



Humans as God's Perfect Creation: Exegesis Review of Ephesians 2:10

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Abstract. Humans are the perfect creation compared to other God's creations. However, many people still need to be made aware of the perfection they have and will not be the same as other people. The human basis for imperfection results in actions to perfect oneself humanly, such as facial and nose surgery and comparing oneself to others. The actions taken by humans show the nature of disobedience and understanding God's plan in their life. Human perfection is different from the perfection of other creations of God because God created humans like himself, and these humans have the highest intelligence compared to other creations. However, God created man in the image and likeness of God Himself, not the same as Allah. The Apostle Paul explained in Ephesians 2:10 that humans are God's perfect actions/deeds in Jesus Christ so that humans can do good things following the purposes of the creator. From the statement above, the background for writing this article is to realize ourselves as human beings who are God's most perfect creations. Paul explains this through his letter to the Ephesians, saying that man's model in Christ had a significant effect by doing good things according to the Creator's plan. To do good things does not happen by itself, but it takes perseverance and struggle. All these things will happen when a man is in Christ. To explain Paul's view, researchers used literature analysis methods and library research related to this article.

Keywords: God-made, man, Paul, theolog, perfect creation, the man in Christ

1 Introduction

Man is an extraordinary created creature of God, with many advantages over other creations. Anthony A. Hoekema says that man is one creation at a time [1]. God's image in man makes it different from other creations, especially concerning God. But the fact shows that many people still do not realize that he is an extraordinary and unique creation. A man should be confident, fully convinced that he is so precious in God's eyes, but what happens is the opposite. The health ministry shows that the world's suicide death rate is close to 800,000 a year and is of grave concern to the world [2]. The deterioration of self-esteem tends to depression, anxiety, eating disorder-

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ders, poor social functioning, dropouts, and risky behaviors [3]. The decline of self-esteem is worthless, meaningless, and prolonged inferiority due to negative evaluation of oneself and self-ability. There is a feeling of loss of confidence, feeling failed because it cannot achieve the ideal self-desire. This disorder is a person's negative assessment of self and ability, expressed directly or indirectly. The concept of self understands all thoughts, beliefs, and beliefs that make one know about him and influence his relationship with others.

The Apostle Paul wrote in his epistle to the church of God at Ephesians 2:10. Saying that man is god's precious handiwork. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians highlights the Biblical revelation and occupies a unique place among Paul's other epistles. In a similar vein, Paul explains the life of man after being in Christ found in 2Corinthinth 5:17 "So whosoever is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old is gone, the new has come," thus the author gives an affirmation of the status of man in Christ. Paul wanted to show that God's people who had become one in Christ were uniquely new creations through this epistle.

According to Harry Soegijono and Marianus Patora, Ephesians 2:10 consists of 3 phrases [4]. They discussed more of the second phrase in his writing, which is about good work. However, they acknowledge that the second phrase cannot be separated from the other terms. Therefore, the author wants to dig deeper into the word $\rho\omicron\iota\eta\mu\alpha$ as part of the first phrase, where this verse has such deep meaning. In addition, this paper aims to answer the above problems, that the deterioration of self-esteem is not something to be afraid of. The deterioration of self-esteem is not something to be afraid of because we need to understand that we (human beings) are the handiwork of God, who is all beautiful and perfect. In addition, this paper aims to answer the above problems.

2 Method

The method of writing this article is qualitative research literature [5], which uses text analysis with an exegesis approach that corresponds to the steps specified by Gordon Fee in his book with the title *New Testament Exegesis* [6]. i.e., manuscript research, syntax structure, and text explanations and conclusions. The research focused on the discussion in the text Ephesians 2:10. In addition, the author tries to compare with various other Bible translations in the same verse to get a complete understanding, which ultimately draws the conclusion that can explain that man is a perfect creation of God.

3 Findings and Discussion

Text of Ephesians 2:10, according to UBS4 and NA27, is relatively stable. There are no problems in this text.

3.1 Syntax Structure Text

Original Text (GNT version) Ephesians 2:10

αὐτοῦ γάρ ἐσμεν ποίημα, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς οἷς προητοίμασεν ὁ θεός, ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν.

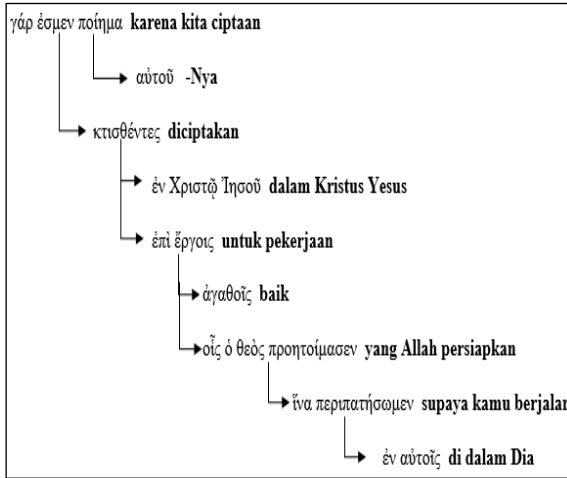


Fig. 1. Syntax Structure of Eph. 2:10

3.2 Comparative Literal Translation

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (KJV).

For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (NIV).

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (RSV).

3.3 Discussion: Text Explanation

In this discussion, the author focuses on and explores the word ποίημα. ποίημα is derived from the phrase ποίημα itself in the form of noun nominative neuter singular. ποίημα is found in no other verse other than in Ephesians 2:10. ποίημα means work, creation, or of the works of God as the Creator. In various translations, ποίημα has several meanings, in English translations of the three versions above ποίημα translated as workmanship. Contritely, it has two different implications in the Indonesian language but with the same purpose. In the TB Bible version, ποίημα is translated as God-made while the BIS Bible version translates it as God's creation. In this case, ποίημα is a noun associated with ατοο, where ατού is a singular masculine personal pronoun derived from the word ατός. The author sees that ατο is a pronoun of the

owner of the nearby *ποίημα* is God himself. Wycliffe sees *ποίημα* as having something to do with *ατο*, in which he translates it as God's creation [7]. Wycliffe, on the other hand, emphasizes the word God, of which God is the owner of the *ποίημα*. In this case, *ποίημα* was created in Christ Jesus to perform *ργοις* (*ργοις* noun dative neuter plural common from *ργον* which is defined as (a)act, (b)work, (c)workmanship) the *αγαθος* (*αγαθος* adjective normal dative neuter plural no degree from *αγαθος* which is defined as (a) good (moral), (b) good (value), (c) generous). *ργοις αγαθος*, in this case, is a good deed or action which in its context is good in terms of morals, values, or generosity to others. This good work may be an act or attitude seen by others, and the author refers to the Apostle Paul's statement that we as believers are open epistles of Christ read by others.

In its development, *ποίημα* was intended as a human being created so that we could do good work or "live in good works." This Paul contrasts with verse 2, i.e. "living in sin" (Pada waktu itu kalian mengikuti kebiasaan-kebiasaan dunia ini; berarti kalian taat kepada penguasa angkasa raya, yaitu roh yang sekarang menguasai hati orang-orang yang tidak taat kepada Allah/BIS). Thus, it can be interpreted that doing the good work referred to in this section is a life that continues to do good work, namely, a life, which after being saved by Christ and united with Him, is not only possible but must also (must) live in good works. This formulation shows the relationship between the gift of salvation on the part of God and the human response to the gift of salvation, that by grace, man can have faith in Jesus Christ and His work and that faith calls man to do good deeds. Contrary to this, it must be understood that people accept rights and emphasize their obligations and responsibilities completely to the grace of God.

The word *ποίημα* means a masterpiece of God, the author uses this term as an expression to acknowledge man is the work of the great and perfect God, referring to Genesis 1:27. It is entirely in God's Providencia that God is the great Creator of all things and controls them to streamline the plan he has set [8]. In this case, the author emphasizes that good work, a human responsibility, is given by God to impact God's work in creating man as a masterpiece of God to achieve a goal, namely fulfilling God's eternal plan. This providence is marked by the grace that God has bestowed upon man. Man is us as members of the church, are raised from the dead and placed together with Christ in Heaven as a new creation [9]. The Geneva Bible notes about this as "For we are his workmanship (*ποίημα*), created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

The Word *ποίημα* is spoken of as a gift from God to man as His creation that was once created so perfectly there is no blemish and blemish, which aims to do good works. The logical consequence of the perfection of human creation is doing a good job. Bigman Sirait says that humans are superior workers [10]. As an outstanding worker, God gives trust and the ability to man to be a representative of God to rule the universe. God gave knowledge in the symbolic God's image, illustrated and likeness to God (Gen. 1:26). Thus, man is different from other creations and becomes the highest as the crown of God's creation over all creation [11]. By creating the initial form that existed in God, the understanding is printed on man. God is the original, and man is the copy [11]. Therefore, Solomon in Proverbs 1:7 says that "the fear of God is

the beginning of knowledge", so that knowledge is a gift given by God as a privilege of creation and that knowledge is intended for man to be able to do good works, which please God. It means that the knowledge given by God makes man know what God wills and what God does not like.

Furthermore, man has been placed in a bodily and spiritual position as a human being made in God's image [12] and can construct what God has already provided on this planet. So, knowledge is sacred and aims to bring people always close to God. Therefore, the Geneva Bible emphasizes that if the works are ever so good, see what they are and know that they are that way because of grace. All because of grace from God alone and not because of the good deeds of man. Matthew Henry also explains that men are God's new creation, where they are no longer seen as ordinary human beings, but rather part of the saints. *ποίημα* refers to the new man as a new creation, and God is the Creator. As a new creation or a man who has been renewed in Christ, three things that surely accompany his life, namely will surely see the truth of the gospel, he will feel a deep conversion concerning his unworthiness and sinfulness before God that result in the need for grace and redemption through Jesus Christ who died on the cross, and he will repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, a helper (*parakletos*), helps believers understand the word, enabling them to do the Word, reminding the word of God to the believer according to the life he lives [13]. In the course of the life of a newborn person, the Holy Spirit not only gives an understanding of the truth but not only enables it to do righteousness and helps Christians live life. In Galatians 5:16, it is explained that the Holy Spirit will lead believers. To lead in this sense is to use the word of God to control believers in various situations. The Holy Spirit guides renewed people and remembers God's words that have been learned. Even the Holy Spirit has given the understanding of life. The author quotes Anthony's statement in his book as saying that man can be held accountable for first experiencing the work of the sovereign Holy Spirit, reviving or empowering total human inadequacy through rebirth. The fruit of rebirth enables man to experience repentance, faith, justification, sanctification and obedience [14]. Contrary to the above explanation, it is clear that the person who was raised has the character of Christ. It is this character of Christ that the author means as *ργοις αγαθοις* that is to do a good job, both morally, the values that exist in Christ and the life or way of life that contrasts with the world that is living in sin. So it is understandable that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that allows a person to be biased to obey, for it is the Holy Spirit who conquers their tendencies against God, for in fact God's elect are the ones who must be angered just like everyone else (Ephesians 2:3), but it is the Holy Spirit that renews them that they can have faith in Christ..

In addition, the Bible also repeatedly states that one must be renewed or born again according to the will of God John 3:14-16, 18, and the birth is based on faith in Jesus Christ (1Peter 1:3) [15]. Therefore, everyone who experiences a new birth is spiritually reborn. They will more easily share awareness of their sins and have true faith in Jesus Christ. They have had a new heart and a new spirit through the death and resurrection of Christ, wrought by His word and Spirit that dwells in them. Contrary to the above explanation, the author affirms that a person who has experienced a rebirth and is spiritually revived will do good work, pleasing God. But a person who has no expe-

rience of being born again will not be able to do good works but tends to do the work and the will that results in sin. Williamson says that repentance and faith are two aspects of the total transformation of the soul, for the faith shows aspects of change that turn to Christ and interrelationship with Him. So, these two aspects include personality as a whole – ratio, affection, and will [8]. Francois, meanwhile, says two aspects are inseparable from repentance, namely shutting down the old man and taking part in a new life. Both are directly derived from oneness with Christ and lead to the purpose of rebirth, namely the restoration of God's image to its original integrity [16]. This confirms that the born-again person must strive to sanctify himself until he sheds tears because he failed in the field of spiritual struggle.

Therefore, the *ποίημα* which is us as members of the church or rather as believers is a masterpiece of God. Man is the perfect creation, and God is the Creator of Most Perfect [17]. As masterpieces of God, believers must realize that the Lord Jesus Christ has fulfilled the work of salvation for the man (Eph. 1:7-8; 11-12) and in Christ, His people are chosen, predestined, called, born again (1 Peter 1:3), and in Him, we believe, receive the Holy Spirit and become god's family. Thus, believers must have diligence as part and struggle to the end in doing the good works that God had prepared before. Matthew 24:13 says that "the one who endureth to the end shall be as long as. Sovereignty and effectiveness of the call (effective calling) do not loosen or diminish human responsibility but rather underlies and affirms the commitment of the human being to put forward grace and enhance obligations.

For this reason, the author affirms that perseverance is required, fighting against all the evils and desires of the world involving our entire lives. It is a struggle that will not be abandoned by those who truly believe, who endure to the end of the world. Therefore, it is only through the education of God that God can lead man to become a pleasing person before God by exemplifying the person of Jesus Christ, for the Word of God gives faith, faith gives love, and love gives us good works. Good works follow an everlasting inheritance, a life of happiness [18]. In James 1:22-25, it is explained that "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers; for if ye deceive oneself, for if a man heareth only the word and does not do it, he is like one who is observing his true face in front of a mirror. Just as he looked at himself, he was gone or immediately forgot what he looked like, but who examines the perfect law, which is the law that frees people, and perseveres in it, so not only heareth to forget it but truly does it, he will be happy by his deeds. Thus, sincere obedience to God and being the doer of His word is a form of recognition that God is sovereign over human life and gratitude for the salvation that God has given freely. Man is *ποίημα* God, and there is no reason for us not to be grateful for what we have. The man was created in Christ as God's properly prepared for the *ργοις αγαθος* performed in *Χριστ Ηησο ο*. Therefore, man is very special in God's eyes because we are masterpieces of God.

4 Conclusion

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that Paul's view of the creation of man in Ephesians 2:10 is an act of God's hand-designed in such a way that it re-

sembles him. Human perfection occurs when man is in Christ. According to the Creator's plan, the human ideal in Christ has a significant impact by doing good things. It will clearly understand that man was created perfectly according to God's intentions and purposes. So that is why man has duties and responsibilities in life; following God's plan is not under the wishes of the man himself. To understand these things, man must live in Christ. Man's self-esteem is no longer based on things seen physically but also spiritually obtained, as a new creation in Christ to do good works in this world, especially now in this disruption era.

Writing this article enriches the hermeneutics of the Book of Ephesians 2:10. In addition to adding understanding in theological literature in the study of the New Testament. And in the end, every reader can understand their existence as a complete human being in God as the perfect creature in this life.

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