

The Human: What Does it Mean to be Human?

The gods We Imagine—part 2

October 4, 2026

Invictus

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

-William Ernest Henley

What is a human being? Primary secular narratives:

- a. Darwinism-
- b. Marxism-
- c. Naturalism, postmodernism-
- d. Feelings and desires-

Four biblical meta-narratives

Metanarrative #1: Dignity: the Creator creates the crown of His creation

God is the measure of all things, not man.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Psalm 139:1 You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. ² You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. ³ You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. ⁵ You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. the night will shine like the day,

¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, ^e God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸ Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you.

Metanarrative #2: Depravity: The Fall, mankind’s dark side)

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ” ⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was

afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt. Who can understand it?

Isaiah 53:6 All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned, each of us, to our own way. And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

- **The strange mix of dignity and depravity**

Romans 7:18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. “For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.”¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Metanarrative #3: Substitution (and sacrifice)

Jeremiah 13:23 Can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

The shocking remedy!!

- **Substitution**

Romans 5:8 For God demonstrated His own love for us in this, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!

Leviticus 26:19 I will break down your stubborn pride...

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of deeds done by us, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal by His Spirit.

- **Sacrifice**

1 Peter 3:15 For Christ also died for sin, once for all, the Righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.

Metanarrative #4: Reconciliation and transformation

- **Reconciliation**

2 Corinthians 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Galatians 4:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ,

We are given the most exalted status any human can enjoy!

- **Transformation**

Colossians 1:28-29 Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this end I toil, striving with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what God's will is—what is good, acceptable and perfect will of God.