



Humanity: Dignity, Depravity, & Destiny

Week 5 – 10/5/2025

Human Destiny

What is human destiny?

Or to use a term you might see for this, what is the *telos* of humanity?

- *Telos* is Greek for purpose or design. (40x in NT)
 - Endpoint, goal, final stage, result/end, purpose, outcome
- We can apply this to the idea of human destiny – purpose and end.

My summary statement:

For believers, even as they struggle with sin, humans move toward the completion of their *telos*, to image God and glorify him forever.

I want to focus on each aspect of this definition as main themes for this morning, to image God and glorify him forever. First, let's look at,

I. THE *TELOS* OF HUMANITY IS TO IMAGE GOD FOREVER

Without saying it, in this class, we have been talking about this *telos* in terms of the image of God already.

The *telos*, the design, purpose, and goal for humanity is to image God and glorify him forever. This is the design for human destiny.

- God created humans in his likeness to fully image him.
- How? By living in perfect relationship with him and by perfectly reflecting who he is to others and in creation (Gen 1:26-31).
 - God created male and female in his image, likeness. Multiply. Dominion.

John Frame explains this *telos* of humanity well. He says,

“The goal of human life is to glorify God... Our meaning and significance are to be found in the fact that God has created us in his image and redeemed us

by the blood of his Son... we could not possibly ask for a more meaningful existence."¹

- Frame emphasizes that people are created in the *imago Dei* and that the critical component of redemption is the blood of Jesus Christ.

And so, having been redeemed by the blood of Christ, Christians look to Jesus as their example, for he is the image of the invisible God. (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3).

Colossians 1:15

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."

- Also 2 Cor 4:4, "Christ, who is the image of God."

Believers, as image bearers, have the *telos*, purpose to become like Jesus.

- We called this the "progressing image of God" in the storyline.

Romans 8:29

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

2 Corinthians 3:18

"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. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

Colossians 3:9–10

"Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

Indeed, the entire process of sanctification is described as,

- Believers being conformed to the image of Jesus and
- Being transformed into his image from one degree of glory to another (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18).

Believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit as they walk in obedience, They do this by putting off the old self and putting on the new self, which is

¹ Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 125.

- “created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24)
- And is “being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Colossians 3:9-10).

In the future, there will be a revealing of the *telos*, the purpose for which we are created. Glorification.

- Embodied physical existence is the fullness and future of humanity.

2 Corinthians 5:1–5,

“For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.”

- We have an earthly body “tent” but we long to put on our heavenly body, “dwelling.”
- We groan in this body, we’re burdened, we’re longing for the future.
- We’ll be further “clothed...mortal swallowed up by life” become immortal.
- And we can take heart, we have the Spirit now to help, and as a “guarantee” that these things will come to pass.
- Notice too the *telos*, purpose, “God has prepared us for this.”

1 Corinthians 15:42–44,

“So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.”

- **Four aspects:** Imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual

Philippians 3:20–21,

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

- Notice, our bodies will be transformed to be like his body, glorious, we’ll be fully transformed into his image!

1 Corinthians 15:49,

“Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.”

And we will be like Jesus and See him fully as he is!

1 John 3:2–3,

“Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”

So, at the second coming, believers will bear the image of Jesus and will receive imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual bodies (1 Cor 15:49).

Beeke and Smalley explain,

“The full glory of God’s image is a mystery that will be revealed with the coming of God’s incarnate Image, Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2)... One day the image will be revealed to those who belong to Jesus Christ and – beyond all dreams and expectations – we will share in it.”²

- So, believers, being like Christ’s image, will have the perfected capacity to see Jesus as he truly is (1 John 3:2).
- This is the perfected image we talked about in the storyline.
- This full glory of God’s image will be beyond our dreams and expectations!
- Therefore, for us believers, the image of God is not only, our “created design but also our eschatological destiny.”³
 - Image of God is our created design. Purpose.
 - Image of God is our future destiny. The goal, where we are headed.
- So the telos of humanity is to image God forever, our second point,

² Beeke and Smalley, *Reformed Systematic Theology, Volume 2*, 204.

³ John S. Hammett, “Human Nature,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed, Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 294.

II. THE *TELOS* OF HUMANITY IS TO GLORIFY GOD FOREVER

What does it mean that we are created to glorify God?

- To live for his purposes, to magnify him, to point to him, to honor him.
- To glorify is hard to define. But we know glory when we see it. When we look at the mountains – glory. When we hear a perfect song – glory. When we see a starry sky – glory. It amazes us, causes us to enjoy it and point others to it.
- The glory of God is the beauty of all his displayed perfections. His fullness his magnificence.
- To glorify him is to live for his name, to exalt in his beauty, to enjoy his majestic perfections.

Two aspects of this for our purposes this morning:

First, to glorify God forever is to enjoy God in all of his glory.

John 10:10

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

John 17:3

“And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

Psalm 27:4

“One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.”

Psalm 16:11

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

- We enjoy his presence, we enjoy his pleasures for us.
 - God gets glory, we get joy!
 - We glorify God by enjoying him forever.
- So first, to glorify God forever is to enjoy God in all of his glory.

Second, to glorify God forever is to exalt God in all of his glory.

John Piper explains that,

“Man was created from the beginning in God’s image that he might image forth God’s glory... He created us for his glory. God’s great aim in creating and governing the world is that he be glorified.”⁴

This is an amazing concept, it gets at the very purpose of our existence.

“Man was created from the beginning in God’s image that he might image forth God’s glory... He created us for his glory.” (Piper)

Isaiah 43:6-7,

“I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

- God speaks of his people “whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” We were formed and made by God to bring him glory!

I Corinthians 10:31,

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
o God’s intention for people is to, “do all for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31).

Rom 11:36,

“for from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever”

- o “**From him**” created all, source.
- o “**Through him**” he is the means by which all things are accomplished... he sustains us.
- o But also we are “**to him**” – God is the goal of all things, he gives the purpose to us.
- o This purpose is further explained, “to him be glory forever.”
 - One commentator says,
“The one from whom and through whom and to whom are all things deserves all the glory...God has arranged redemptive history to bring the maximum glory to himself.”

⁴ John Piper, “God Created us for His Glory,” *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007), Logos Bible Software.

- **Sum:** God is the creator, sustainer, and purpose provider for all things, that might be glorified forever!

So, "God's great aim in creating and governing the world is that he be glorified."
(Piper)

This includes,

All things: Revelation 4:11,

"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

All nations: Psalm 86:9,

"All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name."

All people:

- In the end, all people will glorify the name of God,

Revelation 15:4,

"Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

All believers, Matthew 5:16, Jesus said,

"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Jesus exhorted people to shine their light so others may see their good works and "give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16).

- We do good works so that people will be pointed to God, his glory, and praise him, the Father in heaven.

All this aligns with the Westminster Larger Catechism which says,

"Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever."

What will happen in the future for humanity? Where is all this going?

The future of humanity is certain. Jesus will come back, judge all people, And assign humans their eternal states,

- Some to everlasting condemnation in hell, and,
- Some to everlasting blessedness in the new heaven and earth.

(Matt 25:31-46; Rev 20:11-21:4).

God is holy and he is just, he will execute perfect justice. Does it fall upon Jesus on our behalf? Or does it fall on people who do not know him?

Jim Hamilton, in his book *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, summarizes very succinctly the future of humanity. He lays out the events,

1. Jesus, "defeats his enemies (Rev. 19:11-21),
2. Sets up his kingdom (20:1-6),
3. Puts down a final rebellion (20:7),
4. Enacts the final judgment (20:11-15),
 - o Some to everlasting condemnation in hell, and,
 - o Some to everlasting blessedness in the new heaven and earth.

"Salvation has come through judgment for God's glory. God's people worship him for his mercy and justice forever (19:1-3; cf. Isa. 66:21-24)." ⁵

5. And finally, Jesus rules with God in the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21-22).

The final judgment is the future, universal, public verdict rendered by Christ of all humans and angelic beings.

- o Believers acquitted on basis of Christ's work, his justification (Rom 3:21-4:25) and given degrees of reward (2 Cor 5:10; 1 Cor 3:12-15)
- o Unbelievers, stand condemned already (Jn 3:17-19, 36), some degrees of punishment (Luke 20:47; Matt 11:22,24).

Growth Project

Read Revelation 21-22 and list all the characteristics of the new heavens and new earth, the destiny of humanity.

⁵ James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment* (Crossway Books, 2010), 548-49.