

# What is Man?

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## Lesson Guide

LESSON  
ONE

IN THE BEGINNING



THIRD MILLENNIUM  

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## HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or text versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

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- **Before you watch the lesson**
  - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
  - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
  - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
  - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
  - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
  - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
  - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

## Notes

### I. Introduction (0:20)

Anthropology: the study or doctrine of humanity (*anthropos*: “man” + *logos*: “study”)

Theological anthropology: the study of humanity in itself and in its relationship to God.

### II. Creation (3:05)

The Bible relates the true story of creation in order to explain how humanity was designed to function within the world.

“Creation Ordinances” – moral requirements established by God’s works of creation.

- explicit ordinances – e.g., “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28)
- implicit ordinances – e.g., keep the Sabbath holy (Exodus 20:11)

**A. Biblical Accounts (5:37)**

Two accounts of creation:

- **Genesis 1:1–2:3** – God spent six days forming and filling the universe:
  - Day 1: God separated dark from light.
  - Day 2: God separated the waters above from the waters below.
  - Day 3: God separated dry land and sea.
  - Day 4: God filled the light and darkness with heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars).
  - Day 5: God filled the sky and oceans with birds and sea creatures.
  - Day 6: God filled the dry land with animals and created human beings to rule over creation.

Human beings were created in God's image and given authority over creation (Genesis 1:27-28).

- **Genesis 2:4-25** – This account contains more details related to God’s work on the sixth day:
  - God formed the animals from the dust of the earth.
  - God made the first man (Hebrew: *ish*) from the dust of the earth and breathed life into him.
  - Adam looked for a suitable helper from among the animals.
  - God created Eve, the first woman (Hebrew: *ishshah*), from Adam’s rib (Genesis 2:23).

Eve was under Adam’s authority in their marriage, but she was equal to him in the tasks God had assigned them as a race.

## **B. Historicity (11:12)**

Historicity: historical authenticity

### **1. Genesis (12:47)**

The record of Adam and his immediate family (Genesis 2–4) is intended to describe actual history.

- Most of Genesis is historical narrative:
  - Early patriarchal histories (chapters 11–37)
  - Later patriarchal histories (chapters 37–50)
- Genesis 2 is introduced by the same literary marker that introduces other historical accounts (Genesis 2:4).

The phrase “*elleh toledoth*” (“this is the account”; “these are the generations”) also introduces generational lists of:

- Adam – 5:1
  - Noah – 6:9
  - Shem – 11:10
  - Terah – 11:27
  - Ishmael – 25:12
  - Isaac – 25:19
  - Esau – 36:1,9
  - Jacob – 37:2
- Genesis gives biographical details about Adam’s life:
    - Eve became pregnant and bore 3 children: Cain, Abel, Seth.
    - Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born.
    - Adam died when he was 930.

Moses intended his readers to believe that Adam and Eve were real, historical people.

## 2. Old Testament (15:47)

Adam is presented twice in the Old Testament as a historical figure:

- The genealogy beginning in 1 Chronicles 1:1 lists Adam as the historical father of Seth.
- Hosea 6:7 compares the sins of Israel to Adam's sin.

The covenant with Adam is only significant if it was historical.

## 3. New Testament (17:43)

New Testament authors frequently attached theological significance to Adam's history:

- Romans 5:12-21 – Adam's sin is the reason human beings die.
- 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45 – Jesus saves his faithful people from the curse we suffer in Adam.
- 1 Timothy 2:13, 14 – Adam was created before Eve, and Eve sinned before Adam.
- Jude 14 – Adam's genealogies are reliable.

There isn't a single place in either the Old or the New Testament that suggests that Adam *wasn't* a real historical figure.



**C. Superiority (20:03)**

Adam and Eve were created superior to the rest of God's earthly creatures:

- Created on the sixth day, separately from the animals, as the culmination of creation (1:27).
- God called them "very good" (1:31).
- Only Adam is said to have his life breathed into him by God (2:7).
- God created them *in his image* and appointed them to rule over creation on his behalf (Genesis 1:27-28, 9:2; Psalm 8:6-8).

God created humanity to reflect his glory and his attributes in ways that other creatures couldn't.

Because human beings are likenesses of God:

- Our existence points to his power and goodness.
- No other creature carries this much honor and inherent dignity.

Humanity also has a superior role: to administer God's rule over the earth (Genesis 2:20)

The Scriptures confirm humanity's superiority by putting us almost on the level of angels in the present, and superior to angels in the future (Psalm 8:5).

Many people have tried to destroy the distinction between humanity and animals.

This view denies the fundamental dignity we have as God's image and undermines our authority as creation's rightful rulers.

Evangelicals should all agree that humanity was created to be superior to the rest of creation in both dignity and authority.

### **III. Composition (25:26)**

Composition: the different parts that make up a human being

- “body”
- “soul” or “spirit”

Scripture indicates that we can summarize our human nature in terms of the physical body and the immaterial spirit (2 Corinthians 7:1; Romans 8:10; 1 Corinthians 7:34; Colossians 2:5; James 2:26; 1 Peter 4:6).

#### **A. Physical Body (28:37)**

Scripture most frequently uses the word “body” to say that human beings are made of real, physical substance (Matthew 10:28).

The Bible also speaks of our physical qualities as:

- “flesh” (Colossians 1:24)
- “flesh and blood” (1 Corinthians 15:50; Hebrews 2:14)
- “flesh and bone” (Genesis 2:23)
- “strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30)
- “members” (Romans 7:23)
- individual parts (e.g., hands, arms, feet, eyes, etc.)

Our physical bodies are necessary aspects of our existence, and important parts of our human nature.

Even though our physical bodies are separated from our immaterial souls at death, they continue to be part of us (2 Chronicles 24:15, 16; Acts 13:36; John 11:17; Acts 13:29, 30).

In the general resurrection our souls and bodies will be reunited and will never be separated again (John 5:28-29).

## **B. Immaterial Soul (32:38)**

Scripture uses a variety of terms to refer to the immaterial aspects of our human nature:

- “soul” (Hebrew: *nephesh*; Greek: *psuché*) – generally refers to our immaterial nature, but sometimes includes the physical body (Genesis 2:7; John 15:13).

- “spirit” (Hebrew: *ruach*; Greek: *pneuma*) – refers to the immaterial aspect of human nature, but can also refer to “breath,” “wind,” or even an attitude or demeanor (2 Timothy 1:7)
- “mind” – the seat of our moral, intellectual, and rational thought (Romans 7:23)
- “heart” – our inner lives or the immaterial source of our thoughts, will, feelings and emotions (1 Samuel 16:7; 2 Timothy 2:22)
- “*me’eh*” – (Hebrew) bowels, womb, inward parts, or our immaterial being (Psalm 40:8)
- other terms for various parts – conscience, desires, reason, thoughts, mind, emotions

## 1. Origin (37:00)

Views regarding the origin of the human soul:

- creationists – God creates an individual soul for each human being when the person is conceived (Zechariah 12:1; Isaiah 42:5; Hebrews 12:9).
- traducianists – human beings inherit their souls directly from their parents (Romans 5:12; Hebrews 7:9, 10).

## 2. **Immortality (39:44)**

The Bible teaches that our souls continue to exist after our bodies die.

“Intermediate state” – time between our lives on earth now and the general resurrection when Christ returns.

Scripture affirms that the immaterial aspect of our human nature survives physical death:

- Believers – souls go to be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8; Luke 23:43; Acts 7:59; Philippians 1:23-24; Revelation 6:9).
- Unbelievers – suffer temporary punishment in hell (Luke 12:4, 5).

In Scripture, death does not mean “ceasing to exist,” but rather, falling under God’s condemnation.

## 3. **Trichotomy (42:09)**

Most evangelical theologians affirm “dichotomy” (the bipartite view): human beings are composed of *two* parts – body and soul.

Some theologians affirm “trichotomy” (the tripartite view): human beings consist of *three* parts – body, soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Corinthians 15:44; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Trichotomists argue that the spirit and soul are not the same thing:

- soul – lower immaterial functions (e.g., those that create our desires and appetites)
- spirit – higher immaterial functions (e.g., those that connect us to God)

Both dichotomists and trichotomists agree that human beings are partly physical and partly immaterial.

Our composition as body-soul beings encourages us to recognize the importance and interrelatedness of both.

#### **IV. Covenant (45:42)**

Covenant (Hebrew: *berîth*; Greek: *diatheke*) – a formal relationship between God and his people that resembled ancient suzerain-vassal treaties

Features of ancient suzerain-vassal treaties:

- the suzerain's benevolence toward his vassal
- the loyalty the suzerain required of his vassal
- the consequences that would result from the vassal's loyalty or disloyalty

God's covenants record his benevolence, explain the requirements of loyalty owed to him, and describe the consequences for loyalty or disloyalty.

Scripture strongly suggests that God made a covenant with Adam and with the rest of humanity through Adam:

- God was a sovereign king over Adam.
- God appointed humanity as his vassals to rule over creation (Genesis 1:28)
- God's relationship with Adam included:
  - God's benevolence
  - the requirement of Adam's loyalty
  - the consequences for Adam's obedience or disobedience
- God's covenant relationship with Adam is assumed later in the account of Noah (Genesis 6:18).

When God said he would "establish" (Hebrew: *qum*) his covenant with Noah, he meant he would confirm a covenant that already existed.

- Hosea referred to Adam's covenant (Hosea 6:7).
- Jeremiah 33:20, 25 refers to a covenant made during the creation week that would naturally include Adam and Eve as God's vassals.
- God's relationship with Adam paralleled God's relationship with Christ (Romans 5:12-19), and God's relationship with Christ was a covenant (Hebrews 7-13).
- Jesus claimed that he was initiating the "new covenant" at the Last Supper (Luke 22:20).

Theologians have referred to the relationship between God and Adam as the:

- "Adamic covenant" – Adam was the head over his people, and the first human administrator of the covenant.
- "Covenant of life" – would have resulted in everlasting life if Adam hadn't broken it.
- "Covenant of creation" – made during the creation week and carries implications for the entire created order.
- "Covenant of works" – promised life on the condition of humanity's works of obedience.



**A. Divine Benevolence (53:04)**

God's benevolence is the goodness and kindness he expresses toward his creatures.

For example:

- God elevated humanity to a position of authority over the rest of creation. (Psalm 8:4-6).
- God provided shelter and sustenance (Genesis 1:29; 2:8).
- God provided a way for fallen humanity to be redeemed and poured out his saving grace on them (Genesis 2:17).
- God continued to show grace to generation after generation of his people that repented of sin and turned to him for salvation.

**B. Human Loyalty (57:11)**

Many theologians say that Adam received the full moral law from God, which was later summarized in the Ten Commandments.

**1. Priestly Obligations (58:30)**

Adam and Eve did the work of priests in the Garden of Eden.

As a sanctuary, the Garden was the precursor to the tabernacle and later the temple:

- The tabernacle's lampstand resembled the Garden's tree of life.
- The cherubim that decorated the curtains of the tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant recalled the cherubim that guarded the Garden (Genesis 3:24).

Similarly, Adam and Eve were precursors of the priests that ministered in the tabernacle and temple:

- God walked and talked with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3), and later manifested his presence only to his high priest in the most holy place (Leviticus 16).
- Adam's assignment in the Garden is described with the same technical language as the priests in the tabernacle: to "work," *avad*, and "take care," *shamar* (Genesis 2:15; Numbers 3:8).

Humanity is still responsible to God for fulfilling the moral obligations that flow from Adam's priestly duties:

- Serve God and worship him
- Cultivate and guard the creation
- Turn the whole world into a sanctuary that's fitting for God's presence

God has given the church additional obligations (1 Peter 2:5, 9):

- Render sacrifices of praise and obedience to him.
- Proclaim his goodness to the world.

## 2. **Royal Obligations (1:03:01)**

God commanded Adam and Eve to increase the human race in order to spread its rule over the whole earth (Genesis 1:28).

The great King of heaven ordained humanity as his royal vassals to expand his kingdom beyond the Garden of Eden.

Humanity is to turn the *entire* planet into God's earthly sanctuary as an extension of his heavenly kingdom (Matthew 6:10).

This task falls especially on God's faithful people in the church.

**C. Consequences (1:06:23)**

God's covenant with Adam promised blessings for loyalty and curses for disloyalty.

Consequences of Adam and Eve's sin:

- They fell under God's condemnation, suffering judicial death.
- They died spiritually and condemned all their natural descendants to the same fate (Romans 8:10).
- God cast them from his presence in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22-24).
- Creation was put in bondage to corruption.

God did not kill Adam and Eve outright after they fell in to sin but instead he:

- extended benevolence to them in their new state of sin.
- implicitly restored them to spiritual life (Genesis 4:1, 25).
- promised to send a Redeemer to rescue them from *all* the consequences of their sin (Genesis 3:15).

The Redeemer would be Christ, who would keep the covenant perfectly, earn God's blessings, and share his blessings with those he redeemed.

Scripture implies that multiplying and ruling over the earth were blessings of obedience (Genesis 1:22, 28; Deuteronomy 7:14; 2 Timothy 2:12).

Everlasting life *would have been* a blessing of their obedience.

Jesus obtained life for us by succeeding where Adam had failed (Romans 5:12-19).

Because Adam was the covenant head of the human race, the consequences of his loyalty and disloyalty were matters of life and death for all humanity.

## **V. Conclusion (1:12:27)**





5. How does the Bible refer to the physical or material aspects of our human nature? Why are our physical bodies necessary aspects of our existence?

6. How does the Bible refer to the immaterial aspects of our human nature? What does Scripture teach happens to our souls after our bodies die?







## Application Questions

1. Some contemporary theologians teach that Adam and Eve were not historical people but merely “metaphorical” figures. How might this claim threaten our historic Christian faith? How would you defend the historicity of Adam and Eve?
2. Read Psalm 8 and meditate on it. Make a list of all the things Psalm 8 teaches you about your dignity before God. What does God think of you, since you have been created in his image?
3. How is human dignity being upheld and promoted by the society where you live? How is it being undermined or damaged? What can you do to defend humanity's God-given dignity within your realm of influence?
4. What are some common beliefs about human origins that exist in your culture? How do these views compare and contrast with the Christian view?
5. Scripture tells us that our bodies will be resurrected in the new heavens and new earth. How might this be an encouragement to our Christian brothers and sisters who have physical illnesses or disabilities? How can this hope help us minister to them without undermining the seriousness of their physical conditions?
6. Although the physical and immaterial aspects of our beings are interrelated, we sometimes focus on one over the other. What is the danger in doing this, and how can we give proper attention to both?
7. Scripture tells us that the priestly and royal roles assigned to Adam and Eve in the Garden have been passed on to us. How are you fulfilling this calling in your life? How does this energize you to continue with your work?
8. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

## Glossary

**Adamic covenant** – Covenant made between God and Adam; also known as the “covenant of life,” “covenant of creation,” or “covenant of works”

**anthropology** – Theological term for the study or doctrine of humanity

**berit/berîth** – Hebrew term (transliteration) most commonly translated "covenant"

**composition** – The different parts that make up a whole

**covenant** – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

**creation ordinances** – Moral requirements/commands established by God’s first acts of creation

**diatheke** – Greek term (transliteration) for "covenant"

**dichotomy** – Division into two parts; in theology, the doctrine that human beings consist of two parts (body and soul); also called “bipartite view”

**elleh toledoth** – Hebrew phrase (transliteration) meaning “this is the account” or “these are the generations”

**genealogy** – A record or list of the descendants of a person or family group

**historicity** – Historical authenticity

**intermediate state** – The state between our lives on earth now and the lives we will have in the resurrection

**nephesh** – Hebrew term (transliteration) commonly translated “soul”; can refer to the entirety of our immaterial human nature

**pneuma** – Greek term (transliteration) for spirit; breath; wind

**psuché** – Greek term (transliteration) for soul; life; self

**ruach** – Hebrew term (transliteration) for spirit; breath; wind

**soul** – The immortal, immaterial part of a human being; all the inner, non-physical aspects of our being

**suzerain** – A powerful emperor or king that ruled over smaller nations; the more powerful party of a covenant, the one to whom it was necessary to submit

**suzerain-vassal treaty** – A covenant arrangement made between a conquering emperor and a lesser ruler

**traducianism** – Belief that human beings inherit their souls directly from their parents

**trichotomy** – Division into three parts; in theology, the doctrine that human beings consist of three parts (body, soul, spirit); also called “tripartite view”

**vassal** – A king or nation that must submit to a more powerful emperor or king (suzerain)