MAN CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

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May 23–25, 2025	**Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, MN**

Gustav Wingren once wrote: "To become like Christ is to become man as the Creator intended he should be (Gen 1:26). Those who are called are intended to be images of God's son, likenesses of him (Rom 8:29). The new man is created in the likeness of God (Eph 4:24). The growing likeness to Christ leads man … into the true life of man which is fully attained in the resurrection of the dead."[1]

Views of the Image of God

Man has often read into the image of God (*imago Dei*) whatever his culture thinks distinguishes the human being from the rest of creation. What follows are the predominate approaches to the divine image. The structural view understands the image of God to be about what humans are. It equates the image with something embedded into human nature itself. Irenaeus of Lyon introduced this view into Christianity when he distinguished between the image and likeness of God. In the fall, man lost the likeness, but it is being restored in Christ. The image, conversely, is always retained.[2] Irenaeus's other idea about Edenic mankind would also fuel speculations. He opined that man was created imperfect so that he could grow.[3] Soon Tertullian affirmed this distinction between image and likeness, and it remained dominate until the Reformation.[4] Augustine of Hippo built on this distinction. He gave the image a more psychological and Trinitarian dimension. He regarded the image to be memory, intellect, and will, which he associated with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively.[5]

Drawing on Aristotelian substance ontology (i.e., metaphysical categories), medieval theologians, especially in the west, came to associate the image of God with natural qualities of man (e.g., will and reason) which were part of man's "substance" (*substantia*, i.e., something capable of existing by itself). Thus, the image was deemed essential to being human. The likeness of God, conversely, came to be regarded as a "superadded gift" (*donum superadditum*) that piggybacked spiritual gifts (e.g., righteousness, holiness, and knowledge, or simply original righteousness) on top of a human nature.[6] For the Dominicans, this superadded gift was bestowed

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[1] Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church*, trans. Victor C. Pogue (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 75.

[2] Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against the Heresies*, trans. Dominic Unger et al. (New York: Newman Press, 1992–2024), 5:138–39, 142, 162–63 (*Against the Heresies* 5.6; 5.8; 5.16).

[3] Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against*, 115–18 (*Against the Heresies* 4.38).

[4] Unless otherwise indicated, all patristic references are to *The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325: Ante-Nicene Fathers [ANF],* ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) or *The Select Library of the Christian Church: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers [NPNF],* ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995). ANF 3:672 (Tertullian, *On Baptism* 5).

[5] Augustine, *The Works of St. Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle and Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park: New City Press, 1990–), 1/5:491 (*The Trinity* 14.15).

[6] Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, trans. Giulio Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2007–10), bk. 2, dist. 24; Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia* (Florence: ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi, 1882–1902), 5:229–30 (Breviloquium 2.11); Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province

at creation. For the Franciscans, it was bestowed after creation as a reward for the meritorious use of natural powers. Consequently, the likeness was deemed an "accident" (*accidens*, i.e., something contingent and only capable of existing in something else). Thus, the likeness was deemed not essential to being human.

In contrast to the likeness of God, John of Damascus associates the image of God with intellect and free will.[7] For Bonaventure, the image is primarily realized with the will.[8] For Thomas Aquinas, the image is primarily realized with the intellect or reason. He also speaks of three states or stages of the divine image in man. In the natural state, all humans have a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God. In the graced state, the image bearers actually and habitually know and love God imperfectly. In the heavenly state, the image bearers know and love God perfectly.[9]

As Roman Catholic Second Scholastics and Neo-Scholastics thought more about the substance ontology that undergirded their anthropology, they began to posit the idea of a state of pure nature (*status purorum naturalium*).[10] On the one hand, a state of pure nature seemed necessary to defend the Roman Catholic idea that the image of God (i.e., memory, intellect, and will) was a substance that retained its integrity after the fall because original sin was only an accidental deprivation of original righteousness. On the other hand, a state of pure nature also seemed necessary to defend the Roman Catholic idea that the likeness was merely an accidental superadded gift.

As Roman Catholics were permitted greater "freedom" in exegesis with *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, they came to recognize the exegetical problems with an image and likeness distinction. Thus, Vatican II recombined them, but maintained that the likeness (*similitudinem*) was only deformed (*deformatam*) in the fall.[11] The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines this likeness as being "capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons." "It is in Christ … that the divine image, disfigured in many by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God."[12]

The anthropomorphite view understands the image of God to be about man's physical resemblance with God. During the Origenistic controversies of the late fourth century, some illiterate Egyptian monks radically distanced themselves from Origen. On the basis of Bible

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(New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), 1:482–83 (pt. 1, q. 95, art. 1); *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, trans. J. Donovan (Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1908), pt. 1, chap. 2, q. 19.

[7] John of Damascus, *Writings*, trans. Frederic H. Chase, Jr. (Washington, D.C.; Catholic University of American Press, 1958), 234–235 (*Orthodox Faith* 2.12).

[8] Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia*, 2:404–8 (Sentences II, dist. 16, art. 2, q. 3).

[9] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1:471–72, 477 (pt. 1, q. 93, art. 4, 9).

[10] Robert Bellarmine, *Omnia Opera*, ed. Justinus Fèvre (Paris: Vives, 1870–74), 5:179; Francisco Suarez, *Omnia Opera* (Paris: Vivès, 1856–61), 7:179; Matthias Scheeben, *Handbook of Catholics Dogmatics*, trans. Michael J. Miller (Steubenville: Emmaus Academic, 2019–23), bk. 3, par. 507, 591, 947, 1072–74, 1082–83, 1120–22; Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, trans. M. Timothea Doyle (Rockford: TAN Books, 1947–48), 1:288. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1:1124–25 (pt. 1-2, q. 109, art. 2).

[11] *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N. P. Tanner, G. Albergio, J. A. Dossetti, P.– P. Joannou, C. Leonardi, P. Prodi, and H. Jedin (London and Washington: Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:1081–82.

[12] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007), par. 357, 1701ff.

passages that describe God with human characteristics (e.g., Gen 3:8–9), these Anthropomorphites (Audians) insisted that God had a material form. Thus, they concluded that man was made in the physical image of God.[13]

Rationalistic theologians took some interest in this idea. Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider regarded man's upright and external form to be part of the divine image.[14] Orthodox theologians have drawn attention to this too. But they did not make it part of the image of God.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day saints teaches God was once a human being. Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 states, "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's…."[15] Accordingly, the Mormons also associated the image of God with a physical resemblance to God, albeit for different reasons than the Anthropomophite monks.

The functional view understands the image of God to be what humans do. It equates the image with dominion which is man's mastery and rule over creation as God's representative. Human dominion coupled with man's upright form had long been accepted as a definition of the divine image in the ancient pagan religions of the Levant. John Chrysostom offers one of the earliest Christian articulations of this view. He writes, "So 'image' refers to the matter of control, not anything else, in other words, God created the human being as having control of everything on earth, and nothing on earth is greater than the human being, under whose authority everything falls."[16]

Some early Reformed theologians included dominion in their conception of the image of God, but they did not exclude original righteousness.[17] The Socinians or Polish Brethren, conversely, did reduce the image of God to dominion. They did so because they insisted man was created mortal.[18] Under the influence of Socinianism, some early Remonstrant (Arminian) theologians like Philipp van Limborch denied that the image of God consisted of original righteousness and taught that dominion was the image instead.[19] Not surprisingly, rationalist theologians associated dominion with the image too.[20]

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[13] Epiphanius of Salamis, *The Panarion*, trans. Frank Williams, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2009–13), 3:412–28 (3.70); John Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (New York: Newman Press, 1997), 371–74 (*Conferences* 10.2–5).

[14] Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider, *Systematische Entwickelung aller in der Dogmatik vorkommenden Begriffe*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1825), par 88; Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider, *Handbuch der Dogmatik der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 4th ed. (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1838), par. 115.

[15] *The Book of Mormon … Doctrines and Covenants … The Pearl of Great Prince* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1981). See also Book of Ether 3:6.

[16] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis 1–17*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Washington, D.C.; Catholic University of American Press, 1986), 110 (*Homilies on Genesis* 8.9)

[17] Wolfgang Musculus, *Common Places of Christian Religion*, trans. John Man (London: Henry Bynneman, 1578), 29; Peter Martyr Vermigli, *The Peter Martyr Vermigli Library*, ed. John Patrick Donnelly and Joseph C. McLelland (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University, 1994–2006), 4:42–43.

[18] *The Racovian Catechism*, trans. Thomas Rees (London: Longman, Hust, Rees, Orme, and Brown, Paternoster Row, 1818), 2.1.

[19] Philipp van Limborch, *Compleat System, or Body of Divinity, Both Speculative and Practical, Founded on Scripture and Reason*, trans. William Jones, 2nd ed. (London: John Darby, 1713), 1:142–45.

[20] Bretschneider, *Handbuch*, par. 115.

The relational view understands the image of God to be about human relationships with God and other creatures. Martin Luther's understanding of the image of God was the first articulation of a relational understanding of the image of God. He understood the image to be original righteousness via a faith-relationship with God.[21] Man lost this image in the fall,[22] but it is being restored in Christ. The *Book of Concord* only specifically teaches an image of God in the strict sense (*imago Dei stricta dicta*) as well.[23] Eventually, Philipp Melanchthon, conversely, came to the conclusion that the image of God continued after the fall in some sense.[24] In addition to a relational understanding of the image of God in the strict sense, some Lutheran theologians have also taught a structural understanding of the image of God in the wide sense that persists after the fall.

The chief Reformed Confessions (i.e., Three forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards)[25] and some of their significant theologians teach only a relational understanding of the image of God as original righteousness via a faith-relationship with God.[26] While John Calvin did not explicitly teach a structural understanding of the image of God in the wide sense, he also does not think the image of God is completely lost in the fall.[27] That being said, the majority of Reformed theologians came to teach a relational understanding of the image of God in the strict sense coupled with a structural understanding of the image of God in the wide sense.

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[21] Martin Luther, *Luther's* Works [*LW*], ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, 1955–), 1:61–65.

[22] Luther says, "Until [this image of the new creature] is accomplished in us, we cannot have an adequate knowledge of what that image of God was which was lost through sin in Paradise. … Even this small part of the divine image we have lost, so much so that we do not even have insight into the fullness of joy and bliss which Adam derived from his contemplation of all the animal creatures." *LW* 1:65–66. However, Luther does add this seeming contradictory remark. "Thus, even if the image has been almost completely [*pene tota*] lost, there is still a great difference between the human being and the rest of the animals… What we achieve in life, however, is brought about, not by the dominion of which Adam had but through industry and skill." Martin Luther, *Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [WA], ed. J. K. F. Knaake et al. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–1993), 42:50; *LW* 1:67.

[23] *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche*, ed. Irene Dingel, Bastian Basse, Marion Bechtold-Mayer, Klaus Breuer, Johannes Hund, Robert Kolb, Rafael Kuhnert, Volker Leppin, Christian Peters, Adolf Martin Ritter, and Hans-Otto Schneider, 1st ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014); *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, trans. Charles Arand, Eric Gritsch, Robert Kolb, William Russell, James Schaaf, Jane Strohl, and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), Ap II.17–22; FC SD I, 10–11.

[24] Philipp Melanchthon, *The Chief Theological Topics: Loci Praecipui Theologici 1559*, trans. J. A. O. Preus, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 321 (locus 13).

[25] *Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformierten Kirche*, ed. E. F. K. Müller (Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 1999), Belgic Confession XIV; Heidelberg Catechism q. 6; Canons of Dordt III/IV, 1–4; III/IV, R2; Westminster Confession IV, 2; Westminster Large Catechism q. 17; Westminster Short Catechism q. 10.

[26] Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades*, trans. H. I. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849–52), 3:377, 394; William Perkins, *The Workes of That Famovs and Worthy Minister of Christ in the Vniuersitie of Cambridge* (London: John Legatt, 1626), 1:150–51, 162; Johannes Cocceius, *Svumma Theologiae Ex Scriptvris Repetita*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: Widerhold, 1665), locus X, chap. 26; R. L. Dabney, *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Presbyterian Publishing Company, 1878), 206, 293; G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, trans. Dirk W. Jellema, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 54–63. For others that shared this minority view in Reformed theology, see Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. G. T. Thomson, rev. ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 232, 237–38.

[27] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 1:186–92 (1.15.3–4).

Karl Barth argued for a different understanding of the relational view of the image of God. The divine image does not consist in anything man is or does. It is also not tied to original righteousness, nor is it anchored in faith. For Barth, "The *tertium comparationis*, the analogy between God and man, is simply the existence of the I and the Thou in confrontation."[28] In other words, the image of God is about being addressed and responding to that address. It is human interpersonal relationality that reflects the relationality between the persons of the Trinity. The specific relationships that image bearers engage in are between God and man (Gen 2:8–17) as well as man and other people (Gen 2:21–25). Others have stressed the relationship between man and creation too (Gen 2:15, 18–20), though this is not an I and Thou encounter.[29] Scripturally speaking, Barth sees the image chiefly expressed in the way man's relationship with woman corresponds to the Trinitarian persons' relationships with each other. Even though all of these human relationships are damaged in fall (God [Gen 3:8]; people [3:7, 12, 16]; creation [3:18–19]), the image is not lost.

He Who Bears the Image of God in an Essential Way

Nikolaus Hunnius points out that only God is omniscient (1 Cor 2:11), perfectly righteous (Deut 32:4), totally holy (1 Sam 2:2), completely free (Psa 115:3; 135:6), immortal (1 Tim 6:16), and completely sovereign (Psa 24:1; 33:9). Hunnius goes on to add that man was created to have right perception of God, right perception of creation, complete righteousness, true holiness, free will, immortality, and dominion in some sense as well.[30] The Scriptures also say that Christ "is the image of God" (ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ) (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3. cf. Wis 7:26). But man is said to be made "in [God's] image, according to [God's] likeness" (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ) (Gen 1:26). The Hebrew prepositions "in" (בְּ) and "according to" (כְּ) provide some helpful insight here. They imply man is a copy of an original prototype. He is a human type meant to correspond to a divine archetype.[31] Finally, Christ cannot lose the image of God. In the fall, humans did lose the image (Gen 5:3; 1 Cor 15:49. cf. Wis 2:23–24) and only regain it in Christ. For this reason, Christ is the essential image of God. Humans are the derived, normed, copied, patterned, and (accidental, or better) concreated image of God (cf. also Exod 25:40; Heb 8:1–6; 10:1) who bear the characteristics of the image in a derived, normed, copied, patterned, and (accidental, or better) concreated way.[32]

Those Who Bear the Image of God in a Non-Essential Way

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[28] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), 3/1:183–91, esp. 184–85.

[29] Cornelis van der Kooi and Gijsbert van den Brink, *Christian Dogmatics: An Introduction*, trans. Reinder Bruinsma and James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017), 264–65.

[30] Nikolaus Hunnius, *Epitome Credendorum*, trans. Paul Edward Gottheil (Nuremberg: U. E. Sebald, 1847), 48–50.

[31] David Chytraeus, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, trans. Richard Dinda (Decatur: Repristination Press, 1994), 50; Johann Gerhard, *On Creation and Angels, On Providence, On Election and Reprobation, On the Image of God in Man Before the Fall*, trans. Richard Dinda, Theological Commonplaces (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 257 (locus 11, par. 14); Johann Friedrich König, *Theologia positive acroamatica (Rostock 1664)*, ed. Andreas Stegmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 118 (pt. II, par. 4).

[32] Johann Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica, Sive Systema Theologicvm … Divisvm* (Leipzig: Thomas Fritsch, 1702), 2:2–3; David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicvm Acroamaticvm Vniversam Theologiam Thetico-Polemicam Complectens*, ed. Romanus Tellerus (Leipzig: B. C. Breitkopf, 1763), 462; August Grabner, "Doctrinal Theology: Cosmology Anthropology," *Theological Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1899): 139.

The Bible says that the Triune God created man in his image (Gen 1:26). Some medieval theologians thought the divine image could be found in the human soul or mind because God is not corporal (save in the person of Jesus Christ).[33] Johann Gerhard points out that the image of God is not only found in the human soul. It is also found in the human body because man was created for immortality (Gen 2:16–17; Rom 2:7; 1 Cor 15:53–54; 2 Tim 1:10. cf. Wis 1:13; 2:23).[34]

St. Paul writes, "For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man" (1 Cor 11:7). What does this mean if both the man and the woman are clearly said to be created in the divine image (Gen 1:27)?[35] Nikolaus Hunnius explains that this refers to how the husband as the head of the wife (Eph 5:23) is empowered via the image of God to exercise dominion differently than his wife does (Gen 1:28). "… [A]s God governs the world, so also is the husband (*Mann*) to rule the house." Hunnius adds that this nuance of the image is so unique that "In this sense, again the term is applicable but to husbands (*Ehemännern*); and in no way to females, children, unmarried persons or widows etc."[36]

Other Ancient Near East cultures applied the divine image only to kings.[37] Genesis 1:26–29 indicates that all humans are created in the image of God and have dominion. While Genesis insists that all people are equal regardless of their sex, race, or social rank, it also recognizes the need for complementarity and subordination (Gen 2:18).

Some Lutherans have thought the good angels must have the divine image because they share the same characteristics that the Scriptures use to define it. Martin Chemnitz states, "All the angels were created in truth, John 8:44; in holiness, because they were called the holy angels; in righteousness and in the image of God, which had to be restored in man, Eph 4:34."[38] Be that as it may, David Hollaz notes that the Scriptures do not clearly affirm or deny whether angels have the image or not.[39] But the fact of the matter is that God only explicitly says that mankind was created with it. It is man and ultimately Christ in the state of humiliation that are a little lower than God (Ps 8:5; Heb 2:6–9). Only human beings are called to carry out all the purposes or effects of the divine image (i.e., faith, active righteousness, procreation [Matt 22:30], and dominion [Ps 8:6–9]).

States of Man

The Augustinian states of man have often been used to explicate the human condition. The *Book of Concord* lays out the four traditional states as follows: "before the fall," "before …

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[33] See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1:473–74 (pt. 1, q. 93, art. 6).

[34] Gerhard, *On Creation*, 300 (locus 11, par. 104).

[35] Jesper Rasmussen Brochmand, *Systematis Universae Theologiae … decidantur*, rev. ed (Leipzig: Johann Hallervord, 1638), 1:314–15.

[36] Nikolaus Hunnius, *Epitome Credendorvm … wort verfasset* (Wittenberg: Paul Helwig, 1628), 135; Hunnius, *Epitome Credendorum*, 47–48. See also Johannes Rudbeckius, *Loci Theologici: Föreläsningar vid Uppsala universitet 1611–1613*, ed. Bengt Hägglund (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), 109; Gerhard, *On Creation*, 301 (locus 11, par. 105–7).

[37] Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion, Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), 153.

[38] Martin Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works,* trans. Fred Kramer, Luther Poellet, Georg Williams, J. A. O. Preus, Matthew Harrison, Jacob Corzine, and Andrew Smith (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008–15), 7:301.

[39] Hollaz, *Examen Theologicvm Acroamaticvm*, 469–70.

conversion," "after they have been reborn," and "when they arise from the dead."[40] Abraham Calov adds to these a fifth state of eternal condemnation for unbelievers in hell. However, Calov rightly rejects a sixth state called the "state of pure nature."[41]

Image of God in the Strict Sense

It should come as no surprise that Luther advocates for restraint when trying to spell out the image of God in the strict sense. While the Bible has some clear teachings about its nature and purpose, the human faculties of memory, intellect, and will have been so distorted by the fall that they are not able to fully grasp this Edenic gift, which is only eschatologically (i.e., already in justification, but not yet fully until glorification) restored in Christ.[42] Needless to say, Biblical anthropology has not fared well in the procrustean bed of fallen worldviews. It should also be recognized that Genesis 1:26–27 does not explicitly define the image of God. The meaning and function of the image of God become clearer when its immediate context is read in light of the rest of the canonical Scriptures, especially those passages treating its restoration in Christ. Certain texts from the apocrypha are also worth referencing because they shed light on how the canonical texts were historically understood.

The distinction between the image and likeness of God is partially rooted in a misunderstanding of Genesis 1:26–27. The LXX added the conjunction "and" (καὶ) between "in our image" and "according to our likeness," obscuring the Hebrew parallelism. The Masoretic text reads, "in our image, according to our likeness (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ), which shows that these two terms refer to the same concept. Both "image" and "likeness" are used without the other to refer to the same idea in Genesis 1:27 and 5:1. Whereas the Hebrew preposition בְּ governs "image" in Genesis 1:26, and כְּ governs "image" in Genesis 5:3; the Hebrew preposition בְּ governs "likeness" in Genesis 5:3, and כְּ governs "likeness" in Genesis 1:26. Finally, the LXX uses εἰκών and ὁμοίωσις to translate צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת in Genesis 1:26 respectively. It uses εἰκών and ἰδέα to translate these same two words in Genesis 5:3. But it uses εἰκών to translate both Hebrew words in Genesis 1:27 and 5:1.

The divine image is the image of the Triune God. God the Father created all things through his Son and by his Holy Spirit (Gen 1:1–3, Ps 33:6, 9; 148:5; John 1:3, 14; 1 Cor 8:6, Col 1:15–16; Heb 1:1–2, 10, 11:3). When the Triune God made man, he said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness" (נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ) (Gen 1:26). The image is renewed in Christ (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:47, 49; 2 Cor 3:18), but the renewed image is not the image of Christ as Andreas Osiander and other have claimed.[43] It is the image of the Triune God. After all, Christ is the essential image of the Triune God. He who sees Christ, sees the Father (John 14:8–10).[44]

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[40] FC SD II, 2.

[41] Abraham Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum … exhibens* (Wittenberg: Andreas Hartmann, Johann Röhner, Michael Wendt, Christian Schroedter, and Johann Wilcke, 1655–77), 4:385–88.

[42] *LW* 1:60–65. See also Johann Gerhard, *Succinct and Select Theological Aphorisms*, trans. Paul A. Rydecki (Malone: Repristination Press, 2018), chap. 8, aphorism 2–4.

[43] Andreas Osiander, *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Gottfried Seebaß and Gerhard Müller (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1975–97), 9:465, 471–72.

[44] Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–57), 1:515–16; John P. Meyer, "The Image of God, Genesis 1," in *Our Great Heritage*, ed. Lyle W. Lange (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1991), 2:185.

A dependent faith-relationship with the Triune God (Gen 2:16–17) presupposes that humans were created with the original passive righteousness necessary to be capable of trusting. After humans lost the image of God in the fall, unregenerate humans are unable to self-create trust in the Triune God (Gen 3:17; 6:5; 8:21) and can only self-generate trust in false gods (e.g., self, idols, etc.). While humans retain their natural faculties (e.g., memory, intellect, and will), unregenerate humans no longer have the graced human faculties necessary for expressing active righteousness in properly-ordered free and responsible service to God and others (Gen 3:7–8, 12, 16–17). Consequently, their ability to execute dominion over creation (Gen 1:26, 28) is damaged as well (Gen 3:17–19, 9:2).

With the aforementioned in mind, later Old Testament and apocrypha texts conclude that the image of God in the strict sense is comprised of uprightness, immortality, holiness, righteousness, strength, and knowledge. Ecclesiastes 7:29 says, "God made man upright." Wisdom 1:13; 2:23; 9:2–3 states, "God did not make death … God created the human being to be immortal/incorruptible, and he made him to be an image of his own eternity" … "to administer the world in holiness and righteousness, and pronounce judgement in uprightness of soul." Sirach 17:2–3, 7 says the image includes "strength like [the Lord's] own" and "understanding." See also 2 Esdras 8:44, which is not found in the apocrypha of the Luther Bible or the LXX.

An image of God that consists of uprightness, righteousness, and holiness accords with Genesis 1:31; 3:17; 5:3; 6:5; and 8:21. The creation of man in God's image made the creation "very good" (Gen 1:31; Ps 139:14). But Adam's fall broke faith with God, distorted human relationships, and cursed the creation (Gen 3:17). Thereafter, man could only procreate children in fallen Adam's unrighteous image (Gen 5:3). An evil inclination was also injected into all human beings (Gen 6:5; 8:21).

A divine image that consists of immortality and strength is congruent with Genesis 2:16–17; 3:19; 5:3; and 5:5ff. The Lord God himself states that humans would only die if they broke faith with God by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16–17).[45] Five major objections have been raised to this claim. First, Genesis assumes that even Edenic humans were naturally mortal and would eventually die. Hebrew thought has not yet developed a notion of the afterlife.[46] This contradicts Genesis 2:17 which only speaks of death resulting from sin. This view also tries to impose the same Ancient Near East religious thought on Genesis that Genesis is combating. What is "natural" to fallen man is not natural to Edenic man.

Second, Paul says that only God is immortal (1 Tim 6:16).[47] In addition, humans cannot be immortal because that would imply they are autonomous secular beings who find their true identity and freedom apart from God. However, humans are clearly not essentially immortal.

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[45] See also Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967), 64–65, 69; Walter R. Roehrs and Martin Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 19; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commenatary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 67–68, 83; Andrew Steinmann, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 72.

[46] John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, International Critical Commentary 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1910), 84; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 223–25; 266–65.

[47] Kidner, *Genesis*, 64–65; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 173; Kenneth A. Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1–11:26*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 211–12.

They derive their immortality from God. That being said, Genesis never calls pre-fall humans mortal. The rest of the Scriptures actually do describe both the restored image (1 Cor 15:47, 49, 53–55) and re/created life as "immortality" (Rom 2:7; 2 Tim 1:10. cf. Wis 2:23).[48] Moreover, human beings (whether they know or it or not) cannot exist in any of the aforementioned states of man without being sustained by one or more of God's various presences (e.g., gracious sacramental presence [Gen 2:9, 16–17; Exod 25:22; 29:43; 40:34–35; John 14:23; 15:4–5], providential presence [Gen 6:3; Jer 23:23–24; Ps 139:7–12; Acts 17:28], wrathful presence [Ps 139:7–12; Rev 14:10], and glorious presence [Rev 21:3–4; 22:5]).[49] Human autonomy is a fiction of fallen man.

Third, human immortality could only be activated by eating from the tree of life.[50] Genesis never actually says eating from the tree of life activated immortality, it only says that eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil deactivated immortality. The fact that Adam and Eve were permitted to eat from the tree of life from the start suggests that regular partaking of the tree of life sacramentally preserved human life in a dependent faith-relationship with God before the fall (Gen 2:9, 16–17).[51] Fallen humans were only barred from the tree of life so that they would not enter into an unalterable state of eternal death (Gen 3:22–24).

Fourth, God retracted the death penalty for eating the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:17) because humans did not immediately die.[52] Humans actually did experience spiritual death in the fall (Gen 2:17; Matt 8:22; Luke 9:60; Rom 5:12–19; 6:13; Eph 2:1). This triggered the inevitability of temporal death (Gen 3:19; 5:3). Had God not remedied their spiritual death with the protoevangelium (Gen 3:15), they would have experienced eternal death (Gen 3:22; Ezek 33:11; Dan 12:2; Matt 10:28; Joh 8:51; 11:25–26; 2 Pet 3:9; Rev 20:6, 14–15; 21:8).[53]

Fifth, the reference to "dust" (Gen 2:7; 3:19) indicates that humans were always supposed to die.[54] However, the far more significant literary allusion is Genesis 3:17's clear reference ("which I commanded you, saying, 'you shall not eat of it'" [לְא תאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ]) to Genesis 2:17 ("you shall not eat from it" [לְא תאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ] for in that day that you eat of it you will surely die"). In fact, Genesis 3:17's reference to Genesis 2:17 expects the reader to recall the rest of the Genesis 2:17 quotation which explicitly links death only to eating the forbidden fruit. The omission of the "breath of life" in Genesis 3:19, conversely, does just as much to undermine a

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[48] Orthodox Lutherans often said that man only lost his physical immortality in the fall. After the final judgment, believers regain their physical immortality and the damned suffer eternal death with an immortal soul and resurrected body (Gen 3:22; Dan 12:2; John 5:29; Rev 20:11–15). Balthasar Mentzer, *Handbook*, trans. Walter Hamester (Decatur: Johann Gerhard Institute, 1998), q. 66.

[49] For God's wrathful presence in hell, see John Brug, *A Commentary on Psalms 73–150* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2004), 458–59.

[50] Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary Genesis*, JPS Tanakh Commentary (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 21; John A. Goldingay, *Genesis*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Pentateuch (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 61–62, 82.

[51] Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, trans. John H. Marks, rev. ed., Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), 81–82; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 79.

[52] David J. A. Clines, "Themes in Genesis 1–11," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976): 490; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 172–74, 203–4; Goldingay, *Genesis*, 62.

[53] Kidner, *Genesis*, 69, 72; Roehrs and Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study*, 20. Gunkel too recognizes that God is acting to keep humans from achieving an irreversible permanent state (i.e., "immortality") in Gen 3:22–24. However, Hermann Gunkel thinks God was trying to keep a humanity that was always destined to die from becoming gods. See his *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 23–24.

[54] Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 83.

literary connection between Genesis 2:7 and 3:19 as the mention of "dust" does in both passages to promote it.[55] If the tree of life would have never sustained ongoing life in the first place, why would human beings now need to be barred from it (Gen 3:22–24)?

An image of God that consists of understanding and knowledge accords with Genesis 2:16–17, and 3:22. Just as Christ grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52), humans were created to grow in experiential knowledge.[56] This does not mean that Adam and Eve lacked knowledge and understanding. God himself indicates that they had the compacity for making moral decisions in Genesis 2:16–17, though the crafty serpent would dupe them (Gen 3:5). It is also true that human beings only became like God "knowing good and evil" after the fall (Gen 3:22). When humans tried to usurp the autonomous understanding and knowledge that only the infinite God is capable of having, they lost the genuine human understanding and knowledge associated with the image of God. As a result, their finite minds were only obfuscated by evil because they were not created to have autonomous understanding and knowledge of good and evil.[57]

Most importantly, the New Testament's renewed image of God does not just affirm the later Old Testament and apocrypha image of God, but it also comports with Genesis's image of God. Death is only the result of Adam's fall according to Romans 5:12; 8:10; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 53–55; and Revelation 21:4. Ephesians 4:23–24 defines the restored divine image as being "renewed in the spirit of your mind and putting on the new man, which according to [the likeness of] God has been created in true righteousness and holiness." Luke 1:74–75 concurs with Ephesians 4:23–24. Colossians 3:10 states, "the new [man]" … "is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created him." Finally, Romans 8:29 speaks of the renewed image in terms of being "conformed to the image of [God's] Son." Similarly, 1 Corinthians 15:47, 49 says, "Just as we have borne the image of the earthly [first man], we will also bear the image of the heavenly [second man]." Likewise, 2 Corinthians 3:18 states, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."

In sum, the image of the Triune God in the strict sense refers to concreated (Gen 1:26–27) righteousness, holiness, uprightness (Gen 1:31; Eccl 7:29; Eph 4:24; 2 Cor 3:18. cf. Wis 9:3), understanding, knowledge (Gen 2:16–17; Col 3:10. cf. Sir 17:7), immortality, and strength (Gen 2:16–17; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 47, 49, 53–55. cf. Wis 2:23; Sir 17:3) with which human beings, both males and females (Gen 1:27), reflect their Creator. Christ is the essential image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3. cf. Wis 7:26); humans are the derived, normed, copied, patterned, and (accidental, or better) concreated image of God (Gen 1:26–27). Humans also bear the image in different ways among themselves (1 Cor 11:7). All believers have it fully before the fall and after the resurrection (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18) but eschatologically after justification (Eph 2:10; 2 Cor 5:17). Without a faith-relationship with the Triune God, the divine image cannot exist in man (Gen 2:16–17). God's Life-giving Word and the sacrament of the tree of life sustained both the image and faith in Edenic man (Gen 2:16–17), just like the means of grace sustain both the image and faith in the regenerated man.

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[55] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 83.

[56] Adolph Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, trans. James Langebartels, Heinrich Vogel, Richard A. Krause, Joel Fredrich, Paul Prange, and Bill Tackmier (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999–2009), 2:326–30. See also *LW* 1:110–11, 113.

[57] Von Rad, *Genesis*, 97; Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*, 165–66, Steinmann, *Genesis*, 66.

The Apology to the Augsburg Confession agrees with this definition:

> Thus original righteousness was intended to include not only a balanced physical constitution, but these gifts as well: a more certain knowledge of God, fear of God, and confidence in God, or at least the uprightness and power needed to do these things. And Scripture affirms this when it says [Gen. 1:27] that humankind was formed in the image and likeness of God. What else does this mean except that a wisdom and righteousness that would grasp God and reflect God was implanted in humankind, that is, humankind received gifts like the knowledge of God, fear of God, trust in God, and the like? This is how Irenaeus interpreted the likeness of God. After having discussed many other things related to this topic, Ambrose then says, "That soul is not in the image of God in which God is not always present." And in Ephesians [5:9] and Colossians [3:10] Paul shows that the image of God is the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth. Even Peter Lombard is not afraid to say that original righteousness is the very likeness of God, which was implanted in the human creature by God. The statements of the ancients that we cited do not contradict Augustine's interpretation concerning the image of God.[58]

Luther and the Lutheran Fathers also support this understanding of the image of God in the strict sense.[59] Still they often use "original righteousness" as shorthand for the image of God because they recognize the divine image was fundamentally passive righteousness.[60] The Formula of Concord concurs with this shorthand: "Original sin is a complete absence or 'lack of the original righteousness acquired in paradise' [Ap II, 15] or of the image of God, according to which the human being was originally created in truth, holiness, and righteousness."[61] Calov so recognized that human beings were created passively righteous and in a faith relationship with God that he spoke of "justification in the state of integrity" (*justificatione in statu integritatis*).[62] Of course, Calov did not mean that man had to be redeemed from sin before the fall.

Critique of Other Views of the Image of God

A sort of structural view of the image of God in the strict sense might be possible if it only meant that original righteousness was concreated. Since the structural view of the image of God does not mean this, it fosters a number of difficulties. The distinction between image and likeness is not exegetically tenable. Likewise, the distinction between an essential image and an accidental likeness is not contextually defensible. Johann Gerhard adds, "Since [righteousness and holiness of truth] are a list of qualities and virtues, it is clear that the image refers more to likeness in virtues than to nature."[63] Since man loses these qualities and virtues in the fall, the image of God in the strict sense cannot be understood structurally.

Memory, intellect, and will cannot constitute the image of God in the strict sense. Luther observes, "If these powers are the image of God, it will also follow that Satan was created according to the image of God, since he surely has these natural endowments, such as memory

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[58] Ap II.17–22.

[59] *LW* 1:61–65; Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works*, 7:321.

[60] Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1899), 219, 226.

[61] FC SD I, 10.

[62] Abraham Calov, *Theologia Positiva ... Ceu Compendium Systematics Theologici* (Frankfurt and Wittenberg: Johann Ludolph Quenstedt, 1690), 268, 274–75.

[63] Gerhard, *Succinct*, chap. 8, aphorism 5–6.

and a very superior intellect and a most determined will, to a far higher degree than we have them."[64] Moreover, if these same powers are what makes a man human even after the fall, then some people would seem to be more human than others given the fact that some (e.g., unborn, handicapped, etc.) people are not able to exercise these powers as well as others. Thomas Aquinas's tendency to reduce humanity to rationality seems especially dangerous. Memory, intellect, and will cannot be the image of God in the strict sense. After man lost the image in the fall, these powers remain, albeit corrupted.

The problems with the structural view of the image of God were compounded by Aristotelian substance ontology (i.e., metaphysical categories). Like Roman Catholics and the Reformed, Early Modern Lutherans used Aristotelian philosophy. Despite its positive uses, Lutherans recognized how substance ontology distorted Biblical anthropology. It was not just Roman Catholic anthropology that forced Lutherans to explicate Biblical anthropology in modified Aristotelian terms, the Flacian Controversy and Syncretistic Controversy necessitated this conversation as well. To counter synergism, Matthias Flacius maintained that man's "material substance" (*substantia materialis*) remained intact after the fall. However, the image of God, which had been his "formal substance" (*substantia formalis*), had been replaced with original sin, which was his new "formal substance."[65] Georg Calixt, conversely, propagated a Roman Catholic notion of a "state of pure nature," original righteousness as a superadded gift, and original sin as a "deficiency" (*carentia*) to advance irenicism in Lutheranism.[66]

The Lutherans confessed that the image of God (i.e., original righteousness) cannot be a substance because man loses the image in the fall.[67] They maintained that God would become the origin of evil and Christ would have to assume original sin to save mankind if original sin were substantial.[68] Besides passing remarks about fallen man being stamped with the "image of the devil,"[69] Luther does refer to original sin as "nature-sin" or "essential sin." Here Luther uses "nature" in the sense of "disposition," not "nature" in the sense of "substance." In other words, man's character rather than his essence has been fundamentally altered by the fall.[70] Now if the image of God and original sin are not substantial, then they can only be "accidental" in substance ontology. The Formulators and Orthodox Lutherans did reluctantly call them accidents,[71] but they warned that they were not mere accidents. In fact, Chemnitz writes, "There are many who so weaken the doctrine of original sin that they imagine that it is only a corruption consisting of accidents."[72]

The problem with calling original righteousness and original sin "mere accidents" is that it suggests there is a state of pure nature underneath them. A state of pure nature understands original righteousness to be a mere accidental superadded gift for bridling the conflict between

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[64] *LW* 1:61–62.

[65] Matthias Flacius, *Clavis Scriptvrae Seu de Sermone Sacrarum* (Basel: Eusebius Episcopius, 1581), 2:368–82.

[66] Georg Calixt, *Epitome Theologiae* (Goslar: Johann Vogt, 1619), 94–95, 105–6, 113.

[67] Ap II, 15–23; FC SC I, 10–12; Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works*, 7:510; Gerhard, *On Creation*, 293–95 (locus 11, par. 98).

[68] FC SD I, 30–34; FC SD I, 40–46. See also FC SD II, 81.

[69] *LW* 1:63.

[70] FC SD I, 51, 53.

[71] FC SD, I, 50, 54, 60.

[72] Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works,* 7:579. See also Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica,* 2:62.

the lower sensual and higher spiritual nature rather than something co-natural, or better concreated, in human beings (Gen 1:26–27). This idea, meant to guard against Pelagianism, suggested that God did not make a fully good creation.[73] If that were not bad enough, a state of pure nature also understands original sin to be an accidental deprivation of original righteousness rather than the total corruption of the human nature (Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; John 3:6; Rom 7:18: Eph 2:3).[74] This idea implies that human nature largely retained its integrity after the fall and has some active compacity to orient the unregenerate human to God. This innate ability to do more than civil righteousness apart from original righteousness is Semi-Pelagian. The impact of the state of pure nature does not end here. The concept paved the way for Immanuel Kant's deist idea that autonomy, even from God, was a necessary precondition for human freedom and morality.[75] Secularism would develop these ideas further to justify the privatizing of Christianity and ultimately the claim that a dependent-faith relationship with the Triune God only dehumanizes human life. Henri de Lubac led the charge against the state of pure nature in Roman Catholicism for this very reason.[76]

All of this was why Flacius wanted to make the problematic argument that original sin was a formal substance, and Chemnitz warns against calling original sin a mere accident. It is also why Lutherans rejected a state of pure nature. In accord with other Lutheran theologians, Calov says, "The Papists err, who invent still another state, which they call purely natural (*purorum naturalium*), which is nothing more than a pure figment of the Scholastics; since, indeed, a man never did exist, nor could exist, with the simple negation both of integrity and grace and of sin and misery, who was neither just nor unjust, and who neither pleased nor offended God."[77] It is further why the Formula of Concord calls the divine image and original righteousness "concreted" (*concreata*) and not a superadded gift.[78] In accord with other Lutheran theologians, Calov explains further:

> … [B]y this term [righteousness] … is now meant, according to the use of theological writers, that universal and exceedingly delightful agreement, συμφωνια, in the first man, of mind, will, and heart, with the intellect, will, and heart of God. … Righteousness is called original because it was first of all in man and because from the beginning he possessed the same after the manner of a concreated habit (*habitus concreati*); also, in order that the righteousness of man's first and original state may be distinguished from moral, imputed, and beginning righteousness, from what is perfected in another life, and from every other whatsoever; and finally, because it needs to be transmitted to posterity by generation … just as now in the state of sin, original sin is propagated….[79]

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[73] Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, 2:12–15, 38–43; Johann Michael Reu, *Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2nd ed. (Dubuque: Wartburg Theological Seminary, 1963), 87–88.

[74] FC SD 1, 6, 20, 22–23, 30. See also CA II; Ap II, 7–8.

[75] Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary Gregor, The Cambridge edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge: Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 166ff (AA 5:33ff).

[76] Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder: Crossroad Herder, 1998).

[77] Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, 4:386–87, 467ff. See also *LW* 1:142, 164–67; 12:308; Hollaz, *Examen Theologicvm Acroamaticvm*, 482–84; E. Hove, *Christian Doctrine* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1930), 131–32. Similarly, Hunnius adds, "Man has not been created in the state of sin and misery, nor as being subject to death, as he now actually appears to us." Hunnius, *Epitome Credendorum*, 47.

[78] FC, SD, I, 10, 27.

[79] Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, 4:598. See also *LW* 1:164–67; Konrad Dieterich, *Institutiones*

In other words, the original passive righteousness was concreated (i.e., not essential or merely accidental). The post-fall passive righteousness remains imputed as long as man is "at the same time saint and sinner" (*simul iustus et peccator*). That said, the Lutherans did acknowledge the mystical union or indwelling of the Trinity in pre-fall and regenerate man is a superadded gift.[80]

The anthropomorphite view of the image of God in the strict sense has a number of problems. It overlooks most of what Scripture actually says about the image. God is spirit (John 4:24). He does not have a physical body except in the person of Jesus Christ. The Father may have revealed himself twice in a visible manifestation (Gen 18:1–33; Dan 7:9–14). The Holy Spirit assumed the visible manifestation of a dove (Matt 3:16). Yet, neither the Father nor the Spirit ever became incarnate or have a material body. The Scriptures use anthropomorphic language to communicate the uncommunicable in terms that humans can understand. Believers certainly are called to reflect the divine image to others (Gen 1:26–27). What is reflected to others is righteousness, not the material form of God.

The functional view of the image of God in the strict sense equates image with dominion which is man's mastery and rule over creation as God's representative (Gen 1:26, 28–29). This view is so focused on what Genesis 1 says about the image that it ignores what Genesis 2 and the rest of the Bible say about the image. Genesis 1:26–28 never equates dominion with the image. Instead these verses suggest that the image is what makes dominion possible.[81] It is only after the image is bestowed that dominion is granted with another distinct word. Thus, dominion is framed as a purpose or effect of the image and is included among other such purposes or results of the image (Gen 1:28). Dominion is also not the core of the image in Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9.[82] It is not the core of the image in any of the New Testament passages that speak about the image's renewal either. Even though dominion is diminished by the fall (Gen 3:17–19), it is not completely lost like the image (Gen 3:23; 9:1–3). The unregenerate perform some measure of dominion (Gen 10:1–31).[83] If dominion were the essential mark of humanity after the fall, that would raise questions about the humanity of those who fail to exercise it optimally. Contrary to many critics of the Bible today, dominion properly understood does not foster patriarchy, exploitation, racism, colonialism, and environmental catastrophe. Sin is the origin of all that is truly disordered about the world.

Catecheticae … Expositio, ed. August Dieckhoff (Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1864), 233–34; Rudbeckius, *Loci Theologici*, 107–9; Gerhard, *On Creation*, 273, 307 (locus 11, par. 57, 116); Balthasar Meisner, *Anthropologia Sacra*, 3rd ed. (Wittenberg: Tobias Mevius, 1663), 45; Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica,* 2:9; Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:520. Other Lutheran used the word co-natural for the same idea. Heinrich Schmid calls all the excellences associated with the image of God "*natural* to man in his original state, not indeed in the sense that if he lost them he would no longer be the same being; but yet in this sense, that they were created along with him, and that they cannot be separated from him without making his whole condition different from what it formally was. This is expressed in the statement, that the image of God is a natural perfection, and not an external, supernatural, and supplementary gift." Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology*, 219. See also Hieronymus Kromayer, *Theologia Positivo-Polemica* (Frankfurt: Friedrich Knoch, 1688), art. 7, thesis 3; Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2:324–25.

[80] Gerhard, *On Creation*, 282 (locus 11, par. 79); Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, 4:467.

[81] Gerhard, *Succinct*, chap. 8, aphorism 67; Meyer, "The Image of God," 2:178–79.

[82] *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* [*TDOT*], s.v., "צֶלֶם."

[83] *LW* 1:67–68; William C. Weinrich, "Creation," in *Confessing the Faith: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology*, ed. Samuel H. Nafzger, John F. Johnson, David A. Lumpp, and Howard W. Tepker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 1:2801–81.

The Lutheran view of the image of God in the strict sense defended so far is a relational view. However, Karl Barth's relational view is problematic. He seems to base his view exclusively on Genesis 1:27. His relationality is really about how interpersonal relationships reflect the relationships of the person of the Trinity. His image does not require the original passive righteousness or faith. As a result, Barth's image of God can survive the fall. Barth's mixed gospel-law only further problematizes his conception of the divine image.

Some Irenaeus-influenced theologians have argued that the renewed image of God cannot be used to explicate the pre-fall image of God which is in some sense imperfect. They insist the image renewed in Christ is something greater and different that will only fully manifest itself in the human community at the end of time.[84] However, Ephesians 4:23–24 makes it clear that the "new man, which according to [the likeness of] God has been created in true righteousness and holiness" is the lost likeness being "**re**newed" (**ἀνα**νεοῦσθαι). The same is true for the "new self, which is being **re**newed (**ἀνα**καινούμενον) in knowledge according to the image of its Creator" (Col 3:10). Of course, the "new man" is also being distinguished here from the old man. But the way the new man is "new" is by being a restoration of the divine image that was lost.[85] To suggest that God created man imperfect so that he could accomplish something more in man via Christ not only contradicts Genesis 1:31, it imposes a process theology framework on the Biblical text.

Purpose of the Image of God in the Strict Sense

The divine image bearer in the strict sense is a passively righteous type called into being to reflect an archetype (Gen 1:26–27; 2 Cor 3:2–3). In other words, the divine image's purpose is to foster a recognition that human beings (i.e., type) have a responsibility first and foremost to God (i.e., archetype [Gen 2:8–17]), then to other human beings (i.e., fellow types [Gen 2:21–25]), and finally to creation itself (Gen 2:15, 18–20).[86] Passive righteousness drives human image-bearers to freely respond in these relationships with faith, active righteousness (Gen 2:16–17), vocation (Gen 2:8, 15), procreation (Gen 1:22, 28; 9:1, 7), and dominion (Gen 1:26, 28–30; 9:2–3; Ps 8:6–8. cf. Wis 9:2–3; Sir 17:2–3, 7) as defined by the framework of the law (Gen 2:16–17; 4:7) and the needs of the neighbor. In other words, human beings long to reflect the divine image and make God's name holy via their royal priesthood (Gen 1:26–27; Exod 19:5–6). God, moreover, perpetuates his providence and grace through the vocations and eucharistic (i.e., thank) offerings of these very same image bearers.

Loss of the Image of God in the Strict Sense

The Scriptures clearly say that Adam's progeny was created in his fallen image after the fall (Gen 5:3). Paul says, "Just as we have borne the image of the earthly [first man], we will also bear the image of the heavenly [second man]" (1 Cor 15:49). If Jesus Christ, the essential image

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[84] Kooi and Brink, *Christian Dogmatics*, 263–64. See also Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 178–80; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991–93), 2:10–15. Others have advocated that the image of God should be defined by wisdom literature rather than Genesis. See David Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

[85] Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2:334–35, R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 566–70.

[86] See also Werner Elert, *The Christian Ethos*, trans. Carl J. Schindler (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 23–29.

of God, came so that the fallen would "be conformed," "bear," "be transformed into," "be renewed," and "put on" Christ's image because they only have the fallen image of Adam (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10), then the image of God in the strict sense must have been lost in the fall.[87] While man remains human (Gen 3:9, 22) and God's good creation (Ps 8:5–9; 24:1; 50:12; 139:13–16; 1 Cor 10:26),[88] his humanity is deformed and curved in on itself. In the aftermath of the fall, Adam passed to all his progeny an "evil inclination" or original sin (Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:7; 143:2; Isa 6:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 5:12–21; 14:23; Heb 11:6). They experience death (Gen 3:19; Gen 5:5ff; Rom 5:12; 8:10; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 53–55; Rev 21:4. cf. Wis 2:23–24). Finally, mankind has lost created faith (Gen 3:17). For this reason, the Lutheran Confessions and the Lutheran fathers conclude that the divine image has been lost.

> That not only is original sin (in human nature) such a complete lack of all good in spiritual, divine matters, but also that at the same time it replaces the lost image of God in the human being with a deep-seated, evil, horrible, bottomless, unfathomable, and indescribable corruption of the entire human nature and of all its powers, particularly of the highest, most important powers of the soul, in mind, heart, and will.[89]

While this study has argued that passive righteousness and faith are fundamental to being fully human, the loss of the image shows why there are two kingdoms. To be sure, Christ is the Lord of the kingdoms of the right and the left. There is overlap between the kingdoms. Christians do not stop being Christians in the left-hand kingdom. Some dominion persists. That being said, there is no state of pure nature or common grace to fuel an optimist notion of cultural progress. God's Word and Sacraments are the sole source of grace. There is only law and providence in the left-hand kingdom. Unbelievers are not capable of applying the gospel (Rom 14:23; 1 Cor 2:15; 2 Cor 3:5–6; 2 Tim 2:15; Heb 11:6). When the left-hand kingdom attempts to administer the gospel, it excuses assaults on natural law and fails to correct injustices (Gen 9:6; Rom 13). When the right-hand kingdom makes the law its focus it become legalistic. This is why theocratic (e.g., Catholic Integralism and Protestant Dominion Theology) attempts to integrate the right-hand kingdom with the left-hand kingdom only end up preventing both kingdoms from performing their God-given duties.

Image of God in the Wide Sense

Many Lutherans have never addressed whether or not there is a structural image of God in the wide sense. Still, some have explicitly rejected it.[90] Others have explicitly affirmed an image of God in the wide sense that is essential or substantial to human beings.[91] Those that have

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[87] *LW* 1:339–40; Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works*, 7:515.

[88] FC SD 1, 30–34.

[89] FC SD I, 10–11. See also Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works*, 7:509–10; Gerhard, *On Creation*, 322–23 (locus 11, par. 129–132).

[90] The following theologians rejected the image of God in the wide sense: Friedrich Adolf Philippi, *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Samuel Gottlieb Liesching, 1854–82), 2:371ff; Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:518–19; Meyer, "The Image of God," 2:189–91; Hove, *Christian Doctrine*, 125–26; Lyle W. Lange, *God So Loved the World: A Study of Christian Doctrine* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1991), 190–91.

[91] The following theologians taught the image of God in the wide sense: Johann Wigand, *ΣΥΝΤΑΓΜΑ, Seu Corpus Doctrinae … ueteri Testamento … cinnatum* (Basel: Johann Oporinus, 1564), 402; Gerhard, *On Creation*, 326 (locus 11, par. 137); Johann Gerhard, *Confessio Catholica* (Frankfurt: Christian Genshius, 1679), 1371 (bk. II, pt. III, art. 20, chap. 2); König, *Theologia positive acroamatica*, 120 (pt. II, par. 8); Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-*

affirmed it typically call it the "remnant" of the divine image (e.g., Gerhard, Hollaz, Bengel, Meyer, and Giese), the "lesser principal or secondary conformity" (e.g., Gerhard), the divine image in the "improper sense" (e.g., König, Quenstedt, and Linsenmann), the "image of God in the wide (general) sense" (e.g., Wigand, Baier-Walther, Löber, Luthardt, Rohnert, Jacobs, Hoenecke, Lindberg, Dau, Lenski, A. Pieper, and Mueller), the "*character indelebilis*" even after the fall (e.g., Keil, Delitzsch), "certain external characteristics" of the likeness (e.g., Kretzmann), or the "shell of God's image" (e.g., Deutschlander). Those that have affirmed it have also noted that the wide sense is really what the church fathers meant by the substantial divine image (i.e., memory, intellect, and will) as opposed to the accidental divine likeness.

Two concerns have driven the debate about a structural image of God in the wide sense: Can this be affirmed without suggesting that the image of God in the strict sense partially survived the fall (i.e., without suggesting an active compacity for orienting oneself towards God remains in the unregenerate)? Is there any actually Scriptural support for the wide sense? The *Book of Concord* does not explicitly teach the wide sense. But the Formula of Concord maintains that there is something that remains in fallen human beings that distinguishes them as a "rational creature" in terms of the law and makes them "capable of conversion" without coercion by God's grace alone.[92] While the Formula rejected Viktorin Strigel's synergistic "*modus agendi* or way of accomplishing something good and beneficial in divine matters,"[93] it recognized with Luther that the unregenerate still have a "capacity not active but passive" (*capacitatem [non activam, sed passivam]*) for God.[94]

Do the Scriptures even speak about an image of God in the wide sense? Genesis 9:6, 1 Corinthians 11:7, and James 3:9 are typically cited as the Scriptural support for the image of God in the wise sense (cf. Wis 2:23; Sir 17:3; 2 Esd 8:44). Lutheran exegetes recognize the perfect verb in "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God he made [עָשָׂה] man" (Gen 9:6) could be understood as man only had been created in the image of God. However, Lutheran exegetes recognize that the present participle in "[man] is [ὑπάρχων] the image and glory of God," suggests that man still possesses the image of God in

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Polemica, 2:3; Johann Wilhelm Baier and C. F. W. Walther, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae Adjectis Notis Amplioribus … Confirmatur* (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia Verlag, 1879), 2:147–49; Hollaz, *Examen Theologicvm Acroamaticvm*, 478; Christian Löber, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Dogmatik* (St. Louis: Fr. Dette, 1872), 346; Chr. Ernst Luthardt, *Kompendium der Dogmatik*, 10th ed. (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1900), 161; W. Linsenmann, *Die Dogmatik der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche* (Saginaw: Saginaw Publishing House, 1901–2), 1:251–54; W. Rohnert, *Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Braunschweig: Hellmuth Wollermann, 1902), 197; Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1905) 96, 99; Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 2:320, 322, 328–29; C. E. Lindberg, *Christian Dogmatics* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1928), 156–57; W. H. T. Dau, *Doctrinal Theology* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 1:150–52; August Pieper, "The Law Is Not Made for a Righteous Man," *The Wauwatosa Theology*, ed. Curtis A. Jahn (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997–2022), 2:79n1; Steven P. Mueller, ed., *Called to Believe, Teach, and Confess: An Introduction to Doctrinal Theology* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 132; Daniel M. Deutschlander, *Grace Abounds: The Splendor of Christian Doctrine* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2015), 197, 199. See also Elert, *The Christian Ethos*, 23–29; Kolb, *The Christian Faith*, 55–57; Jerrold A Eickmann, "Anthropology," 1:272–81.

[92] FC SD II, 19–23.

[93] FC SD II, 61–62. See also FC SD, I, 10.

[94] FC SD II, 23, 60, 71; *LW* 33:67. See also Klaus Detlev Schulz, *Theological Anthropology and Sin*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics (Ft. Wayne: Luther Academy, 2023), 70, 74.

some sense (1 Cor 11:7).[95] They also recognized that the perfect participle in "the human beings who have been made [γεγονότας] in the likeness of God" (Jam 3:9), suggests humans still possess the image of God in some sense as well.[96] It should also be noted that the unregenerate carry out some measure of some of the purposes or effects of the image of God (e.g., vocation, procreation, and dominion). Thus, there is warrant for the teaching of the divine image in the wide sense.

The image of God in the wide sense seems to refer to a passive compacity for God, which makes unregenerate human use of memory, intellect, and will possible. Unlike the image in the strict sense, this image survives the fall, albeit totally corrupted, void of grace, unable to orient itself to God (Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:7; 143:2; Isa 6:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 5:12–21; 14:23; Heb 11:6). The divine image in the wide sense then would be essential and substantial to man,. The divine image in the wide sense also provides human beings with God-given dignity. When one of God's human representatives are dishonored, God is ultimately dishonored (Gen 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Jam 3:9). Mankind also continues to be loved by God (John 3:16) and remains essentially his good creation (Ps 8:5–9; 24:1; 50:12; 139:13–16; 1 Cor 10:26). What maintains and fuels this image in the unregenerate is natural law (Gen 4:7; Rom 2:14–15) and providence (Gen 8:22; Neh 9:6: Matt 6:26; Acts 14:17; 17:25; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3).

Nathan Jastram has argued for a new Lutheran way of thinking about the wide and narrow sense of the image of God. He proposes that divine image in the wide sense be defined as "to be like God." He then proposes two different kinds of narrow senses. His narrow sense 1. (i.e., former strict sense) refers to "godlike spiritual attributes lost in the fall, regained in Christ." His narrow sense 2. (i.e., former wide sense) refers to godlike natural attributes retained after the fall." Jastram himself admits this definition too would lead to confusion and does not adequately account for the comparative difference (e.g., between "Christ's complete, essential likeness to our partial likeness").[97] Ultimately, Jastram's aim to be as comprehensive as possible still cannot account for every nuance of the image and muddies the distinctiveness of the narrow sense.

Purpose of the Image of God in the Wide Sense

The divine image bearer in the wide sense is also a type meant to reflect an archetype. In other words, its purpose is to foster a recognition that human beings have a responsibility to God (i.e., archetype [Rom 1:18–25]) and other human beings (i.e., fellow types [Rom 1:26–32]). Fallen man's passive compacity for God, the demands of the law, and providence make civil righteousness (Rom 2:14–15) and some measure of some of the purposes or effects of the image in the strict sense possible (e.g., vocation, procreation, and dominion). But when unbelievers do these things, they are on some level always trying to justify themselves before the demands of

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[95] Curtis Giese, *James*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2021), 312.

[96] Johann Albrecht Bengel, *Gnomen of the New Testament*, trans. Andrew R. Fausset (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1863), 5:27; H. A. W. Meyer, *Commentary on the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 10:118; R. C. H. Lenski, *Commentary on the New Testament: The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistles to James* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 611; Paul Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible: The New Testament* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 2:507–8; Giese, *James*, 312. See also C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 1:287 on Gen 9:6.

[97] Nathan Jastram, "Man as Male and Female: Created in the Image of God," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 68, no.1 (January 2004): 56–58.

the law, themselves, God, and their neighbors (Luke 10:29; 16:15). Nevertheless, God still perpetuates his providence through the vocations and works of unbelievers.

Recreation of the Image of God in the Narrow Sense

To accomplish a divine act of recreation for those who bear the image of the fallen first Adam, Christ assumed a perfect human nature. He did this so that man could receive the image of the new Adam via his theanthropic salvific work (Luke 1:74–75; Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). Martin Chemnitz captures Christ's recreative work this way:

> … [God] poured into [man's] soul divine light, wisdom, and righteousness, etc., in order that man might be the image and likeness of God. Christ also, as He undertook to restore in man the image of God, used the process of breathing in or upon, as when he breathed upon the apostles and gave them the Holy Spirit, John 20:22. And there is no doubt that he intended to lead us to thoughts of that first inbreathing.[98]

In justification, the image of God is recreated already (Eph 2:10; 2 Cor 5:17) but not yet in all its fullness (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 John 3:2). The regenerate remains at the same time saint and sinner until the last day (Gen 8:21; Rom 7:15–25; Gal 5:16–17). Here Luther expresses the "already" and the "saint" aspects of justification

> But now the Gospel has brought about the restoration of that image [*Hoc autem nunc per Euangelium agitur, ut imago illa reparetur*]. Intellect and will indeed have remained, but both very much impaired. And so the Gospel brings it about that we are formed once more according to the familiar and indeed better image, because we are born again into eternal life, or rather into the hope of eternal life by faith, that we may live in God and with God and be one with Him as Christ says (John 17:21).[99]

Luther conversely captures the "but not yet" and "at the same time sinner" aspects here.

> In this manner this image of the new creature begins to be restored by the Gospel in this life, but it will not be finished in this life. But when it is finished in the kingdom of the Father, then the will will be truly free and good, the mind truly enlightened, and the memory persistent. Then it will also happen that all the other creatures will be under our rule to a greater degree than they were in Adam's Paradise.[100]

There are few better ways to close a reflection on the image of God than Martin Franzmann's poetic summary of its restoration in his hymn "Thy Strong Word."

Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous;
Bright with Thine own holiness.
Glorious now, we press towards glory,
And our lives our hopes confess.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia without end![101]

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[98] Chemnitz, *Chemnitz's Works*, 7:282.

[99] WA 42:48; *LW* 1:64.

[100] *LW* 1:65. See also FC SD, XI, 49.

[101] Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (St. Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, 1996), hymn 72:3.