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**Anthropomorphism, the saving Grace.**

**Introduction**

 There has been a long line of philosophical thought concerning anthropomorphism in religion. The critique in religious anthropomorphism is that by attributing human traits to God, the mysterious and divine nature of God begins to strip away. On the other hand, by characterizing God as something far from human understanding, humans ability for dialogue and comprehension becomes shallow. For what is there to talk about if there is no substance in the description of God? I will be exploring philosophers such as David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Stewart Guthrie and how they tackle and complicate this tension between anthropomorphism and the divine. With the information gathered, I will apply their thoughts and critiques to Paul’s letter to the Romans. There is no doubt that anthropomorphism is present in Paul’s writing, but his ability to maintain God’s divinity and mysticism is something to be explored and appreciated. Before we analyze Paul’s letter and explore the philosophers listed above, it is important to define anthropomorphism.

 The Oxford Reference defines anthropomorphism as, “The representation of Gods, or nature, or non-human animals, as having human form, or as having human thoughts and intentions.” Within the context of this paper, God and nature are attributed with human-like attributes.

**David Hume**

 David Hume’s argument for anthropomorphizing God is the desire to find comfort and security in the unknown: “Agitated by hopes and fears of this nature, especially the latter, men scrutinize, with a trembling curiosity, the course of future causes, and examine the various and contrary events of human life.” (Thorton 85) In other words, the unknown is threatening and a powerful tool for stirring up emotions and passions within humans. Whether that be, the contemplation of life, mortality, or nature, humans desire to find an answer in order to reconcile with the unknown. In doing so, they begin to anthropomorphize because the characteristics of man are the closest thing humans can connect with. He states that people are likely to “conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object, those qualities with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious.” (85) It is because we are “familiarly acquainted” and “intimately conscious” with ourselves that we anthropomorphize the unknown.

There is a general consensus among philosophers that all our ideas are “derived from experience.” (84) In other words, humans have difficulty or no understanding of something they have never come across. If this is the case, Hume questions the validity of human understanding for the nature of God. Hume argues that the only possible avenue of understanding God is through experience and knowledge. Unless someone encounters God through an experience, there is little to no basis for a claim to God[[1]](#footnote-1). However, since anthropomorphism implies human experience, thoughts, and actions, a basis begins to form in which substantial and meaningful discourse can occur in religion. Although anthropomorphism by itself causes no issue, it is combined with the attempt of “flattery” (86) In other words, theists attempt to appease and exalt God far above humanity. However by doing so Thorton states, “The urge to imagine an infinitely perfect and purely spiritual being which originates in flattery results in conceptions that are “disproportioned to vulgar comprehension…” and subject to alteration by the popular religion.” (87) There is a sense in which the idea of God should be described as “perfect” and “infinite”. However, what does it mean to be perfect and infinite? Is it possible to understand these terms? Hume believed that if it is beyond our experiential data, it wouldn’t make much sense to talk about it. For Hume, there is a standoff between two ideas: The first being, by anthropomorphizing God, God becomes similar and comprehensible to human thought. The second idea is, by attempting to flatter God, theists ascribe traits that are beyond human understanding, which makes any discourse about God meaningless and beyond comprehension. Thornton describes this as, “a continual unstable fluctuation in concepts of the divine” (87) Although, his idea may sound promising, Kant critiques Hume’s writings on anthropomorphism in religion.

**Immanuel Kant**

 Immanuel Kant agrees with Hume to the extent that our knowledge and experience is the limit in which one can conceive ideas. However, he attempts to get rid of the skepticism found in Hume’s idea of God. Kant raises the question: “How does reason approach the unknown and unknowable world of *noumena* when reason is applicable only to the known and knowable world of phenomena?” (133) The Kantian term, noumena, refers to an object in itself, a reality that exists apart from human experience. While phenomena refers to objects that humans perceive through sensory experience, the experiential data. While Hume believed that there was no possible connection between these two realities, Kant attempts to show a connection in which humans can conceive the noumena.

 The critique Kant emphasizes is, “objects are not limited by the ways in which we are able to know them.” (134) In other words, objects can only be perceived and understood through the phenomena. Anything outside of human sensory experience would be impossible to grasp. However, this claim does not nullify the existence and the object itself, the noumena. Our limited perception does not get rid of the independent nature of objects. Just because something is outside of our experiential data does not mean it ceases to exist. If this is the case, how does Kant justify the ability to discuss the nature and existence of God?

 Kant believed that Hume was attempting to justify the existence of God through empirical reasoning. However, if God belongs to the noumena and is independent from human experience, there is no justification to use reasoning to conclude anything about God. If we are under the assumption that God is separate from the experiential data (phenomena). Instead, Kant uses these ideas as a means to, “guide the use of reason within it according to principles of the greatest possible (theoretical as well as practical) unity.” (137) In other words, Kant believed that it is for the sake of understanding that humans anthropomorphize the noumena. Anthropomorphism wasn’t used to place claims on the unknown but rather to guide our thoughts towards understanding and unity.

Kant believes humans anthropomorphize simply for the sake of conversation. He refers to this as “symbolic anthropomorphism”. Instead of describing the deity itself, the closest idea of a deity is through language rather than the nature of the deity. Logan states that, “Kant employs what he calls ‘symbolic anthropomorphism’, which ‘concerns language only and not the object itself’ It is a way of thinking and talking about the Deity that reflects the relationship between the sensible world and the Deity without purporting to describe the Deity.” (138) In other words, just because we talk about God, it doesn't necessarily mean we are stripping anything away from God. This type of anthropomorphism allows us to form dialogue and understand within our reasoning. Logan states, “it does allow us to think and talk about the Deity through terms and relations that are within the scope of our knowledge; we are describing what our experience is like for us and speaking about God in those terms that are knowable to us.” (138-139) Kant’s argument is not about the existence of God but rather how human beings come to understand God within their reality and experience. One can argue that humans obtain a better understanding of themselves rather than the nature of God. Logan ends his analysis by stating, “that any way we may come to speak about the Deity says much about us and nothing about the Deity.” (144). Since all of our ideas about God are confined within our reality and experiences, the very idea of God becomes an anthropomorphic self-portrait. Kant attempts to separate anthropomorphism from the existence of God. However, he does not attempt to separate anthropomorphism from our understanding of God.

**Ludwig Feuerbach**

 For Ludwig Feuerbach, his main idea was to view religion as a form of anthropology. Thorton states, “The true subject-matter of religion then, for Feuerbach, no less than philosophy, is human nature - religion is a rudimentary form of man’s awareness of himself as a species-being, and is therefore by virtue of that a primitive anthropology .” (105) He believes that behind all the abstract and theological ideas lay the “study of human nature and the intellectual elaboration of the very conditions of human life itself.” (105) In other words, religion is but a means to express the human condition and nature. Feuerbach argues that it’s not necessarily the attempt to understand God that matters as much as the journey to uncover human nature and he believed it was only possible through self-awareness and externalizing one’s self.

One of the main ideas he uses to carry out his line of thought is the human ability to be self-aware. He refers to self-awareness as,

the conscious subject contemplates his own nature, this nature presents itself as an intentional object, as something which is ‘other than’, or is external to, the self. It is, in fact, the ‘otherness’ of the self which is paramount in the dialectical confrontation which constitutes self-awareness. (105)

The idea of self-awareness does not merely mean to recognize one’s self. It is the ability to recognize one’s self “externally” and “other” from the self, which constitutes self-awareness. In other words, the ability to project one’s consciousness as an independent entity apart from the human mind is what Feurbach uncovers. Human’s ability to view oneself externally allows for the “I-Thou relationship” (105) this idea is crucial for understanding Feuerbach because by externalizing one’s self, he believes that the “ego or self can be apprehended and understood.” (106) In an attempt to fully recognize and uncover human consciousness, Feuerbach believes that it must be externalized. By externalizing human nature, humans gain a better understanding of themselves. Thornton states, “The achievement of full self-consciousness is therefore for Feuerbach the achievement of the recognition of others as being species-identical *with* the self.” (106) Once we begin to recognize others—referring to anything other than human—similar to ourselves, we gain a better understanding of human qualities. This is only possible because humans are self-aware which naturally brings forth religion. For Feuerbach, he is more concerned with our journey to understand ourselves rather than solving the mysteries of the world.

If we are to view religion as a form of anthropology, it’s hard to argue against the anthropomorphic nature of religion. For Feuerbach, religion and human consciousness are not two separate ideas but rather identical. He justifies this claim, through this idea of the subject and predicate” (110) Thornton describes this idea as, “in order to argue that whatever holds true generally of the predicates of any subject, of necessity holds true of the subject itself.” (110-111) In other words, whatever content or substance is found in the predicate, the subject must also obtain these traits. Within the context of religion, if the predicate (anthropomorphic traits), are ascribed to God, therefore it must be true that the subject (God), is anthropomorphic. A rather simple deduction, but what kind of predicates are humans ascribing to God? For Feuerbach, the answer to this question is found in culture and society.

 Although Feuerbach emphasizes the individual and human consciousness, it would be important to address the broader scale of human consciousness, which is social and cultural consciousness. He continues with this line of thought by describing religion as a, “complex nexus of belief, practice and ritual… deeply rooted in the cultural consciousness of any given society.” (112) Just as an individual's mind is shaped by their culture and society, Feurbach believed the same for religion. Since the conditions and environment varies in each society, the concept of God would also differ. However, a commonality amongst all societies, is the “fact that God is necessarily conceived in terms of the attributes in which a given society holds in high esteem, or which occupy a lofty place in the hierarchy of values shared by the community.” (112) Whatever is honorable and highly esteemed in any given society, these are the traits in which God is usually ascribed to. Feurbach approaches religion through a cultural lens, which is influenced by the consciousness and desire to obtain a better understanding of human nature.

**Stewart Guthrie**

Like many philosophers, Stewart Guthrie believes that anthropomorphism is religion. He believes humans anthropomorphize because, “our world is ambiguous and perpetually inchoate; our first need therefore is to interpret it; interpretation gambles on the most significant possibilities; and the most significant possibilities are humanlike (4) In an attempt to rationalize the unknown, humans seek to interpret the best possible outcome, which is anthropomorphism because it serves in our best interests. Guthrie refers to interests through a systematic lens. In which humans are given a situation where they have to figure out the best possible percentage of going in their favor. Guthrie provides an example:

We animate and anthropomorphize because, when we see something as alive or

humanlike, we can take precautions. If we see it as alive we can, for example, stalk it or

flee. If we see it as humanlike, we can try to establish a social relationship. If it turns out

not to be alive or humanlike, we usually lose little by having thought it was” (5).

In other words, there is much to gain from anthropomorphizing. In the case of religion, if by attributing traits to God that are similar to humans, you are also expecting God to act and think similarly to humans. If that is the case, humans should also expect God to be in favor and prioritize humanity above all else. And if God (by definition) is on the side of humanity, that is the highest percentage of favor. By anthropomorphizing God, humans become the greatest importance to God. Not only that but, Guthrie believes that there would be little to lose if anthropomorphizing God is false. By anthropomorphizing, we are given a template on how to live and react in any given situation. This approach allows our consciousness to feel at ease and find the unknown less daunting.

 Guthrie critiques Hume’s idea that human’s anthropomorphize religion and nature because, “we are more familiar with ourselves than with anything else” (185). However, Guthrie counters this claim by stating, “we are as mysterious with ourselves than with anything else,” (185) He believes that human consciousness and identity is just as ambiguous as God and nature. Therefore, it cannot be familiarity that is the reason for anthropomorphizing but rather our interests and preoccupations. Guthrie states, “we perceive the world in terms of our interests, which usually involve humans.” (185) He explains the idea of interest through the lens of Feuerbach, although not completely agreeing with him. Religion is influenced by perceptions of self and culture, but Guthrie believes it is not for the purpose of self-discovery, but rather, “our motivation simply is to see what is important to see.” Thus making it a subjective journey for spirituality.

 A rather long and thoughtful train of ideas, let us examine how these ideas of anthropomorphism can be found in Paul’s writing. But before we examine Paul’s letter, it is important to describe the social and political climate during the time in Rome. I have broken down the latter portion into three sections: The socio-political climate in Rome,

**Socio-Political Climate in Rome**

To set the tone for the cultural climate in Rome, I. C. Berg best describes it as, “an advanced agrarian society founded on distinctive ideologies of status differentiation, hierarchy, androcentric patriarchy, dichotomy of honour and shame, and collectivism.” (7) Simply put, discrimnation and distinction were common ideas in Roman society. Consequently, this created minority groups, in which they were stripped from “the “quality” of the social experience of specific groups of people.” (8) Majority of wealth, power, and high status belonged only to a small group of people. So minority groups were not bound by the quantity but rather the quality of living. For Berg, the minority group in Rome, were stripped from the social experiences that wealthy and influential men experienced.

**The Church in Rome**

 The book of Romans was written by the apostle Paul, around 57 A.D. for the church in Rome. Similar to other books in the New Testament, Paul’s epistle was meant for encouragement, rebuke, and guidance to fellow Christians. One of Paul’s main motivations while writing this letter was to consider the relationship between the Jews and Gentiles. Originally, the Roman church was founded by Jewish believers but around 49 A.D. The Roman emperor Claudius expelled most Jews from Rome because of their disturbances over “Chrestus” (Latin for Christ). During this time period many Gentile believers began to form their own churches. When the Jewish Christians came back, tensions began to rise between the two groups for their different beliefs yet same following of Christ. It states, “tensions began to develop between law-observing Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians who lived free of the restrictions in the Mosaic law.” (ESV Study Bible p.2151) The Jewish Christians were doubtful of the Gentile’s faith due to their inability to uphold the Mosaic laws, in essence attacking their sincerity and genuinity of faith under Christ.

**Romans**

Without a doubt, anthropomorphism is found in Paul’s writing. Even in his attempt to transcend and mystsize God, he uses terms within human understanding. There seems to be little attempt to describe God to the point of incomprehensibility, rightfully so, considering the audience of the letter to be Roman citizens. Although the book of Romans is considered one of the most theologically dense books in the Bible, my argument is similar to Guthrie’s and Feuerbach’s idea of “interests” and “anthropology” held within religion. By no means does this denote the nature of God but rather the purpose of the letter was for the interests of the Roman citizens. In order to get his message across, Paul uses “symbolic anthropomorphism” to further support this claim. To a certain extent, Paul argues that the gospel is completely anthropomorphic, as his writing constantly merges the “spirit” and the “flesh”. The greatest example being Jesus, claiming to be God, came down as man in order to condemn sin (spiritual), in order to free the world from sin. (Romans 8) I would argue that the nature of God is not so distant from man, while still leaving room for mysticism and ambiguity. I have broken down the analysis of Paul’s writing in three sections. The first being Paul’s relationship and view towards God, the second being the law and sin, and lastly the person of Jesus.

**Paul’s description of God**

 In the very first verse, Paul’s relationship with God is conceived as a “servant”, “apostle”, and someone who is “set apart for the gospel of God”. Although these terms refer to Paul, it also implies anthropomorphic traits to God. These nouns allow the reader to understand the dynamic of this relationship. The term servant implies a separation and distinction between the two partners. The servant is bound and required to serve his master, indicating a superior position held by the master. The master has no need to explain himself to the servant, for the master owns and is in control over the servant’s life. The power dynamic is in favor of the master, while the servant obeys every command. Although this analogy is anthropomorphic, there is a sense in which these terms are attempting to mysticise and flatter God. Who are we to question the master? We are merely servants in the eyes of God.

However, the term apostle referred to the twelve disciples Jesus had while living on earth. While this paper will not focus on Jesus’ teachings (his claim as being God is possibly the greatest form of anthropomorphism) his relationship with his disciples gives the reader insight on how Paul viewed God. The term apostle describes a comprehensible and intimate relationship with God. The interactions Jesus had with his disciples, whether that was washing their feet, rebuking their actions, or even eating and weeping with them[[2]](#footnote-2), all offer a view on God that is relatable and comprehensible to humanity.

The term “set apart for the gospel of God”, offers a more existential approach. I would argue that this term is used to satisfy the innate longing to find purpose in life. Although this does not directly attribute God with anthropomorphic traits, God is indirectly ascribed as something to answer the void in which humans struggle to find, which is meaning to life. In this example, Paul is given a task to complete on this earth. He has found purpose and therefore answers one of the most daunting questions to life.

Paul believes that God’s “eternal power and divine nature” is something to be perceived within the experiential data. He states:

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of this world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” (Romans 1 19-20)

In other words, all the reasons to believe in a God are found in the world. Whether that be, the stars, trees, skies, and everything that exists, this all proves God’s existence. In one sense, Paul is implying that God’s nature is not mysterious at all. Humans are coming to understand the environment around them. Whatever information is found out about the world, only demonstrates and magnifies God’s attributes. This verse also supports the experiential data of God. Paul is stating that God is found within our scope of experience therefore, it is impossible to argue against the nature and existence of God. Of course, some may conclude that nature does not bring forth God’s existence but rather the opposite. But for Paul, he believes that all humans are without excuse in the experiential data of God.

**The Law and Sin**

The idea of law and sin is analyzed and deconstructed in the first seven chapters of Romans. I will not venture far into the theological aspect of this idea but rather mention a couple of key points in which the law encompasses God’s anthropomorphic nature. Within the Christian faith, God isn’t as mysterious as one may think. God sets rules and expectations for humans (the law), in which all men must uphold. However Paul states, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) In other words, humans failed to uphold God’s law. The law isn’t merely a parameter of how one should live their life but it also reveals God’s righteous character. Paul uses the righteousness of God to unite the Christians in Rome. Using Guthrie’s idea of “interests” Paul believed that uniting the Jewish-Christians and Gentiles would be for the benefit of the church[[3]](#footnote-3). God’s righteousness can be based on the social context of the Roman church. As stated before, tensions between the Gentiles and Jewish-Christians were rising. However, we see Paul pointing to the righteousness of God that shuts down any idea of separation and social structure within the Christian faith. Paul refers to the state of man, regardless of social class, influence, Gentile or Jew as, ‘What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.” (Romans 3:9) In other words, Paul breaks the notion of distinction between the Jewish-Christians and Gentiles in the Roman church. He also emphasizes that all have failed to keep God’s law and therefore requires judgment from God. In other words, whether you are Jewish or Gentile, all fall under judgment of God. Through an anthropomorphic lens, Paul’s emphasis on God’s righteousness is justified and supported by the culture of the Roman church. argued that religion is the base of human consciousness, we can see Paul applying God’s righteousness as a means to resolve the conflict in Rome. Paul’s anthropomorphic God as righteous allowed the Christians in Rome to understand that none is righteous, regardless of who kept the mosaic law, thus supporting the tensions between the two religious groups.

**Freed from the law through anthropomorphism**

Paul describes a redemptive work that is found in the person of Jesus. With the fall of man and judgment upon all unrighteousness, God sets forth a redemptive plan in which Jesus redeems his people. Paul describes this scenario as follows:

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4)

Paul’s emphasis on Jesus is repeated throughout Romans. Although Jesus’ teachings and actions are important within the religious faith, my focus is on his nature, as he is completely man and God. There would be little debate on whether Jesus is the most important figure within the Christian faith. The very nature and high status of Jesus presents a contradiction within the argument of religious anthropomorphism. Just as Hume would argue that flattery leads to incomprehensibility, there is a sense in which Jesus can be understood yet his status and value within the religious community is unparalleled to anyone else in Christanity (for the name itself retains the name of Christ). Hume would then argue that Jesus should not be praised because his nature is similar to us. What kind of God are Christians worshiping if Jesus is exactly like us (for God and Jesus is synonymous)? Paul explains that Jesus is similar to us but, this act of redemption is entirely spiritual and could have not been done by anybody else. This leaves room for the divine and mysticism beyond the physical realm of reality. Paul combines this idea of “flesh” and “spirit” to describe the anthropomorphic nature of God yet upholding the divine and power of God. Jesus was sent as a “likeness” to man, but for the purpose to fulfill the “righteous law”

 Another example of the duality between man and divine nature is Jesus’ ability to free us from the law. Paul emphasizes that the law brings forth a spiritual form of death, in which no man is able to free himself from. However Paul states, “you have died to the law through the body of Christ… now we are released from the law.” (Romans 7: 4,6) In other words, Jesus was sent as man to complete a task that could have been completed only through a spiritual process. Paul implies that Jesus has done something that no man could have done. Paul combines two ideas of divine power with the nature of man as the most fundamental principle within the Christian faith. “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh.” (Romans 7:14)

**The Love of a Father**

 When reading the Bible, it is important to understand the context each book is being written in. In “Adopted and Begotten Sons of God'' Michael Peppard points out Luke’s “masterful skill with, presenting the history of nascent Christianity to a broad audience with diverse social practices and cultural ideologies” (94), Although Luke did not write the book of Romans, Paul wrote in a way that was relevant to Roman citizens. Peppard also establishes adoption as a cultural aspect of Rome, “Especially in the areas more influenced by Roman culture, a high view of adopted sons was well established. In contexts where actual adoption was an important social practice” (92-93) With this idea of “adoption” as a form of cultural acceptance, Paul utilizes this practice in his writing. Paul describes God's love through the term “adoption.” In Rome at the time Paul was writing this letter, adoption was for the purpose of sonship and inheritance. Peppard explains the purpose behind adoption: “As research into Roman social practices has demonstrated, adoption in the Roman world was enacted for far different reasons than it is in the modern Western world; the chief impetus was the securing of an heir. Inheritance included not only land and other wealth but also the family name, the family glory, and a share of the family spirit.” (96). Adoption wasn’t merely a drafting into a family but rather obtaining everything a father and mother would bestow onto their child. Immediately, we can recognize Feurbach’s idea of cultural relevance in religious thought and writing. Paul’s style of writing was catered towards the people of Rome because it made God comprehensible. Adoption was recognizable within their social framework and an acceptable practice in Rome. Paul emphasizes adoption as a means to hope and claim the future inheritance in the kingdom of God. He states, “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Romans 8:18). Paul encourages the Christian to push past their suffering in order to gain their inheritance that is found in the afterlife. Paul uses human terms to describe a spiritual reality.

Romans chapter 8 is the pinnacle of the Christian faith. In the beginning of Romans, Paul addressed transgression and sin to all men, but in chapter 8, he transitions to assurance and an everlasting love that is found in God the father. As Paul describes God as, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15) The term Abba is an Aramaic word for father, more specifically, “Abba suggests a more intimate relationship between God and a person” (45) He uses this term to express the intimacy and relational aspect of Christianity. Through the anthropomorphic lens Paul characterizes God as a Father to portray the inheritance and an emotional love. This was necessary because the Christians in Rome were conflicted with assurance, due to the Jewish-Christians discrediting their faith for not following the mosaic law. However, if we were to analyze this text through the philosophers, they would argue that characterizing God as a “Father” strips away the divinity and mysticism of his nature. Although Paul is using terms suitable for Roman Christians, he is constricting the nature of God within human framework.

A very clear and obvious approach but given the context of the current climate in Rome, we can see how Kant’s and Feuerbach’s ideas of anthropomorphism are in play. Kant argues that an anthropomorphic God can only be described within the confines of our own ideas and experiences, and we see Paul applying applicable terms to the Roman Christians. We also see Feuerbach’s idea of God as a representation of our human nature and culture. After describing God as a Father, Paul then describes the inheritance in which Christians obtain under Christ. Paul states, “if children, then heirs - heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may be glorified with him” (Romans 8:17)

**Conclusion**

Many philosophers believed anthropomorphism pulls away from the divine nature of God. By attributing God with anthropomorphic traits, God becomes similar to us, thus making the value and nature of God less divine and supreme. On the other hand, in an attempt to flatter and ascribe worship unto God, theists attribute traits that are often misunderstood. Paul attempts to merge the two ideas in order to make God understandable yet at the same time divine and supreme.

There are many factors that contribute to anthropomorphism in religion such as, consciousness, cultural and social norms, passions, interests, and experiential data. Upon closer look into Paul’s letter, implications of all these ideas are found in his description of God. Ascribing God with righteousness in order for unity in a civilization where social hierarchy and status is prevalent, the nature of Jesus being fully man and God, yet being held in high esteem and worship within the Christian faith, and conceiving God within terms of social practices within Roman society. Paul makes no attempt to hide anthropomorphism, on the contrary he incorporates this idea throughout his letter.

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1. There is an argument that nature’s design is innate with God’s nature, therefore God is within the experiential data. See “The Role of Anthropomorphism in Hume’s Critique of Theism” for more information [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Gathered this information from the gospels. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Possibly referring to Mark 3:25, a house divided cannot stand. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)