

# The New Humanity: Islam, Gender Agenda, AI, or the Cross?

Psalm 8, Eph. 2:14-18

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**Introduction:** In our culture today there is a battle raging over the identity of humanity – what we are and what we will become. I know you're well aware of it. Sometimes it focuses on manhood (as in John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*, Ryan Michler's "Order of Men," Kevin Sorbo's campaign to return masculinity to Hollywood; but do these guys have the answers?). Other times it focuses on womanhood (Matt Walsh's "What is a woman?", Beyoncé's music and entertainment career, Gloria Steinem's pro-feminist activism, Oprah Winfrey's media empire, Irene Montero's political clout; do they have the answers?). Or is it the U.N. Women's organization that has the answers? Since 2019, U.N. Women explicitly promotes LGBTQI+ rights under the guise of promoting women's rights, abandoning traditional programs of education and nutrition, now dedicated to a "liquid" definition of humanity.

**1)** King David wasn't the first to pose the question about what a man is. But his is perhaps the most memorable reflection for us (Ps. 8:3-4): **"... what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?"** Both Hebrew words here translated as "man" refer to humanity in general and emphasize the transience and weakness of humankind. When David looks at the vast expanse and magnificence of the night sky, human beings seem so small and insignificant. Considering the majesty and permanence of the moon and stars that God created, David is overwhelmed with awe: "What do human beings matter here, O God, that You should pay us special attention?" Before David, Job had already asked this question, but with a different emphasis. Rather than being captivated by God's attention to humanity, Job was so caught up in his misery and suffering that he just wishes the Lord would leave him alone (notice the difference in tone!): **"What is mankind that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him, visit him every morning and test him every moment?"** (Job 7:17-18). The 21<sup>st</sup> century is frightfully ignorant of these sentiments, at least, in the West.

So while King David praises the Lord for granting humans such a superior position in His creation, Job is so depressed by his tragedy and illness that he can only imagine that God is somehow responsible for his suffering. Notice how our life situation affects how we perceive spiritual truth! David, on the other hand, has such a positive outlook at this point in his life that he proceeds to answer his own question about human identity: **"You made him only a little lower than the heavenly beings [Elohim] and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands, you have put all things under his feet."** (Ps. 8:5.6). In view of God's handiwork and the vastness of His creation, David is awestruck by the Lord's concern for humans and the position He gave us to rule over creation, to be responsible for our planet! There are echoes here of Gen. 1:26, where God made the decision to create humans in His own image and make us His caretakers over all creation. This is the biblical doctrine that from the beginning God's plan was for us to be His representatives on the earth, exercising dominion in His name over all the

other creatures and the environment. Also according to the Gen. passage, God's intention was always binary (male/female), for the formation of families to replenish the earth and teach this pattern to our children, so that we would take care of the planet and one another (our vocation!). How far have we wandered?

**2)** So in our society, there are many proposals for getting humanity back on track – rediscovering our true identity. One of them comes into special prominence next week. Ramadan 2024 is on the horizon, starting next Sunday evening (Mar. 10-Apr. 9). Does this leave you indifferent? Or should Christians also hear it as a call to prayer? Islam is the fastest growing religion in Europe, and in the world (Pew Research Center): in Europe, there were 30 million Muslims in 1990; 44 million in 2010; by 2030, they're projected to be 58 million, by 2050 reaching 11-14% of European population. In Islam, humanity's basic assignment is blind obedience to Allah, via submission to his prophet's every command, which has to be interpreted through local mullahs (who are sometimes totalitarian and misogynistic). Are there parallels there with Christianity? Maybe to a limited degree, but the differences are enormous! OT prophets and psalmists were often questioning God, doubting and struggling with His commands, because Yahweh values understanding as well as obedience, and biblical submission is always about relationship; i.e., there's a basic difference in the conception of God and humanity. Islamic leaders since the 1970's have been proclaiming they would conquer Europe, not through military or even political measures, but through generous immigration policies and the wombs of their women. Algerian president Houari Boumediene in 1974 predicted mass migration from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere *"to conquer it"*; he also made an additional threat: *"And they will conquer it with their sons. The wombs of our women will give us victory."*

**3)** Christian faith is experiencing growth in many places around the world, but it's in decline in both Europe and North America. Currently, Christianity has a -0.39% growth rate in Europe, -0.16% rate in North America. By 2050, it's projected that the number of Muslims in the world will approximately equal the number of Christians; and almost twice as many Christians will live in Africa as in Europe and North America combined! It's ironic how today's "thought police" are pushing Muslims and Christians into some common social positions these days. Redefining marriage always implied redefining womanhood and manhood, and God's definitions are no longer considered valid in a society that's entering the final stage of its rebellion (it's commonplace to think we are in the "twilight" of Western civilization). The new socio-political agenda insists that religious freedom is a lot less important than the promotion of LGBTQ+ ideology, so they're happily sacrificing the former in order to promote the latter. The master's thesis that I'm currently directing at our seminary makes me shiver every time I pick it up – focusing on how the indoctrination of the children of Spain is proceeding apace all over the country, through bipartisan measures that impose the new view through legislation. The bottom line is that everyone who is "in the know" today agrees on the new gender ideology (what's "politically correct"), and it's coming from the highest offices in the land all across the West: with a unified social model of the family and humanity, based on an aggressive transgender policy, unbounded abortion advocacy, sexualization of children (known as Comprehensive Sexuality Education). And if you don't go along with the program (including the transitioning and mutilating of minors who don't feel comfortable in their body), then you're a "dinosaur," and called a "backward extremist."

**4)** Of course, there are even more challenges confronting the Christian church in the area of artificial intelligence and its impact on our understanding of human identity. Will technology change what it means to be human? (Or has it already done so?) Will Christian faith even survive the digital/virtual revolution? It seems the driving goal of AI is a "new humanity," practically a different breed of beings almost unrecognizable to the current species. So is this futuristic computerized anthropoid still "made in God's image"? Or has he become a re-invented humanity? (A totally new breed?) Will this new humanity still need "redemption," or will it have achieved a kind of "spiritual independence" (divine

status!)? Jesus Himself asked on one occasion whether He would find faith on the earth upon His return (Lk. 18:8).

Does the Bible even offer any wisdom for the digital age? There may be a lot of questions we're not ready to answer given how quickly society and culture are shifting, as we approach this inorganic, post-human era when the most important minds that best understand our cosmos won't be human ones, but machines! (according to UK Astronomer Royal Lord Rees). But it's been rightly said that the public square is not neutral, because someone's vision of the good life is being promoted there. In the same way, no piece of technology is inherently neutral. Every device, service, or platform we use is designed to shape how we view and interact with the world around us. The Chat GPT Revolution is designed to generate human-like text responses, seemingly real conversations based on the given input or prompt, because it's been trained on a vast amount of diverse text data from the internet, thus can understand and generate text in a conversational manner; now it's also producing living movies, creating real-looking people who are interacting, and you can't tell they're only virtual! The goal? A new humanity! We're still after the "super race"! A recent book by Israeli author Jubal N. Harari says it's all about "reengineering humanity," grappling with the technological challenge of mortality, moving *homo sapiens* toward *Homo Deus* (title of his latest book). So parallel to the transgender debate, we have the transhuman debate: can we supersede the limitations supposedly imposed by God Himself?

**5)** Does this mean the message of the cross has become irrelevant to human needs and ambitions in this new era? I believe it's as relevant as ever, and the challenge to Christians is to live it out *more radically than ever*. Will we accept that challenge? How do we do that? What will it look like? As John Lennox says, we live in a "*world where we understand how almost everything works, and yet we know the meaning of nothing!*" Science takes things apart to see how they work, but we need religion to put them together to see what they *mean!* (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks). And Scripture is precisely our *resource for meaning!* The Bible teaches that the evil in this world is of a **radical nature** – not simply an abstract or general energy force, but a malicious *personal power* that has become rooted in the heart of God's most important creation (humanity), i.e., affecting the image of God in us and the most intimate level of our being. It's the prime reason why God Himself had to come personally onto the earthly scene, so that He could en flesh the remedy and accomplish the rescue and restore humanity to our true identity! Somebody had to incarnate the original vocation, fulfill it to the uttermost, and overcome the enemy who had humanity enslaved! Even under the most difficult trial this "Somebody" had to prove true: true to God and true to fellow humans (vertically/horizontally), bringing us back together under one roof, one head. Infinitely complex!

***"For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility<sup>15</sup> by canceling the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thereby making peace,<sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, putting the hostility to death.<sup>17</sup> And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.<sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father."*** (Eph. 2)

Paul describes Jesus here as our peace: His own body becomes the instrument for breaking down the wall of hostility; when both human and demonic hostility comes crashing down on Him, His divine shock absorbers handle it – He doesn't respond according to fleshly criteria. He cancels the law by fulfilling it (those commandments with their ordinances and ceremonies), so it would no longer be capable of dividing Jews and Gentiles. That's how He brings the archenemies together in Himself, the New Man, Second Adam. This is where the new humanity had its start, as Jesus reconciled both to God receiving all our hostility and indifference, and forgiving it in person! And if you haven't experienced this personally, you have only to call on Him, confess His name, and let Him put to death the hostilities in you! Let His reign come in you! May we all experience more of His reign in these special areas:

- **Islam:** God is opening the doors of immigration so that Muslims can access the Gospel, and so that we can learn to love our neighbor as ourselves, no matter how different!
- **Gender question:** God is opening the door of the closet, so that what's hidden becomes disclosed (and healed!), so that we who follow Jesus can learn from Him to stand for grace and truth, loving all our neighbors as ourselves!
- **AI:** God is the one who gifted humanity with an incredible mental capacity, amazing creative skills, hunger for dominion and conquest (the *imago Dei*, confirming Scripture!); so surely He's the one who can teach us how to harness these new horizons for His Kingdom! But our vision, goals, and priorities remain rooted in God's: His Word, Lordship, Cross. He's the one who relates to us personally (so we must relate to Muslims); who teaches us to empty our own closets in confession, for restoration, so that we can help our neighbors; the one who humanizes and transforms us into the true image we're called to reflect in this world, so that we can shine His Light into the darkest corners. May we discern the challenges and respond with undivided loyalty to the One who is worthy!