

*The Whole Counsel of God*  
**Study 11**

**LOOKING BACK AT THE CREATION OF MAN**

*“If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.  
So also it is written, ‘The first MAN, Adam, became a living soul.’  
The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”  
(1Corinthians 15.44-45)*

We have approached the subject of the nature of man from the creation of man related in Genesis 1 and 2. In Gen 1.26 man is introduced as created in the image of God. As the image of God man is viewed in his relation to God and to creation and in his function of representing God and ruling over the material creation below him. Genesis 2.7 sets forth man in his created constitution. This is about what he is made of—dust from the ground and the breath or spirit of life from God—and what he is—a living soul.

Creation gives us the true starting point for the doctrine of man. All that is further disclosed in the Bible about man is based on the foundation of creation. But, while Genesis 1 and 2 give us the first word on man, they by no means give us the last word. To fill in what it means for man to be made in the image of God and to be body, soul and spirit, we have had to follow the themes throughout scripture. Creation only set things up for history which is made by the interaction between God and man. As this relationship is worked out, the revelation of God and the truth of man unfold. With Christ the revelation of God is completed and through this the created nature of man comes into the full light. We can only gain a full understanding of the nature of man when we look back on the creation of man from the point of view of what Jesus achieved for mankind in his humanity, and this we see in his resurrection. Paul opens up this view in 1Corinthians 15.

**A. THE TWO ADAMS**

Paul’s concern in 1Corinthians 15 is to show that the faith which we have in the risen Christ (vv 1-11) involves the faith that we will be raised from the dead with resurrection bodies (vv 12ff.). What some of the Christians at Corinth denied was not the resurrection of Jesus but the resurrection of the dead (v 12). It is not our interest at present to study 1Corinthians as a whole. We are only interested in the way the resurrection of Jesus is tied to Adam, and through this connection how the resurrection is tied to our created nature.

**1. Bringing Adam into a comparison with the risen Christ**

Paul strikes up the connection between Adam and the risen Christ in 1Cor 15.20-22:

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

The fact that Christ’s resurrection leads to our resurrection calls up the parallel between Adam and Christ. There is a contrast in that death came to all through Adam whereas resurrection comes through Christ. But, there is a significant contact. Resurrection picks up where death through Adam leaves the human race. There is also the important parallel: both death and resurrection come to all through a man. The connection between Adam and Christ that Paul is making adds to the force of his argument. It shows that the way God brings resurrection to all through Christ agrees with the way God set things up in creation. God set it up so

that the status of all the members of the race would be determined by the one human head of the race, and his work of bringing about the resurrection of the dead works in the same way.

The fact that Jesus' resurrection leads to ours fits in with the established order of creation. There is a foundational principle involved in this. When Adam sinned and brought in death, God did not give up the order of creation that he established. God did not back out of his order. Rather, he took up the problem and worked through his created order. The way the gospel message of the resurrection fits in with the order established in creation gives that message the support of the foundational revelation in Genesis 1 to 3.

The connection between Adam and the risen Christ allows Paul to compare the created nature of man and the nature of resurrected humanity in Christ. In 1Cor 15.45 he makes the comparison with the creation of man in Gen 2.7 as follows: "So also it is written, 'The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.' The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit." Paul draws on the fact that the LORD God made man from the dust of the ground in vv 47-48: "The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly." Finally, in v 49 the apostle draws on Gen 1.26 and 5.3 that say that man was made in the image of God and that Adam fathered a son according to his image: "Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly."

## **2. The way to think about our natural body and the resurrection body**

To understand the contrast and comparison between the created humanity of Adam and the risen Christ, we have to follow Paul's argument in 1Cor 15.35-49.

In v 35 Paul is taking up two questions raised as objections to the idea of resurrection. They are: "How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?" Paul answers these questioned in reverse order. The question, "And with what kind of body do they come?" is answered in vv 35-49. The question as to how the dead are raised is answered in vv 50-57. This yields a chiasmic arrangement (which is common in Paul's letters) as follows:

Q1: How are the dead raised?  
Q2: And with what kind of body do they come?  
Answer to Q2: vv 35-49  
Answer to Q1: vv 50-57

Our interest lies in Paul's answer to second question. Notice that the question is not why resurrection is necessary. That question would point to the entrance of sin and death into the world through Adam, and Paul does take this into account. Rather, the question concerns the nature of the resurrection body. This touches on the resurrection body in comparison to our bodies, the body we see and know which was created by God. That is why Paul brings Gen 2.7 into direct contrast with the risen Christ and the resurrection body.

### **a. Learning from the creation in which we live (1Cor 15.36-41)**

Paul calls the person who objects to the doctrine of the resurrection with the question, "And with what kind of body do they come?" a fool. This person will not believe what he cannot see or conceive of. He limits his view to one type of body, the body he has, and limits the possibilities for what God can do to that. Paul points him to the creation in which we live and points out that God's works in creation do not point to only one type of body. Rather, they point to the kind of change and variety that is involved in resurrection. The person's objection shows that he has not taken the time to think through the way creation shows how God works. Because he defines reality and all possibilities by his limited way of looking at things, he is called a fool.

Earlier we noticed that Paul places the resurrection of the dead into God's created order of setting up the whole race under one head, which is seen in the fact that death came on all through one man. The doctrine of resurrection fits with the way things were set up. Now the apostle fits it in with the natural order of creation. To appreciate his way of reasoning, we must enter into his way of seeing the world. The creation does not present the limits of reality. Rather, it shows us how God works and presents analogies for how we are to conceive of his further works. We must be careful to state the line of reasoning correctly. The different types of bodies in the material creation do not prove that there will be a resurrection. But, when the reality of resurrection is presented to us in the resurrection of Jesus, creation opens up to us a view of how God works and offers analogies by which we can understand the resurrection body as true to the character of God's creative work.

Paul points to three facts in creation that should enable us to conceive of the resurrection body as a body that is different from our present body.

*i. Changes in the physical state of being (vv 36-38)*

Paul first points to the example of dying and rising offered by nature: "That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies" (v 36). Here Paul picks up the theme of death and resurrection pointed out in v 21. Paul also uses this analogy of sowing seed to make a contribution to the answer to the question as to the kind of body with which the dead will rise. Sowing is not a matter of planting the full plant. Rather, one sows the naked seed which dies (i.e., loses its form as a seed, v 37) and then God who works all things in nature gives the seed that has died a body that is very different from the seed (v 38). The fact that each seed is given its own body (v 38) points to the identity between the seed that dies with the body that is given when the seed comes to life. The different body is not unrelated to the seed that is sown. It shares the same identity.

From the plant world Paul points out two phenomena that contribute to our understanding of resurrection. That which dies comes to life, and in coming to life God gives it a body that is very different from what was sown.

In the analogy of the seed, Paul is suggesting that our body, as created in Gen 2.7, is only a seed out of which God raises the new body. As we follow Paul's reasoning, we will see that this suggestion ought to be taken seriously.

*ii. Different kinds of flesh (v 39)*

Paul moves from plants to living creatures: men, beasts, birds and fish. He does not now speak of different bodies but of the different types of flesh God has created. The body refers to the organ through which a creature has its being and appears in the physical world. The flesh refers to the physical nature of the living creature. In the different types of flesh, we see that God is not limited to one type of physical nature. The fact that God created bodies with different types of flesh or different natures, each suited to the function and sphere of the creature, opens up to us the way we can conceive of the resurrection body. We are to think of a type of physical nature that is suited to resurrection life which is different than our present life.

*iii. Different spheres of existence (vv 40-41)*

Paul returns to the theme of bodies again. Now he points out that bodies differ in their sphere of existence and glory. There are heavenly bodies and earthly ones. This touches on a basic theme in the Bible. The created heavens point the mind upward to the realm of God and angels, the spirit world. So, it is quite natural to take the heavenly bodies as symbolic of a mode of existence in the heavenly or spiritual state. Paul underscores the fact observed in the heavens: there is variety of glory (v 41).

**b. The resurrection of the dead (vv 42-49)**

Paul turns from the bodies in our world to the resurrection with this line: “So also is the resurrection of the dead...” (v 42). The ideas about differences in bodies learned from creation are now directly applied to our understanding of the resurrection body.

i. *The change in state (vv 42-44a)*

In v 37 Paul said that the bare (lit., naked) grain is sown. This is parallel to the state of the body that dies: it is sown a perishable body, sown in dishonour and weakness as a natural (soulish) body. The body that God gives in resurrection stands in direct contrast to the body that dies. It is imperishable, raised in glory and power as a spiritual body. The difference between the body that is sown and that is raised is as different as the bare grain and the plant that grows up from it (v 37).

ii. *The difference in kind of body (vv 44b-46)*

Paul made four contrasts in describing the change of the state of the body:

perishable	imperishable
in dishonour	in honour
in weakness	in power
natural	spiritual

The word translated *natural* in the English Bible is the Greek word *psuchikon* which comes from the word for soul (*psuche*). That Paul consciously chose this word for its reference to the human soul is made clear in v 45. Our natural body is *psuchikon* because Adam was made a living *psuche*. To keep the contrast that Paul intended, we should not translate with “natural” but with “soulish”.

The nature that is imperishable and in glory and power is spirit (*pneuma*). This is basic to the biblical view of reality. So, it is quite biblical for Paul to set the spiritual (*pneumatikon*) body in contrast to the soulish one.

When we think of the body being sown as perishable and in dishonour and weakness, we think of the dying state of our existence after the fall of mankind. Through Adam death came upon all so that, indeed, our bodies die as perishable and in dishonour and weakness. But, by saying that this body is a soulish body on the basis of its created nature as set forth in Gen 2.7, Paul points out that the difference between our bodies that are sown in death and the resurrection body is not simply the difference between our body in a fallen state and our new bodies. The fact that our bodies are perishable and weak goes back to the created nature of the body—it is soulish.

By bringing the contrast between our present mortal body and the resurrection body down to a difference between soulish and spiritual bodies, Paul has come to a definitive answer to the question raised in v 35: “And with what kind of body do they rise?” The answer is: with spiritual bodies that are as different from our present ones as the nature of a created soul is from the nature of spirit. In 1Cor 15.44b-46, Paul opens this up.

Paul goes on to reason, “If there is a soulish body, there is also a spiritual one” (v 44b). To understand the logic, we have to bring with us what Paul has established. The soulish body is perishable and weak. What is spiritual has the nature of spirit about it which is imperishable and powerful. It has the characteristic of divine life. Within the scheme of a body that is sown in death and one that is raised in life, it follows that if the dying body is soulish the one that is raised is spiritual.

Paul gives the basis for this difference in bodies in v 45. He writes, “So also it is written...” He quotes Gen 2.7 to show that the first man, Adam, became a living soul. As we noticed in our previous study, Adam or man is never called a spirit in the OT. When described as a living creature, man is called a soul or a living soul, and it is always understood in the OT that he is a soul in contrast to being a spirit. This means that

man is alive, but he does not have a nature which is imperishable and powerful. He is weak, and his life is vulnerable. This is not the result the sentence of death for sin passed over man. Even in the Garden of Eden, man as a living soul could only live forever by having access to the tree of life. Life was not in Adam's own nature. The breath of life, or the human spirit from God, has its seat in his flesh of dust. The dust, the material base of man's being, has no power of life and of itself would come apart. This makes man mortal by nature. Gen 2.7 establishes Paul's point—Adam was a living soul and his body was soulish in that the life within it was that of a created and dependent soul.

Paul has already set up Christ as a man who answers to Adam in 1Cor 15.21-22. Now he draws on this to present the last Adam. In contrast to being a living soul, he is a life-giving spirit. The word spirit here does not mean an immaterial being or a being without a body like an angel. We have already seen that by the word spiritual in v 44 Paul is referring to the nature that is imperishable, existing in glory and power and heavenly. The resurrection body has this nature that belongs to God. Now in v 45, Paul uses the word spirit for Christ as life-giving. Jesus uses the word spirit as that which is alive and gives life in Jn 6.63 when he said: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." The last Adam is the risen Christ who as a life-giving spirit makes that which is sown in death come to life (v 36).

The contrast drawn in 1Cor 15.45 between the first man Adam and the last Adam is not the same as the one drawn in vv 21-22: death came through a man, Adam, and resurrection from the dead came through the man, Christ. Now it is a contrast of bodies of different natures that God has brought about in the creation of Adam and in the resurrection of Jesus. In v 46 Paul points to the order in which these two types of bodies came into being: first the soulish and then the spiritual.

*iii. The different sources for the two humanities (vv 46-49)*

Paul now takes up the point of the third analogy with creation which he made in vv 40-41: there are heavenly bodies and earthly ones.

"The first man is from the earth, earthy" (v 47a). This is taken from Gen 2.7 which says that the LORD God formed man of the dust from the ground (or earth), and this defines Adam's nature as earthy (confirmed by God's word to Adam in Gen 3.19, "For you are dust"). A key point made in the creation account is that the earth has no life in it and cannot make anything alive. Life comes down from above, from God. This points to the way Christ stands in contrast to Adam: "The second man is from heaven" (v 47b). The risen Christ is in view. Jesus was raised from the grave, from under the earth, but his resurrection life is the life of God as God has it. It is eternal and immortal, full of divine glory and power. In his resurrection life he is enthroned in heaven at God's right hand (and so on equality with God) and he gives us life by the Spirit sent from heaven. We will receive our resurrection bodies when Christ comes down from heaven in his resurrection body to take us up to be with him in his heavenly existence (1Thess 4.16-17; 2Thess 1.10; Col 3.1-4).

In vv 48-49 Paul points out the connection between the two men and all of those who are in them: "As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly."

The resurrection of Jesus does not simply pick up where Adam left off—in death. It touches on the very created nature of man. The resurrection body transcends the created body. The spiritual body and heavenly man answer to and replace the soulish body and earthy man that God created.

**c. The kingdom theme (1Cor 15.50-57)**

Paul takes up the first question posed in v 35 with these words: "Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (v 50). Paul is bringing together two key themes that he has used to expound the truth of the resurrection. The first is the

theme of kingdom opened up in vv 24-28. The second is that of the perishable versus the imperishable body which is taken over from v 42.

The concept of kingdom in the Hebrew of the OT and the Greek of the NT is that of reign. Paul expresses this in 1Cor 15:25-27 by saying that God the Father has put all things under the feet of the risen Christ and that he must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, which will be accomplished when death is abolished. The kingdom of God is the reign of God in life as triumph over death. This triumph will be realized and celebrated in our resurrection (vv 54-57). The themes of the kingdom of God (v 50a) and the imperishable body (v 50b) are tied together in the resurrection.

The theme of the kingdom in v 50 ties in closely with the theme of the *image* found in v 49. Both are creational themes found in Gen 1:26-28. Adam was made in the image of God and was given the mandate to reign. In Genesis 1 mankind was to reign over the animals and the earth, but after man became a slave to death his reign was no longer a matter of ruling over the lower creations. It now means defeating that which has subdued man—and this means defeating Satan and death. Fallen mankind could not achieve this. Christ achieved this for us, but he did this by taking up the order set in creation: he did it as a man to realize God's goal for man, i.e., to reign. Since the conquest had to be over death and over the hierarchy of wicked angels in heavenly places, the reign now must be the reign of God in heaven. Again we see that Christ took up creation and in fulfilling the role of man went beyond creation to resurrection and the heavenly humanity.

Paul has tackled two objections to the doctrine of the resurrection, which he listed in v 35. The question as to *the kind of body* in which the dead will be raised was derived from what we see in the natural order of creation. The question as to *how the dead will be raised* is given a different kind of answer. This is a mystery. Paul said that flesh and blood, i.e., our natural bodies, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. There is nothing inherent in the nature of the first creation that can make the dead rise. So, the “how” of the resurrection is a mystery disclosed in Christ. That is why Paul does not now reason toward an understanding. Rather, he turns to the mode of prophetic announcement (vv 51-53), the victory cry over death (vv 54-55) and thanksgiving to God (v 56). Paul closes with an application of this truth and this vision of our destiny to our present life in the body (v 58). The truth of the resurrection bears on the way we see ourselves and live our lives.

## **B. UNDERSTANDING THE CREATION OF MAN FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**

Our study in 1Corinthians 15 has opened up to us the relationship between creation and the resurrection. Now we can explore what this relationship shows us about the created nature of man. In resurrection we have the end of the created nature of man and move beyond what we find in Genesis 1 and 2. So, we are looking backward to see what the beginning looks like from the end. This end seals the doctrine of man. It shows us what the full potential of human nature is. It also points out the limit and destiny of our created being.

### **1. The connection between creation and resurrection**

Paul wants the Christians to understand the resurrection of Christ and their own resurrection bodies within the framework of creation. The resurrection of Jesus is in continuity with the creation of Adam and his place as head in relation to the race. In bringing about resurrection life, God works in continuity with his creation of the human race in Adam.

Paul also sees the created order of plant life, the variety of kinds of flesh and the bodies in the heavenly and earthly spheres as pointing to the principle of difference in kinds of bodies, which principle is extended to envision the resurrection body as a different type of body. The apostle does not see the physical creation as limiting the possibilities of types of bodies. Rather, it points us to the fact that God does not limit himself to one kind of material being. Paul's view of creation points to a profound insight. The material creation

brought about in Genesis 1 is a shadow of the eternal reality God is bringing about. In the language of Col 2.17, things within the physical creation are a shadow of what is to come.

The way Paul anchors the resurrection in creation is of extreme importance for our understanding of salvation. Redemption is true to creation. It is based on the order of creation, reflects it and is worked out through it. This must control the way we think of salvation. If salvation were realized in the escape of the soul from the body to be at rest in a disembodied state like God and the angels, then salvation would be a revolution against creation. In a revolution the first order is abandoned and overthrown for something different. A revolution denies continuity with or any development through the old. The pagan mind has sought this kind of salvation, whether in the Greek West or the Hindu East. This kind of liberation may suit the way people think and imagine things, but it would mean that the creation was a mistake or even an evil that must be gotten rid of, and this would deny the glory of God as the creator. In creation God made no mistake. Though mankind has sinned and death came in as a temporal defeat of creation, God moves ahead affirming his creation and working through the created order.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body through Jesus Christ as the last Adam is a cornerstone for biblical doctrine. It affirms that redemption is not an abandonment of creation. Resurrection is the fulfillment of what God made mankind that upholds the whole created order. I have called this a cornerstone because there are other aspects of the created order that we have not explored yet. These aspects of creation must be built into our doctrinal understanding on the basis of the connection made between creation and salvation in the doctrine of resurrection. Any spirituality that abandons the foundation of creation is a doctrine of demons, the spiritual enemies of God (1Tim 4.1f.).

## **2. Going beyond creation**

The resurrection of Jesus and of our bodies at his coming is not just a matter of overcoming death which entered the world through Adam. Resurrection takes human existence beyond the first creation.

Resurrection is not resuscitation. In resuscitation, death is reversed. The dead person is brought back to life on this side of the grave to return to the kind of existence he had before he died. If Jesus had reversed death, he would have come back to life as he lived it before his death. This would be a model for salvation as a return to the original creation. That which was added to creation through sin and death would be reversed and man would be returned to the original state. 1Corinthians 15 makes it clear that this is not the case.

Resurrection is triumph over death and brings the human body into the life, power and glory that belongs to God. In resurrection we will have eternal life, and this will be the very life of our bodies. This is not the life created in the beginning.

The fact that resurrection goes beyond and transcends creation sets the trajectory of life in Christ. In no way are we to think of salvation as a turning back to an original state untouched by sin. God does not reverse the effects of sin and bring us back to a state of innocence. No, sin continues to exist, and corruption or decay continues to work in our earthly bodies. We move through this state to receive a resurrection body. This sets a principle that applies to all aspects of life. Salvation does not involve a movement “back to the land” as a return to the ideals of Eden. We must live in the created order, and we must move through that order under the judgment of death, and through this we live toward a new creation that transcends the original creation.

The forward direction set in the doctrine of resurrection is built into the gospel. The gospel calls people to repentance. In the OT the call to return to the Lord was a backward call. Israel was called to return to the state set up in the past, the covenant made at Mt Sinai. This covenant held up the ideal of returning to a blessing in the land that harked back to Eden. But, the Law had the effect, and the divine purpose, of forever closing off the backward route. Israel broke the Law and came under the irrevocable curse of the covenant. This meant that the vision of salvation had to be forward looking. Against the background of Israel’s failure and the inevitable judgment of God, the prophets pointed forward to the Messiah and

kingdom of God. The gospel that Jesus proclaimed took this forward view up. The reference point for the call to repentance was not the past, the Law given at Sinai, but the future—the kingdom of God that had drawn near. The people were called to a change of mind toward God’s future breaking in. This future was God’s reign, and it showed that the very conditions of existence, even if one was righteous within the present order of things, were wrong. Satan, sin and death ruled, and to live within the status quo of the present age was a resignation to the authority of darkness. People had to reorient their minds and change from thinking in terms of what was in the past and what is the prevailing order in the present toward what was coming to be. The reign of God that drew near was filled in by the resurrection of Jesus. The apostles proclaimed this resurrection and called people to a repentance and faith that oriented them away from the conditions of life in this age toward entering the resurrection life in Christ.

God’s future for mankind in resurrection life is a new creation but it is not a separate creation. It is worked through the first creation and its order. The transition is made through the cross. God’s will as set in the creation is obeyed, but the crucial obedience goes beyond this in that it is obedience to the decree of the broken law, that mankind must die. Jesus carried this obedience through for us in his sacrifice for sins, and now gives us the gift of a life in which we can live within his obedience unto death toward resurrection life.

### **3. The limit, potential and the destiny of our created nature**

Death brought out the limitations of our created nature. Human nature as created by God is mortal and weak. After mankind came under death, there was no power or capability in human nature to secure life as victory over death. The resurrection of Jesus seals this. The teaching, such as we find in Judaism and Islam, that people will be resurrected by the power of God on the basis of their own merit ascribes to human nature the foundational role in resurrection: man provides the basis for it. The fact that Jesus achieved resurrection life for us seals the fact that we can do nothing to achieve life. We can contribute nothing toward it. There is no power in nature and no merit in man.

This limit is true to the creation of mankind. Adam had no role in his own creation. He was made a living soul by God’s will, power and goodness, and he contributed nothing, not even the reception of the life given to him. As a created living soul, he had no life-giving power in himself. Death presses this on us, and the resurrection of Jesus seals this as an eternal reality against the religious and philosophical vanity of the human mind that ascribes to man a role in bringing about his own eternal life.

The doctrine of resurrection as set forth in 1Corinthians 15 also shows the potential of created human nature. Paul argues in 1Cor 15.44: “If there is a soulish body (the body of Adam as a living soul), there is also a spiritual body (the resurrection body).” We have seen how the doctrine of resurrection is not just tied to death that came through Adam but also to the soulish nature of the created body. The creation of Adam with a soulish body set mankind up for a spiritual body. The resurrection shows that the created body has the potential to be sown and raised as a spiritual body.

The potential in the created body cannot be realized from within the body. As a soulish, the body is alive but has no life-giving power. The potential is in God. God designed the body so that it would die as a result of sin, but he also designed it that he could raise it as a spiritual body.

The revelation of God in Christ opened up to us the eternal purpose of God, and this is the purpose formed among the divine persons of the Godhead in eternity prior to creation. This eternal purpose is stated in Rom 8.29 as follows: “For those whom He (i.e., the Father) foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.” God designed the soulish human body for this destiny, and that destiny is realized in the resurrection body.

Genesis 2.7 sets forth the created constitution of man. The fall of mankind shows us the weakness of this constitution. The resurrection of Jesus shows up what is not revealed in the creation account. Man was created in such a way that his created body was the seed for a resurrection body in which the very life of God is the life of his body. The implications for our understanding of man are profound. Our created nature finds its fulfillment in Christ, not narrowly focused on the Jesus who shared our natural condition on earth

but focused on the Christ who made his way through that natural condition to resurrection life. To find the meaning of our existence in our created state and to see our fulfillment in the self actualization of this state is to violate our created nature and to bring ourselves to eternal ruin. As we move on in exploring the whole counsel of God, we will have to draw on these themes again and again.