

—Westminster Shorter Catechism—
Lesson 8—The Creation of Man, Q. 10 (WCF 4.2)

- I. In opposition to the teaching that man has evolved from an amoeba or an animal and from barbarism to civilization, the biblical doctrine of sin and redemption maintains the following points:
- A. *Man was created holy, but changeable.*
 - B. *Man had a fair trial in a perfect world with an easy and reasonable test.*
 - C. *He voluntarily sinned and corrupted his nature.*
 - D. *Hence he is polluted, guilty, depraved, sinful, and helpless.*
 - E. *Hence the necessity of the expiation of guilt by the blood of Christ and of the removal of pollution and helplessness by the Holy Spirit.*
- II. *God created man.* Man was *created*, not gradually by evolution, but in an instant, as a mature man with no history and no yesterday. Moreover, his creation was marked off and signaled by the striking change in the manner in which the work is recorded, Gen 1.26-27
- A. In all His other works the Lord spoke by the Word of His power and called things into existence. But at the creation of man, the narrative changes. Instead of a word of command, we find the language of divine counsel, deliberation, and resolution. The Creator speaks as if a work was about to be done altogether distinct from and immeasurably superior to all that had hitherto been made, Gen 2.7
 - B. Whyte, “In the posture of divine deliberation and mutual counsel, in His so signally connecting mankind with the Godhead by creating him after His own image, and in the royal and “divine” position He gave Adam over all His creation—in all this there was secured for man a clear and indubitable charter of his divine origin and heavenly relationship.” cf. WSC 1.
- III. *God created man male and female.*
- A. The crowning work of the creative week is not the creation of a man, but the creation of a human pair, a *married* pair. The entire human race, in all its varieties, descended from this first marriage (Acts 17.26) and then, after the flood, from the family of Noah (Gen 9.1-2, 18-19).
 - 1. That *all men*, regardless of race, color, language, and distinction, descended by generation from Adam and Eve is necessarily established by the biblical doctrine of original sin in which all men received their guilt from and in Adam, Rom 5.12, WSC 16.
 - B. God’s creation of male and female counterparts as the first couple, family, and marriage, *establishes* the form and pattern for *all* marriages and relationships.
 - 1. Same-sex unions are a *perversion* of God’s good creation and can in no way be *made* into marriages. *Instead*, they reveal man’s natural depravity and need for regeneration, and justify God’s judgment upon his refusal to submit to His created design, Rom 1.21-28
 - C. There was a twofold act in man’s creation (1. the fashioning of his body from the dust of the ground and 2. the breathing into that body the breath of life, Gen 2.7). Accordingly, there are two substances which make up man’s constitution: *body and soul*, just as there are two persons which make up one race (which is why Eve was not made as a new creation, but from Adam, to establish racial unity).
 - D. Man was distinguished from all other creation, being created *in God’s image* with a reasonable and immortal soul, able to: *know, commune with, enjoy, and obey God*, WSC 1.
- IV. *God created man after His own image.*
- A. There is a *constitutional* image of God and a *moral* image of God.
 - 1. When God made man *a rational and moral spirit capable of free will*, He made him after own image *constitutionally*. This image of God *was not* lost in the fall, and it can *never* be lost. It’s in this sense that fallen man is *still* in the image of God, Gen 9.6; Js 3.9
 - 2. But to speak of God making man *with knowledge, righteousness, and holiness*, is to speak of the *moral* image of God. This image *was lost* in the fall and is only *restored* by regeneration, Eph 4.24; Col 3.10

- B. The image of God cannot pertain to man's *body*, but must be imprinted on his *soul, mind, conscience, and heart*—what the Catechism calls “knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.”
1. Shaw, “The image of God cannot consist in a participation of the divine essence, because that is incommunicable to any creature. Neither did it consist in his external form; for God, having no bodily parts, could not be represented by any material resemblance, such as a body. The image of God consisted partly in the *spirituality* of the soul of man and likewise in the *dominion* assigned to him, but principally in his *conformity* to the moral perfections of God.”
 2. Boston, “Man had *knowledge* in his understanding, *righteousness* in his will, and *holiness* in his affections.” But by sin, his *knowledge* of God's will was darkened, his *will* was enslaved to sin, and his *affections* were set on evil as if it were good, Ecc 7.29
 3. Though the image of God was irreparably marred by man's fall, it was not lost entirely (Gen 9.6; Js 3.9; Rom 1.20; 2.14-15). It is part and parcel of his humanity, and it'll be part of man's account on judgment day that he so poorly cared for this “talent”.
 4. Van Dixhoorn, “It is because of this divine image that the fall of man is so *horrific*. We see in Adam and Eve's rebellion not only the crowning part of creation dissatisfied with its crown, but the very image of God rebelling against God himself.” —**Note** the dignity of every human being! How should we regard our fellow human beings!? How should we regard ourselves!?
- C. *In knowledge,*
1. There was in man a rich fountain of knowledge springing up within him, a deep well of *intuitional truth*, which perfectly filled and informed his understanding, heart, and conscience.
 2. This intuitive knowledge arose from his having the law of God written on his heart by the Spirit (Rom 2.14-15) and the power to fulfill it (Ecc 7.29). He perfectly knew his Master's will.
 - a) In his creation, God communicated knowledge to him sufficient to be the vicegerent he was called to be. He knew the language. He knew what things (e.g. animals) were and could name them perfectly. He knew God and immediately began to speak with Him.
 - b) Adam didn't invent things or interpret things out of his own mind, but had the mind of Christ to think His thoughts after Him and to name things as they were by God's creation. *His naming things didn't *give* them meaning and purpose but rather was *declarative* of their God-given meaning and purpose.
 - c) Also, his naming of things were expressive of his dominion over them as God's vicegerent.
 3. In addition to God's *general* revelation, written on man's heart, God added *special* revelation, the revelation of a positive command of His will (Gen 2.17; 3.8-11, 23). This was given as a probationary test of his obedience to his Creator and God. This command revealed a covenant relationship into Adam was created and a representative role in which Adam stood, Rom 5.12
- D. *In righteousness,*
1. Man was created in a relation of *conformity* in all respects *to the divine law* that was incumbent upon him. He was in complete and perfect conformity to it. There was no part of him (understanding, will, or heart) that was not in conformity to God's moral law. In fact, his conformity was so flawless, that after his creation, God pronounced him *very good*, Gen 1.31
- E. *And in holiness,*
1. Having the *knowledge* of God's will and perfect *conformity* to it, man was created *holy*, i.e. *perfectly clean and spotless* in himself. This *inward purity and holiness in his heart* was to be the root of his *outward conformity* to the law of his Creator. —And he would continue before God in righteousness and acceptance *only as his holiness of heart* was preserved unimpaired and untainted.
 2. ***So in sum**, in his creation, his *mind* was given a perfect *knowledge* of God's will, his *will* was given a righteous *conformity* to that will, and his *affections* were given a holy spotlessness and health with regard to that will.
 3. *And yet*, God created man *capable of falling*.

a) Man's moral condition was perfect *in that* it was without flaw (Gen 1.31); but in the wisdom of God it was also mutable (Ecc 7.29). It was to be *secured* by obedience, but *could be corrupted* by disobedience. Ferguson, "The injection of a law (Gen 2.17) in addition to the law imprinted on man's heart simultaneously creates the possibility of growth in obedience on the one hand and lapse into sin on the other."

F. *With dominion over the creatures.*

1. Man was appointed as *lord* of the world, *God's vicegerent*. All creation was made ready for man *before* he was created, thus teaching us that all creation was given to man in order that he might have everything he needs to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
2. Man has a covenantal responsibility over creation. He is its divine steward and will give an account of his use of its goods and services.

Reflections

1. Let us never forget that we are not the Creator. As privileged, distinguished, and exalted as man is over and above the rest of creation, man remains a creature—a creature made from dust. And despite all that we're destined for by the grace and redeeming work of God in Christ, we'll never be more than a creature and the Creator-creature distinction will never be erased.
2. Van Dixhoorn, Man being made in God's image "has implications for the way in which we live. It speaks today for those who would end the lives of unborn children, avoid the company of people from another race, argue for the superiority of one gender over another, or care about chimps more than children. The image of God is important for ethics: it is as much an equalizer among humans as it is an 'elevator' over all other creatures."
3. Memorize WSC 10 along with Gen 1.26-27; Eph 4.24; Col 3.10; Ps 8.3-4