

## **What We Believe About Anthropology – the doctrine of mankind**

To know ourselves rightly, we must first understand that we are created by God, made in His image, designed for His glory and accountable to His authority.

### **Man Is Created by God**

The Bible does not begin with man searching for meaning. It begins with God creating. (*Genesis 1:26–28*) Mankind is not the product of chance or evolutionary processes – we are made by design, on purpose, for a purpose. Our existence and identity is not self-determined – it is God-given.

### **Man Is Made in the Image of God**

What makes mankind unique in all of creation is that we are made in the image of God. We are designed to reflect something true about the God who made us. There are multiple ideas of what this means:

- **The Relational View** sees the image of God in our capacity for relationships.
- **The Functional View** focuses on what we are called to do.
- **The Holistic View** sees the “image of God” as a description of the totality of our being.

The most biblical understanding of the image of God incorporates all three of these views. In our relationships, our work and our purpose, the image of God is the reality of what we are.

### **The Image of God Is Broken — But Not Erased**

When sin entered the world, the image was not erased, but it was distorted. Instead of reflecting God rightly, we suppress His truth, resist His authority and focus inward on ourselves.

### **Jesus Christ — The Perfect Image of God**

Where humanity has failed, Jesus Christ stands as the perfect image of God. (*Colossians 1:15–16; Hebrews 1:3*) Jesus is the perfect image of God because He IS God. Everything humanity was meant to reflect, Christ reveals perfectly.

### **The Image of God in Us Is Restored Through Christ**

Salvation is the restoration of the image of God within us (*Colossians 3:9-11*). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the broken image is renewed.

### **Man Is Both Body and Soul**

To understand ourselves rightly, we must also understand what we are made of. (*Genesis 2:7*)

- The body is temporary, but important (*2 Corinthians 5:1*)
- The non-physical can be seen as both soul and spirit. (*1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12*)
- Regeneration (being born again) is being brought to life spiritually. (*Ephesians 2:1*)

### **We Are Designed for God’s Glory and Accountable to Him**

- We were created by God’s power, for God’s glory. (*Isaiah 43:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31*)
- All sin is a failure to glorify God. (*Romans 1:21*)