός” in William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 665.

Early, Paul says, *“the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord”* (**1 Cor. 6:13**). The body is to be used for His use and glory.

Fast forward a bit. Notice what Paul brings up in **v. 14** –

¹⁴ Now God has not only raised the Lord,
but will also raise us up through His power.

What did the Father raise up? The body of our Lord.
What will He raise up in the future? Our bodies.

Our bodies are designated not only to serve in this life but in the life to come. They will undergo change. They will be glorified but they will still be our own bodies. Bodies fit for heaven, for His use and glory.

We are reminded in **Phil. 3:20-21** –

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait
for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
²¹ who will **transform the body of our humble state into
conformity with the body of His glory**, by His working through
which He is able to even subject all things to Himself.

While we eagerly wait, we understand full well that our body has been affected by the Fall of Man. It is decaying to put it mildly and it is a consequence for sin – *“the wages of sin is death”* (**Rom. 6:23a**).

Thus our body is spoken of as a “body of death” (**Rom. 7:24**). It has cravings and desires that remind us we still wrestle against unredeemed flesh. And so we must discipline our body and make it our slave (cf. **1 Cor. 9:27**), striving to bring honor and glory to our God as we eagerly wait for the redemption of our body from corruption (cf. **Rom. 8:23**).

SOUL

Another important aspect of man's nature is the *soul*. We reflect back to **Gen. 2:7** –

⁷ Then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**; and so the man became **a living being** [*nephesh*].

“**living being**” – Heb. נֶפֶשׁ (*ně·pěš*).

Now *why is soul being translated as “living being”?*
Turn over to **Ex. 4:19** for a moment –

¹⁹ And Yahweh said to Moses in Midian, “Go, return to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your **life** are dead.”

Nephesh here is synonymous with *being a person*.

The theologian **Berkhof** explains –

This work of God should not be interpreted as a mechanical process, as if He first formed a body of clay and then put a soul into it. When God formed the body, He formed it so that by the breath of His Spirit man at once became a living soul.²

Young **Elihu**, one of Job's friends rightly says in **Job 33:4** –

⁴ “The Spirit of God has made me,
And **the breath of the Almighty gives me life**.”

What we learn about God is that God Himself “*gives to all people life and breath and all things*” (**Acts 17:25**). Job understood this well. God gives but God also takes away. The response is still the same: “Blessed be the name of Yahweh” (**Job 1:21**).

² L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938), 192.

If you recall, The Lord allowed Rachel to die after giving birth to Benjamin. We read in **Gen. 35:18** –

¹⁸ Now it happened as her soul [*nephesh*] was departing (for she died),
that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

Rachel's soul left her body. The soul here is distinguished from the body since it leaves the body. This is what happens at death.

At physical death, the *soul* survives and is immediately in God's presence. **Revelation 6:9** tells us concerning the saints that are killed on earth –

⁹ And when He opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the **souls of those who had been slain** because of the word of God, and because of the witness which they had maintained;

Paul wrote in **2 Cor. 5:8** –

⁸ we are of good courage and prefer rather **to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.**

To the Philippians he wrote in **Phil. 1:23** –

²³ But I am hard-pressed between the two, **having the desire to depart and be with Christ**, for *that* is very much better,

The body “sleeps,” the soul does not.

There is normal sorrow when one a loved one dies. There is pain and loneliness that is felt. Jesus grieved over the death of Lazarus (**Jn. 11:33, 35**). Paul exhorted the Romans to “*weep with those who weep*” (**Rom. 12:15**). But as believers we do not “*grieve as do the rest who have no hope*” (**1 Thess. 4:13**).

So let me stop here and ask you a question:
How does the world view death?

The wonderful truth is that souls in heaven will one day receive a physical, glorified body.

SPIRIT

The immaterial part of man is also referred to as *spirit*.

The Hebrew word for “spirit” is *ruakh* and is used for

- *wind* (Gen. 8:1; Amos 4:13),
- *physical breath* (Job 9:18; Ps. 135:17),
- *the Spirit of God* (Pss. 51:11; 106:33 [ESV mg.]; Isa. 42:1),
- and *the life force of lower creatures* (Gen. 6:17; Eccles. 3:19, 21).³

In regard to human beings, *ruakh* refers to the whole person. We see this in **Ps. 31:5** –

⁵ Into Your hand I commit my **spirit**;
You have ransomed me, O Yahweh, God of truth.

Ruakh also refers to mental capacities:

- *intellect* (Gen. 41:8; Ezek. 20:32),
- *spiritual understanding* (Job 20:3; 32:8),
- *wisdom* (Ex. 28:3),
- *will* (Dan. 5:20), and
- *emotions* (1 Sam. 1:15; Prov. 15:13); and
- the *openness of the soul to God* (Ps. 51:10; Isa. 26:9).

David prayed in **Psalms 51:10** –

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast **spirit** within me.

A spirit that is *fixed aright, set a right*. God knows when your spirit is not steadfast towards Him.

³ John MacArthur, ed., *Essential Christian Doctrine: A Handbook on Biblical Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 229.

Spurgeon explains –

“Create” what is not there at all;
“renew” that which is there⁴

What is pivotal for our study is that “spirit” is sometimes used interchangeably with “soul.”

Take Mary’s Magnificat (the first word of her exaltation in the Latin translation of Luke 1:46-55). It is filled with OT allusions and quotations and it reveals that Mary’s heart and mind were saturated with the Word of God. Mary rejoiced with Elizabeth in **Luke 1:46-47** saying –

⁴⁶ And Mary said: “My **soul** magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ And my **spirit** has rejoiced in God my Savior.

HEART

The Bible says much about the *heart* – the control center of a person and the seat for thoughts, attitudes, motivations, and actions.

From the heart flow “the springs of life” (**Prov. 4:23**).

The heart really does control everything. You have to guard it *with all diligence*.

Our Lord stated the matter negatively when He said that it is not that which goes into a man which pollutes the man but rather that which comes out of him. Jesus said in **Mark 7:20-23** –

²⁰ And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

²¹ “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, adulteries,

²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, *and* foolishness.

²³ “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 27-57*, vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 405.

In other words, it is not the temptations that meet us on the streets that determine our conduct; it is the heart of the man who faces them.

Two men may face the same conditions; one falls, the other stands. The difference is not in the temptation but in the heart of the man.

So we must pay attention to the heart.

The heart is the center of one's being. It is where we *think, grieve, rejoice, love, hate, desire, fear*, etc.

It is the center of *thinking* and *reason*, of *emotions*, of *will*.

One key verse regarding the *heart* is found in **Jer. 17:9** –

⁹ “The heart is **more deceitful** than all else And is **desperately sick**; Who can know it?

This shows us man's depravity. The trouble is in the heart of man. The trouble is not what is outside of man, but what is in man.

The Bible says that it is all stemming from a *wicked, evil, and deceitful* heart.

So let me stop here and ask you a question:

What does God do with such a heart when He rescues us?

God says through the prophet Ezekiel in **Ezek. 36:26** –

²⁶ “Moreover, I will give you **a new heart** and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you **a heart of flesh**.

God gives you a new heart that loves Him, desires to obey him, is purified, and produces good fruit. *Amen?* Amen!

CONSCIENCE

The *conscience* is a God-given faculty of moral evaluation concerning right and wrong, good and evil.

A conscience provides a person with self-awareness and rational capacity, and alerts a person concerning the morality of his or her actions. The conscience functions like *a divine moral referee*.

Although the concept is clearly there, the Old Testament has no specific term for “*conscience*.” For example, Solomon asked God for “an understanding mind” so he could “discern between good and evil” (**1 Kings 3:9**).

In the *NT*, Paul uses a Greek term for conscience that speaks of that innate knowledge of right and wrong based on God’s law – i.e. conscience.

CONCLUSION

My beloved, when we ask “what is man” we answer giving the *components* or *elements* man possesses.

We discuss body, soul, spirit, heart, and conscience.

God makes His home in our hearts and works “*in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure*” (**Phil. 2:13**).

Let me close with this passage in mind in **Eph. 3:14-21** –

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,
¹⁶ that He would give you, according to the riches of His glory,
to **be strengthened with power through His Spirit
in the inner man,**
¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that
you, being firmly rooted and grounded in love,
¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth
and length and height and depth,
¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that
you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or understand,
according to the power that works within us,
²¹ to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.