

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 2

The Creation of Humanity

Lesson 3

Formed from the Dust

The Special Creation of Adam

“God’s Personal, Immediate, and Purposeful Formation of the First Man”

Key Texts: Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4; Psalm 139:13–16; Acts 17:25–26; Isaiah 64:8

“Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

Genesis 2:7, NASB 1995

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Introduction

We arrive now at the text that stands at the foundation of the entire doctrine of humanity. Genesis 2:7 is not merely an ancient creation story; it is the decisive statement about the origin, nature, and dignity of the human creature that determines every subsequent anthropological affirmation the church can rightly make. “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7, NASB 1995). In this single sentence, Moses, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives us the two constitutive elements of human existence: the material and the immaterial, the earthly and the divine, the dust that reminds us we are creatures and the breath of God that sets us apart from every other creature. The human being is, uniquely and permanently, the one in whom heaven and earth meet in a single creaturely form. No evolutionary account of human origins, however sophisticated, can accommodate this claim, because no evolutionary account has a Creator who stoops, who shapes with intentionality, and who breathes.

This lesson opens Unit 2 of the Anthropology series, which spans Lessons 3 through 6 and is devoted to the creation of humanity. Having established in Unit 1 the methodological foundations of the study, why Anthropology matters, what the secular alternatives are, how the tradition has handled the doctrine, we turn now to the exegetical work of the series itself. Unit 2 is deliberately grounded in the text of Genesis 1–2, because these chapters are not merely the starting point of biblical anthropology; they are its permanent reference point. Every doctrine we develop in the remaining twenty-two lessons of this series will either depend upon, develop from, or be tested against the account of humanity that Genesis 1–2 provides.

Lesson 3 focuses specifically on the creation of Adam: its manner, its meaning, its theological content, and its present-day apologetic stakes. The lesson proceeds in six movements. We begin with the exegesis of Genesis 2:7 itself, attending carefully to the Hebrew vocabulary and its theological freight. We then consider the particular significance of the divine breath and what it means for the constitution of human nature. From there we examine the creationist affirmation against theistic evolution, following the argument from the text itself rather than from scientific apologetics. We then take up the question of Adam’s historicity and its indispensable role in the structure of the biblical narrative and the logic of the gospel. The fifth section addresses the pastoral and ethical implications of special creation: the dignity that belongs to every human being precisely because he or she is the purposeful handiwork of the living God. We close with the doxological conclusion that the doctrine of special creation is designed to produce, not merely correct information about human origins, but the worshipful astonishment of creatures who know who made them and why.

A preliminary note on method is in order. This lesson will engage the debate over evolutionary origins directly and without apology, because the text of Genesis 2:7 requires it. This is not scientific obscurantism; it is theological fidelity. The question before us is not primarily a scientific one but a hermeneutical one: what does the text actually say, and what does fidelity to the inerrant, infallible Word of God require us to affirm? The answer this lesson will defend is that the text of Genesis 2, taken in its plain grammatical-historical sense, teaches the direct, personal, immediate creation of Adam by God, and that this affirmation is not merely compatible with human dignity but is its only adequate foundation.

I. The Exegesis of Genesis 2:7: Heaven and Earth in a Single Verse

What the Hebrew Text Actually Says About the Creation of the First Man

A. *Yatsar: The Potter and the Clay*

The opening verb of Genesis 2:7 is *yatsar* (יָצַר), and its selection by the Spirit of inspiration is not accidental. *Yatsar* is the word used throughout the Old Testament for the work of a potter who fashions clay into a vessel with his hands. It appears in Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand” (NASB 1995), and in Jeremiah 18:2–6, where the prophet watches the potter working at his wheel and hears the word of the Lord using the image to describe His sovereign governance of the nations. The use of *yatsar* for the creation of Adam is not incidental metaphor; it is a deliberate theological statement about the nature of the creative act. The creation of man is an act of personal, intimate, artisanal attention. God does not speak man into existence as He speaks the light and the firmament and the seas into existence in Genesis 1; He forms him, as a craftsman forms a vessel, with the specificity and care of a maker who is personally invested in what He is making.

This distinction between the creation of the non-human world and the creation of Adam is theologically significant and has been noted by the exegetical tradition from the church fathers onward. In Genesis 1, God speaks (אָמַר, *amar*) and the created order comes into existence by the sheer power of the divine word: “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Genesis 1:3, NASB 1995). The creation of the non-human world is characterized by the sovereign command that admits of no resistance and requires no physical engagement with the material being created. The creation of Adam is different: it involves the direct, personal, physical engagement of the Creator with the material from which the creature is formed. This is not anthropomorphism that should be allegorized away; it is a genuine theological statement about the uniqueness of the human creature’s relationship to its Maker. The God who formed Adam from the dust is the God who has, from the very moment of creation, a personal stake in the creature He has made.

The word translated “dust” is *afar* (עָפָר), a term that appears throughout the Old Testament to denote the dry soil of the ground, the dust of the earth that the wind drives away, and the grave to which the dead return. Its use in Genesis 2:7 establishes from the very outset the creaturely humility of the human being: man is made from the same material as the ground on which he walks, the same material to which he will return at death (Genesis 3:19: “For you are dust, and to dust you shall return”). The theological message is clear and intentional: there is nothing in the material from which man is made that is inherently superior to the rest of creation. The dignity of the human creature does not reside in the dust; it resides in what God does with the dust. The creature who is most exalted in all of creation is made from the most common of materials, and this disproportion between the material of origin and the dignity conferred by the Creator is itself a theological statement about the nature of grace: the worth of the vessel comes entirely from the One who made it, not from the clay of which it is formed.

B. *Nishmat Chayyim: The Breath That Makes the Difference*

The second act of creation in Genesis 2:7 is even more remarkable than the first. Having formed the body from the dust, the Lord God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (NASB 1995). The Hebrew phrase is *nishmat chayyim* (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים), and the word *nishama* (נִשְׁמָה) is used consistently in the Old Testament to denote the divine breath or spirit that animates life, particularly the life of the human creature. What is theologically decisive about this phrase is not merely that God breathes into man, it is the direct, unmediated, personal character of the act. God does not command the breath of life into man’s nostrils; He breathes it there Himself, in what the text presents as an act of extraordinary intimacy. The face-to-face image of the Creator bending toward the dust-formed creature to breathe into him the breath of life is one of the most theologically charged images in all of Scripture.

The result of this act is that man became a *nephesh chayyah* (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה), a living being or living soul. The word *nephesh* is the standard Hebrew term for the self, the soul, the living person in his or her entirety, and its use here identifies the result of the divine breath not as the acquisition of a separate spiritual substance distinct from the body, but as the coming-to-be of a unified personal existence: a living self who is irreducibly both body and breath, both dust and divine inhalation. The body alone, without the breath of God, is not yet a person; the breath of God, without the body, would not produce the kind of creature Genesis 2 describes. The human person is the unity of both, and this unity is constituted by a direct act of God that no natural process can replicate or explain.

The theological weight of *nishmat chayyim* extends beyond the creation narrative. In Job 33:4, Elihu declares: “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (NASB 1995). The parallel between the Spirit of God (רוח אל, *ruach El*) and the breath of the Almighty (נִשְׁמַת שַׁדַּי, *nishmat Shaddai*) is significant: the breath that animates the human creature is not merely a natural life-force but a direct impartation of the divine life, a participation in the vitality of God Himself that no other creature in the created order shares in this same way. This is part of what makes the human creature unique: not merely that he is formed with particular care, but that he is animated with a kind of life that comes directly and personally from the living God. And it is this, not the complexity of the brain, not the sophistication of the genome, not the capacity for rational thought considered as a merely natural endowment, that is the deepest ground of human dignity and the most fundamental reason why every human life is sacred.

“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”

Job 33:4, NASB 1995

II. Special Creation: The Direct, Personal, and Immediate Act of God

What It Means That God Formed Adam Rather Than Commissioned a Process to Form Him

A. The Nature of the Creative Act

The affirmation of special creation, that Adam was formed directly, personally, and immediately by God, without the mediation of any natural process, is not a claim made on the basis of scientific evidence, though the scientific evidence is relevant to the discussion. It is a claim made on the basis of the plain grammatical-historical sense of Genesis 2:7, which presents the creation of Adam as a discrete, personal, divine act, complete in a single creative moment, not as the terminus of a long developmental process that God initiated and then guided from a distance. The text does not say that God designed a natural process by which hominids gradually developed over millions of years until at some point one of them became sufficiently developed to receive the divine image. It says that God formed man from the dust and breathed into him the breath of life. The subject is God; the object is man; the action is immediate and personal.

The Westminster Confession of Faith captures the theological content of the biblical account with precision: God “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 fulfill it” (WCF 4.2). This confessional statement reflects the exegetical consensus of the Reformed tradition that the creation of Adam is an event, not a process, a creation *ex nihilo* of the kind that only God can perform, in which the human creature comes into existence not through the modification of pre-existing natural forms but through the sovereign, creative act of the One who calls things that are not as though they were (Romans 4:17). Special creation is not a scientific hypothesis to be evaluated on the basis of empirical evidence alone; it is a theological affirmation grounded in the divine revelation of Scripture and accepted on the authority of the One who alone was present when the act was performed.

The pastoral significance of the special creation of Adam is immense and is felt most acutely in the domain of human dignity. If Adam was directly, personally, and immediately formed by God, then the human creature as a class bears a relationship to its Maker that no other creature shares: a relationship of direct personal authorship, in which the Maker has invested not merely creative power but creative care. The God who formed Adam from the dust and breathed into him the breath of life is the same God who, in the words of Psalm 139:13–16, knit each subsequent human being together in the womb: “For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (NASB 1995). The special creation of Adam is not merely an event in the ancient past; it is the theological foundation for the ongoing creative involvement of God in every human life from the moment of conception, and it is the ultimate ground of the sanctity of human life that no evolutionary account of human origins can provide.

B. *Against Theistic Evolution: Why the Text Cannot Bear the Weight*

Theistic evolution, the position that God initiated and guided the evolutionary process through which *Homo sapiens* gradually emerged from pre-human ancestors, has been increasingly attractive to evangelical scholars in recent decades as a strategy for holding together a high view of Scripture and a positive engagement with the consensus of the biological sciences. The BioLogos movement and similar initiatives have produced sophisticated theological arguments for the compatibility of evolutionary biology with Christian faith, and they deserve to be engaged with intellectual seriousness rather than dismissed. But the conclusion of this lesson, and of the series as a whole, is that theistic evolution cannot be reconciled with the plain teaching of Genesis 2:7 without doing violence to the text in ways that have severe and cascading consequences for the entire structure of biblical anthropology and the gospel itself.

The most fundamental problem with theistic evolution is not scientific but exegetical. Genesis 2:7 presents the creation of Adam as a discrete, personal, divine act performed on a specific material (עפר, the dust of the ground) to produce a specific individual (ha-adam, the man) who then became a living being by a second specific divine act (the breathing of the divine breath). The text does not present a process; it presents an event. To read Genesis 2:7 as a theological account of what was in fact a long evolutionary process, in which God worked through natural selection, genetic mutation, and the gradual development of hominid intelligence until a population of pre-humans was sufficiently developed to bear the divine image, is not to interpret the text; it is to replace the text’s meaning with a meaning it does not have and was not designed to carry. The grammatical-historical method, to which the Reformed tradition is committed, requires that the interpreter allow the text to mean what its human author, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, intended it to mean in its original linguistic and literary context, and in that context, Genesis 2:7 means the direct, personal, immediate creation of a single, individual, historical human being by the living God.

The theological stakes of this exegetical judgment are not merely theoretical. Theistic evolution, in virtually all its forms, requires the abandonment of a historical Adam, a single, individual, specially created first man who is the common ancestor of the entire human race and the federal head of all his natural posterity. And without a historical Adam, the Pauline argument of Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21–22 collapses entirely. Paul’s argument in Romans 5 is not a theological metaphor or a typological construction that could survive the non-historicity of Adam; it is a direct, parallel comparison between two historical individuals whose actions had representational consequences for those who are in them: “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19, NASB 1995). If Adam is not a historical individual whose historical act of disobedience affected the historical condition of his historical posterity, then Paul’s argument for the historical act of Christ’s obedience that affects the historical condition of those who are in Him by faith is undermined at the same stroke. You cannot save the Last Adam by surrendering the first.

III. The Historicity of Adam: Why It Is Not Optional

The Structural Role of a Historical First Man in Biblical Theology and the Gospel

A. *Adam in the Narrative Structure of Scripture*

The historicity of Adam, the affirmation that Adam was a real, individual, historical human being who actually existed, who actually sinned, and whose actual sin had actual consequences for his actual posterity, is not a peripheral conviction that the theologically generous reader can set aside without loss. It is a load-bearing wall in the architectural structure of the entire biblical narrative, and its removal does not leave the building standing with a gap where the wall used to be; it brings the building down. The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 trace a continuous line of descent from Adam to Noah to Abraham, presenting Adam not as a mythological figure but as the historical beginning of a historical sequence. Luke 3:23–38 extends the Matthean genealogy of Jesus all the way back through “Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God” (Luke 3:38, NASB 1995), placing Adam in the same historical sequence as Abraham, Isaac, David, and Jesus Himself. To demythologize Adam while preserving the historicity of Abraham is a hermeneutical inconsistency that the text does not permit.

The Apostle Paul treats Adam as a historical individual with a directness and a theological specificity that cannot be accommodated by any reading of the text that treats Genesis 2–3 as myth, symbol, or theological narrative without historical reference. In 1 Timothy 2:13–14, Paul grounds the creation order of male and female in the sequence of historical events: “For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” Paul’s argument depends entirely on the historical priority of Adam’s creation and the historical sequence of the transgression in the garden. In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul quotes Genesis 2:7 directly, identifying “the first man, Adam” as the counterpart to “the last Adam” who is Jesus Christ, not as two mythological figures in a theological framework, but as two historical individuals in a single continuous redemptive history. The Adam of Paul’s letters is the same Adam as the Adam of Genesis 2: real, historical, individual, and consequential.

The witness of Jesus Himself confirms the historical character of the Genesis creation accounts. In Matthew 19:4–5, when the Pharisees ask Jesus about divorce, He appeals directly to the historical reality of creation: “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?” (NASB 1995). Jesus does not treat Genesis 1–2 as a theological framework to be honored while its historical claims are set aside; He treats it as the account of what God actually did at the beginning of human history, whose implications for human behavior remain binding in the present. If Jesus, whose knowledge of the Scriptures was perfect and whose authority over their interpretation was absolute, treated the Genesis creation accounts as historical, the Christian who follows Him cannot do otherwise on the grounds of accommodation to contemporary scientific consensus.

B. *Adam and the Logic of the Gospel*

The most urgent reason for defending the historicity of Adam is not genealogical or hermeneutical but soteriological: without a historical Adam, the logic of the gospel as Paul presents it in Romans 5:12–21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21–49 becomes incoherent. Paul’s gospel is not merely that Christ died and rose again; it is that Christ died and rose again as the Last Adam, the new representative head of a new humanity, undoing by His obedience what the first Adam did by his disobedience. This is not a decorative theological framework that could be removed while leaving the gospel intact; it is the load-bearing argument by which Paul explains why Christ’s death and resurrection accomplish what they accomplish for those who are “in Him.” The argument requires that there was a first Adam whose disobedience brought death to all who are in him, so that there could be a Last Adam whose obedience brings life to all who are in Him. Remove the historical first Adam and you remove the typological framework that gives the Last Adam’s work its meaning.

The doctrine of original sin, that every human being inherits from Adam both the guilt of his transgression and the corruption of nature that makes sin the orientation of the will, stands or falls with the historicity of Adam. If Adam is not a historical individual, then the sin that “entered into the world through one man” (Romans 5:12, NASB 1995) did not enter through a historical act but is simply a feature of the human condition whose origin is mysterious or gradual. But on this account, the sin and guilt that Paul attributes to all human beings cannot be grounded in a single historical event of representational significance; it must be grounded in something else, perhaps the accumulated sinful choices of the evolutionary process, perhaps the moral failures of early human communities. And if sin’s origin is not in a single historical act of a single historical representative, then the removal of sin cannot be accomplished by the single historical act of a single historical representative. The coherence of the doctrine of atonement is inseparable from the coherence of the doctrine of original sin, and the coherence of the doctrine of original sin is inseparable from the historicity of Adam.

The Westminster Larger Catechism Q. 22 states the connection with characteristic precision: “The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.” This is not merely a confessional position to be held in institutional loyalty; it is the exegetical conclusion demanded by Paul’s argument in Romans 5 and confirmed by the entire structure of biblical typology from Genesis to Revelation. The first Adam and the Last Adam are not theological constructs; they are the two heads under whom all of humanity stands, the two representatives in whom all human destiny is determined, and the two figures around whom the entire redemptive narrative of Scripture is organized. The student of Anthropology who has understood this is equipped to understand why the question of Adam’s historicity is not a peripheral skirmish in the culture wars but a central battle for the integrity of the gospel.

“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

1 Corinthians 15:22, NASB 1995

IV. The Young-Earth Affirmation: When Did Adam Live?

The Chronological Framework of Genesis and the Integrity of the Biblical Timeline

A. The Genealogies and the Age of the Human Race

The question of when Adam was created is inseparable from the question of how Genesis 1–2 is to be read, and the answer to that question has been debated with considerable vigor in the Reformed and broader evangelical traditions. This series affirms, on the basis of the grammatical-historical interpretation of Genesis 1-2 and the genealogical data of the Old Testament, the Young-Earth Creationist position: that Adam was created by God within the past ten thousand years, that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 provide a reliable chronological framework for the age of humanity, and that the days of Genesis 1 are normal solar days. This is not an anti-intellectual position; it is the position that results from the consistent application of the same grammatical-historical hermeneutic that Reformed theology applies to every other portion of Scripture, and it is the position that has characterized the exegetical majority of the church from the patristic era through the Reformation.

The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are among the most precisely constructed texts in the entire Old Testament, listing names, ages at the birth of the named descendant, and remaining years of life with a regularity that suggests a chronological as well as a genealogical function. Archbishop James Ussher’s famous calculation of 4004 BC as the date of creation, though no longer accepted in its precise details by most Young-Earth scholars, was based on a careful and internally consistent reading of these genealogies, and the chronological framework he constructed, placing Adam within a few thousand years of the present, is supported by the straightforward reading of the biblical text. The claim that the genealogies contain significant gaps that could accommodate hundreds of

thousands of years of human history is possible but not demanded by the text, and it requires the interpreter to import an assumption, that the genealogies are selective summaries rather than sequential records, for which the text itself provides no explicit warrant.

The Young-Earth position stands in obvious tension with the consensus of contemporary geology and paleoanthropology, which place the emergence of anatomically modern humans at approximately 300,000 years ago and the earliest hominid ancestors far earlier. This series does not dismiss this scientific consensus dismissively, but it does insist on the epistemological priority of the special revelation of Scripture over the findings of natural science when the two appear to conflict. The natural sciences operate on methodological naturalism, the assumption that natural processes provide sufficient explanation for observed phenomena, and are therefore constitutionally unable to account for the kind of direct, supernatural, miraculous creative act that Genesis 2:7 describes. The age of the human race is a question that cannot be resolved by empirical investigation alone, because the act that brought the first human being into existence was by definition unique and non-repeatable, and its historical dating depends ultimately on the reliability of the historical record that the Creator Himself has provided in the Scriptures.

B. *Reading Genesis 1 as Historical Narrative*

The interpretation of Genesis 1 as historical narrative describing six literal, consecutive, solar days of creation is the reading that the grammatical-historical method most naturally yields from the text, and it has been the dominant reading of the exegetical tradition from the earliest commentators through the Westminster Assembly. The word *yom* (יוֹם), the Hebrew term for “day” in Genesis 1, is used in contexts throughout the Old Testament where it unambiguously denotes a normal solar day, and the repeated refrain of “there was evening and there was morning, the [Nth] day” provides a structural marker that identifies the days as bounded, sequential units of time rather than indefinite ages or literary constructs. The Fourth Commandment’s basis in the creation week, “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day” (Exodus 20:11, NASB 1995), grounds the Sabbath rhythm of human work and rest in a historical reality, not a theological symbol. If the days of Genesis 1 are not the same kind of days as the days of the human work week, the Fourth Commandment’s appeal to them as a pattern loses its force.

The alternative readings of Genesis 1, the Day-Age theory, the Framework Hypothesis, the Analogical Days view, and Gap Theory, have all been proposed by scholars of genuine Reformed conviction and exegetical seriousness, and they deserve respectful engagement. Each of these views attempts to preserve the theological truth of Genesis 1 while accommodating the long-age chronology of contemporary science, and each of them has genuine exegetical arguments in its favor. But each of them also requires interpretive moves that the text itself does not require and that the tradition did not employ until the pressure of the scientific consensus of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries created the motivation to find them. The theological humility that the history of hermeneutics recommends is not the humility that revises the reading of the text in response to the changing consensus of secular science, but the humility that holds the plain meaning of the Word of God with more confidence than it holds the current consensus of any human discipline, however impressive that consensus may appear.

The most important point for the purposes of this series is not the length of the days but the character of the creative acts: that God created directly, personally, and immediately; that Adam was the product of a single divine creative act performed on a single material at a single moment; and that the creation of Adam was as historical, as real, and as dateable in principle as the creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars. The Young-Earth position holds these affirmations with the greatest exegetical consistency, but the series’ fundamental anthropological claims about Adam’s special creation and historicity are shared by all traditions that affirm a historical Adam, and it is those claims, rather than the precise dating of the creative week, on which the whole of the doctrine of humanity ultimately rests.

V. The Dignity That Flows from Special Creation

You Are Not an Accident of Nature but the Purposeful Handiwork of the Living God

A. Special Creation as the Ground of Human Dignity

The pastoral and ethical implications of the doctrine of special creation are as concrete and urgent as any doctrinal affirmation in the whole of systematic theology. If Adam was directly, personally, and immediately formed by God, if the human creature as a class is the product of a divine creative act that was not delegated to natural processes but was performed by the living God with the kind of personal investment that the word *yatsar* implies, then every human being who descends from Adam bears a dignity that is not contingent on intelligence, capacity, productivity, health, stage of development, or any other creaturely attribute. The dignity of the human creature is grounded in the character of the act by which it was made, not in the characteristics of the creature itself. You are not worthy of respect because you are rational; you are rational because you were made worthy of respect by the God who formed you from the dust and breathed into you the breath of life.

This foundation for human dignity is the only one that is genuinely universal and genuinely inviolable. The Enlightenment tradition grounded human dignity in rationality: the human being is to be respected because he is a rational agent, capable of autonomous moral reasoning, possessed of what Kant called an absolute worth that cannot be reduced to a merely instrumental value. But this grounding immediately produces a problem: the human beings who lack full rational capacity, the unborn, the severely cognitively disabled, the demented elderly, the comatose, are, on the rationality-based account, either less than fully dignified or their dignity requires special philosophical argument to defend. The evolutionary account grounds human dignity in the complexity and sophistication of the human organism, which is biologically and ecologically continuous with the rest of the animal kingdom and which shares a common ancestor with every living creature on earth, and on this account, the moral distinction between human beings and other animals is a matter of degree, not of kind, with all the ethical instability that implies. Only the account that grounds human dignity in the direct, personal, creative act of the living God provides a foundation that is both universal and absolute: every human being, at every stage of development, in every condition of capacity or incapacity, bears the dignity of the creature whom God personally formed and personally animated with the breath of His own life.

The implications of this grounding for the ethical debates of our cultural moment are direct and urgent. The sanctity of unborn human life, from the moment of conception, rests on the affirmation that God is personally involved in the creation of every human being, as Psalm 139:13–16 makes explicit and as the doctrine of special creation requires: “For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb.” The use of the same word (קנה, *qanah*, to acquire, to possess, often used of creative ownership) in Psalm 139:13 as in Genesis 4:1 (“I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord”) connects the creation of each individual human being to the original creative act of God in Genesis 2:7. The opposition to physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia rests on the conviction that the life God has personally created cannot be legitimately terminated by creatures who did not create it. The opposition to racism rests on the conviction that all human beings, regardless of ethnic or national origin, share a common dignity grounded in a common origin in the creative act of the same God. These are not merely moral intuitions; they are the logical and necessary implications of the doctrine of special creation, and they make that doctrine as practically urgent as any affirmation in the whole of Christian theology.

B. Isaiah 64:8 and the Ongoing Relationship of Potter and Clay

The image of God as potter and humanity as clay, which the use of *yatsar* in Genesis 2:7 first establishes, recurs throughout the prophetic literature as a characterization of the ongoing relationship between the Creator and the creature. Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand” (NASB 1995), is among the most theologically rich of these recurrences. Isaiah’s prayer is addressed to a God who has the right to do with His creature whatever He wills, as the potter has the right to do with the clay whatever he wills (a point that Paul develops in Romans 9:20–21 in the context of the doctrine of

election). But it is addressed to this God precisely as Father, as One whose sovereign power over the creature is exercised not in indifference or hostility but in the relationship of a parent with a child. The combination of absolute sovereignty and personal fatherly care that Isaiah articulates is the combination that the doctrine of special creation establishes: God's absolute right over the creature He has made is the right of the One who made it with His own hands and breathed into it with His own breath.

The potter-clay image also carries an important implication for the creature's response to its Creator. In Isaiah 29:16 and 45:9, the prophet rebukes those who question the ways of the potter: "Shall the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing made say to its maker, 'He has no understanding?'" (Isaiah 45:9, NASB 1995). The creature who has been directly, personally formed by the living God has no standing to question the purposes for which it was made, the nature with which it was endowed, or the calling to which it has been appointed. This is not the counsel of passive fatalism; it is the counsel of the creaturely humility that the doctrine of special creation establishes as the fundamental posture of the human being before God. The creature who knows that it was formed from the dust by the hands of the living God and animated by the breath of the Almighty will not attempt to redefine what it is, to redesign its nature, or to determine its own telos apart from the purposes for which the Potter formed it. This creaturely humility, grounded in the doctrine of special creation, is both the beginning of wisdom and the foundation of a properly ordered human life.

The Acts 17:25–26 proclamation of Paul at the Areopagus brings the doctrine of special creation into direct engagement with the philosophical culture of the ancient world in a way that is as relevant to the contemporary moment as it was to first-century Athens: "Nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (NASB 1995). Paul's address to the Athenian philosophers identifies the God who gives life and breath to all people with the God who made from one man every nation, connecting the ongoing gift of creaturely existence with the specific historical act of the creation of the first man, and grounding the universal human dignity and the universal accountability before God in the single creative event of Genesis 2:7. This is the apostolic proclamation of special creation in the public square, offered not as a retreat from intellectual engagement but as the foundation of the only anthropology that can ground both human dignity and human accountability in a way that the surrounding culture's own deepest convictions demand.

VI. The Doxological Conclusion: Formed for Worship

The Creature Formed from the Dust Is the Creature Made to Stand Before God

The doctrine of special creation does not end with an argument for human dignity, however important and urgent that argument is. It ends where all good theology ends: in worship. The God who formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life did not form him merely to govern the garden, to name the animals, or even to bear the divine image in the world, though all of these are included in the purpose of creation. He formed him for fellowship, the kind of fellowship that the Creator enjoyed with the first man in the garden in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8), the kind of fellowship that the fall destroyed and that the redemption accomplished by the Last Adam restores and surpasses. The act of creation in Genesis 2:7 is the act of a God who wants not merely a creature but a son; not merely an image-bearer but a worshipper; not merely a vice-regent but a friend.

This is why the knowledge of special creation, the knowledge that you were personally formed by the hands of the living God and animated by the breath of the Almighty, is not intended to produce pride but gratitude; not self-congratulation at being the crown of creation but astonishment at the condescension of the One who stooped to form the dust and breathe into it. The Psalmist who cries, "I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well" (Psalm 139:14, NASB 1995) is not admiring himself; he is worshipping the God whose work he is. The proper response to the doctrine of special creation is the response of the creature who has understood, at least in part, what it means that the infinite God

should stoop to form the finite creature with personal care and intimate attention, and who can find no adequate response to that knowledge except the response that the whole of Scripture points toward: the response of the whole creature, body and soul, dust and breath, in the adoration of the One in whom it lives and moves and has its being.

Every subsequent lesson in Unit 2 and beyond will build upon the foundation laid in this lesson: that the human creature was made by God, personally and purposefully; that its dignity is grounded in the character of the act that brought it into existence; that its historicity is essential to the coherence of the biblical narrative and the logic of the gospel; and that its proper response to the knowledge of its origin is not the anxiety of the creature who is uncertain about its worth, but the worship of the creature who knows that it was made by Love, for love, and in the image of the One whose nature is love. “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:1, NASB 1995). This is the doxology that the doctrine of special creation is designed to produce, and it is the doxology with which this lesson, and every lesson in this series, most fittingly ends.

“But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand.”

Isaiah 64:8, NASB 1995

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Special Creation	The doctrine that God created human beings, and all other creatures and the cosmos itself, directly, personally, and immediately, without the mediation of pre-existing natural processes or evolutionary development. With respect to humanity specifically, special creation affirms that Adam was formed by a discrete, personal, divine act from the dust of the ground and animated by the direct impartation of the divine breath, as described in Genesis 2:7. Special creation stands in opposition to both atheistic evolution (which denies divine agency) and theistic evolution (which affirms divine agency but mediates it through a long natural process).
Yatsar (יצר)	The Hebrew verb used in Genesis 2:7 to describe God's creation of Adam: "formed" or "shaped." Yatsar is the standard term for a potter's work, denoting the intimate, personal, hands-on fashioning of material into a specific form. Its use in Genesis 2:7 characterizes the creation of Adam as an act of artisanal divine care, distinguishing the creation of humanity from the creation of the non-human world (where God speaks and it comes into being) and establishing the personal relationship between Creator and creature that is foundational to the entire doctrine of humanity.
Nishmat Chayyim	Hebrew: "breath of life" (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים). The divine breath that God directly imparted to Adam's nostrils in Genesis 2:7, producing the living being (nephesh chayyah). The word nishama connotes not merely a natural life-force but a direct participation in the divine vitality, distinguishing the animating principle of the human creature from that of all other creatures. Job 33:4 parallels it with the "Spirit of God" as the source of human life.
Nephesh (נפש)	Hebrew for "soul," "being," or "life." In Genesis 2:7, Adam becomes a nephesh chayyah (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה), a living being, as the result of the divine breath. Nephesh refers to the whole unified person, not merely to an immaterial component. It is the standard Old Testament word for personal identity, the self, and the inner life of the human being, used in thousands of contexts to denote the whole person in his or her subjective existence before God and in community with others.
Federal Headship	The doctrine that Adam stood before God as the representative head of the entire human race, such that his act of disobedience in the garden is imputed to all his natural posterity. Federal headship is the structural principle that links the doctrine of original sin to the doctrine of special creation: because Adam was individually, historically created as a specific person and placed in a covenantal relationship with God, his covenantal failure has real, individual, historical consequences for every human being who descends from him. Without a historical Adam, federal headship has no historical grounding.
Theistic Evolution	The position that God created the universe and initiated the evolutionary process through which all living organisms, including human beings, gradually developed over billions of years, and that the Genesis creation accounts are theological narratives rather than historical descriptions of specific creative acts. Theistic evolution is incompatible with the plain grammatical-historical reading of Genesis 2:7 and, in most of its forms, requires the denial of a historical Adam, with severe

	consequences for the doctrines of original sin, federal headship, and the Pauline argument of Romans 5:12–21.
Young-Earth Creationism	The position that God created the heavens, the earth, and all living creatures, including Adam and Eve, directly and immediately within the past six to ten thousand years, and that the days of Genesis 1 are normal solar days. Young-Earth Creationism is based on the grammatical-historical interpretation of Genesis 1-2 and the genealogical data of Genesis 5 and 11, and it represents the dominant reading of the creation accounts in the Christian tradition prior to the nineteenth century. It affirms the full historicity of Adam and Eve and the direct creative agency of God in the formation of the first human beings.
Imago Dei (in creation context)	The image of God in which Adam was created, according to Genesis 1:26–27. In the context of the creation of Adam specifically, the imago Dei is not merely a spiritual or intellectual quality added to a pre-existing hominid; it is part of the total package of what it means to have been specially created by God. Adam was created in the image of God from the very moment of his formation, the image is not a subsequent endowment but a constitutive feature of the creature that God made when He formed man from the dust and breathed into him the breath of life.
Original Sin	The doctrine that Adam’s transgression in the garden resulted in both guilt (imputed to all his posterity by federal headship) and a corruption of human nature (inherited by all through natural generation) that renders every human being, apart from the grace of God, morally incapable of the obedience that God requires and deserving of the condemnation that justice demands. Original sin presupposes the historicity of Adam: the “one man” through whom sin entered the world (Romans 5:12) must be a real individual whose real act had real consequences for his real posterity.
Afar (עפר)	Hebrew for “dust” or “ground.” The material from which God formed Adam in Genesis 2:7. Afar is the common dust of the earth, dry, light, and undistinguished, and its use as the material of Adam’s formation establishes the creaturely humility of the human being: the creature’s dignity does not reside in the excellence of its material origin but in the excellence of the One who formed it. The same word appears in Genesis 3:19 in God’s word of judgment: “For you are dust, and to dust you shall return”, marking the bookends of mortal creaturely existence.

Practical Application

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

We must believe that the creation of Adam was an event, not a process, a real, historical, datable act of the living God by which a single individual human being was brought into existence from non-living material by the direct exercise of divine creative power. This is not a scientifically naive affirmation; it is a theologically necessary one, demanded by the plain grammatical-historical reading of Genesis 2:7, confirmed by the witness of Jesus and Paul, and required for the coherence of the doctrines of original sin, federal headship, and the gospel of the Last Adam. The Christian who has been formed by the secular academy to regard special creation as an embarrassment will need to undergo a genuine theological reclamation in this lesson, not because the secular academy is wrong about everything, but because it is constitutionally unable to account for the kind of event that Genesis 2:7 describes, and the church must not define the boundaries of its theological convictions by the boundaries of secular science.

We must also believe that the human dignity that flows from special creation is the only adequate foundation for the sanctity of human life in the full range of contexts where that sanctity is contested. The unborn child formed in the womb, the disabled adult whose cognitive capacity is permanently limited, the elderly person whose rationality has been eroded by dementia, the criminal who has forfeited his civil rights, all of them are formed by the same hands, animated by the same breath, and bear the dignity of the same Creator. The church that holds the doctrine of special creation with conviction will be the church that stands, without equivocation, for the sanctity of human life at every stage and in every condition, because it knows that the worth of the creature is grounded not in the creature's capacity but in the Creator's act.

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

Let the image of Genesis 2:7 press itself upon your spiritual imagination with all the weight its theological content demands: the Creator of the universe, the One whose power sustains the spinning of galaxies and the burning of stars, stooping to the dust, forming a human body with a care and specificity that the word *yatsar* implies, and then bending toward that dust-formed creature to breathe into it the breath of His own life. This is not mythology; it is the account of what God actually did at the beginning of human history, and it is the account that defines the relationship between you and your Maker at the most fundamental level.

Desire the kind of self-knowledge that flows from this account, not the self-knowledge of the therapeutic culture, which begins with the assumption that the deepest truth about you is what you feel and desire, but the self-knowledge of the creature who knows that the deepest truth about itself is what its Maker declared when He formed it from the dust and breathed into it the breath of life. You are *afar*, dust, dignified beyond measure by the act of the One who formed you. You are *nishmat chayyim*, the breath of the Almighty, a living being whose existence is a moment-by-moment gift of the God in whom you live and move and have your being. This is the knowledge that produces not pride but gratitude, not self-congratulation but worship.

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

- Read Genesis 2:1–25 slowly and in full, attending not merely to the content but to the texture of the language. Note the verbs: God “rested” (v. 2), God “blessed” and “sanctified” (v. 3), God “formed” (v. 7), God “breathed” (v. 7), God “planted” (v. 8), God “placed” (v. 8), God “commanded” (v. 16), God “said” (v. 18), God “formed” again (v. 19), God “brought” (v. 22), God “made” (v. 22). The God of Genesis 2 is not a distant first cause; He is an intimately engaged personal Creator. Ask yourself: does this portrait of God shape the way you pray, the way you think about your own existence, the way you understand what it means to be human?
- Memorize Psalm 139:13–16. This passage is one of the most important in the entire Old Testament for the doctrine of the personal creative involvement of God in every individual human life, and it is one of the most

urgently needed in the pastoral and apologetic repertoire of every Christian who must engage the abortion debate, the euthanasia debate, or the disability rights debate from a position of theological conviction. The knowledge that God “wove” every human being in the womb is not merely a theological opinion; it is the foundation of every ethic of human dignity that deserves the name.

- **Engage with one primary source on creation.** John Calvin’s commentary on Genesis 1–2 remains the standard Reformed exegetical treatment and is accessible and pastorally rich. For a more contemporary engagement with the question of origins, John C. Lennox’s *Seven Days That Divide the World* (2011) provides a careful and irenic treatment of the interpretive options. For the Young-Earth position specifically, Douglas Kelly’s *Creation and Change* (1997) offers the most exegetically grounded and theologically sophisticated defense of the literal six-day reading of Genesis 1 available in the Reformed tradition.
- Identify one person in your life, a family member, a colleague, a church member, a neighbor, whose dignity you are in danger of failing to honor adequately. It may be someone whose cognitive capacity is limited, someone whose behavior has made them difficult to respect, someone whose stage of life, very young or very old, makes their claim to full human dignity easy to overlook. Bring the doctrine of special creation to bear on your relationship with that person: they were personally formed by the same God who formed you, animated by the same breath, and bear the same dignity that you bear. What specific act of recognition, care, or honor does that conviction require of you?
- Pray through Genesis 2:7 phrase by phrase as an act of devotion. “The Lord God formed man of dust”, give thanks for the creative condescension of a God who works with common material to produce uncommon dignity. “Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”, give thanks for the personal, intimate gift of life that sustains your existence moment by moment and that no creature has ever deserved. “Man became a living being”, give thanks for the fact of your existence, which is not an accident of nature but the purposeful act of a God who wanted you to exist, formed you with care, and breathed into you the life that is His gift to give.

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- When you read Genesis 2:7, what strikes you most? Is it the image of God as a potter working with clay? The intimacy of the divine breath? The simplicity of the material, dust, from which something so extraordinary is made? Share your initial response to the text, and then consider: has your initial response changed at all by the time you reach the end of this lesson?

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Genesis 2:4–25 in full. What is the relationship between the creation account of Genesis 1:26–31 and the account of Genesis 2:7? Are these two accounts of the same event from different perspectives, or do they describe two different aspects of a single act? What does the use of the divine name “the Lord God” (YHWH Elohim) in Genesis 2, as opposed to simply “God” (Elohim) in Genesis 1, suggest about the character of the Creator’s relationship to the creature in each account?
- Compare Genesis 2:7 with Job 33:4 and Psalm 139:13–16. What common themes unite these three texts? What do they collectively imply about the ongoing relationship between the Creator and the creature? How does the Psalm’s language of weaving and knitting relate to the potter’s language of Genesis 2:7? What do both sets of images suggest about the character of God’s creative involvement with each individual human being?
- Read Romans 5:12–21 with specific attention to the structural parallel between “one man” (Adam) and “one man” (Christ Jesus). Count the uses of “one man” or its equivalent. What does the precision and repetition of this parallel imply about the historical character of Adam in Paul’s argument? Could Paul’s argument survive the replacement of Adam with a population of early hominids, a mythological first couple, or a symbolic representative of the human condition? Why or why not?
- Read Acts 17:22–31. What does Paul affirm about the creation of humanity in this address to the Areopagus (vv. 25–26)? How does he connect the doctrine of creation to the call to repentance (v. 30) and the coming judgment (v. 31)? What does this suggest about the relationship between the doctrine of special creation and the proclamation of the gospel in the public square?
- Read Isaiah 64:8 and then Romans 9:20–21. What does the potter-clay image communicate in each context? What does it imply about the rights of the Creator over the creature? What does it imply about the appropriate posture of the creature before the Creator? How does the combination of absolute sovereignty (the potter’s right to do as He will with the clay) and intimate fatherly care (Isaiah 64:8’s address to God as “our Father”) shape the way you understand your own relationship to God?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson argues that the grammatical-historical reading of Genesis 2:7 presents the creation of Adam as an event, not a process, and that theistic evolution cannot be reconciled with this reading without doing violence to the text. Do you find this argument persuasive? Are there exegetical arguments for theistic evolution that you believe deserve serious engagement? If so, what are they, and how would you respond to them from within the grammatical-historical hermeneutic?
- The lesson identifies three grounds on which theistic evolution should be rejected: exegetical, theological, and soteriological. Which of these three arguments do you find most compelling? Is the soteriological argument, that the denial of a historical Adam undermines the Pauline argument of Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, sufficient by itself to settle the question, or do the exegetical arguments need to be made independently? How would you present this argument to a theistic evolutionist who affirms the authority of Scripture?

- The lesson distinguishes the question of the length of the creation days (on which godly Reformed scholars have disagreed) from the question of Adam's special creation and historicity (which the series treats as non-negotiable). Is this distinction valid? Can someone hold a non-literal reading of the days of Genesis 1 while still affirming the special creation and historicity of Adam? What specific arguments would such a position need to make, and what are its weaknesses?
- The lesson grounds human dignity in the character of the creative act by which God formed Adam, arguing that dignity is not contingent on creaturely capacity but on the Creator's act. How does this grounding compare with the Enlightenment grounding of dignity in rationality? What specific ethical conclusions follow from each grounding, and where do the two groundings diverge? Which grounding is more adequate to the full range of human beings, including those at the margins of cognitive or physical capacity?
- Isaiah 64:8 addresses God as both sovereign potter and "our Father," combining absolute sovereignty over the creature with intimate fatherly care. How does this combination of attributes shape the theological and pastoral message of the doctrine of special creation? Does the doctrine of special creation produce submission, gratitude, worship, or some combination of all three? What is the difference between the submission that the potter-clay image calls for and the fatalism that it might seem to imply?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- The lesson argues that special creation is the only adequate foundation for a genuinely universal and genuinely inviolable human dignity. Apply this argument to a specific ethical controversy in your ministry context, abortion, euthanasia, disability rights, racial justice, or the treatment of the poor. How does the doctrine of special creation change the terms of the argument? What specific affirmations and denials does it require that could not be grounded as adequately in any alternative anthropology?
- The lesson notes that the church must not define the boundaries of its theological convictions by the boundaries of secular science. Is this principle easy to apply in practice? Where do you feel the most pressure, in your own theological formation or in your ministry context, to accommodate the doctrine of creation to the consensus of secular science? What theological and pastoral resources do you need to hold the doctrine of special creation with more confidence in those moments of pressure?
- Paul's address at the Areopagus uses the doctrine of creation, specifically the creation of all humanity from one man, as the foundation for the call to repentance and the proclamation of the coming judgment. How might the doctrine of special creation serve as the apologetic foundation for gospel proclamation in the secular intellectual culture of your context? What specifically would it look like to follow Paul's Areopagus strategy, beginning with the doctrine of creation before moving to the call to repentance and the announcement of the resurrection?
- Psalm 139:13–16 grounds the sanctity of the unborn human life in the personal creative involvement of God in the formation of every individual human being from conception. How consistently and how effectively does the congregation you serve understand and apply this text? What preaching, teaching, or pastoral initiatives would be required to form the congregation's conscience on the sanctity of life in a way that is rooted in the doctrine of special creation rather than merely in the political and cultural arguments of the pro-life movement?
- Genesis 2:7 presents the creation of Adam as an act of extraordinary divine intimacy: God stooping to form the creature from the dust, breathing into it with a directness that no other creative act in the Genesis account involves. How does this intimacy shape the way you understand prayer? If the God who made you is the God who stooped and breathed and formed, what does that imply about the character of the relationship He invites you into through prayer? How might a deeper understanding of Genesis 2:7 change the way you actually pray?

Prayer Focus

Open this third lesson of the Anthropology series with a meditative reading of Psalm 139:13–16, one of the most personal and most theologically rich passages in the entire Psalter. Read it slowly, allowing each image to settle before moving to the next: “You formed my inward parts”, the same verb as in Genesis 2:7, the same divine artisan at work in the womb as worked in the garden. “You wove me in my mother’s womb”, the image of weaving connotes patience, intricacy, the threading of individual strands into a coherent whole. “I am fearfully and wonderfully made”, the Psalmist’s response to the knowledge of the divine creative involvement is not self-congratulation but awe. “My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret”, the hiddenness of the womb is not hidden from the God whose eyes saw the unformed substance. Read this Psalm as the one who knows that its description of the Psalmist is a description of yourself, that every word of it is true of you, because the God it describes is the God who made you.

Spend time in Trinitarian adoration, allowing the doctrine of special creation to deepen the gratitude and wonder with which you approach each person of the Trinity. Begin with the Father, the Creator, the potter who stooped to form the dust and breathed into it with intimate personal care, the God whose creative act is the first and most fundamental fact about you, the fact that precedes every other fact and grounds every other dignity you possess. Move to the Son, who is Himself the image of the invisible God and in whom all things were created, including the first Adam, and who became, in the Incarnation, what the first Adam was made from: dust, formed by the Spirit’s overshadowing in the womb of Mary, animated by the same divine life that animated Adam in the garden, bearing in His person the full dignity of the creature God made and the full weight of the sin that creature committed. Conclude with the Spirit, the breath of the Almighty, who is the animating presence of God in creation and the regenerating presence of God in redemption, the One whose breath formed Adam in the beginning and whose breath forms Christ in us now, renewing the image in which we were created and conforming us to the likeness of the Son.

Pray together for this lesson’s content in three specific directions. First, for exegetical fidelity: that the Spirit who inspired the text of Genesis 2:7 would illuminate its meaning in every mind and heart that engages it in this series, producing the kind of confident, careful, and humble reading that takes the plain meaning of the Word of God as the starting point rather than the conclusion of its inquiry. Second, for anthropological clarity: that the doctrine of special creation would take root in the conscience and imagination of every member of this community with enough depth and firmness to hold against the constant pressure of the surrounding culture’s evolutionary and therapeutic anthropologies, and to bear the weight of the ethical and pastoral convictions that the doctrine demands. Third, for pastoral courage: that the knowledge of what human beings are, personally formed by the living God, animated by the divine breath, and bearing the dignity of creatures who have been made with extraordinary care, would translate into specific acts of justice, compassion, and advocacy on behalf of those whose dignity is most consistently and most grievously denied in the cultural moment we inhabit.

“I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.”

Psalm 139:14, NASB 1995

Key Texts: *Genesis 2:4–25; Job 33:4; Psalm 139:13–16; Isaiah 64:8; Acts 17:22–31; Romans 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 45–49*

Soli Deo Gloria
To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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