

## ANTHROPOLOGY (17)

It is precisely this that brings the structure to life. Although God formed man from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7), it was not until He breathed into his nostrils “the breath of life” that man “became a living soul.”

Our conclusion, based on these observations, is that the main idea behind being created in the “image of God” is not that which is physical or material.

**(Conclusion #2)** - “Image of God” is an emphasis on a natural and moral likeness.

**Observation #1** - The natural likeness refers to the personality.

As we previously studied in Theology Proper, God is a Person comprised of intellect, emotion and will. God’s intellect is very systematic and orderly. The earliest record we have of man’s design by God indicates he had these same qualities:

(Quality #1) - Man was created with a will –he could make choices–Gen. 2:16-17

(Quality #2) - Man was created with emotions –he needed companionship–Gen. 2:18

(Quality #3) - Man was created with an intellect –he could govern a garden and animals–  
Gen. 2:15, 19-20

This was a natural personality likeness between God and man.

**Observation #2** - The moral likeness refers to righteousness and holiness .

It seems evident that when Adam and Eve were first created, God gave them a moral character that was very reflective of Him. They had a unique ability to look at all of life in a total purity, prior to the fall (Gen. 2:25; 3:7). The character of man was originally so righteous and holy that God, Himself, classified His creation as being “very good” (Gen. 1:31).

At the moment of sin, it was not the material part of Adam and Eve that changed, it was their immaterial part that immediately changed. Their intellect, emotions and will and righteous character were so greatly affected that they could not face each other and they could not face God (Gen. 3:7-8). At the moment of the fall, it was not their physical or material structure that changed, it was their immaterial structure that immediately and drastically changed. This, then, leads us to the conclusion that being created in the “image of God” is more of an emphasis on the immaterial than the material.

**QUESTION #15** – What part of the human being is still today in the “image of God?”

Since sin has entered humanity—we no longer have the same Edenic existence that Adam and Eve had. Therefore, we need to consider what exactly is the image of God today.

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There are three observations we want to make:

**Observation #1** - The image of God is not a physical body.

As we have said, although the body has been carefully designed by God, this is not the primary emphasis of the “image of God.” It is clear at “death” that the body is not transported into the presence of God. It is also clear that at the resurrection, the body is drastically changed in order to fit God’s criteria of being a body able to go to heaven. Our conclusion then is that the “image of God” is not a reference to one’s physical body.

**Observation #2** - The image of God is not the moral character.

The Bible makes it absolutely clear that the righteousness and holiness that we once had before the fall was totally lost at the fall. No longer does God evaluate us as being “good” or “righteous” (Rom. 3:10-12), but He does classify us as being “dead in our transgressions” (Eph. 2:1). This is precisely why one must be “born again” (John 3:3). We are born physically with a moral and spiritual depravity. We are not righteous or holy and are certainly not in the image of God morally or spiritually. In fact, we all fall far short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

**Observation #3** - The image of God is the personality.

The ability to systematically think and reason, the ability to emotionally relate and make logical choices is the natural likeness that, to some extent, is still a reflection of the “image of God.” Since all human beings are born in the same spiritual condition—lost, all human beings are born in a natural condition—being in God’s image.

This suggests that there is a certain majesty to the human being and an accountability for being a human being. Humans, as no other created being, were specifically created by God on earth in His image. It is the immaterial side of a human that has been created in the image of God.

**QUESTION #16** – From where does the immaterial part of a person originate?

The origin of the material part of a human being has never been much of an issue to the world of theology, since it has been proved over and over again that upon conception, a baby physically begins to grow inside of a mother, actually growing by feeding off the mother’s system. The physical part of a person clearly comes from the parents. The issue that has become important to the world of theology is the immaterial part of a person. **Specifically, when, where and how does a human receive an intellect, emotion and will?** In the course of study there have been three theories pertaining to this matter:

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### (Theory #1) - Pre-existent Theory .

The pre-existent theory is one that states that the soul and spirit of a person existed in a previous state. The basic premise is that God created the immaterial part of a person and then, because of sin, He made each soul and spirit go into a human body as punishment.

Historically, this type of thinking was prevalent with the Greeks, especially with the philosopher Plato. In our present day, there are those who still hold to the belief that prior to physical birth, the soul exists. Those in Theosophy, Hinduism and Mormonism adhere to the pre-existent theory. It is usually this type of thinking that leads to a belief in reincarnation.

#### **All who accept the Bible dogmatically reject the pre-existence theory for several reasons:**

(Reason #1) - There is no Scriptural support for this idea.

(Reason #2) - Human beings were not originally created as a punishment, but as a very good creative work of God (Gen. 1:26-27).

(Reason #3) - This theory ignores the doctrine of original sin, which leads to a denial of eternal damnation.

(Reason #4) - There is no proof or evidence anywhere of such a possibility.

### (Theory #2) - Creationism Theory .

This theory states that at the exact moment of conception or at the exact moment of birth, God creates the immaterial part of the person and unites it with the material part of the person. This theory states that the body is from the parents, and the soul and spirit are from God. The parents generated the material part through the reproductive process and God generated the immaterial part through a special creative work. Those who adhere to this position do so on the basis of three main arguments:

Argument #1 - This seems to be implied by certain passages of Scripture—Num. 16:22; Eccl. 12:7; Is. 42:5; Zech. 12:1; Heb. 12:9.

On close examination of these passages we observe that the intent is to demonstrate that God is the author of all life and that this present life is not all there is. These passages also indicate that there will be an accountability to God of the immaterial part of a person.

Argument #2 - It would seem logical that since the physical part of a person is transmitted by a physical process, the immaterial part of a person would need an immaterial process, such as God directly creating a new soul and spirit.

Argument #3 - Jesus Christ's sinlessness can only be true if His soul were created by God.

Here is a major theological error especially made by Catholic and some Reformed theologians. Jesus Christ was not created, He existed from all eternity and was "with God and...was God" (John 1:1).

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(Theory #3) - Traducianism Theory.

The word “traducianism” comes from the Latin word “traducianus,” which means a propagated shoot. This theory states that the immaterial part of a person is transmitted or propagated along with the material part of a person through the normal, parental reproductive process of natural generation. To state this belief simply—both the material and the immaterial part of a person originates from the parents.

There are several reasons why this theory is maintained by many theologians:

**Reason #1** - This theory accurately interprets Genesis 2:7 in light of Genesis 1:28, which indicates that God gave men and women an ability to propagate the species.

**Reason #2** - This theory is perfectly consistent with Genesis 2:2, which indicates that all creative work of God was completed by the seventh day of His creative work.

**Reason #3** - This theory is perfectly consistent with biblical statements, which suggest that direct descendents come from the loins of the father—Gen. 46:26; Heb. 7:9-10.

**Reason #4** - This theory logically explains why there are certain noticeable physical, mental and emotional traits which can be seen in other family members.

**Reason #5** - This theory logically and biblically explains human depravity—Ps. 14:2-3; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:10-12, 23; Eph. 2:1. An immaterial nature that wars against God and His Word cannot be a nature that was created by God (Rom. 7:15, 19).

**Reason #6** - This theory logically and biblically explains why we need to be born again, because the physical and immaterial existence, which we inherited from our parents, is not enough to make us right with God (John 3:3-5).

There have been three main objections to Traducianism:

(Objection #1) - How is it possible for something immaterial to come from something material—such as a man or woman? We would immediately suggest that a man and woman are both material and immaterial. We would also immediately admit that we know very little about the actual formation and development of a fetus. However, Genesis 1:28 clearly suggests that it is possible for two human beings to produce another human being.

(Objection #20) - If God creates a new life at the moment of regeneration, why not also at the moment of reproduction or birth? Actually, this reasoning becomes a positive support for Traducianism. Obviously, the reason why there must be regeneration (“born again”) is because something is not right with God automatically at one’s first, physical birth. In John 3:3, Nicodemus’ parents had produced a very fine, seemingly very moral and religious son. Christ is very careful to point out that his first physical birth was not enough to make him right with God, so he needed to be “born again.” This need would seem to support the fact that the material and immaterial part of a person were originally created by the parents, not by God.

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(Objection #3) - If the immaterial part of a person comes from the parents, then Jesus Christ must have inherited a part that was sinful and guilty. This is a very weak and completely unsupported argument because the Scriptures clearly reveal that Christ's birth was completely unique and in fact states that it would be a special work of the Holy Spirit that would enable Mary to produce a "holy" offspring (Lk. 1:35). It is assumed that if this special work of the Holy Spirit did not take place, that which would be produced would not be holy. This clearly would lend itself to the Traducian position.

The view that seems best to square with the biblical record is that of Traducianism. There are many mysteries concerning conception and birth, but it seems that two human beings comprised of both the material and the immaterial have the capability of reproducing, certainly by the sovereign direction of God, a human life comprised of that which is material and that which is immaterial.

**QUESTION #17** – When does the union take place between the material part of a person and the immaterial part of a person?

Another way to ask this question is—"When does life begin?" The Bible, through various statements, takes the position that life begins at conception !

- 1) Psalm 51:5 - Personal pronouns connect life to conception.
- 2) Psalm 139:13-16 - God is credited with ordaining the life of a person before conception.
- 3) Jeremiah 1:5 - God says life begins to be formed in the womb = conception.
- 4) Luke 1:41-44 - A baby in the womb of a mother is classified as being alive.

Based upon these passages we conclude the following:

- 1) Every abortion does in fact murder a real life.
- 2) Certain contraceptives do in fact murder a real life.
- 3) Stillborn babies were in fact really alive.

One who has had an abortion is one who has in fact committed murder. God is able to forgive one and cleanse one from this sin, but it must first be acknowledged that it is a murderous sin which has been committed.

Every year in the United States, approximately 120,000 third trimester (last 3 of the nine months) late-term abortions are performed. Since becoming legal in 1973, 42 million babies have been systematically executed. Dr. Ann Speckhard, a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, published a study of the long-term effects on women who have had abortions. Her conclusions were formed by interviewing many women from various backgrounds 5-10 years after having an abortion.

1. 81% report a preoccupation with the aborted child.
2. 73% report flashbacks of the abortion experience.
3. 69% report feelings of "craziness" after the abortion.
4. 54% recalled nightmares related to the abortion.
5. 35% had perceived visitations from the aborted child.