

What Is a Human?

Introduction

A. What is a human?

i) dictionary

- member of animal family that is most advanced in evolutionary development (mammal that walk around on two feet (biped); has largest brain & capacity for speech)

ii) Bible

- **crown** of God's creation
- **words** (# of) used to describe the creation of man (versus animals)
 - chp.1 → 2 verses re: animals; 6 verses re: humans
 - chp.2 → majority of 25 verses devoted to humans
- **way** God created man
 - divine **conference** between the members of the Triune Godhead (“Let us ... in our ...”)
 - divine **nearness** – God forms from dust of the earth and breaths into
 - divine **speech** – speaks *to* and *with*

B. Outline

- Part 1 – Gen.1:27a – God created people **in His image**
- Part 2 – Gen.1:27b – God created people **as two distinct sexes**

Part 1 – God Created People In His Image (Gen.1:27a)

1. What this means: we are *like God* in certain ways

A. in what ways are we *like God*?

i) we are not:

- as powerful as God
 - Isaiah 40:25 – “To whom will you compare Me? Or who is My equal?”
 - Isaiah 40:26 – “Lift up your eyes & look to heavens; Who created all these?”
- as knowledgeable as God
 - Deuteronomy 29:29 – “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.”
 - Psalm 139:1-4 – “¹O LORD, You have searched me and known me. ²You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. ⁴For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.”
- everywhere present as God
 - 1 Kings 8:27 – “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!”
- look like God
 - John 4:24 – “God is Spirit”
 - John 1:18 – “No one has ever seen God.” (cf. 1 John 4:12)

ii) we are:

- spiritual beings who have a soul
 - Genesis 2:7 – “And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”
 - Matthew 10:28 – “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
- sets us apart from all other animals
 - think – choose names for animals
 - talk – God spoke to and with Adam, but not to any of the other animals
 - morally responsible
 - Genesis 2:16-17 – “¹⁶ And the LORD God **commanded** the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you **may freely eat**; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you **shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.””

B. pre-Fall image-bearing

i) **Belgic Confession, Art.14 – *The Creation and Fall of Man***

“We believe that God created man from the dust of the earth and made and formed him in his image and likeness— good, just, and holy; able by his own will to conform in all things to the will of God.”

ii) Ecclesiastes 7:29a – “Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright...”

C. post-Fall image-bearing

i) **Canons of Dort, 3-4.1 – *The Effect of the Fall on Human Nature***

“[R]ebelling against God at the devil’s instigation and by his own free will, he deprived himself of these outstanding gifts and brought upon himself blindness, terrible darkness, futility, and distortion of judgment in his mind; perversity, defiance, and hardness in his heart and will; and finally impurity in all his emotions.”

ii) Ecclesiastes 7:29b – “Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But [since the Fall] they have sought out many schemes.”

iii) Genesis 6:5 – “The LORD saw **how great the wickedness** of the human race had become on the earth, and that **every inclination** of the thoughts of the human heart was **only evil all the time.**”

2. **Why this matters:** the foundation for the highly-valued concept of human rights

A. What are our human rights?

i) God’s law gives us obligations/responsibilities toward God and each other

- C#5 – honour positions of authority others have over you
- C#6 – do not murder – respect the life of every human being
- C#7 – honour sacred bonds of marriage that bind people around you together
- C#8 – do not steal – respect the personal property of others
- C#9 – honour name and reputation of your neighbor

B. Who has human rights?

i) *all* humans

- all races
- all religions
- all ages
- all ability-levels
- all locations (within *or* outside of the womb)

ii) *only* humans

- animals **must be** treated with care and not be abused/neglected/needlessly killed
 - Proverbs 27:23 – “Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds.”
 - Proverbs 12:10 – “A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal.”

- animals **may be** used for food
 - before the Flood
 - Genesis 1:29 – “And God said, 'See, I have **given you every herb** that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and **every tree** whose **fruit** yields seed; to you it **shall be for food.**”
 - Genesis.1:30 – “Also, **to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth**, in which there is life, I have given **every green herb for food.**”
 - after the Flood
 - Genesis 9:2 – “² ... all the beasts of the earth, ... all the birds in the sky, ... every creature that moves along the ground, ... all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. ³ **Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you.** Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.”
- absurdity of animal rights movements
 - shooting sick animals *versus* slaughtering people in gory video games & dismembering pre-born babies
 - PETA president – “Instead of seeing all the other species on Earth as ours to convert into hamburgers, handbags, living burglar alarms ... and so on, we need to respect them as fellow beings, as other individuals & families & tribes who have the same basic interests in experiencing joy & love & living ... as we do.”
 - legal status of ‘personhood’ for chimpanzees
 - worship services held by churches for pets (big and small, even horses) that die

C. Who will be judged?

- i) *all* people
 - 2 Corinthians 5:1 – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”
- ii) for *all* our actions
 - Matthew 12:36 – “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.”

Conclusion

A. The Bad News

- i) we are *all* guilty
 - Genesis 5:3b – after the Fall we bear not only the image of God, but also the image of our fallen forefather, Adam
 - our level of obedience to God’s law is a measure of how much we reflect God’s image
- ii) we *all* have hanging over our heads a verdict of eternal death
 - James 2:10 – “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”
 - Romans 6:23a – “The wages of sin is death.”

B. The Good News

- i) Jesus came to **restore** the image of God in us
 - Philippians 2:7-8 – “⁷ He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”
 - paid the penalty for all ways in which we tarnish/distort/destroy God’s image
 - without this, we would spend all eternity in our deviant & defiant nature, enduring hellish agony
- ii) Do you have faith in Jesus as the one who perfectly imaged God *and* who restores the image of God by forgiving you of sin and sanctifying you by His Word and Spirit?
 - if so, you are “being renewed in knowledge after the image of [your] Creator” (Colossians 3:10)
 - when Jesus returns, He will make you like Him—one who perfectly images God!
 - 1 Corinthians 15:29 – “And as we have borne the image *of* the man of dust, we shall also bear the image *of* the heavenly Man [Jesus Christ].”
 - Romans 8:29 – “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.”

Part 2 – God Created People as Two Distinct Sexes (Gen.1:27b)

Intro

A. Maleness & Femaleness (sex/gender)

- i) is something God gives to us, not something we choose for ourselves
- ii) A. Strauch, *Men & Women: Equal yet Different*
 - “One of most significant changes *in* human history has occurred *during* the past 40 years. It is the gender revolution. ... 'the erasure of distinctions between the sexes is *not only* the most striking issue of our time, it *may be* the most profound the [human] race has ever [been] confronted with.”

B. our sex (gender) has direct bearing on

- i) *who* understand ourselves to be
- ii) *how* we serve God & those around us

1. Equally image-bearers

A. Genesis 1:27

- “So God created man **in** His own **image**;
in the **image** of God He created him;
male & female He created them.”
- men and women / boys and girls *equally reflect* God’s image
 - male & female are equal in dignity and status as human beings

B. non-Christian worldviews: inequality of men & women

- i) Roman empire (1st century)
 - Josephus – “Let not the testimony of women be admitted [in court-of-law], on account of the levity & boldness of their sex since it is probable that they may not speak truth, either out of hope of gain, or fear of punishment.”
 - Sophocles – “Silence is a woman’s glory.”
- ii) Hinduism – sati (widow-burning)
- iii) Islam
 - *I Am Malala* – “I was a girl in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are hidden away behind a curtain, [since] their role in life [is] simply to prepare food & give birth to children... when a boy is born, friends come along throw dried fruits, sweets & coins into the cradle, but [this does] not happen if it is a baby girl. For most Pashtuns it's a gloomy day when a daughter is born.” (13-14).
 - *Qur'an* – surah 2:282 – testimony of a woman is worth ½ of that of a man

C. Christian worldview: equal dignity, value, and status of men & women

- i) Genesis 1-2
 - both men & women are **created in God’s image** (Gen.1:27b)
 - equal in dignity & value
 - both have ruling power as king & queen (Gen.1:26,29)
 - woman is **created from man’s side** (Gen.2:21-22)
 - not superior nor inferior, but an equal
- ii) Practice of Jesus
 - Luke 8:1-3 – “¹ Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, ² and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—**Mary** called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, ³ and **Joanna** the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and **Susanna**, and **many others** who provided for Him from their substance.”

- Luke 24:10 – “¹ Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they (women who went w. Joseph of Arimathea), and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb... ⁴ And it happened ... that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ ... [T]hey said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen!" ... ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.”
- Mosaic Law – makes no distinction between the value of testimony given by man vs. woman (cf. Deut.17:6-7)

iii) Teaching of the apostles

- Galatians 3:28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male *and* female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- Ephesians 5:25 – “Husbands love your wives just *as Christ* also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her.”
- 1 Peter 3:7 – “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

2. Distinctly male & female

A. two different genders

i) complementary

- Genesis 2:18b – “I will make him a helper **comparable to** [אִשָּׁה] – **opposite/counterpart/corresponding** him.”

ii) good, God-given differences are rooted in gender

- maleness and femaleness is *God-given* (no such thing as non-binary)
- differences exist on physical, mental, and emotional levels
- differences are good & complementary

iii) obliteration of gender

- the transgender movement
 - denies that maleness and femaleness is essential to what it means to be human
 - goal: *replace biological sex with gender identity* (or disconnect the two from each other)
- British Columbia, CA (2018 – Nov.2022)
 - court case against father who insists on referring to daughter as ‘she’
 - “It’s considered criminal violence to not use the preferred pronouns. It’s no different, let’s say, if I were to take a broomstick and whack one of my kids over the head. So they were treating it in the similar fashion that misgendering, mispronouncing, my child is family violence.”

B. two distinct roles

i) man’s role as head

- creation order
 - man created first (Gen.2:7-8, 15-18); woman from man (Gen.2:18-23)
- authority to name
 - gives name to her gender: *woman* (Gen.2:23)
 - gives her a personal name: *Eve* (means *life*; Gen.3:20)
- human race named after the man, Adam: an *honor & an responsibility*
 - Gen.5:1-2 – “¹ This is the book of the genealogy of **Adam** [אָדָם / *Adam*].

In the day that God created **man** [אָדָם / *Adam*], He made him in likeness of God.

² **Male & female** He created them, and He blessed them and **named them Man** [אָדָם / *Adam*].”

- Romans 5:12,14 – Adam is held responsible for the Fall of the human race into sin

“¹² Therefore, just as through **one man** sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men ... [Who is this one man?] ¹⁴ ... death reigned from **Adam** to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of **Adam**, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

- New Testament teaching
 - home
 - 1 Corinthians 11:3 – “But I want you to understand that the **head** of every **man** is **Christ**, the **head** of a **wife** is her **husband**, and the **head** of **Christ** is **God**.”
 - Ephesians 5:23 – “For the husband is the **head** of the **wife** even as **Christ** is the **head** of the **church**.”
 - Genesis 18:19 – “For I have known him [Abraham], in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”
 - Ephesians 6:4 – “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - church
 - qualifications for pastor, elder, and deacon require male leadership (Acts 6:1-6; 1Ti.3; Tit.1:5-9)
 - 12 men appointed as apostles (Luke 6:12-16); many women travel with as helpers (Luke 8:1-3)

ii) woman’s role as helper

- Genesis 2:18
 - “And the LORD God said, "*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a **helper** comparable to him.*”
- helper vs. hired hand
 - servant/slave = property of another person; take orders; work for pay; subservience of a subordinate
 - helper = an equal/ally; someone who runs to another’s aid
 - God is our helper!
 - Psalm 30:10 – “Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me! O LORD, be my helper!”
 - Psalm 54:4 – “Behold, **God is my helper**; the Lord is the upholder of my life.”
 - Psalm 121 – confess “My help comes from the Lord”
 - John’s Gospel – the **Holy Spirit** as '**helper**' who Father will send (Jhn.14:16,26; 15:26, ESV/NKJ)
 - Hebrews 13:6–“So we can confidently say, 'The **Lord** is my **helper**; I will not fear; what can man do to me?’”
- implications
 - not mean woman:
 - is less valuable
 - does not image God *as much* / in ways *as important as* a man
 - does mean:
 - you submit to one who is your equal
 - model for submission is church’s submission to Christ & Christ’s submission to the Father (Eph.5:24; 1Cor.11:3)
 - role as wife
 - your husband’s calling from God should be the first and foremost consideration in your mind as you consider how God wants you to use your time and energy
 - role as mother
 - primary way to help your husband is to raise the children God may bless you with

Conclusion

As people, we are equally image-bearers of God, yet distinctly male and female with correspondingly distinct roles. We are sexual beings who need to live sexually pure lives. Because of the Fall, we struggle with sexuality in various ways: not being content with the gender God gave us, not being sexually pure as singles or married, and not fulfilling our God-given roles. However, in Jesus we have full forgiveness of all our sins, a new (restored) identity, a perfect model of both what headship and submission look like, and the certain promise of being made perfect men and women in the resurrection.