

# ANTHROPOLOGY – THE STUDY OF MAN

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## Introduction to Anthropology

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- What is anthropology:
  - ...derived from the Greek words Anthropos ("human") and logia ("study of"), meaning "the study of humankind"
  - According to the American Anthropological Association: “Anthropology is the study of what makes us human. To understand the full sweep and complexity of cultures across all of human history, anthropology draws and builds upon knowledge from the social and biological sciences as well as the humanities and physical sciences.”<sup>4</sup>
  - There are four fields which anthropologists’ study:
    - Human biology, Archaeology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics.
- Why is knowing this important to the study of salvation?
  - This is just one description of an Anthropological Studies degree, this description is from Western Michigan University, “
    - The central paradigm of all biological anthropology is the notion that our species (Homo sapiens) is the result of the evolutionary process, that we have evolved like all other living things, and that our biology provides a necessary base of knowledge from which to interpret our behavior and place in the world. Most biological anthropologists today take a biocultural approach in their work where they recognize the importance of both human biology and the varieties of human culture in making us who we are.”<sup>5</sup>
- It is important to study biblical anthropology because what you are going to find in the world is a study of mankind starting with mankind.
  - Notice what was taken as fact in the above description...*our species is the result of the evolutionary process...our biology provides a necessary base of knowledge which to interpret our behavior*
- A biblical worldview does not align with what is being taught here (and a plethora of other universities, too numerous to count.)

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<sup>4</sup> <https://americananthro.org/practice-teach/what-is-anthropology/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://wmich.edu/intercultural/academics/anthropology/biological>

- Having the right anthropology also means putting the authority in the right place and giving it to the right Person.
  - If we think that we are a random chance of cells gathering together to make a person, then we have no Creator and no one to whom we are accountable.
  - If we have not Creator, then we need to salvation because we have no sin. We truly should live our best lives now because now is all we will ever have.

## **What is a biblical anthropology?**

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- Christian / Biblical Anthropology deals with who we are and how we relate to God. Whether people are inherently good or inherently sinful is crucial in determining how our relationship with God can be restored. Whether the souls of human beings carry on after death determines in large part our view of our purpose in this world. Christian Anthropology helps us to understand ourselves from God's perspective. When we delve into this subject, we get a clearer understanding of our fallen nature, and this leads to a sense of wonder at the love of the Savior who saw our helpless state and went to the cross to redeem us.<sup>6</sup>
- John Calvin wrote "Nearly all wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." (Institutes I.1.i.)
- Calvin argues that we must know ourselves to know God, **but what we must know is our "shaming nakedness" which exposes "a teeming horde of infirmities."** Knowledge of self is indispensable because from "the feeling of our own ignorance, vanity, poverty, infirmity" we can recognize "that the true light of wisdom, sound virtue, full abundance of every good, and purity of righteousness rest in the Lord alone." The goal is not to discern our personality type or figure out our giftedness or get in touch with our past, though all of these have their place. For Calvin, knowledge of self is essential because we will only begin to seek after God when "we begin to become displeased with ourselves."<sup>7</sup>
- For when we see God as he has revealed himself, **"What wonderfully impressed us under the name of wisdom will stink in its very foolishness.** Know God. Know yourself. Know yourself to know your need of God. Know God to know you are not gods." That's what Calvin means.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-Anthropology.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/a-calvin-clarification/>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

- It is because we do not have a robust understanding of who we are that we do not see our need for such a great savior. It is only once we see ourselves in light of who God is that we will come to fully know what we need from God and how He does not need us at all.
  - To know God is to know that He did not save us because He was lonely.
  - He did not save us because He just couldn't stand the thought of eternity without you.
  - God did not save us because He needed more angels (we don't become angels)
  - We know that God is self-sufficient...He exists because of Himself. He needs nothing more or less, He is perfect.
  - We, on the other hand, only exist because of God. We do not exist for ourselves or because of ourselves, we exist because of and for God alone.
- When we bring God down to our level of the created being, we strip Him of everything that makes God who He is.
- “The discussion of the decrees naturally leads on to the consideration of their execution, **and this begins with the work of creation.** This is not only first in order of time, but is also a logical prius. It is the beginning and basis of all divine revelation, and consequently also the foundation of all ethical and religious life. The doctrine of creation is not set forth in Scripture as a philosophical solution of the problem of the world, but in its ethical and religious significance, as a revelation of the relation of man to his God. It stresses the fact that God is the origin of all things, and that all things belong to Him and are subject to Him. The knowledge of it is derived from Scripture only and is accepted by faith (Heb. 11:3) ...”<sup>9</sup>

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDYING BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

- **Psalm 8:1–4** “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, *what is man that you are mindful of him*, and the son of man that you care for him?”

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<sup>9</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans publishing co., 1938), 126.

- “From cover to cover the Bible reveals that man is a very special creation of God. The LORD by divine intention made him the crowning capstone of the six days of creation.”<sup>10</sup>
- **“Anthropology answers ultimate questions like, who am I? Why am I here? Why am I able to reason and feel? What is my purpose in life? Where am I headed?”<sup>11</sup>**
  - One of the main reasons that we need to know anthropology is so that we will know God. If we live this life never knowing that God created us with a purpose, then we will be forever lost and downtrodden forever.
  - If we believe that we were simply left up to chance without a loving creator involved, we will look at people as nothing more than clumps of cells, without a soul. When we look at others like that, we will soon be looking at ourselves like that as well.
- **This class is going to set the foundation for Biblical anthropology.** We are going to discuss why man cannot define himself. We are also going to look at the need for Biblical anthropology and then what confusion comes when man does try to define who he is.
- Lastly, we are going to look at the need for creation, a literal Adam and Eve and how evolution devalues mankind and sets people up for a hopeless existence.
- mankind and sets people up for a hopeless existence.

## **BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGY VS. WORLDLY ANTHROPOLOGY**

- “Today, more than at any time, the question “What is man? is at the center of theological and philosophical concern.”<sup>12</sup>
  - This book was first published in 1962. Decades later this question is still being asked and there is more confusion than ever.
- “It is better, then, to recognize at the outset two contrasting possibilities in anthropology: (1) that in which man is simply set in relation to himself and his world, and (2) that in which man is also and primarily set in relation to God. On the one side is scientific anthropology in the sense of an empirical study of man in his world; on the other is theological or biblical anthropology in the sense of a study of man in God’s world”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> George Zemek, *A Biblical Theology of the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace*, 3

<sup>11</sup> MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 400.

<sup>12</sup> G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 9

<sup>13</sup> G.W. Bromiley, “Anthropology” in ISBE, 1979, 1:131.

## The Question of Authority:

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- Who has authority to determine what is true about man?
- What process is used to determine what is true about man?
- Can man impress his own ideas about himself upon others?

## The question of Ability:

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- The reality of the noetic effects of sin.
  - The **noetic effect of sin** in Christian theology refers to the way that sin negatively affects and corrupts the human mind, intellect, reasoning, and ability to perceive and discern truth, particularly concerning spiritual realities and the knowledge of God.
- “It is often apparent that man’s self-knowledge is extremely limited and incomplete, and that man’s picture of himself does not correspond at all with the actuality of his nature. It seems undeniable that ‘our eyes become clouded more quickly in examining ourselves than in examining others.’<sup>14</sup>
- Can man accurately assess himself?
- What happens when there is disagreement of assessment?
- Why does man’s assessment of himself continually change over the course of study?

## The need for Biblical clarity

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- “Regarding worldly approaches to anthropology, “We must go beyond this kind of judgment, however, and enter into the heart of the matter. Since each...view of man considers one aspect of the human being to be ultimate, *apart from any dependence on or responsibility to God the Creator, each of these anthropologies is guilty of idolatry*: of worshipping an aspect of creation in the place of God. If, as the Bible teaches, the most important thing about man is that he is inescapably related to God, we must judge as deficient any anthropology which denies that relatedness.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 19

<sup>15</sup> Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 4

- “...only a study of God’s revelation can furnish a complete answer to the timeless question, ‘What is man?’”<sup>16</sup>
- “The Bible never speaks of man in himself, as isolated, but always in terms of his relationship to God...Man is never taken out of, nor can he flee the searching light of the ever-present God (Amos 9:1-4, Ps 139:7)—even though he may prefer the darkness to the light.”<sup>17</sup>

## **Contemporary Confusion over Anthropology**

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- “We find ourselves in a contest of anthropological visions: Christianity vs. neopaganism.”<sup>18</sup>
- **Confusion of purpose:**
  - If man’s purpose is man centered, then man’s ultimate purpose is to please himself and look out for his own felt needs. He is not worried about pleasing God and glorifying Him.
- **Confusion of worth:**
  - When we find our worth in things that are outside of God, our soul becomes weak. We are more prone to things like depression, anxiety because we struggle to handle life God’s way.
- **Confusion of identity:**
  - Man cannot answer why he is here or who he is apart from God. This is why we have such issues today with people “identifying” as something other than what God made them.
- **Confusion of gender and sexuality:**
  - Simply put, when we leave the objective truth of the Bible, we are free to call anything man or a woman because we have now redefined what those terms mean.
- **Confusion about remedy:**
  - In all of this, man can see the problems but because he has left God and sought his own answers, he cannot see the remedy. That is why man is all over the map when they try and “fix” themselves.
- All this confusion in our modern-day world is because man has a wrong relationship with God. When man leaves God and seeks to find out his own meaning apart from God, he is *always* going to end up wherever he wants.

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<sup>16</sup> Trevor Craigen

<sup>17</sup> G.C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, 34

<sup>18</sup> Owen Strachan, *Reenchanting Humanity*, 4

- **Romans 1:18-19** “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”
- When we do things that show no care or reverence towards God, we are acting ungodly.
  - If we start studying man by man’s own standards, we are starting in an ungodly place.
  - 2 Timothy 2:16 “But avoid worldly and empty chatter, *for it will lead to further ungodliness...*”
  - Ungodliness is something that is an entrance to becoming more ungodly.
- Man’s unrighteousness is *a deed violating law and justice*. This is the action of doing something that is against what God has said to do. When we no longer revere God and seek to glorify Him, our actions are going to be against Him.
- **What are these men doing in Romans 1:18-19?**
  - They are *suppressing the truth in unrighteousness*. This is a dangerous place to be. To know what to do and then to do what is wrong, is to cast off God and willfully go your own way.
- We know that God *made it evident to them* what they were supposed to be doing. They simply denied what they already knew to be right (at least by conscience) by suppressing that truth in them.
- God’s judgment upon men who are suppressing the truth is Romans 1:28 “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, *God gave them over to a depraved mind*, to do those things which are not proper...”
- This is called the judgment of abandonment. God allows man to “go it alone,” without His help.
- He has allowed their minds to be darkened even further as they travel to whatever destination their hearts truly desire.

## **MAN’S ORIGIN: CREATION OR EVOLUTION...DOES IT MATTER?**

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- No matter what, when speaking about mankind, we must always come back to where man came from in the beginning. We want to know the origins of man.
- **One must either believe that God created man or that there was some sort of evolution involved.** There are certainly “hybrid” theories, but when all the excess is taken away, it is either creation or evolution.

- I don't believe that Christians can have their head in the sand when it comes to this question. The absolute snowball effect of consequences for believing wrong is infinite.
- Everything we think, believe and act upon comes from either creation or evolution.
  - **Abortion:** if people are not people until they are out of the womb, abortion is legitimate.
  - **Euthanasia:** if we believe there is not a God whom we are accountable to allowing people to decide when they die is no problem at all.
  - **Sin:** this becomes relative because there is no absolute truth as there is no Creator to whom we are accountable to. We are allowed to live to the level that we deem best.
  - **Bible:** its sufficiency, its inspiration, its truthfulness
- I have no doubt there are many more we can add, but the point is simple, if our worldview is framed outside of being created by a loving God, we are going to fall for anything and act according to our own lusts and desires.

### **Adam as an actual, historical person**

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- As bad as all the other consequences of believing in the theory of evolution are, all pale in comparison to not thinking there was a first created person named Adam.
- “The church has historically affirmed that Adam was a historical man, yet with the acceptance of evolutionary science, some now claim that this is not the case. Those who believe that the earth is millions or billions of years old will not accept that God fully formed the human Adam a few days after creating the universe. However, Genesis presents Adam as a real historical man, not the result of eons of evolution.”<sup>19</sup>
- One would have to affirm that the simplest, most natural and historically accurate reading of **Genesis 1** is not what it appears to be or not what God intended to communicate to us.
- If there was no Adam, was there an Eve? Cain and Abel? What about all the details of their ages, descendants and how they spread across the known world?
- **The largest issue with no historical and literal Adam is that we must throw out much of the New Testament and other parts of the Old Testament which also affirm an actual Adam.**

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<sup>19</sup> MacArthur and Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 405.



- The New Testament writers also affirm Adam as a historical figure<sup>20</sup>. Jesus’s genealogy in Luke includes Adam (**3:38**).
- This is consistent with **1 Chronicles 1:1**, which also includes Adam in its genealogy.
- The apostle Paul clearly believed in a literal Adam. In **Romans 5:12** and **14**, Paul states, “Sin came into the world through one man [Adam],” and “death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam.”
- Paul treats Adam as a person, just as he treats Moses as a person.
- Further, in **Romans 5:12–21**, Paul makes several comparisons between Adam and Jesus, showing that both are literal heads of humanity who bring certain consequences for mankind.
  - The man Adam brings death, guilt, and condemnation to all who are in him (all who possess human life, except the Lord Jesus), while the man Christ Jesus brings life, righteousness, and justification to all who are granted spiritual life through their faith-union with him.
  - **If Adam is not a person, then the comparison collapses, including Jesus’s role as the One who represents mankind as Savior.**
  - **Rejecting the historicity of Adam truly undermines the gospel itself.**
- In similar fashion, Paul contrasts Adam and Jesus several times in **1 Corinthians 15**:
  - For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (**1 Cor. 15:22**)
  - Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (**1 Cor. 15:45**)
  - The first man [Adam] was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man [Jesus] is from heaven. (**1 Cor. 15:47**)
  - Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (**1 Cor. 15:49**)
- Paul’s point is that just as we humans bear the image of Adam, so with the coming glorification we will bear the image of Jesus.
- The comparison assumes that both Adam and Jesus are historical persons who represent humanity. Jesus as a person can only be a “last Adam” if Adam was also a real human being.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 406–407.

- Further, in **1 Timothy 2:13**, Paul makes an argument for functional distinctions between men and women in the church because “Adam was formed first, then Eve.”
  - His point would make no sense if Adam were merely a symbolic figure.
- **The historicity of Adam is not a trivial matter.** A literal Adam is foundational for understanding the origin and history of the human race, the nature of humanity, the origin of sin, the beginning of human and animal death, the need for salvation, the basis for historical events in Genesis, the reason for functional order within the church, and even the future existence of mankind.
- All of this to say, it is no surprise that this is the fundamental doctrine that has been under attack from Satan and continues to be assaulted; even by those who claim the historic faith.