

CHAPTER 2

NATURE OF MAN

Hodge 2, pp. 42-76, 92-116

Shedd 2, ch. 1-3

Murray 2, ch. 2-4

Some specialized works:

Thomas Boston, *Human Nature in Its Fourfold State*, 1720

John Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, 1879

Franz Delitzsch, *A System of Biblical Psychology*, 1855, ET 1866, 1899 ed. reprinted

G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 1962

Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the OT*, 1973, ET 1974

Gordon H. Clark, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man*, 1984

Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 1986

Man's self knowledge

1. Question: What is man?

Cf. Berkouwer, ch. 1, "The Mystery of Man"

2. Modern anthropology seeks to know man

1) In relation to self (psychology)

2) In relation to others (sociology)

3) In relation to the universe (philosophy)

3. Reformed theology asserts that self knowledge is possible, but only through the knowledge of God

- Calvin *Institutes* 1:title; 1:1:2 (pp. 35, 37)

(especially concerning our sinful estate and lost condition)

- Man as creature in God's image, 1:15:1-4 (183-90; follows chapters on knowledge of God)

Man in God's image

[Cf. Murray, vol. 2, ch. 4; also good article by LeRoy S. Capper, "The *Imago Dei* and Its Implications for Order in the Church," *Presbyterion* XI:1 (Spring, 1985) 21-33]

Scripture passages

- Asserting God's image in man:

Genesis 1:26-27 ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image (אֱלֹהִים *šelem*), in our likeness (דְמוּת *d^emût*) and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

Genesis 5:1-3 ¹ This is the written account of Adam's line.

When God created man, he made him in the likeness (*d^emût*) of God. ² He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man."

³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness (*d^emût*), in his own image (*šelem*); and he named him Seth.

(image of God continues with Seth, Murray 35)

Genesis 9:6 ⁶ "Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed;
for in the image (*šelem*) of God
has God made man.

1 Corinthians 11:7 ⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image (εἰκὼν *eikon*) and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

for *eikon* cf. Mark 12:16-17—picture on coin shows ownership

James 3:9 ⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness (ὁμοίωσις *homoiosis* = "similarity").

- Showing effects of the fall related to God’s image in man:

Romans 1:21²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Romans 1:23²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Ephesians 4:18¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

- Showing a restored image of God:

Romans 8:29²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness (*eikon*) of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Ephesians 4:24²⁴ and to put on the new self (τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον *ton kainon anthropon*, “the new man”), created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:10¹⁰ and have put on the new self (τὸν νέον [ἄνθρωπον--v. 9] *ton neon [anthropon]*, “the new man”), which is being renewed in knowledge in the image (*eikon*) of its Creator.

—While *kainos* emphasizes newness in kind, *neos* emphasizes newness in time; both are true of the restored image of God in regenerated man.

Conclusions regarding God’s image in man

1. Man as unity is in the image of God

- Body and soul (see next section)
- Male and female
 - Together in Gen. 1:27
 - Female mediate in Gen. 2:22-23; 1 Cor. 11:7-9

2. Fallen sinners are in God’s image

Esp. Gen 9:6 and Jas 3:9

3. The image of God is not totally Adam's knowledge, righteousness, and holiness

Or the Roman Catholic idea of added original righteousness (*dona superaddita*); cf. Murray 2:41-45; Hodge 2:103-06

4. The renewed man is a new man, in Christ's image, in a different way from Adam's original estate

Cf. passages above ("showing a restored image of God")

Cf. 1 Cor 15:49, we shall bear the likeness (*eikon*) of the man from heaven

The redeemed Christian is thus in a higher position than Adam was.

Man as body and soul/spirit

Scriptural terms

Describing the body:

בָּשָׂר *bāśār*, flesh

(other Hebrew words infrequently; e.g., נְבֵלָה *nēbēlāh*—carcass, corpse; גִּשְׁמֵם *gēśēm*—body, in Aramaic of Daniel; גֻּפָּה *gūpāh*—corpse, more frequent in Modern Hebrew; שֶׁרֶץ *šē'er*—flesh)

σῶμα *sōma*, body

σὰρξ *sarx*, flesh

Describing the soul or spirit:

נֶפֶשׁ *nepeš*, soul

רוּחַ *rûah*, spirit

ψυχή *psuche*, soul

πνεῦμα *pneuma*, spirit

Distinction of body and soul/spirit

1. Creation order in Gen 2

Body formed; afterwards creative breath; man a “living soul,” *neḫeš ḥayyāh*

2. Body distinguished from spirit in death

Gen 3:19 ¹⁹By the sweat of your brow
 you will eat your food
 until you return to the ground,
 since from it you were taken;
 for dust you are
 and to dust you will return.”

1 Sam 28:13-20 ¹³The king said to her, “Don’t be afraid. What do you see?”

 The woman said, “I see a spirit coming up out of the ground.”

¹⁴“What does he look like?” he asked.

 “An old man wearing a robe is coming up,” she said.

 Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.

¹⁵Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?”

 “I am in great distress,” Saul said. “The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has turned away from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do.”

¹⁶Samuel said, “Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has turned away from you and become your enemy? ¹⁷The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. ¹⁸Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today. ¹⁹The LORD will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines.”

²⁰Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel’s words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and night.

Note on Eccl 3:21 ²¹Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth? (NIV)

Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? (KJV)

The KJV makes this a statement, showing certainty of continuing life of spirit; the NIV makes it a question, expressing similarity of man to beast (see context). Since the translation of this verse is uncertain, it is best to rely on the many other passages for this doctrine.

Eccl 12:7⁷ and the dust returns to the ground it came from,
and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Matt 10:28²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Luke 23:43⁴³ Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Acts 7:59⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

2 Cor 5:1-4¹ Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling,³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Phil 1:23-24²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Jas 2:26²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

2 Pet 1:13-14¹³ I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body,¹⁴ because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

Rev 6:9⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.

Souls of slain in heaven (prior to resurrection, v. 11)

3. Other passages showing distinction

Matt 6:25 ²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?”

Matt 26:41 ⁴¹“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

Luke 24:39 ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost (Gk. “spirit”) does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

1 Cor 2:11 ¹¹For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

1 Cor 7:34 ³⁴and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world -- how she can please her husband.

2 Cor 12:2-3 ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. ³And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows.

Unity of body and soul in man

Man created as body and soul together (Gen 5:1-2)

The soul of man can exist without the body temporarily, but as such is incomplete and “naked” —2 Cor 5:2-4; cf. WSC 37, bodies still united to Christ.

Manner of their interaction—a mystery; cf. final conclusion of Murray 2:21-22:

The biblical doctrine is then to the effect that there are two aspects to man. Using the word “entity” to denote that which has distinctness of being, we can say that there are two entities in man’s constitution, diverse in nature and origin, the one derived from the earth, material, corporeal, phenomenal, divisible, the other derived from a distinct action of God, immaterial and ordinarily not phenomenal, indivisible and indestructible. These two entities form one organic unity without disharmony or conflict. In the integral person they are interdependent. They coact and interact. The modes of coaction and interaction are largely hid from us.

The union is intimate and intricate and we are not able to define its mode, nor can we discover the relations they sustain to each other. “The union of soul and body which makes man is not external and extensive, but internal and intensive.” [quoting John Macpherson]”

Trichotomy

[Hodge 2:47-51; Murray 2:ch. 3 (23-33); Hoekema 204-10]

1. Definition

Derived from Pythagoras & Plato & most Greek and Roman philosophers, who contributed to NT word usage (A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, 299)

Belief that man has three constituent elements: body (*soma*), soul (*psuche*), and spirit (*pneuma*)

Body—purely material

Soul—understanding, feeling, sensibility

Spirit—reason, will, conscience

2. Passages used to defend trichotomy

1 Thess 5:23 ²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Heb 4:12 ¹² For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

3. Passages showing *soul* and *spirit* interchangeable

Soul used for characteristics of *spirit*:

Can be lost: Matt 10:28 ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Matt 16:26 ²⁶ What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Sins: Lev 4:2² “Say to the Israelites: ‘When anyone [Heb. נִפְשָׁה *nepeš*, LXX ψυχή *psuche*] sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands” (cf. Ezek 18, soul that sins)

Is saved: 1 Pet 1:9⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Is purified: 1 Pet 1:22²² Now that you have purified yourselves [lit. “your souls”] by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

Hopes: Heb 6:19¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,

Loves God: Matt 22:37³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

Praises God: Luke 1:46-47⁴⁶ And Mary said:
“My soul glorifies the Lord
⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

(parallel to *spirit*)

Soul used as synonym for self or person:

1 Pet 3:20²⁰ who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people (“souls”), eight in all, were saved through water,

Spirit used for characteristics of *soul*:

Jas 2:26²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Body dead without spirit

Eccl 3:21²¹ Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?”

Used for animals

Both *soul* and *spirit* used for deceased persons:

Souls:

Acts 2:27, 31²⁷ because you will not abandon me [Gk. “my soul”] to the grave [“Hades”], nor will you let your Holy One see decay. . . .³¹ Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

Rev 6:9⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.

Rev 20:4⁴ I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Spirits:

Luke 24:37-39³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost [Gk. “a spirit”].³⁸ He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost [“spirit”] does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

Heb 12:23²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,

4. Connotations of the words

“Connotation” refers to the particular “flavor” of the word, more subtle shades of meaning or emotion associated with the word (e.g., “robber” v. “thief”; or “elder” v. “overseer”).

While *soul* and *spirit* refer to the same essence in man’s nature, usage shows they carry different connotations.

soul—man’s spirit viewed as residing in man

spirit—man’s spirit viewed as belonging to God

—Cf. Murray 2:32

5. Proper interpretation of passages

Cf. Hodge 2:49-51; Murray 2:29-31

Heb 4:12— “dividing within,” “cutting apart (one thing, not two)”; μερισμός *merismos* (2x, here and Heb 2:4; related forms more often, same idea)

1 Thess 5:23—cf. Mark 12:30; “periphrasis for the whole man” (Hodge); “It is in accord with the usage of Scripture to employ an accumulation of terms to express completeness” (Murray)

Denial of the soul as a separate essence

Today some evangelical theologians are reacting not only against trichotomy, but against dichotomy as well. They are influenced by modern medicine and the study of the brain. They maintain that those human actions and thoughts that used to be linked to an immortal, invisible human spirit are actually manifestations of physical events in the brain. This view sometimes is called monism. It is promoted in various varieties in the writings of G. C. Berkouwer and modern postmodern theologian Stanley Grenz (e.g., *Theology for the Community of God* [1994] 202-213). This view rejects the idea of a separate human substance, “the soul,” which is separable from the body and is intrinsically immortal. Scripture passages quoted above (“Distinction of body and soul/spirit”) answer this position.

Origin of the soul/spirit

Three main theories

- 1) Realism—all souls actually present in human nature, which was then found in Adam
- 2) Traducianism—souls and bodies together derived from the parents
- 3) Creationism—bodies from the parents, souls created directly by God at conception

Relative unimportance of question

Cf. A. A. Hodge, *Outlines* 351, Hodge 2:75-76

Related to more important doctrines of imputed and original sin, and moral question of God's justice

Great diversity among theologians; compare and contrast analysis of A. A. Hodge with that of William G. T. Shedd (2:41-50ff)

Realism

Hodge 2:51-64 (seven objections to Realism)

Shedd's position: "Traducianism" with elements of Realism (Shedd 2:18-19, 40, 72)

Main argument: Where is justice of God in condemning non-participants in Adam's sin?

Traducianism

Arguments of Shedd 2:19-94 (also a good defense in Gordon H. Clark, *The Atonement* [1987], pp. 109-122):

Scriptural, 19-29
Theological, 29-63
Physiological, 63-77
Objections answered, 81-94

Main theological arguments:

- (1) Completed work of creation
- (2) Natural mode for imputation and original sin (Ps 51:5)
- (3) Virgin birth of Christ explains his sinlessness

Creationism

Hodge 2:70-76

Maintains important assertions (Hodge 76):

The soul indivisible
Individual souls not numerically united

Christ not tainted with sin

Main theological arguments:

- (1) Christ's spirit truly human, yet sinless
- (2) Imputation of sin not through natural descent, but representation—thus parallel with Christ's righteousness (Rom 5:12-19)

Man's spiritual state before the fall

[Hodge 2:ch. 5]

WCF 4:2, “. . . 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; and yet under a possibility of transgression, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.”

(Cf. also WLC 17, WSC 10)

1. Knowledge, righteousness, and holiness

Not a state of neutrality (Pelagian idea: “ability limits obligation”); cf. Hodge 2:106-07

Older Reformed theologians contrast “accidental image of God,” with its moral uprightness, with the “essential image of God,” which cannot be lost (Hodge 2:99)

Harmony of man's constitution: reason, will, affections, appetites; soul, body

Opposed to Roman Catholic doctrine of soul-body conflict, requiring supernatural gift of original righteousness (Hodge 2:103)

Evidence for original righteousness:

- 1) Man created “very good,” Gen 1:31
- 2) God made man “upright,” Eccl 7:29
- 3) Moral image of God reflected in renewed man—Eph 4:24; Col 3:10

— “the new man” = “according to God” (*kata theon*)

—Cf. notes above

2. Law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it

Evidence of moral law in Gen 1-3

- 1st table: worship of God, communion with God, respect for nature, Sabbath
- 2nd table: family, marriage, property stewardship, truth, envy

3. Subject to fall

Evident from the case: Gen 2:16-17; cf. 3:6

Classic progression: *posse peccare*—possible to sin
non posse non peccare—not possible not to sin
posse non peccare—possible not to sin
non posse peccare—not possible to sin

First two categories—Adam
Second—sinner
Third—saint in this life
Fourth—glorified saint