

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

ANTHROPOLOGY

The Doctrine of Humanity

Created, Fallen, and Redeemable — What It Means to Be Human Before God

UNIT 9

Conclusion — The Dignity and Destiny of Man

Lesson 26

From Dust to Glory

The Full Arc of the Human Story

“Created for Glory, Fallen into Ruin, Redeemed by Grace, and Destined for Eternity”

Key Texts: *Psalm 8:3–9; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:29–30; 1 Corinthians 15:42–49; Revelation 21:3–5; Ephesians 2:1–10*

“What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty!”

Psalm 8:4–5, NASB 1995

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Introduction

Twenty-six lessons. Nine units. The doctrine of humanity, surveyed from its first foundation in the creation of the image-bearing creature through its vocational commission, its covenantal accountability, its sexual and marital identity, its cultural mandate, its racial and federal solidarity in Adam, its anticipation of the fall's devastating reach, and now, at last, its final and doxological reckoning with the full arc of the story from dust to glory. Lesson 26 is not a lesson in the same sense as its twenty-five predecessors. It does not introduce a new doctrine or a new set of biblical texts to be exegeted with precision. It gathers, as the conductor raises the baton for the final movement after twenty-five movements of a symphony that has been building to this conclusion, the full weight of everything the series has established and offers it as a single sustained act of theological meditation and doxological response. This is the lesson that asks not "what do we know?" but "what does it all mean, held together, for the way we understand ourselves, our condition, our Savior, and our destiny?"

The human story, as the Anthropology series has traced it, moves in four great movements that correspond to the four great epochs of the biblical narrative: creation, fall, redemption, and glorification. In the first movement, the human creature is brought forth from the dust of the ground, breathed into living existence by the very breath of God, crowned with glory and majesty as the image-bearer of the Creator who made it, placed in the garden of the very good creation, given a spouse from its own flesh, and commissioned to fill and subdue and rule the earth as the vice-regent of the One whose image it bears. In the second movement, the creature plunges from this glory through the transgression of the covenant of works, bringing the entire race that descends from it under the condemnation of the covenant's judgment, and standing estranged from the God for whom it was made, dead in trespasses and sins, a child of wrath by nature. In the third movement, the God who is rich in mercy acts where the creature could not: He sends His Son as the Last Adam, who takes on the humanity of the condemned race, who bears the guilt that the condemned race bears, who obeys where the first Adam disobeyed, who dies where the first Adam's disobedience incurred the sentence of death, and who rises as the firstfruits of the new creation that His obedience has secured. In the fourth movement, the Spirit of the risen Last Adam is poured out on all flesh, progressively renewing the damaged image toward its eschatological perfection, gathering from every nation and tribe and people and tongue the great multitude of the redeemed, and bringing the entire human story to its consummation in the new creation where the God who made the creature dwells with it forever.

This final lesson traces those four movements with the specific theological content that the series has established across its twenty-six lessons, and it does so in the service of the specifically doxological response that the full arc of the human story is designed to produce. The study of man, rightly conducted, does not end in the knowledge of man; it ends in the worship of the God whose wisdom, power, mercy, and grace the full arc of the human story most comprehensively displays. Psalm 8's frame of wonder, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!", is the response that twenty-six lessons of the Anthropology series have been building toward, and it is the response with which the series now concludes.

The lesson proceeds in six sections corresponding to the most important theological affirmations that the full arc of the human story generates: the dignity of man (what the creation has established about the human creature's worth that even the fall cannot erase); the misery of man (what the fall has done to the creature whose original dignity the creation established); the hope of man (what the gospel announces as the specific answer to the specific problem the fall has produced); the destiny of the redeemed (what the eschatological glorification provides for those who are in Christ); the destiny of the unredeemed (what eternal separation from God means for those who reject the gospel's provision); and the Christological center (the affirmation that true humanity is not found in Adam alone but in the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, who is what man was meant to be and who is what, by grace, the redeemed are becoming). The lesson concludes with the doxological meditation that the series' full arc makes possible and that the whole of the Anthropology series has been building toward.

I. The Dignity of Man: The Image That Even the Fall Cannot Erase

Why Every Human Being Is Infinitely Precious, Morally Significant, and Worthy of Honor

A. *The Persistence of the Image Through the Fall*

The first and the most foundational affirmation that the full arc of the human story generates is the affirmation of human dignity: the specific, inalienable, theologically grounded worth of every human being that the image of God establishes and that the fall has marred but not destroyed. Unit 3's treatment of the *imago Dei* established that the image of God is the ground of the human creature's dignity, the reason why every human being, regardless of her condition, her capacity, her cultural standing, or her moral achievement, possesses an intrinsic worth that cannot be revoked by any human judgment or destroyed by any human failure. And Lesson 9's treatment of the image after the fall established that the image persists through the fall's damage: Genesis 9:6's prohibition of murder is grounded, even in the post-fall world, in the fact that the human creature is made in the image of God. The image-bearing dignity of the human creature is not a pre-fall condition that the fall has abolished; it is the persistent mark of the Creator's intention for the creature He made and the ground of the creature's worth that the fall has damaged but not erased.

The practical implications of the image's persistence through the fall are among the most urgent that the entire Anthropology series has generated. Every human being who has ever lived, every person of every ethnicity, every level of intellectual capacity, every stage of developmental ability, every degree of moral corruption, every stage of life from conception to natural death, bears the image of God and is therefore the object of the same dignity, the same protection, and the same love that the Creator who made them in His image intends toward them. The prohibitions of murder (Genesis 9:6), of child sacrifice (Leviticus 18:21), of the exploitation of the poor (Proverbs 14:31), of the contempt for the vulnerable (Matthew 25:40–45), all are grounded, explicitly or implicitly, in the image-bearing dignity of the human beings who are protected by the prohibitions. The dignity is not earned; it is given. It is not conditional; it is constitutive. And it is not diminished by the fall's damage to the image's expression; it is the persistent mark of the Creator's intention that endures through the damage and that the redemption's renewal is restoring toward its eschatological perfection.

The dignity of man is not merely a truth about the human creature's worth in the sight of God; it is a truth about the human creature's worth in the sight of every other human being who shares the image. The command to love the neighbor as oneself (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39) is grounded in the specific theological reality that the neighbor is, like the one who loves, a bearer of the image of the same God. The ethical implications of the *imago Dei* are the implications of a common origin, a common dignity, and a common accountability before the Creator whose image both parties bear: the recognition that the neighbor's worth is the same as one's own, that the neighbor's suffering matters in the same way that one's own suffering matters, and that the neighbor's flourishing is as much the object of the Creator's concern as one's own. The Anthropology series' account of the *imago Dei* is thus not merely a theoretical doctrine about the human creature's metaphysical constitution; it is the most comprehensive ethical foundation available in the history of human thought for the treatment of every human being with the dignity, the protection, and the love that the Creator's image-bearing intention for the creature requires.

B. *Dignity as the Ground of Every Practical Ethics*

The dignity of man, grounded in the *imago Dei* and persisting through the fall's damage, is the theological foundation of every specific ethical commitment that the Anthropology series has generated across its twenty-six lessons. The prohibition of racism is grounded in the equal image-bearing dignity of every human being and the monogenetic unity of the human family (Lessons 10 and 23). The affirmation of women's equal worth is grounded in the equal image-bearing dignity of male and female image-bearers and the ordered complementarity of their relationship (Lessons 17–19). The protection of the unborn is grounded in the image-bearing dignity of the human creature from the moment of its creation (Lesson 3). The care for the elderly, the disabled, and the vulnerable is

grounded in the image-bearing dignity that persists regardless of the capacity or the condition of the bearer. The advocacy for the poor and the oppressed is grounded in the image-bearing dignity of the specific human beings who are poor and oppressed and who are therefore the objects of the Creator's specific concern and the church's specific advocacy.

The dignity of man also grounds the church's proclamation of the gospel as the specific provision that the Creator's love for the creature who bears His image has made available. The gospel is not merely the offer of an abstract spiritual benefit; it is the specific provision of the God who loves the image-bearing creature He has made, who grieves the estrangement that the fall has produced, and who has acted, at infinite cost to Himself, to restore the image-bearing creature to the communion with Himself for which He made it. The evangelist who has understood the dignity of man will not offer the gospel as a product to be sold or a technique to be employed; she will offer it as the specific provision of the loving Creator for the specific creature who bears His image and who is made for the communion with God that the gospel restores. The dignity of man and the urgency of the gospel are not competing motivations for the church's mission; they are the two faces of the same theological conviction about the infinite worth of the specific human beings to whom the gospel is offered.

The final word on the dignity of man is the word of Psalm 8, which began the Anthropology series' treatment of the cultural mandate in Lesson 20 and which serves as the frame of the entire series' doxological conclusion: "What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty!" (Psalm 8:4–5, NASB 1995). The Psalmist's wonder at the paradox of the human creature's position, so small under the vast canopy of the Creator's heavens, yet crowned with the glory and the majesty of the Creator's image and the commission to rule the works of the Creator's hands, is the wonder that the Anthropology series has been attempting to generate across twenty-six lessons. The dignity of man is the gift of the God who made the creature for this astonishing purpose and who has not revoked the dignity even in the face of the creature's most catastrophic failure.

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

2 Corinthians 5:17, NASB 1995

II. The Misery of Man: The Fall's Devastation of the Image-Bearing Creature

Apart from Christ, Humanity Is Lost, Guilty, Corrupt, Enslaved, and Under Wrath

A. The Comprehensive Ruin of the Fall

The second great affirmation of the full arc of the human story is the affirmation of the misery of man: the specific, comprehensive, and humanly irremediable condition of the fallen human creature apart from the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Lesson 25 traced the breadth of the fall's damage across every dimension of the human creature's existence, and the present lesson gathers those dimensions into the single comprehensive description that the biblical testimony provides: apart from Christ, the fallen human creature is lost (separated from the God for whom she was made), guilty (under the condemnation that the federal headship of Adam has imputed to every member of his race), corrupt (bearing the inherited corruption of nature that Adam's transgression has transmitted to every member of his posterity), enslaved (held in the bondage of the world, the flesh, and the devil from which her own resources are entirely inadequate to deliver her), and under the just wrath of the holy God whose law has been violated and whose covenant has been transgressed.

The specific character of the misery as the Anthropology series has traced it is what gives the misery its specific theological urgency. The lost condition is not the condition of the temporarily misplaced but the condition of the estranged, the creature who has broken the communion with the God for whom she was made and who, in the conditions of that broken communion, cannot truly live. The guilty condition is not merely the subjective sense of moral failure but the objective forensic reality of the imputed guilt that the federal headship of the first Adam has established and that only the imputed righteousness of the Last Adam can remove. The corrupt condition is not merely the moral weakness of the one who sometimes does what she knows to be wrong but the comprehensive corruption of every faculty of the human constitution, mind, will, affections, body, that leaves no dimension of the creature's existence untouched by the fall's damage. The enslaved condition is not the temporary captivity of one who might free herself by her own effort but the comprehensive bondage of the dead who cannot raise themselves. And the condition under wrath is not the temporary displeasure of a God who might be appeased by the creature's own moral improvement but the just and holy wrath of the God whose law is as immovable as His holiness and whose justice demands the satisfaction that the creature cannot provide from within the resources of her fallen nature.

The misery of man is not a truth that the Anthropology series has dwelt on for its own sake; it is a truth that the series has traced for the sake of the specific theological purpose that the misery serves: the driving of the fallen creature to the Christ who is the only adequate answer to the specific condition that the misery describes. The lost creature needs the One who seeks the lost (Luke 15:4–7). The guilty creature needs the One who bears the guilt as her substitute (2 Corinthians 5:21). The corrupt creature needs the One who regenerates and renews (John 3:3–6; Titus 3:5). The enslaved creature needs the One who sets the captive free (Luke 4:18). And the creature under wrath needs the One who turns away the wrath through the propitiation that His blood has accomplished (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2). The Anthropology series has not described the misery of man as the final word; it has described it as the problem for which the gospel is the specific, comprehensive, and entirely adequate answer.

B. *The Dignity and the Misery Held Together*

The theological tradition has consistently identified the holding together of the dignity and the misery of man as the specific challenge of Christian anthropology: neither the dignity alone (which produces the self-sufficiency of the one who sees no need for the gospel) nor the misery alone (which produces the despair of the one who sees no ground for hope) but both together in the specific tension that drives the fallen creature to the Christ who alone can address the specific combination of her condition. Pascal's account of the grandeur and the misery of man, the greatness that the image of God establishes and the wretchedness that the fall has produced, captures the specific theological paradox that the Anthropology series has been tracing: the creature is great because she bears the image of the God who made her, and she is wretched because she has fallen from the height that image-bearing implies into the ruin that the covenant's violation has produced.

The holding together of the dignity and the misery is the specific pastoral skill that the Anthropology series equips the pastor to exercise. The congregation that hears only the dignity will not understand why the gospel is urgent; the congregation that hears only the misery will not understand why the gospel is offered specifically to them rather than to beings who are too degraded to be worth the offering. The congregation that hears both together, the specific dignity of the image-bearing creature whose worth the Creator has not revoked even in the face of the fall's devastation, and the specific misery of the same creature whose condition apart from Christ is the condition of the lost, the guilty, the corrupt, the enslaved, and the condemned, is the congregation that is most prepared to receive the gospel with the combination of urgent need and doxological wonder that the gospel deserves. The dignity says: this creature is worth saving. The misery says: this creature cannot save itself. The gospel says: the God who made this creature in His own image has not abandoned it to its misery but has sent His Son to do what the creature cannot do for itself.

The final word on the misery of man is the "But God" of Ephesians 2:4 that Lesson 25 identified as the most theologically compressed possible statement of the sovereign grace that addresses the comprehensive misery of

the fallen condition. The misery is real, comprehensive, and humanly irremediable; and the grace that addresses it is just as real, just as comprehensive, and just as entirely the work of the One who acts where the creature cannot. The misery of man without the “But God” is despair; the “But God” without the misery is presumption; and both held together, the full weight of the fallen condition and the full adequacy of the sovereign grace that addresses it, is the gospel.

III. The Hope of Man: New Creation in the Last Adam

If Anyone Is in Christ, He Is a New Creature

A. The New Humanity in the Last Adam

The third great affirmation of the full arc of the human story is the affirmation of hope: the specific, Christological, eschatologically oriented hope that the gospel announces for the fallen creature who receives the Last Adam’s representative work by faith. 2 Corinthians 5:17’s declaration is the New Testament’s most concentrated single statement of the new creation reality that the gospel produces: “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (NASB 1995). The new creation language, the same language that the eschatological vision of Revelation 21:5 uses for the consummation of all things (“Behold, I am making all things new”), establishes that the gospel’s provision is not the repair of the old creation’s damage but the inauguration of the new creation in the specific person of the believer who is united to the Last Adam by faith. The “in Christ” of 2 Corinthians 5:17 is the union with the Last Adam that transfers the believer from the solidarity of the old humanity in the first Adam to the solidarity of the new humanity in the Last Adam.

The specific content of the new creation that 2 Corinthians 5:17 announces is the content that the Anthropology series’ account of the original creation’s very good has established as the standard for the new creation’s exceeding restoration. The new creature in Christ is not merely a morally improved version of the fallen creature; she is a genuinely new creature whose standing before God, whose nature, whose orientation, and whose destiny are all defined by her union with the Last Adam rather than her descent from the first Adam. The old things that have passed away are the old standing under condemnation (the imputed guilt of the first Adam’s transgression has been removed by the imputed righteousness of the Last Adam’s obedience), the old orientation toward sin as the nature’s default direction (the regenerated nature is inclined toward God by the Spirit’s renewing work), and the old destiny of the child of wrath under the just condemnation of the holy God (the adopted child of God who is an heir of the kingdom). The new things that have come are not the new things of the fully consummated new creation, the new creation’s full reality is still coming, still being worked out in the progressive renewal of the image toward its eschatological perfection, but the new things of the inaugurated new creation: the first fruits of the age to come already present in the life of the one who is united to the risen Last Adam by faith.

The Christological center of the hope is the Last Adam Himself: not a principle of renewal, not a spiritual force, not a moral example, but the specific person of the incarnate Son of God who took on the humanity of the condemned race, bore its guilt, died its death, rose as the firstfruits of the new creation, and now lives as the head of the new humanity that is being gathered from every nation and tribe and people and tongue to stand before the throne in the glory that the Last Adam’s obedience has secured. The hope of man is not the hope of the creature’s own moral improvement; it is the hope of the creature’s union with the One who has accomplished what no creature could accomplish and who shares the fruits of that accomplishment with all who are united to Him by faith. This is the gospel, and the Anthropology series has been building the theological architecture that makes the gospel’s specific content fully intelligible, fully urgent, and fully doxologically powerful.

B. The Already and the Not Yet of the New Creation

The hope of the new creation that 2 Corinthians 5:17 announces is characterized by the “already and not yet” tension that marks the entire present experience of those who are in Christ: the new creation has already been inaugurated in the resurrection of the Last Adam and in the union of every believer with the risen Last Adam by

faith, and the new creation has not yet been consummated in the eschatological glorification that will bring the present progressive renewal to its permanent and perfected completion. The already dimension of the new creation is the dimension of the present experience: the justified standing before God (already established by the imputed righteousness of the Last Adam), the regenerated nature (already given in the new birth that the Spirit produces), the indwelling Spirit (already present as the guarantee of the eschatological inheritance), the progressive renewal of the image (already underway in the Spirit's transforming work from glory to glory). The not yet dimension is the dimension of the eschatological hope: the resurrection of the body (not yet received, but secured by the Last Adam's own resurrection as the firstfruits), the full conformity to the image of the Son (not yet achieved, but being progressively approached in the present life's renewal), and the new creation's consummated reality (not yet manifest, but certain because the One who has promised it is the One whose purposes cannot be thwarted).

The pastoral significance of the already and the not yet is the pastoral significance of the hope that is simultaneously certain and still coming. The believer who holds only the "already" may be tempted toward the over-realized eschatology that expects the new creation's full reality in the present life and is therefore unprepared for the suffering, the struggle, and the persistent evidence of the fall's damage that the present life's experience consistently produces. The believer who holds only the "not yet" may be tempted toward the despair that sees only the present condition's limitations and fails to receive the genuine new creation reality that is already present in the life of the one who is in Christ. The pastor who holds both, who celebrates the genuine new creation reality that is already present in the believer's justified standing, regenerated nature, and progressive renewal, and who holds that genuine present reality within the eschatological hope of the consummation that is still coming, is the pastor who most faithfully communicates the specific character of the Christian hope that the full arc of the human story generates.

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them ... Behold, I am making all things new."

Revelation 21:3, 5, NASB 1995

IV. The Destiny of the Redeemed: Conformed, Resurrected, Glorified, and Home

What the Full Restoration of the Fall's Ruin Looks Like in Its Eschatological Fullness

A. Conformity to the Image of Christ and the Resurrection of the Body

The fourth movement of the human story, the glorification, is the movement toward which the entire series has been pointing from its opening affirmation of the imago Dei in Lesson 7 to its account of the Last Adam's surpassing representative work in Lesson 24 to its progressive renewal of the image in Lesson 25's account of 2 Corinthians 3:18. The destiny of the redeemed is the eschatological completion of the renewal that the Spirit has been performing in the believer's present life: the full and final conformity to the image of the Son that Romans 8:29 identifies as the goal of the predestination toward which the whole chain of grace, foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification, is moving. The glorification is not the dissolution of the believer's personal identity into an undifferentiated divine substance; it is the perfection of the believer's specific, personal, image-bearing existence in the fullness of the knowledge, righteousness, and holiness that the original creation had and that the eschatological state will far surpass.

The resurrection of the body is the physical dimension of the glorification, and its significance for the Anthropology series' account of the human creature cannot be overstated. The series established in Unit 4 that the human

creature is a whole-person entity, body and soul together, each genuinely constitutive of what the person is, and that the reduction of the human creature to the soul alone is a specifically unbiblical account of human nature that the Christian tradition has consistently resisted. The resurrection of the body at the eschatological consummation is the most decisive possible confirmation of the whole-person anthropology that Unit 4 established: the God who declared the body good at the creation, who did not abandon the body to permanent dissolution when the fall's mortality subjected it to death, and who raised the Last Adam's body from the tomb as the firstfruits of the eschatological harvest will raise every believer's body from the dead in the same pattern. The resurrection body is not the present body unchanged but the present body glorified: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power" (1 Corinthians 15:42–43, NASB 1995). The whole-person human creature who was declared very good at the creation will be more than very good at the eschatological consummation.

The eternal life in the presence of God that Revelation 21:3–5 describes is the relational fulfillment of the destiny that the creation's very good established as the goal and that the fall's estrangement interrupted: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away" (Revelation 21:3–4, NASB 1995). The dwelling of God among His people is the eschatological fulfillment of the communion with God for which the creature was made, the unmediated, unbroken, unashamed fellowship of the Creator with the creature He made in His own image, now perfected in the conditions of the new creation where every obstacle that the fall introduced has been permanently removed. The creature who hid from God among the trees of the garden will dwell with God in the city whose gates are never shut and whose lamp is the Lamb.

B. *The Full Restoration, and the Surpassing, of Everything the Fall Destroyed*

The eschatological destiny of the redeemed is not merely the restoration of what the fall destroyed; it is the surpassing of what the fall destroyed, in the specific ways that the Anthropology series' account of the eschatological "much more" has established. The original creation's very good is not the ceiling of the new creation's glory; it is the floor. What the fall destroyed was the Edenic state of the pre-fall human creature, which was itself a good and glorious state but which was also a probationary state, a state whose ultimate destiny depended on the outcome of the covenant of works' test that the first Adam failed. The eschatological state of the redeemed is the state of those whose representative has passed the test on their behalf, whose righteousness is not the mutable righteousness of the creature who stands in the state of integrity but the immutable righteousness of the creature who is united to the One who has perfectly and permanently fulfilled the covenant's condition. The eschatological righteousness is confirmed, permanent, and beyond the reach of any further probationary test; and the eschatological state is therefore more glorious than the Edenic state in the specific dimension of its permanence and its security.

The specific dimensions of the eschatological restoration that the Anthropology series has traced across its twenty-six lessons are the specific dimensions of the fall's damage that Lesson 25 catalogued: the image of God (now perfectly renewed in the conformity to the image of the Son that the Spirit's work has been progressively approaching), the communion with God (now restored to the unmediated, unashamed, uninterrupted fellowship of the creature with the Creator who dwells in its midst), the vocational life (now exercised in the eternal vocation of the new creation without the futility and the toil that the curse on the ground introduced), the relational life (now freed from the power struggles, the jealousies, the exploitations, and the estrangements that the fall introduced into every human relationship), and the body (now raised in glory, incorruption, and power from the mortality and the decay that the fall's mortality subjected it to). Each specific dimension of the restoration corresponds to a specific dimension of the fall's damage, and each specific dimension of the fall's damage corresponds to a specific dimension of the original very good that the fall destroyed. The full arc from dust to glory

is not an arc whose ending merely returns to its beginning; it is an arc whose ending exceeds its beginning in the specific ways that the Last Adam's surpassing representative work has secured for all who are in Him.

Revelation 21:5's "Behold, I am making all things new" is the eschatological declaration of the One who sits on the throne, and it is the declaration that gathers the full arc of the human story, from the very good of the first creation through the ruin of the fall through the grace of the redemption to the glory of the consummation, into the single divine act of the new creation's making. The God who made the original creation good is making the new creation new; and the new creation that He is making will be the permanent, perfected, consummated expression of what the original creation was always intended to become: the dwelling of God with the creature He made in His own image, in the fullness of the communion for which He made her, to the glory of His own name.

V. The Destiny of the Unredeemed and the Christological Center

The Two Destinies and the One Who Stands at the Center of Both

A. *The Solemn Truth of Eternal Separation*

The full arc of the human story cannot be told honestly without the solemn and terrible truth of the destiny of the unredeemed: the eternal separation from God in the conscious punishment that the New Testament consistently describes as the destiny of those who reject the gospel's provision and stand before the judgment of God with only the first Adam's guilt and their own personal transgressions to commend them. This is the most solemn truth in all of Scripture, the truth that the series has not had occasion to treat in full, which belongs to the Eschatology series' comprehensive treatment of the last things, but it cannot be omitted from the Anthropology series' doxological conclusion, because it is the truth that most fully establishes what is at stake in the human story's two possible outcomes and what is at stake in the church's proclamation of the gospel.

The biblical testimony to the eternal destiny of the unredeemed is consistent, somber, and irreducibly serious: the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30), the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels that the cursed are told to depart into (Matthew 25:41), the eternal punishment in contrast to the eternal life of the righteous (Matthew 25:46), the second death in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14–15), and the eternal separation from the presence of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 1:9). The consistent testimony of the biblical witness is not the testimony of the annihilation of the condemned, the simple cessation of their existence at the judgment, but the testimony of the conscious, eternal, and irreversible experience of the separation from God that the fall introduced and that the gospel has offered, at infinite cost, to address. The eternal separation from God is the permanent expression of the spiritual death that Ephesians 2:1 describes as the fallen creature's present condition: the creature who has remained in the condition of being dead in trespasses and sins, who has not received the "But God" of verse 4's sovereign grace, experiences in the eschatological state the permanent and irreversible reality of the separation from God that the fall produced and that the rejection of the gospel has not allowed the grace to address.

The solemn truth of the eternal destiny of the unredeemed is not a truth that the Anthropology series presents with grim satisfaction or theological detachment; it is a truth that should produce in the student and the pastor the specific quality of urgency that the New Testament consistently associates with the proclamation of the gospel. The dignity of man, the image-bearing worth of every human being, is the reason why the eternal destiny of the unredeemed is a pastoral emergency rather than merely a theoretical theological datum. Every human being who rejects the gospel's provision is a human being of infinite worth who is moving toward an eternal destiny of infinite loss; and the church that understands both the dignity of the image-bearer and the solemn reality of the eternal separation will be the church that proclaims the gospel with the specific combination of loving urgency and theological seriousness that the full arc of the human story requires.

B. *The Christological Center: True Humanity Found in the Last Adam*

The central and controlling affirmation of the entire Anthropology series, and the affirmation that most fully illuminates the full arc of the human story, is the affirmation of the Christological center: true humanity is not found in Adam alone but in the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, who is what man was meant to be and who is, by grace, what the redeemed are becoming. Every dimension of the Anthropology series' account of the human creature, the image of God, the original righteousness, the covenantal accountability, the cultural vocation, the ordered complementarity, the monogenetic unity of the race, the federal headship, finds its ultimate expression and its ultimate fulfillment not in Adam but in the Last Adam who has come as the representative of the new humanity to accomplish what Adam failed to accomplish and to become what Adam was always designed to be.

Jesus Christ is the image of God (Colossians 1:15; 2 Corinthians 4:4), the one human being in whom the full and undiminished image of the Father is perfectly expressed in human flesh. He is the original righteousness (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22), the one human being whose obedience was perfect, whose relationship with the Father was unbroken, and whose moral standing before God was never compromised by any act of transgression. He is the fulfillment of the covenant of works (Matthew 5:17; Romans 5:19), the one human being who perfectly obeyed the covenant's condition and secured by His obedience the blessing that the covenant promised to the one who would obey. He is the image of the cultural mandate's commission (Matthew 4:23–25; John 2:1–11), the one human being in whose ministry the creation's original very good is being restored through the healing of the sick, the feeding of the hungry, and the raising of the dead that anticipate the new creation's fullness. He is the Last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45–49), the one human being whose resurrection body is the prototype and the firstfruits of the eschatological humanity that the new creation will bring to every member of the new human race that is united to Him by faith.

The affirmation of the Christological center is the most theologically comprehensive and the most pastorally transformative conclusion that the Anthropology series can offer: the creature who has been studying the doctrine of man for twenty-six lessons has been, all along, studying the doctrine of the Man, the specific human being in whom every dimension of the human creature's design is most fully expressed, every dimension of the human creature's failure is most comprehensively addressed, and every dimension of the human creature's eschatological destiny is most perfectly embodied. The Anthropology series that began with the question "what is man?" ends with the answer that the Psalmist anticipates (Psalm 8:4–5), that the New Testament proclaims (Hebrews 2:5–9, which cites Psalm 8 in application to Christ), and that the Anthropology series has been building toward across twenty-six lessons: the truest answer to the question "what is man?" is the answer that points to the Last Adam, "Jesus Christ, who is what man was meant to be."

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren."

Romans 8:29, NASB 1995

VI. The Doxological Conclusion: The Study of Man Leads to the Worship of God

The Question of Psalm 8 and the Answer That Twenty-Six Lessons Have Been Building Toward

Psalm 8 has appeared at significant moments throughout the Anthropology series, in the treatment of the cultural mandate's commission (Lesson 20), in the prayer focus of the dominion and stewardship lesson (Lesson 22), and in the title page of this concluding lesson, because it is the biblical text that most perfectly models the theological and doxological posture that the Anthropology series is designed to produce. The Psalm opens and closes with the declaration of the Lord's majestic name: "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!" (v. 1, 9). In between the two declarations of the divine majesty, the Psalmist reflects on the paradox of the human

creature's position under the vast canopy of the Creator's heavens: small enough to seem insignificant ("What is man that You take thought of him?") and yet crowned with the glory and the majesty of the image-bearing commission ("Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty!"). The movement of the Psalm is the movement from the wonder at the divine majesty to the wonder at the human dignity to the return to the wonder at the divine majesty: the human creature's dignity does not divert the Psalmist from the worship of God but drives him back to it, because the dignity is the gift of the God whose image the creature bears and whose glory the creature's dignity displays.

This is the specific doxological movement that the Anthropology series has been attempting to produce in the student across its twenty-six lessons. The study of the human creature's creation in the image of God, its original righteousness and covenantal dignity, its cultural vocation, its creaturely identity in gender and marriage, its monogenetic unity in Adam, its federal headship under the first and Last Adams, its present condition of the image marred but not destroyed, and its eschatological destiny of conformity to the image of the Son, none of these truths is meant to produce a self-focused human pride in the student who has received them. They are truths that, rightly understood and rightly received, drive the student to the doxological posture of the Psalmist: the astonished wonder at a God who made such a creature, who did not abandon such a creature when it plunged from the height of its original dignity into the ruin of the fall's devastation, who sent His own Son to take on the humanity of the fallen creature and bear its condemnation and secure its redemption, and who is even now, by the Spirit's renewing work, conforming the redeemed creature to the image of the Son in preparation for the eschatological glorification that will make the full arc of the human story's movement from dust to glory permanently and perfectly complete.

The specific form of the doxological conclusion that the Anthropology series generates is the form of Psalm 8's wonder: the creature who knows what she is, who has understood the height of the original dignity, the depth of the fall's ruin, the comprehensiveness of the gospel's provision, and the glory of the eschatological destiny, cannot contemplate the full arc of the story without being moved to the worship of the God who is the Alpha and the Omega of the story. The worship is not the abstract philosophical admiration of a distant deity; it is the specific, personal, grateful, and astonished adoration of the One who made the creature in His image, who sought the creature when it hid from Him among the trees, who gave His Son for the creature's redemption when it could not redeem itself, and who has prepared for the creature a glory so great that no eye has seen it, no ear has heard it, and no human heart has conceived it (1 Corinthians 2:9). This is the doxological conclusion to which the doctrine of man leads, not the glorification of the creature but the glorification of the God who made the creature and who has done all of this for the creature's good and, above all, for His own incomprehensible glory.

The Anthropology series is complete. Twenty-six lessons. Nine units. The doctrine of humanity, from its first foundation in the creation of the image-bearing creature to its doxological conclusion in the worship of the God who is making all things new. What is man that You take thought of him? Twenty-six lessons of the most serious theological reflection that the question deserves have yielded the only adequate answer: man is the creature who bears the image of the God who made him, who fell from the height of that image-bearing dignity through the transgression of the covenant, who has been redeemed from the fall's ruin by the Last Adam's representative obedience, who is being progressively renewed toward the eschatological perfection of the image that the Spirit's work is accomplishing, and who is destined, in the fullness of the glory that the new creation will bring, to dwell with the God for whom he was always made. And in the light of that answer, there is only one appropriate response: "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!"

"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth, who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!"

Psalm 8:1, NASB 1995

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
The Four Movements of the Human Story	The four-fold structure of the biblical narrative as it pertains to the human creature: (1) Creation, the making of the image-bearing creature in its original dignity, righteousness, and communion with God; (2) Fall, the transgression of the covenant of works and the comprehensive devastation of the original dignity across every dimension of the human creature's existence; (3) Redemption, the Last Adam's representative obedience, the gospel's provision, and the Spirit's progressive renewal of the image toward its eschatological perfection; and (4) Glorification, the eschatological consummation of the renewal in the resurrection of the body, the full conformity to the image of the Son, and the eternal dwelling of God with the creature He made in His own image.
Dignity and Misery Held Together	The specific theological challenge and the specific pastoral skill of Christian anthropology: holding together the dignity of man (the image-bearing worth that the creation establishes and the fall cannot erase) and the misery of man (the comprehensive ruin that the fall has produced in the fallen creature apart from Christ) in the specific tension that drives the fallen creature to the Christ who alone can address the specific combination of her condition. Pascal's account of the grandeur and the misery of man captures the paradox: the creature is great because she bears the image of the God who made her, and she is wretched because she has fallen from the height that image-bearing implies. The dignity says the creature is worth saving; the misery says the creature cannot save itself; the gospel says the God who made this creature has done what the creature cannot do for itself.
The New Creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)	Paul's declaration that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." The new creation language establishes that the gospel's provision is not the repair of the old creation's damage but the inauguration of the new creation in the specific person of the believer who is united to the Last Adam by faith. The old things that have passed away are the old standing under condemnation, the old orientation toward sin, and the old destiny of the child of wrath. The new things that have come are the justified standing, the regenerated nature, and the eschatological destiny of the adopted child of God who is an heir of the kingdom. The new creature in Christ is not a morally improved version of the fallen creature but a genuinely new creature defined by union with the Last Adam rather than descent from the first Adam.
Already and Not Yet	The theological characterization of the present experience of those who are in Christ: the new creation has already been inaugurated in the resurrection of the Last Adam and in the union of every believer with the risen Last Adam by faith (the already), and the new creation has not yet been consummated in the eschatological glorification that will bring the present progressive renewal to its permanent and perfected completion (the not yet). The already/not yet tension is the specific pastoral challenge and the specific pastoral resource of the Christian life in the present age: the genuine new creation reality already present in the believer's justified standing and regenerated nature, held within the eschatological hope of the consummation that is still coming.

The Destiny of the Unredeemed	The eternal separation from God in the conscious punishment that the New Testament describes as the destiny of those who reject the gospel's provision: the outer darkness (Matthew 8:12), the eternal fire (Matthew 25:41), the eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46), the second death in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14–15), and the separation from the presence of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 1:9). The eternal separation is the permanent expression of the spiritual death of Ephesians 2:1: the creature who has remained in the condition of dead in trespasses and sins, who has not received the sovereign grace of the "But God" of verse 4, experiences in the eschatological state the permanent and irreversible reality of the separation from God that the fall produced. The solemnity of this truth is the ground of the church's missionary urgency.
Christological Center of Anthropology	The affirmation that true humanity is not found in Adam alone but in the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, who is what man was meant to be and who is what, by grace, the redeemed are becoming. Jesus Christ is the image of God (Colossians 1:15), the original righteousness (1 Peter 2:22), the fulfillment of the covenant of works (Romans 5:19), and the Last Adam whose resurrection body is the prototype of the eschatological humanity that the new creation will bring to every member of the new human race united to Him by faith. The Anthropology series that began with the question "what is man?" ends with the answer: the truest answer points to the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, who is what man was meant to be.
Revelation 21:3–5	The eschatological declaration of the One who sits on the throne in the new creation: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away ... Behold, I am making all things new." The passage is the eschatological fulfillment of the communion with God for which the creature was made, the unmediated, unbroken, unashamed fellowship of the Creator with the creature He made in His own image, now perfected in the conditions of the new creation where every obstacle that the fall introduced has been permanently removed.
The Doxological Conclusion of Anthropology	The specific theological and spiritual posture that the Anthropology series is designed to produce in the student who has received its full content: the doxological wonder of the Psalmist who asked "What is man that You take thought of him?" and was driven by the answer back to the declaration that frames the whole inquiry: "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!" The study of man, rightly conducted, does not end in the knowledge of man; it ends in the worship of the God whose wisdom, power, mercy, and grace the full arc of the human story most comprehensively displays. The more clearly the student understands the grandeur of the creation, the ruin of the fall, the wonder of the redemption, and the glory of the eschatological destiny, the more she is compelled to bow in humble, grateful adoration before the God who made her, who sought her, and who will one day glorify her.
From Dust to Glory	The compressed summary of the full arc of the human story as the Anthropology series has traced it: from the dust of the ground from which God formed the first man (Genesis 2:7), through the original glory of the image-bearing creation (Genesis 1:27–28), through the ruin of the fall's devastation (Genesis 3), through the grace of the redemption that the Last Adam's obedience has secured (Romans

	5:12–21), to the glory of the eschatological consummation where the redeemed are conformed to the image of the Son (Romans 8:29), raised in glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15:42–49), and dwell with the God who made them in the new creation that He has prepared for them (Revelation 21–22).
Hebrews 2:5–9 (Psalm 8 Applied to Christ)	The New Testament’s Christological application of Psalm 8’s account of the human creature’s glory and majesty: “But one has testified somewhere, saying, ‘What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him? You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and have appointed him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’ ... But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor.” The passage establishes that the Psalm’s vision of the image-bearing creature crowned with glory and majesty finds its ultimate fulfillment in the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, confirming the Christological center as the specific answer to the Anthropology series’ governing question: What is man? The truest answer points to Him.

Practical Application

A. *For the Mind: What Must We Believe?*

We must believe the full arc of the human story, creation, fall, redemption, glorification, as a single, coherent, divinely authored narrative whose every movement is purposeful, whose every reversal is comprehended within the sovereign wisdom of the God who is the Alpha and the Omega of the story. The Anthropology series has traced that arc across twenty-six lessons not to give the student a comprehensive catalog of doctrinal propositions to be stored in the memory but to give her the single, integrated theological vision of what it means to be a human being, made in the image of God, fallen in Adam, redeemed by grace, and destined for the glory that the new creation will bring. The student who holds this vision with clarity and depth is the student who is most prepared to engage every subsequent dimension of the systematic theology curriculum with the anthropological context that makes every doctrine intelligible, urgent, and doxologically rich.

We must especially believe the Christological center with the theological precision and the personal urgency that the full arc of the human story generates. The study of the human creature inevitably and rightly leads to the study of the Last Adam who is the truest expression of what the human creature was always meant to be; and the study of the Last Adam inevitably and rightly leads to the worship of the God who sent His Son as the Last Adam to accomplish what no other human being could accomplish and to share the fruits of that accomplishment with all who are united to Him by faith. The belief in the Christological center is not merely the assent to a theological proposition; it is the personal, doxological reception of the specific provision that the God of grace has made for the specific creature who bears His image and who was made for the communion with Him that the gospel restores.

B. *For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?*

Let the full arc of the human story, held in view across the Anthropology series' twenty-six lessons, produce in you the specific quality of doxological wonder that Psalm 8 models. The creature who has understood what she was made to be, what she became through sin, what God has made her in Christ, and what she will be when His work is complete cannot contemplate the full arc of the story without being moved to the specific quality of awestruck gratitude that the story of the God who made, who redeemed, and who will glorify the image-bearing creature deserves. The wonder is not the wonder of abstract theological admiration; it is the personal, embodied wonder of the one who says: I am that creature. I was made in that image. I fell in that first Adam. I have been redeemed by that Last Adam. I am being renewed by that Spirit. And I will be glorified in that new creation. Let the personal application of the full arc produce the specific quality of doxological wonder that the Psalmist modeled and that the twenty-six lessons of the Anthropology series have been building toward.

Desire, above all, the Christological center: the specific desire for the Last Adam Himself, not merely the theological category He represents, not merely the salvation He provides, but the specific Person who is what man was meant to be and who is, by grace, what the redeemed are becoming. The study of man that ends in the desire for Christ has achieved its ultimate theological purpose; and the study of man that ends in the mere accumulation of doctrinal propositions about the human creature has missed the point entirely. The point of the Anthropology series is Christ: Christ as the image of God in whom the image-bearing creature's dignity finds its ultimate expression, Christ as the Last Adam in whom the fallen creature's condemnation finds its only adequate address, Christ as the Firstborn from the dead in whom the mortal creature's eschatological hope finds its certain ground, and Christ as the One in whom the redeemed creature's destiny of full conformity to the divine image finds its specific, personal, and permanently glorious realization.

C. *For the Hands: What Must We Do?*

- Write a brief theological autobiography of the human story as you understand it after the Anthropology series: not your personal biography but the four-movement arc of creation, fall, redemption, and glorification applied to your specific situation as a human being made in the image of God, fallen in Adam, redeemed in the Last Adam, and being renewed by the Spirit toward the eschatological conformity to the image of the Son. The autobiography should be theologically grounded (drawing on the specific doctrinal content of the Anthropology series), personally applied (using first-person language that makes the theological account personally appropriated rather than abstractly theological), and doxologically oriented (ending with the specific act of worship that the full arc of the personal and theological story generates). Share the autobiography with one other person who has worked through the series.
- Identify the single lesson in the Anthropology series that has most significantly changed your theological understanding, your pastoral practice, or your personal relationship with God. Write a one-paragraph account of the specific change the lesson has produced. What did you believe or do before the lesson that you believe or do differently now? What specific theological conviction did the lesson establish that you did not hold with the same clarity or depth before? And how has that specific conviction most directly shaped your ministry, your preaching, your pastoral care, or your personal walk with God? Share this account in the group discussion as the concluding session's final reflection.
- **Read G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (1962), chapter 1 ("The Christian Doctrine of Man").** Berkouwer's opening chapter provides the most theologically comprehensive account of the specific relationship between the doctrine of man and the doctrine of God that the Anthropology series' doxological conclusion calls for. His treatment of the way the study of man inevitably and rightly leads to the worship of the God whose image the creature bears, and whose wisdom, power, mercy, and grace the full arc of the human story most comprehensively displays, is the theological companion to the doxological conclusion that this lesson has attempted to produce. Reading Berkouwer's opening chapter is the final recommended reading of the Anthropology series and the best single preparation available for the continuing study of the systematic theology curriculum that lies ahead.
- Prepare a single sermon or teaching message from the Anthropology series that you will deliver to the congregation you serve. The message should gather the full arc of the human story, the four movements of creation, fall, redemption, and glorification, into a unified proclamation that is theologically grounded, pastorally warm, and doxologically driven. The message should communicate both the dignity and the misery of man, both the urgency and the joy of the gospel, and both the present reality and the eschatological hope of the new creation that is being inaugurated in the Last Adam. After delivering the message, reflect: what theological conviction, what pastoral application, or what doxological response was most powerfully received by the congregation? And what dimension of the Anthropology series' full arc did the congregation most need to hear?
- Spend time this week reading Revelation 21:1–22:5 slowly, meditatively, and in the light of the full theological content of the Anthropology series. As you read each verse, identify the specific dimension of the fall's devastation that the eschatological new creation has permanently removed: the death that is no more (21:4), the mourning and crying and pain that are no more (21:4), the sea of separation that is no more (21:1), the need for a sun or moon because the Lamb is the light (21:23), the gates that are never shut because there is no threat (21:25), the curse that is no more (22:3), and the face of God that the servants will see without veiling (22:4). Let the reading produce the specific quality of longing and hope and doxological wonder that the eschatological vision of the new creation is designed to generate in the creature who knows what was lost, what was redeemed, and what is coming. And let that longing, hope, and wonder be the pastoral posture with which you carry the full arc of the human story, from dust to glory, into every ministry the Lord has prepared for you.

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- After twenty-six lessons of the Anthropology series, what single sentence would you use to answer the Psalmist's question: "What is man?" The sentence should be theologically grounded (drawing on the specific doctrinal content of the series), personally appropriated (reflecting your own reception of the series' content), and doxologically oriented (pointing beyond the creature to the God whose purposes for the creature the series has traced). Share your sentence with the group and reflect on the similarities and the differences in the group's various answers.

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Psalm 8 in full, attending to the specific doxological movement of the Psalm: the opening declaration of the divine majesty (v. 1), the wonder at the smallness of man under the Creator's vast heavens (vv. 3–4), the wonder at the paradox of man's dignity despite the smallness (vv. 4–6), the specific content of the image-bearing commission (vv. 6–8), and the return to the declaration of the divine majesty (v. 9). How does the Psalm's movement from the divine majesty through the human dignity back to the divine majesty model the theological movement that the Anthropology series has been attempting to produce? And how does the Hebrews 2:5–9 application of Psalm 8 to Christ establish that the Psalm's vision of the image-bearing creature crowned with glory and majesty finds its ultimate fulfillment in the Last Adam?
- Read Revelation 21:1–5 carefully. What specific dimensions of the fall's devastation are explicitly addressed in verses 1–4 (the sea, death, mourning, crying, pain, the first things that have passed away)? How does the declaration of verse 5 ("Behold, I am making all things new") establish the comprehensive scope of the new creation's restoration? And how does the identification of God Himself as the One who dwells among His people (v. 3) relate to the Anthropology series' account of the communion with God as the most fundamental dimension of the human creature's existence and the fall's disruption of that communion as the most fundamental dimension of the fall's devastation?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:42–49. What are the specific contrasts Paul draws between the present bodily existence ("sown in corruption," "in dishonor," "in weakness," "a natural body") and the resurrection body ("raised in incorruption," "in glory," "in power," "a spiritual body")? How do these contrasts establish the continuity of the resurrection body with the present body (it is the same body, raised) and the transformation of the resurrection body beyond the present body (it is raised in conditions that the present body does not possess)? And how does the promise of verse 49 ("we will also bear the image of the heavenly") connect the Anthropology series' account of the imago Dei to its eschatological completion in the resurrection?
- Read Ephesians 2:1–10 in full as the passage that most completely summarizes the human story's movement from misery to hope. How does the passage's movement from "dead in trespasses and sins" (vv. 1–3) through "But God" (v. 4) to "made alive together with Christ" (v. 5) through "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (v. 10) trace the full arc from the misery of man to the hope that the gospel provides and the destiny of the redeemed in the new creation's good works? What does the specific mention of "the ages to come" in verse 7 ("so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus") establish about the eschatological scope of the display of grace that the human story's arc is designed to produce?
- Read Colossians 1:15–20. How does Paul's description of Christ as "the image of the invisible God" (v. 15), the One "by whom all things were created" (v. 16), the One "in whom all things hold together" (v. 17), the head of the church (v. 18), and the One in whom "the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (v. 19) establish the Christological center as the ground of every dimension of the Anthropology series' account of the human creature's creation, fall, redemption, and glorification? What does the connection between Christ as the image of God (v. 15) and the Anthropology series' account of the human creature as made in the image of

God (Genesis 1:27) establish about the relationship between the human creature's dignity and the dignity of the One in whose image she is made?

Integration Questions (Gathering the Series)

- The Anthropology series has argued throughout that the study of man inevitably and rightly leads to the worship of God. Have you found this to be true in your own experience of the series? Has the sustained doctrinal study of the human creature produced in you the doxological response that the series intended, or has it produced primarily intellectual formation without the doxological orientation that the series has been attempting to generate? What specific dimensions of the series' content have been most effective at producing genuine worship, and what specific dimensions have felt primarily informational? And what specific practices, of personal piety, communal worship, pastoral care, or theological reflection, would most effectively translate the intellectual formation of the series into the ongoing doxological posture that it is designed to produce?
- The series has traced the human creature from its creation in the image of God through its original righteousness, its covenantal accountability, its creaturely identity in gender and marriage, its vocational commission, its racial and federal solidarity in Adam, and its anticipation of the fall's devastation. Looking back across the full arc of the series, which unit has most comprehensively changed your pastoral practice? How has the specific doctrinal content of that unit most directly shaped the specific pastoral decisions, pastoral conversations, or pastoral priorities that you have faced in the congregation you serve? And what pastoral situation do you now handle differently, more confidently, more compassionately, or more theologically, as a result of the formation that the Anthropology series has provided?
- The series has consistently argued that the doctrine of man is the prologue to every subsequent doctrine in the systematic theology curriculum. As you prepare to enter the Hamartiology series, the doctrine of sin, what specific theological convictions from the Anthropology series do you most need to carry forward as the context within which the hamartiological account is to be received and understood? Which of the anthropological affirmations (the height of the pre-fall dignity, the breadth of the fall's reach, the federal headship of Adam, the monogenetic unity of the race, the image's persistence through the fall) will most directly shape the way you receive the hamartiological account of sin's devastation, and which of the anthropological affirmations are you most tempted to leave behind as the series transitions from Anthropology to Hamartiology?
- The lesson has argued that the Christological center, the affirmation that true humanity is found not in Adam alone but in the Last Adam, is the most theologically comprehensive and pastorally transformative conclusion that the Anthropology series can offer. In what specific pastoral situation would you most urgently deploy the Christological center as the answer to the anthropological question? Is there a specific person in your congregation who most needs to hear that Jesus Christ is what man was meant to be, whose specific condition (despair, self-sufficiency, confusion about human identity, grief over the fall's damage) is most directly addressed by the Christological center's specific affirmation? How would you communicate the Christological center to that specific person in language that is both theologically grounded and pastorally warm?
- The doxological conclusion of the Anthropology series has attempted to gather the full arc of the human story, from dust to glory, into the single sustained act of theological meditation and doxological response that the Psalm 8 frame of wonder models. As you complete the Anthropology series and prepare to enter the Hamartiology series, what is the specific act of worship that the full arc of the human story most urgently calls you to? It may be the worship of confession (the creature who knows the height of the original dignity confessing the depth of the fall's ruin), the worship of gratitude (the creature who knows the depth of the ruin offering thanks for the grace of the redemption), the worship of hope (the creature who knows the grace of the redemption living in the light of the glory of the eschatological destiny), or some combination

of all three. Let the specific act of worship be your personal response to the question that has framed the entire Anthropology series: “What is man that You take thought of him?”

Prayer Focus

This final prayer of the Anthropology series is not a new prayer for a new lesson's content; it is the gathering of the full theological harvest of twenty-six lessons into the single act of sustained and comprehensive doxological adoration that the full arc of the human story is designed to produce. Begin with Psalm 8 read in full, slowly and meditatively, as the frame within which the entire prayer will be offered. Let the Psalm's opening declaration, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!", be the posture with which you approach every dimension of the prayer's content: not the posture of the theological student who has completed a course of study and is offering a review, but the posture of the creature who has been looking at herself and her story for twenty-six lessons and who finds, at the end of the looking, that every dimension of the story drives her back to the wonder at the God who is the Author of it all. Read through the Psalm to its closing declaration, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!", and let the Psalm's movement from the divine majesty through the human dignity back to the divine majesty be the theological arc within which the prayer is held: the creature's dignity is the gift of the divine majesty, and the proper response to the gift is the return to the worship of the Giver.

Pray through the four movements of the human story in the form of the four great doxological postures that each movement generates. Begin with the creation: the prayer of wonder before the Creator who took the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life and made from it a creature who would bear His own image, exercise His own commission in the created order, and walk with Him in the garden in the unashamed communion of the creature with the Creator for whom it was made. Let this prayer be a prayer of pure, uncomplicated gratitude: the creature whose existence is entirely the gift of the One who made her out of nothing, and who made her not as a cosmic accident but as the specific, intentional, delight-producing expression of the Creator's own image in the creaturely sphere. Move to the fall: the prayer of honest, grief-producing, self-indicting confession before the God who saw the creature He made for communion with Himself hide from His presence among the trees of the garden. Let this prayer be a prayer that does not minimize the height of the fall or the depth of the ruin, the prayer of the creature who knows that the misery of the fallen condition is precisely proportional to the glory of the original dignity, and who acknowledges the specific dimensions of the fall's damage, the darkened mind, the enslaved will, the broken communion, the corrupted nature, the mortal body, with the theological honesty that only the full weight of the Anthropology series can produce. Move to the redemption: the prayer of overwhelming, doxologically uncontrollable gratitude before the God who is rich in mercy and who acted, at infinite cost to Himself, to address the specific condition of the specific creature who bears His image and who had fallen from the height of the original dignity into the ruin of the fall's devastation. Let this prayer be the prayer of the "But God", the prayer that holds the full weight of the misery and the full adequacy of the sovereign grace in the same breath, and that cannot speak of the Last Adam's representative obedience, the great exchange of 2 Corinthians 5:21, and the "much more" of Romans 5:15–17 without the specific quality of doxological wonder that the magnitude of the grace demands. Conclude with the glorification: the prayer of eschatological longing and confident hope before the God who has declared from the throne "Behold, I am making all things new" and who will wipe away every tear, remove every death, and dwell with the creature He made in His own image in the new creation's unbreakable and permanent communion. Let this prayer be the prayer of the creature who has seen where the story is going and who longs, with the groaning of the whole creation, for the 'when' of the story's final movement to arrive.

Close the Anthropology series with the declaration that the series' doxological conclusion has been building toward: the creature who has understood what she was made to be, what she became through sin, what God has made her in Christ, and what she will be when His work is complete has no adequate response but the response of the Psalmist and the response of the redeemed host of Revelation 7:9–10 and the response of the entire company of the redeemed throughout the history of the church who have looked at the full arc of the human story and found at the center of it, not the creature, but the God who made the creature and who refused to abandon it and who has prepared for it a glory so great that it exceeds all that has been described in twenty-six

lessons of the most careful theological reflection that the question deserves: Soli Deo Gloria. To God alone be the glory. Not to the creature for its dignity, though the dignity is real and is cause for wonder. Not to the creature for its resilience, though the persistence of the image through the fall is the gift of the God who preserves it. Not to the creature for its moral achievement, for the redemption is entirely the work of Another and the creature contributes nothing but the sin that made the redemption necessary. But to the God who made the creature, who redeemed the creature, and who is glorifying the creature, for the display of the wisdom and the power and the mercy and the grace that no other story in the history of the universe could so comprehensively and so magnificently reveal: Soli Deo Gloria.

“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth, who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! ... O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!”

Psalm 8:1, 9, NASB 1995

Key Texts: Psalm 8; Genesis 1:26–28; 3:8–19; Romans 5:12–21; 8:18–30; 1 Corinthians 15:42–49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:4; 5:17–21; Ephesians 2:1–10; Colossians 1:15–20; Hebrews 2:5–9; Revelation 21:1–22:5

ANTHROPOLOGY SERIES COMPLETE

26 Lessons, 9 Units

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Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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