

# The Image of God: A Biblical View of Man

by W. J. Ern Baxter (1914-1993)

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What is it to be human? There is much at stake in how this vital question is answered. How one answers will differ according to one's view of reality. And one's view of reality, with its particular understanding of human nature, directly shapes and governs the values by which one seeks to live.

The prevailing evolutionary worldview of secular humanism in the West over the last 150 years has led to the civilisational redefinition of human life and sexuality. In an evolving universe, humans are merely the protoplasm produced by a mindless cosmic process, differing in degree but not in kind to other animals, with no fixed nature or purpose to which they must conform. As products of chance, humans are free to fashion their own nature and values in whatever way they choose. No longer made in God's image, with certain inalienable rights, human worth is now determined by its convenience or usefulness, resulting in policies of death posing as human rights: the wilful termination of life through abortion and euthanasia and the normalisation of homosexuality and gender ideology. No longer having intrinsic purpose, value or dignity, human life has been devalued and debased in our time.

Even so, in the midst of the cultural devastation produced by this evolutionary worldview, the Bible – as revealed truth about reality – sets forth a distinct understanding of the human person that if re-apprehended can bring civilisational renewal. It is this unparalleled view of the human person that has been the greatest humanising force in history, shaping the freedoms of the West for centuries through its high view of human life with objective moral standards by which humankind is to be judged and governed.

If we are to stand for truth and freedom in this generation, defeating the ideological and spiritual forces that seek to defraud and destroy humankind, we must proclaim and personify the potent counter-cultural truth of Scripture concerning the human person, as made in the image of God.

This 6-part teaching by Ern Baxter will equip you to understand and apply the significance of the biblical revelation of man.

## Part 1: Statement of Fact

In this first part, Ern establishes the only basis for truly knowing ourselves—the Bible. Confronting the infiltration of an evolutionary worldview into Christian thinking, he exposes the incoherence of evolutionary theory, underlining why it matters what we believe about origins. In doing so, he unpacks the nature of God's creation and the essential differentiation of man within it as made in the image of God.

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## Part 2: Elaboration of Fact

In this second part, Ern underlines the fact of God's ownership and rule over the whole earth, which man, as his image, is created to steward under him. He brings into focus the cultural mandate, elaborating on God's distinctive purpose for humankind to fill and subdue the earth—not escape it as pessimistic eschatologies teach.

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## Part 3: The Corrupted Image

In this third part, Ern explores the nature of the original temptation and its implications both historically for the whole human race as well as its continuing allure to divert Christian's away from fidelity to God.

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## Part 4: The Composition of The Image

In this fourth part, while emphasising the essential integration and unity of the whole person, in order to better comprehend what it is to be human, Ern explores the biblical differentiation of the spirit, soul and body, and the outer and inner aspects of the person. In doing so, he brings indispensable definition and clarity to the true nature of man.

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## Part 5: The Physical Image

In this fifth part, the Bible's high view of the physical body is set forth, emphasising our duty to steward it to God's glory. In doing so, Ern counters the influence of Greek philosophy in Christian thinking that views the spirit realm as higher than the physical realm, leading to the devaluing, and even despising, of the physical body.

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## Part 6: The Express Image

In this sixth and final part, Ern explores the biblical revelation of Jesus Christ as the express image of the Father's person. The unique birth, the unique nature, the temptation, the life and work and redemptive act of the express image are considered, elucidating the significance of Christ as the Last Adam and Second Man—the beginning of a new human society.

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