

**The 1689 Confession of Faith, Chapter 4 – “Of Creation”, Session # 6 –  
“Reasonable and Immortal Souls”, presented by Pastor Paul Rendall on  
December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018, in the Adult Sunday School.**

**Paragraph 1** – “In the beginning it pleased God the Father, a) Son, and Holy Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of b) his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, to create or make the world, and all things therein, c) whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.”

a) John 1: 2-3; Hebrews 1: 2; Job 26: 13; b) Romans 1: 20; c) Colossians 1: 16; Genesis 1: 31

**Paragraph 2** – After God had made all other creatures, he created d) man, male and female, with e) reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created; being f) made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; having the law of God g) written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was h) subject to change.

d) Genesis 1: 27; e) Gen 2:7; f) Ecclesiastes 7: 29; Genesis 1: 26; g) Romans 2: 14-15; h) Genesis 3:6

**Paragraph 3** – Besides the law written in their hearts, they received i) a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion k) over the creatures.

i) Genesis 2: 17; k) Genesis 1: 26-28

**This morning we want to take up the topic of Adam and Eve being created male and female with reasonable and immortal souls.**

**1<sup>st</sup> – Adam and Eve were created with reasonable and immortal souls.**

Let me read for you first about the creation of Adam and Eve; their being created directly and immediately by God; their bodies formed and fashioned by God, and their then, being given an immortal soul.

**Genesis 1: 26 and 27** – “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Now, when it says that God made man in his own image, we saw last week that it meant that they were created with the ability to reason in a similar manner to how God reasons; thinking thoughts in relation to revelation given to them, and using logic and putting thoughts together to form righteous conclusions as to the decisions that they should make in order to glorify God in their speech and conduct. They were created as upright and holy creatures in their mind, affections, will, and conscience. And this was the purpose for which they were created; to glorify God (to be holy creatures, and to show forth that holiness of being, in righteous and wise thoughts and decisions being made, without any admixture of sin.) In doing this they would enjoy Him forever, as the 1<sup>st</sup> question of the Shorter Catechism states. They would be holy and happy.

They were each (Adam and Eve) created as an eternal being in their soul. We know this because they were created in God’s image and likeness, and since God is eternal, men and women are

also created to be eternal, from the moment that their souls are created, from that time forward. Adam and Eve were created, as our confession states, “male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, rendering them fit unto that life to God for which they were created being made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.”

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Adam’s body was created out of the dust of the ground, and his soul came from God’s breathing life into that body.**

**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.” (or a living soul it says in the KJV and ASV, a living creature – ESV, a living being – NASB)

Here we find that the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the earth, that is his body, formed and fashioned out of the dust of the ground, or the mud of the ground as John Calvin says. And then God breathed into the lifeless nostrils of Adam, the breath of life. From this we can conclude that man is bi-partite; that is, he is body and soul. I am aware that some have believed that man is tri-partite; that he is body, soul, and spirit. But most theologians believe that since the soul and spirit are both immaterial, that although they are directly related to each other, and can be distinguished from each other at points, Biblically, they together make up the immaterial part of man’s being. It is the part of his being that once created, it never dies.

From what I have said thus far, we can deduce from this that the body, although it was created to walk uprightly instead of creeping along the ground like the beasts, it was not created in God’s image because God Himself is a spirit without a body. And further, that although man’s body was created with a physical brain which would house and work together with this ability of the soul and spirit to think and reason, and although the body would have many physical members which would cause Adam to stand forth (and walk uprightly in a physical sense) as the highest of God’s creation; still, these are only outward and appropriate indications of God’s showing to man his high privilege to have a body which houses the more important part of his being – his soul. “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” (**Matthew 10: 28**) And so, we should conclude that even though the body was not created in God’s image and likeness, that it was created to show forth the wisdom and power and holiness of God’s handiwork, and the dignity and worth and honor with which the body ought to be treated, both in life and in death, as the house not made with hands.

**A couple of verses may help us at this point.**

**Hebrews 4: 12** – “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

We should be able to see from these verses that the word of God, the living risen Christ, is a discerner of all the thoughts and intentions of the heart. His discerning gaze can penetrate or pierce through to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow of man’s being. You and I cannot see through to this division, but the Triune God can and does. Now, soul and spirit are no more disjointed than the thoughts and intents of the heart are, when they are mentioned here.

**1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5: 23** – “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We can see from this verse that the sanctification of every Christian involves their being made holy in relation to their whole spirit, soul, and body, although we ought not to see any disconnection between spirit and soul, but only distinguishing aspects of the immaterial part of our being.

**John Gill says on this verse** – “Some by “spirit” understand the graces and gifts of the Spirit in a regenerate man; and by “the soul”, the soul as regenerated, and as it is the seat and subject of these graces; and by the body, the habitation of the soul, which is influenced by the grace that is last; and this is a sense not to be despised.” “Others by “the spirit” understand the rational and immortal soul of man, often called a spirit, as in Ecclesiastes 12: 7 (“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and spirit will return to God who gave it.”) and by the soul, the animal and sensitive soul, which man has in common with brutes; see Ecclesiastes 3: 21 (“Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the beast, which goes down to the earth?”) and by the “body”, the outward frame of flesh and blood, and bones; but rather “spirit” and “soul” design the same immaterial, immortal, and rational soul of man, considered in its different powers and faculties.” “The “spirit” may intend the understanding, Job 32: 8 (“But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding”) which is the principal, leading, and governing faculty of the soul; and which being enlightened by the Spirit of God, a man knows himself, Christ Jesus, and the things of the Spirit, the truths of the Gospel, and receives and values them.” “The “soul” may include the will and affections, which are influenced by the understanding; and in a regenerate man the will is brought to a resignation to the will of God, and the affections are set upon divine things, and the body is the instrument of performing religious and spiritual exercises: and these the apostle prays may be preserved blameless.” (end of quote) Brethren, I agree with John Gill’s analysis here.

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15: 45** – “And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ “The last Adam became a life giving spirit.”

We see here in this verse that Adam in the first creation became a living being; a living soul. He was willing to do God’s will at the first, but then, having been created mutable, and falling prey to listening to the voice of his wife, that she thought nothing bad had happened to her when she ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, he ate and sin entered in to his mind, soul, and body. Because he was our Federal representative Head in his being the first man, all men descended from him are born into the world with sin affecting every part of their being. But when our Lord Jesus Christ obeyed God’s law perfectly in our place and suffered and died for our sins, He arose from the grave as a life-giving Spirit. When we believe in Him we are united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. We are one spirit with Him as it says in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6: 17 – “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” When we believe in Him we are given spiritual life, and we receive the Holy Spirit who works the precious grace of Christ into our soul so that we are being transformed from one degree of glory to another by the Spirit of God.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5: 1** – “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” “For in this we

groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.” “For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.”

Here we see that the body is being described as our earthly house, or tent. When it is destroyed we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I believe that this being clothed with our habitation which is from heaven includes not only our being given a glorified body on the day of Christ’s return, but it also includes our being ushered into heaven and the eternal dwelling places, the many mansions that the Lord Jesus says that He has gone to prepare in **John 14: 1-3**. “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you.” “I go to prepare a place for you.” “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” In this sense we will be clothed from the time of our death to the time of the resurrection and glorification of all the righteous dead, at the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – We can legitimately conclude that Adam and Eve were created with reasonable and immortal souls in order to have communion with God forever.**

**Genesis 2: 8 and 9** – “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.” “And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.” “The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

**Genesis 2: 15-17** – “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 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.’”

The reason that I say that God created them to have communion with Him forever is because He warns them of what would happen if they broke that communion. Sin would break that communion, and they would die, and this would mean that their fellowship and communion would be destroyed, and that they would forever have been without a remedy. We know that after the Fall, that God did provide the remedy in the promised Seed of the Woman who would crush the serpent’s head and bring redemption to all who would believe in the promise. When this happened and Adam and Eve believed the promise, their fellowship and communion was re-established, and that forever. God had not created this garden and placed Adam in it simply to let him go and do whatever he wanted to do. He placed him there so that in his obeying His commandment, his fellowship and communion would be established forever by Adam’s obedience to it. The test was to be over whether Adam would obey and not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or whether he would disobey God’s word, and in doing so, die spiritually in an immediate sense, and physically in an eventual sense, and eternally if he died physically in that state. In his obeying God’s command, Adam’s life would have been established permanently and his own original righteousness would have been established permanently. But most importantly, His fellowship and communion and friendship with God would have been established permanently.

## **I like what James Montgomery Boice in his commentary on Genesis says about the image of God in man –**

“What does it mean to be made in God’s image?” “One thing it means is that men and women possess the attributes of personality, as God Himself does, but as the animals, plants, and matter do not.” “To have personality one must possess knowledge, feelings (including religious feelings), and a will.” “This God has, and so do we.” “We can say that animals possess a certain kind of personality.” “But an animal does not reason as men do; it only reacts to certain problems or stimuli.” “It does not create; it only conforms to certain behavior patterns, even in as elaborate a pattern as constructing a nest, hive, or dam.” “It does not love (*as a righteous man can love*); it only reproduces.” “It does not worship.” “Personality, in the sense we are speaking of it here, is something that links man to God but does not link either man or God to the rest of creation.”

“A second element that is involved in man’s being created in the image of God is morality.” “This includes the two further elements of freedom and responsibility.” “To be sure, the freedom men and women possess is not absolute.” “Even in the beginning the first man, Adam and the first woman Eve, were not autonomous.” “They were creatures and were responsible for acknowledging this by their obedience in the matter of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” “Since the fall that freedom has been further restricted so that as Augustine said, the original *posse non peccare* (“able not to sin”) has become a non-*posse non peccare* (“not able not to sin”). “Still there is a limited freedom for men and women even in their fallen state, , and with that there is also moral responsibility.” “In brief, we do not need to sin as we do or as often as we do.” “And even when we sin under compulsion (as may sometimes be the case), we still know it is wrong and, thus, inadvertently confess our likeness to God in this as in other areas.”

“It is relevant to the matter of morality that, when the sanctification of the believer is spoken of as being renewed in knowledge in the image of (his) Creator” (Colossians 3: 10) or ‘conformed to the likeness of His Son’ (Romans 8: 29), it is the moral righteousness of the individual that is most in view, though of course this may also refer to the perfection of personality in ways we do not as yet understand fully.”

“The third element in man’s being made in God’s image is spirituality, meaning that man is made for communion with God, who is Spirit (John 4: 24), and that this communion is intended to be eternal as God is eternal.” “Although man shares a body with such forms of life as plants or flowers and a soul with animals, only he possesses a spirit.” “It is on the level of the spirit that he is aware of God and communes with Him.” “Here lies our true worth.” “We are made in God’s image and are therefore valuable to God and others.” “God loves men and women, as He does not and cannot love the animals, plants, or inanimate matter.” “Moreover, He feels for them, identifies with them in Christ, grieves for them, and even intervenes in history to make individual men and women into all that He has determined they should be.” “We get some idea of the special nature of this relationship when we remember that in a similar way the woman, Eve, was made in the image of man.” “Therefore, though different, Adam saw himself in her and loved her as his companion and corresponding member in the universe.” “It is not wrong to say that men and women are to God somewhat as the woman is to the man.” “They are God’s unique and valued companions.” “In support of this we need only think of the Bible’s teaching concerning Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as the Bride.”