

Christian Ministry Unit 1
Introduction to Theology
Week 3 – Biblical Anthropology

Introduction

“Anthropology” means the study of humans. Biblical anthropology focuses on the Bible’s revelation about humans, especially our *original design* (CREATION), our *present abnormal state* (FALL), and the *effect of our salvation* through Christ (REDEMPTION).

Why is biblical anthropology so important?

It provides an explanation for why humans are great and capable of noble acts—yet also tragic and capable of terrible evil.

Appreciating the extent of our sinfulness motivates us to appreciate the extent of God’s grace.

Understanding God’s original design for humans provides content for Christian sanctification (Col. 3:10).

It shapes our view of human nature.

God’s original design for humans (Gen. 1:24-2:25)

Humans were created in God’s image (1:26,27).

Gen. 1,2 tells us about four crucial elements of God’s original design for humans:

God created humans to be in a personal, dependent and obedient relationship with him.
(3:8)

(2:16,17)

God created humans to be positively self-aware—total openness without shame (2:25).

God created humans to be in personal relationships with other humans. God revealed himself as “Us” in Gen. 1:26.

(2:18)

(2:24)

(1:27,28)

God created humans to have benevolent rulership over nature.

(2:7,8)

(1:26,28; 2:15).

The Fall (Gen. 3:1-6)

Genesis 3:¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”² The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”⁴ The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! ⁵ “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

(Rev. 12:9)

(Jn. 8:44)

(3:1)

(3:4)

(3:5)

Note how temptation works:

NOTE:

The effects of the Fall (Gen. 3:7-5:32)

What Satan promised would be a noble rise from slavery to life and freedom was actually a tragic fall to slavery and death. The following narrative describes this death as the undoing of the four crucial elements of God's design for humans.

They had enjoyed personal closeness with God—but now they were alienated from God. (3:8-11). This is *theological alienation*.

(3:22-24)

They had been positively self-aware (naked and unashamed)—but they immediately became negatively self-aware (3:8).¹ This is *psychological alienation*.

(see also the contrast between Cain's city in his son's name in 4:17 and the results of Seth's ministry in 4:26)

They had enjoyed wonderful relational closeness with one another—but now they were alienated from one another (3:12,13). This is *sociological alienation*.

(see also 3:16b; 4:8; contrast Lamech's song in 4:23,24 to Adam's song in 2:23)

¹ "To experience shame is to feel *seen* in a painfully diminished sense. Our eyes turn inward at the moment of shame, and suddenly we've become impaled under the magnifying glass of our own eyes . . . Exposure is what we feel . . . (We) yearn to disappear, to escape all those watching eyes, to find cover. Gershon Kaufman, *Coming Out of Shame* (Main Street Books, 1996), p. 17.

They had enjoyed benevolent dominion over nature—but now, because they had become hostile toward God, nature became hostile toward them (3:17-19). This is *ecological alienation*.

(see also the refrain “and he died” in Gen. 5)

(Rom. 8:19-22)

Federal headship

The Bible teaches all descendants of Adam and Eve reap the consequences of their rebellion. Theologians call this “federal headship.” Rom. 5:12-19** teaches this important doctrine.

Romans 5:¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—¹³ for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. ¹⁶ The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift *arose* from many transgressions resulting in justification. ¹⁷ For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹ 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.

“Federal headship” means that the choice of the head affects all of his descendants.

ILLUSTRATION:

Romans 5 teaches that Adam’s decision to sin had immediate negative effects that subsequently spread to ALL of humanity.

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(5:12; 5:15a; 5:17a)

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(5:18a)

(Ezek. 18:20,21)

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(5:19a)

(Mk. 7:20-23)

See also Ps. 51:5; Gen. 8:21; Prov. 22:15

OBJECTION: “This is not fair! Why should I have to suffer the consequences of someone else's wrong decision?”

- This is inescapable in a world with free-will moral agents

ILLUSTRATION:

- Federal headship can also result in great blessing

The greatest example

(5:17)

Total depravity

"Total depravity" is the term theologians use to summarize the effects of the Fall. Paul describes what this means in Rom. 3:9-20**.

Romans 3:⁹What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ¹²ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." ¹³"THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; ¹⁴"WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; ¹⁵"THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, ¹⁶DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, ¹⁷AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." ¹⁸"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES." ¹⁹Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

Total depravity does *not* mean that:

- Humans are without value.

(Jas. 3:9)

(Jn. 3:16)

- Humans are as evil as they could be.

Total depravity *does* mean that:

- The Fall affects every human being. (Rom. 3:9-11)
- Every area of our lives has been adversely affected. (Rom. 3:13-18)
- None of us can be accepted by God on the basis of our own righteousness or moral/spiritual effort (Rom. 3:19,20).
- We would never seek for God without his prior initiative. (Romans 3:11) (Jn. 6:44)

The *only* answer for total depravity is God's radical grace!

Gen. 3:15 is the first promise of his grace.

Rev. 22:1-5 describes the ultimate healing by his grace.

Memory verses

Romans 5:12-19**

Federal headship means that the choice of the head affects all of his descendants.
Adam's & Jesus'. Know the consequences of both for the exam.

Romans 3:9-20**

Total depravity describes the effects of the Fall. Know what those effects are and are not.

Assignment

Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Observe and record each parallel between Isaiah's servant and the ministry of Jesus.