

Systematic Theology session 21
The Doctrine of Man, Part 1

- Biblical anthropology: The study of the origin, essential nature, and destiny of human beings.
- The false anthropologies of the world, that are not informed by Scriptural revelation.
 - The false view of Materialism: Man is just chemistry, and there is no immaterial component to man. Materialism holds that there is no soul, no existence after death.
 - The false view of man that we are all deity. Maybe everything is god, or maybe just all humans are gods.
 - The false view that spirit is all that really matters, because the body is just a prison-house of the spirit, to be escaped and left behind.
 - The Greek philosophers taught that the mind or soul were all that mattered.
 - The Gnostics taught that matter is evil and spirit is good, so the goal is to diminish the importance of the body.
 - Gnostics diminished the importance of the body either by depriving the body (asceticism), or licentiousness (since the body is irredeemably bad anyway).
- The Scriptural revelation that human nature includes both a material component and an immaterial component.
 - The trichotomist view: Humans consist of three parts: body, soul, and spirit.
 - Trichotomists look to two passages: 1 Thessalonians 5:23, and Hebrews 4:12.
 - Both of these passages are better seen as rhetorical devices, or figures of speech.
 - Most theologians do not argue in favor of trichotomy.
 - The dichotomist view: Humans consist of two parts: the material component (the body), and the immaterial component (the soul or spirit, two interchangeable words for the same thing).
 - There are passages that use the words “soul” and “spirit” interchangeably.
- Man as originally created, before the Fall:
 - God created man in the image of God. Mankind was created male and female. Therefore, our bodies matter. But, the image is found in the immaterial aspect of mankind.
 - The Westminster Confession of Faith: “After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image; having the law of God 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 subject unto change. Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.”
 - The image of God includes the ability to reason, having immortal souls, and dominion over the creation.
 - The image of God included original righteousness.
 - Original righteousness included: righteousness according to truth, holiness according to truth, and knowledge according to truth.
 - Man was not a moral “blank slate” at creation. Righteousness, holiness, and knowledge were necessary to worship and serve God in the Garden of Eden.
 - The heretical view of the 4th century monk Pelagius, who taught that Adam was a moral blank slate (neither righteous or evil), and every person born afterward is a moral blank slate, and could therefore live a sinless life if they chose. Adam’s sin only affected Adam.