GENESIS 1-4

(DAILY READINGS FOR THE BEGINNING OF GREAT LENT)

ACCORDING TO THE SEPTUAGINT TEXT OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

WITH COMMENTARY

Compiled by
Richard (John) Staats, M. Div.

All Saints of North America Orthodox Church
Albuquerque, NM

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AN INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

Jesus Christ is the content and focus of the Bible,
from the opening verses in Genesis to the concluding verses of the Apocalypse.

HOW GENESIS AND THE BIBLE CAME TO BE—AN ORTHODOX UNDERSTANDING[1]

I. The Holy Spirit inspired chosen, faithful, and humble people of both the Old Covenant and the New to use their gifts of prophecy and teaching (*cf.* Rom 12:6) to pass down what they taught (oral tradition—*e.g*, 2 Tim 1:13 and 2 Thess. 2:15) and what they wrote, as it was revealed to them (*e.g.* Amos 3:7; Galatians 1:12).

A. We celebrate not only New Testament saints, but also Old Testament saints, because these authors of Scripture are called "the prophets" in the Nicene Creed (see also page 652 in *OSB*), and our "holy and God-bearing fathers" by the Church. Fr. John Whiteford explains: "when we speak of 'our holy and God-bearing fathers,' we are speaking of those of both the Old and New Testaments, and both fathers and mothers, who helped lay the foundations and build up our faith and our Church, both in terms of their examples and their teachings."[2]

B. This "working together" of God and human beings is called *synergy*; so, we can say that, in a mystical communion, the Holy Spirit and faithful people are the co-authors of the Bible. As such, we believe that the Bible "contains no formal errors or inner contradictions concerning the *relationship between God and the world*."[3] We do not believe, however, that every verse of Scripture is to be understood as being literally true, because the Bible contains many different types of writing, *e.g.*, poetry, genealogies, stories of local heroes, letters, songs, ancient sayings or proverbs. There is, moreover, a "canon within the canon" which indicates that certain books and passages are more important than others: Sundays have the most important readings, followed by the Saturday readings. On the weekdays, the NT is read "in course" —see the lectionary (*OSB* pp. 1767-1774).

C. To rightly understand Genesis, therefore, we must first see it as a book of "prophecy." St. John Chrysostom explains: "All the other prophets spoke of what was to occur after a long time or of what was about to happen; but the blessed Moses, who lived many generations after [the creation of the world], was given by the guidance of the right hand of the Most High to utter what had been done by the Lord before [Moses'] birth...therefore I entreat you, let us pay heed to these words as if we heard not Moses, but the very Lord of the universe who speaks through the tongue of Moses, and let us take leave for good of our own opinions."

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[1] Of course, I recommend the excellent article, the "Overview of the Books of the Bible" found in *The Orthodox Study Bible*, on pp xv-xx, and the two other excellent articles found on pp. 1753-1766, for further reading and explanations.
[2] Fr. John Whiteford, "Our Holy and God-Bearing Fathers," *Orthodox Christianity* online, 9/6/2017.
[3] Fr. Thomas Hopko, *italics* added.

1. "In seeking those things which are above, of course, one must not presume to be able in encompass the whole truth with the intellect, for this is the height of madness." St. Maximus the Confessor (ca. 580-662) tells us that "the human intellect is not unaffected by man's [present] corrupt and mortal nature...."[4]

D. The Scriptures are a part of the Church's Tradition, which means the Church[5] existed before the Bible as we know it was formed.
   1. The Bible does not stand over the Church, nor does it predate the Church; rather the Church's "holy tradition is the *source* of Holy Scripture."[6] Therefore, the Bible can only be rightly interpreted and understood in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be *correctly* interpreted by individuals, nor by those outside the Church.
      a. See 2 Peter 1:20; 3:15-16; also 2 Tim 2:15.
      b. St. Jerome says the Bible is intended for God's people, not unbelievers, and he said that although the Gnostics possessed Biblical texts, they did not possess the Gospel.
      c. Tertullian (died around 240) says the Scriptures were written "by people of faith for people of faith;" so, "never discuss the Bible with heretics—the Scriptures do not belong to them!"

   2. It is equally important to understand that the Bible was "not only…*written* under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, [but] the books were *gathered* together under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,"[7] –contrary to what Dan Brown suggests in *The Da Vinci Code*, and those who claim there are other "lost books" of the Bible.[8] As Orthodox, we have more OT books in the Bible than either the Roman Catholic or the Protestant confessions, who, in essence, deny the working and guidance of the Spirit in gathering these books.

II. The Bible was written as Sacred History (*Heilsgeschichte),* revealing the relationship between God and his creation; **not** as a scientific document. The Scripture answers the questions, "What?" / "Why?" rather than "How?"

A. In the opening chapters of Genesis, the questions the Scripture answers are: Why do we have to rest on the Sabbath when other peoples don't? Why am I drawn to the opposite sex and want to get married? Why is the world in such a mess? Why do we die?

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[4] Archimandrite Sergius (Bowyer), *Acquiring the Mind of Christ: Embracing the Vision of the Orthodox Church*. St. Tikhon's Monastery Press, 2015. p.76.

[5] As an Orthodox Christian, when I use the word *Church*, with a capital "C," I mean the Orthodox Church, since I believe she alone is the *One, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.* While there are various "churches" that have at least some portion of the Christian Truth, they are not a part of the One Church established by Christ himself.

[6] George Cronk, *The Message of the Bible: An Orthodox Christian Perspective.*

[7] Fr. Peter Gillquist, italics added.

[8] As Fr. George Sondergaard of blessed memory said, "These books were never 'lost,' the Church knew about them all along, and they were never part of the Bible."

III. German words *Heilsgeschichte* and *Historie*[9]may help explain a way of understanding the Scriptures.

A. *Geschichte* "refers to reports, stories, tales"…its emphasis is on that "which can be appreciated only *by participants*…which may or may not be proved" with objective facts like *Historie.* Thus it is knowledge gained by *experience* rather than *mental* acknowledgment of "facts."

1. *Heilsgeschichte,* (*Heils* mean "salvation")[10] is then, an interpretation of history in which the individual as a part of a faith community has experienced God's saving acts, and thereby comes to an understanding that Jesus Christ is central in redemption.

B. *Historie,* on the other hand refers to "facts, validated by and according to the standard of history as an academic discipline…it stresses objective fact which can be recognized by all observers."

1. As an example: The Civil War[11] began on April 12, 1861, when Confederate shore batteries under General P.G.T. Beauregard opened fire on Union-held Ft. Sumter in Charleston Bay.
2. Or, as Joe Friday said on the old TV series, *Dragnet*, "Just the facts, ma'am."

C. An example of both *Heilsgeschichte* and *Historie* can be seen in 1 Cor. 1:22-24: "we preach Christ crucified [*Historie*, this can be verified], a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks [also *Historie*]; but to *those who are called*,[12] [*i.e.*, those who are in the community of the Church who have experience the mystery Christ] both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom" [*Heilsgeschichte*, one cannot "prove" that this is true with "facts"].

IV. Eastern Mindset and the Language of the Bible

A. The Bible was written by people whose understanding, culture and language were very different than our secular "enlightened"[13] Western 21st century mind-set. Dr. Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou describes this difference of mindset (φρόνεμα, *phrónema*) in her book, *Thinking Orthodox.*[14]

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[9] The following information is taken from, *Two kinds of history: Geschichte vs. Historie / Changing or Remaining* at herowu0501.blogspot.com/2007/04/two-kinds-of-history-geschichte-vs.html.

[10] In Nazi Germany, *Heil Hitler* literally meant, Hitler is salvation (or savior).

[11] But as a graduate of the Seminary of the University of the South, I would be amiss if I didn't say, "aka, the War between the States, or the War of Northern Aggression."

[12] Italics added for emphasis.

[13] I am referring here to the Enlightenment intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe which emphasized reason and individualism rather than tradition.

[14] "Orthodox teaching does not merely differ from Western Christianity in *content*, but the reason for the difference is equally important…Not only the content but the approach to theology differs…This difference in the way Orthodox Christians think is nearly impossible to convey to Western Christians and extremely difficult for Orthodox Christians even to articulate…Orthodox Christians are accustomed to the lack of definitions and the absence of certainty." Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou, *Thinking Orthodox: Understanding and Acquiring the Orthodox Christian Mind*, Ancient Faith Publishing, Chesterton, Indiana, 2020. Italics are in original text.

1. Eastern mindset, φρόνεμα, was formed by poetry and storytelling, perhaps more open to the "mysterious," *i.e.*, not needing to comprehend things mentally; whereas Western mindset was formed by "Law and Order," things are "black and white," and things must be "rational" and "understandable."

B. The OT was originally written in "Old Hebrew," a short-hand language, *i.e.*, no vowels, verb tenses not necessarily related to time. This alphabet was very different than "modern Hebrew," and by the 3rd century B.C., it was no longer understood by the Jewish people.

God's Name, YHWH, in alphabet of Moses and David's time, then in modern alphabet:

V. Alexander the Great's conquests in the 4th cent. BC spread Koine Greek throughout the whole Mediterranean region, and Greek became the *lingua franca* of the region to about A.D. 300.

A. By the 3rd cent. B.C., Hebrew was no longer understood by the Jewish people in Egypt, so the OT was translated into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt by 70 rabbinic scholars.
   1. Known as the Septuagint (LXX) it was received as "divinely inspired text" among the Jews, and it is the text most quoted by the New Testament writers and Church fathers; it is the earliest version of the Old Testament Scriptures which we now have, as most all of the Early Hebrew texts are lost.
   2. The Septuagint is the text which has been continually used by the Orthodox Church.
   3. Nearly all English Bibles today use what is known as the Masoretic text (MT) for the Old Testament. This text was produced between the 6th to 9th centuries *after Christ* by a group of Jewish scholars, (who according to W. O. E. Oesterley in his book, *The Psalms*, were "heretical"),[15] who "resurrected" a revised Hebrew text, using "modern" Hebrew letters and adding vowel points to the text. It was not until *A New Translation of the Septuagint* (*NETS*)[16] was published in 2007, the St. Athanasius Academy *Septuagint* found in *The Orthodox Study Bible*, published in 2008, and *The Lexham English Septuagint*, published in 2019, that the Church's Old Testament was made available to English-speaking peoples!

[15] "Translator's Introduction" found in *The Psalter According to the Seventy,* Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, 1997, p.14.

[16] This scholarly work may be found online at https://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition.

VI. Sources behind the stories in Genesis.

A. God, of course, is the ultimate source for all the Scriptures. In his love for us, he reveals himself to us (*cf*. Ps 117/118:27, "The Lord is God and has revealed himself to us"). The unique attribute of the true God is that "he speaks," unlike the statues / idols of the nations, which "have a mouth, but they shall not speak" (Ps 113:13 [115:5]; and so, in the very first verses of Genesis, we read, "God *said…*"
   1. This means that these are not made-up stories by people, but the truth which God has spoken to his prophets, and these are truly his works for our salvation.
   2. At the same time, God reveals himself to us "as far as we could bear it,"[17] that is, he takes seriously our time and circumstances, using images and symbols that are familiar to the people at the time of his revelation to them. He doesn't overwhelm us with things beyond our ability to understand. He reveals things to us as "in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor 13:12).

B. The stories in Genesis may very likely be traced back to Moses, whom God spoke to "face to face"[18] (*see* Exodus 3:4; 33:11; 34:34-35; Numbers 12:6-8b).
   1. Having been brought up by Pharaoh's daughter, he would have been literate; and
   2. being in a favored relationship to God, with God giving him the Ten Commandments, it would be plausible for God to have revealed to him much of the prehistory found in Genesis.
   3. In addition to what Moses may have written down, there was certainly an oral tradition, stories which he shared with Joshua, Aaron and others, which would have been told to others throughout the years. It may have been these others who finally wrote these stories down so they would not be forgotten, and brought them together in the form we now have.
      a. According to Jewish teaching, "The traditions of the Oral Torah were passed down from generation to generation, from Moses to Joshua, and from there down to the leaders and sages of each generation."[19]

C. The Orthodox Church, to my knowledge, has not taken a doctrinal stand on who the human author of Genesis is. There are Orthodox who believe the Pentateuch to be the work of Moses only, but there are also those who accept modern scholarship's research as well, and neither group is outside the teaching the Church.

D. Most modern-day scholars see several different sources behind Genesis, and although this "source theory" is the product of 19th and 20th century German Protestant scholarship using the MT, I still find it helpful in understanding Genesis.

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[17] Troparion of the Transfiguration.

[18] *face to face* in Exodus 33:11 is, *enōpios enōpiō* (ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίῳ), literally, "in his presence, / his thoughts." In Acts 25:16, *face to face* is *kata prosōpon* (κατὰ πρόσωπον); if God spoke to Moses literally *face to face,* this seems contradictory to what follows, because God says a mortal can never see his *face* and live, so Moses was not allowed to actually see God's face. This is why when someone says to us Orthodox, "Show me your God," we show him the icon of Christ, for we now see God's face, and live.

[19] Yehuda Shurpin, www.chabad.org.

1. The "Priestly" source (P): Compiled around 400 B.C. by priests in Jerusalem; this source focused on genealogies, legal and liturgical matters. This may be the group which, guided by the Holy Spirit, brought all the stories together to form Genesis as we now have it.
2. The "J" source (based on God's name, JHVH in German): Perhaps containing the earliest material in the Pentateuch (*c* 950 B.C.); God is portrayed as very humanlike. In Judaism, the name of God is holy, so the reader of the scriptures would not pronounce God's name, but would substitute *Adonai*, "Lord," in its place—in the Septuagint (LXX), the translators understood this, and simply put the Greek word, *Kyrios*, "Lord," in the text. In English Bibles using the MT, LORD is used to indicate that YHWH is used —*not* for emphasis, as it is usually printed as "LORD"!
    a. In the LXX, *Kyrios* usually appears without the article, the way names are generally used in Greek, but "God" nearly always has the article, meaning, "the God." In Exodus 15:3b, the LXX reads, "'Kyrios' is his name,"[20] or, "'Lord' is his name." In Hebrew, "Lord God" would have been written as יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים – YHWH Elohim, (YHWH of gods), but would have been read as "Adonai Elohim." If one were to translate the LXX literally, one would say, "Lord, the God," because "Lord" is "the God's" name. Those who want to remove "masculine terminology" from the Bible and liturgical services err when they think Lord is simply a masculine *title*. It is not just a title but is, in fact, God's *name* throughout the Old Testament!
3. The "E" source, because the Hebrew uses *Elohim* for God's name, which means literally, "Gods" plural. This source likes to include angels in the stories. Some scholars have now suggested that "E" is simply a part of "J," rather than a separate source.

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Background Introduction

I. All ancient cultures had a creation story, and many of these ancient stories of cultures around the Mediterranean Sea have been discovered and translated into English. The Hebrew people would have been exposed to these, both in their time as slaves in Egypt and their time as captives in Babylon. The two creation stories in Genesis are given by the true God, ("the God" in the Septuagint Greek), to teach us the theological truth about God and his nature, and the truth of creation. A brief summary of these pagan stories follows:

A. In nearly all early cultures, the gods and goddesses were associated with a part of creation, *e.g.*, Apollo with the sun, Luna with the moon, Neptune/Poseidon the sea, etc. Thus, a sailor might pray to Neptune for save journey on the sea, to Apollo that the weather would be sunny, and to Luna so navigation with the stars at night might be good. These cultures were polytheistic, having many gods and goddesses, who often

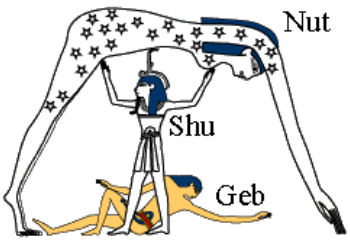
[20] (Ex 15:3b) Κύριος ὄνομα αὐτῷ; *cf.* with Ex. 33:19b, "I will proclaim my Name, 'Lord,' before you" (…καλέσω τῷ ὀνόματί μου, Κύριος…).

displayed many human emotions, and were sometimes at odds and/or at war with one another.

B. The oldest creation story we know of is *Enuma Elish* of Babylon: this story begins with Apsu, the god of fresh water, and Tiamat, the goddess of salt water and chaos (portrayed as a dragon-like creature). Apsu and Tiamat beget a multitude of other deities. Ea, the wisest of the gods, and his lover, Damkina, beget Marduk. From his birth, Marduk is the most awesome of all the gods. A battle ensues between Marduk and Tiamat. After triumphing over Tiamat, Marduk uses her remains to build the earth, making the Tigris and Euphrates rivers from the water that flows from her eyes. Marduk later kills his rival Kingu (whose mother was Tiamat), and Marduk mixes Kingu's blood with earth and used the clay to mold the first human beings, whose purpose is to serve the gods.

Tiamat on left, Marduk on right.

C. Egyptian creation story (1of 5): Atum, (often symbolized as a serpent) is a self-engendered god, embodying the essence and the capabilities of both sexes (the first "he-she"). He creates his children, the first deities, *out of loneliness*, by spitting out a son, Shu, god of the air/wind, and vomiting out a daughter, Tefnut, goddess of moisture.[21] These two beget Geb, god of the earth and Nut, goddess of the sky. Shu blows Nut into the air, where she hovers over Nut. As the goddess of the sky and all heavenly bodies, the sun and moon make their way across her body. At dusk, she would swallow them, and they pass through her belly during the night, to be reborn at dawn. Geb and Nut produce other gods and goddess. When two of Atum's children return after being lost, Atum weeps with joy, and his teardrops become human beings.



Nut swallows the Sun and it makes it way thru her.

[21] There is a more pornographic story about how Atum produced Tefnut, as Atum is both male and female. This may be found under Atum's "Role" at Atum - Wikipedia, or under Atum - Egyptian God of Creation |Mythology.net

Some of the gods and goddesses of Egypt—mixture of human and animal

II. In today's culture, people no longer believe that there is a God at all!

A. According to the Pew Research Group, 38% of Americans 18-29 years old do not believe in God, and 34% of Americans 30-49 do not believe in God.[22]

B. According to a 2021 survey, 31 percent of Americans never attend church or synagogue, compared to 22 percent of Americans who attend every week.[23]

C. This should not be too surprising, because Jesus, St. Paul, and St. Peter told us that this would happen.

1. Jesus warns us that false christs and false prophets (which means false teaching about God and Jesus) will appear, even producing "great signs and wonders;" but the outcome of that is that "even the elect" might be "deceived" and "led away" (Matt. 24:24).
2. St. Luke reports that St. Paul called the presbyters of the Church in Ephesus together (a clergy conference) and warns them that "savage wolves will come in among you [in the Church], not sparing the flock," and men will rise up speaking "perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29-30).
3. St. Paul himself writes to the Church in Thessaloniki, teaching them about the second coming of Jesus, and tells them that it will not happen unless "the apostasy[24] comes first" (2 Thess 2:3).
4. St. Peter also tells us that there will be "false teachers among you, who will "secretly bring in destructive heresies…and many will follow their immoral ways and as a result, *the way of the truth* will acquire a bad reputation" (2 Peter 2:1-2, italics added, *Eastern Orthodox New Testament* [*EOB*]).

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[22] Belief in God - Religion in America: U.S. Religious Data, Demographics and Statistics | Pew Research Center

[23] www.statista.com/statistics/245491/church-attendance-of americans/#:~:text=According%20to%20a%202020%20survey%2C%2029%20percent%20of,40%20percent%20consider%20themselves%20to%20be%20very%20religious.

[24] ἀποστασία, "the abandonment or renunciation of a religious belief."

D. We see this happening today by the primacy given to science, the secularization of American culture[25] (*e.g.,* family "sporting events" seem to always take place on Sunday mornings; the repeal of "blue laws" allowing businesses to be open on Sunday); the millionaire "preachers" of mega churches, the hypocrisy of "Christians" of all denominations, the "trendiness" of "modern worship" services which resemble secular entertainment, with big screen TV's and a coffee shop in the church;[26] the false teachings[27] of many "churches" which have strayed away from the historic, apostolic Faith and the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church; and the demonic influences in our culture, which are too many to mention by name.[28] As St. Paul says, "the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, so that the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ who is the image of God should not dawn on them" (2 Cor. 4:4, *EOB*).

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***The Book of Adam and Eve,* found also in the Talmud.**

In my commentary, I include quotes from *The Book of Adam and Eve*, an ancient book written in Egypt, but also found in the Talmud. So, what is the Talmud?

"The Talmud is a collection of writings that covers the full gamut of Jewish law and tradition, compiled and edited between the third and sixth centuries. Written in a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic, it records the teachings and discussions of the great academies of the Holy Land and Babylonia....[the] Talmud contains rabbinic commentaries, traditions and laws couched in the Torah's infinite wisdom.... As anyone who has learned the Bible can attest, there are certain verses where there is no way of knowing what it refers to by just looking at the verse." [29]

"The Talmud is the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law and Jewish theology."[30]

These are the teachings of the rabbis "filling in" the gapes in the Biblical text. While these stories were never a part of the "canonical" scriptures, they nevertheless shed additional light on the biblical stories, and were probably known by the early Jewish Christians...after all, St. Paul

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[25] Rise in middle-aged white 'deaths of despair' may be fueled by loss of religion, new research paper argues (msn.com)

[26] A young seminarian at Moody Bible Institute made the observation that the "trendiness" of Evangelical and other churches seems to copy the night club scene, but he says that instead of attracting the younger generation, the church services appear to be too much like society, except the music and light shows aren't nearly as good, so the younger generation says, "Why go to church when I can get better music, etc. at the clubs?"

[27] including, but not limited to, the "rapture," the "1000 year earthly reign of Christ," and the necessity of supporting the nation of Israel, the blessing of same-sex couples, the endorsing of "multi-genderism," etc.

[28] An interesting book by Dr. Kristin Kobes Du Mez about the role the Evangelical churches and leaders have played in American religion and politics over the last 75 years is entitled, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation.* While I may not agree with everything Dr. Du Mez believes, this book was an eye-opener for me.

[29] Yehuda Shurpin, www.chabad.org.

[30] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud

himself says that he was "brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, having been instructed according to *the* strictness of the law of the fathers" (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel is mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus (Vita, 38) and in the Talmud, and both are with all due respect.[31]

The Text of Genesis used in this Commentary:

The text of Genesis is my rendering of the Church of Greece text, consulting *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, *The Lexham English Septuagint*, and *An Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint.* I did not use the St. Athanasius Academy text found in *the Orthodox Study Bible*, because in order to get published, the *OSB* was tied to Thomas Nelson's *New King James* Hebrew text.[32] As such, the Old Testament is not a translation based solely on the Septuagint (LXX) text, but a hybrid of the NKJ Hebrew text with some revisions according to the LXX, in order to reduce printing costs. Unfortunately, Genesis is one of the books that suffered greatly, with much of the Hebrew text used. While the *Orthodox Study Bible* is a good start, giving us more of the Septuagint than any other Bible, as well as all the Books found in the Orthodox canon, it would be nice if someday it could be revised using only the Septuagint text. My notes in the Commentary section point out the weaknesses found in Genesis in the *OSB*, not to criticize the intent of the *OSB*, but with sadness, because the Old Testament text could have been so much more than what it is. The *Lexham English Septuagint* was consulted, because as Fr. John Whiteford writes, "it is generally more accurate than the Orthodox Study Bible in terms of translating the Septuagint... Rather than taking an existing translation of the Hebrew Old Testament text, and correcting it with the Septuagint, the LES is a fresh translation, unlike...the Orthodox Study Bible (which used the New King James Version as its starting point)."

[31] www.whatchristianswanttoknow.com/who-was-gamaliel-the-apostle-pauls-teacher/#ixzz7sNXwrCxH

[32] See *Introduction to the Orthodox Study Bible*, p. xi., where it states, "Thomas Nelson Publishers granted use of the Old Testament text of the New King James Version in the places where the English translation of the LXX would match that of the Masoretic (Hebrew) text." Unfortunately, that statement is not exactly correct, because I have found many places where the MT text and the LXX do not "match," but the *OSB* still uses the NKJV text.

First Day of Great Lent:
"Clean Monday"

Let us joyfully begin the all-hallowed season of abstinence; and let us shine with the bright radiance of the holy commandments of Christ our God, with the brightness of love and the splendor of prayer, with the purity of holiness and the strength of good courage. So, clothed in raiment of light, let us hasten to the Holy Resurrection on the third day, that shines upon the world with the glory of eternal life.[33]

Genesis 1:1-13

1 In *the* beginning GOD[a] made the heaven and the earth. And the earth was invisible and empty,
and darkness was upon the abyss, and *the* Spirit of God was rushing above[b] the water.

4 And GOD said, "Let light come into being," and light came into being. And GOD saw the light, that *it* was good. And GOD separated between the light and between the darkness. And GOD named the light Day, and the darkness he named Night; and it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, one day.

6 Then GOD said, "Let a dome[a] come into being in *the* midst of the water, and let it be a separator in the midst of water and water." And it became so. And GOD made the dome, and GOD made a separation in the midst of the water, which was under the dome, and of the water that was above the dome. And GOD named the dome Sky.[b] And GOD saw that *it* was good, and it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a second day.

9 Then GOD said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered together into one gathering, and let the dry land be seen." And it became so. And the water that was under the sky was gathered into their gatherings, and the dry land was seen. And GOD named the dry land Earth, and the gatherings of the waters he named Seas. And GOD saw that *it* was good.
11 Then GOD said, "Let the earth bring forth plants for fodder, seed propagating according to kind and according to likeness, and *the* fruit-bearing tree producing fruit whose seed is in itself according to kind on the earth." And it became so. And the earth brought forth plants for fodder, seed propagating according to kind and according to likeness, and *the* fruit-bearing tree producing fruit whose seed was in itself according to kind on the earth. And GOD saw that *it* was good. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a third day.

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[33] Seasonal hymn following the 3rd reading of the Psalter. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, *The Lenten Triodion*, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2001. p. 190.

[a] When GOD appears in the text, the article is present in the Greek, reading literally *the God*.
Italicized word means that this word is not in the Greek text, but is added to the English translation.

[b] *epephéreto* (ἐπεφέρετο), "to rush upon; to be borne on; to attack or assault."

[a] *dome*, *steréōma* (στερέωμᾰ), "a dome; an arch; a firmness; a firmament" (see picture below).

[b] *sky,* (οὐρανός); this word can also mean the dwelling place of God (the heavens), but here I believe a better understanding is simply "sky," the underside of the dome that would be seen if one were looking up "at the sky."

The first fact you must grasp is this:
The renewal of creation has been wrought by the Self-same Word who made it in the beginning.
There is thus no inconsistency between creation and salvation.[1]

I. It is important to know that the Hebrew people did not understand their unique calling prior to the Exodus from Egypt under Moses, nor did they have any sacred writings we would call "Scripture,"[2] because the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch or Torah) are known as "The Five Books of Moses." Jesus himself quotes verses from Exodus 20:12, 21:15 (LXX), and Deuteronomy 5:16, saying, "Moses said."

   A. Because of their experiences in Egypt, God reveals the truth about himself and creation to Moses, who, according to tradition, wrote them down, and shared it with Aaron and the priests. It also may be believed that Moses received additional revelations from God as Israel journeyed through the desert wilderness for 40 years, and that he told these to the people. Their experience in the desert may have given them another perspective which colors a second story of creation.

II. This first story (Gen. 1—2:3) seems to have been kept by the Jewish priests, who focused on legal and religious matters. It is a statement of faith, answering different questions than the ones we might ask, specifically dealing with the threat of polytheism with the gods and goddesses they encounter in Egypt, and the Baals and fertility goddesses which were a constant temptation to Israel.

   A. Therefore, some of the questions they were answering were:
      1. "Why do we worship only one God when the Egyptians have many gods and goddesses?"
      2. "Why do we have to rest on the Sabbath? We didn't have any day of rest when we were slaves in Egypt, and none of our neighboring peoples do."

   B. There is for us as Orthodox Christians, a different way of looking at this story. I will try to explain, as best as I can—not being an expert in either Judaism nor Orthodoxy—both the Jewish interpretation, and the Orthodox understanding as it has been revealed to us in Christ. I believe both are correct, for they both tell the truth in different ways.

III. The answer to the first question above is: *In the beginning, <u>the</u> God made the heaven and the earth.*

   A. God has revealed to us that he is the only God, *the God* (article present); there is not a pantheon of gods and goddesses. Indeed, the false gods and goddess of these nations are demons who lead people away from the true God, as Moses declares that in Egypt, the

[1] St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation.* St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 1993. p. 26.
St. Athanasius (296-373) was Bishop of Alexandria. He wrote *Incarnation* while he was in his 20's. He attended the Council of Nicea and was a great opponent to Arianism.
[2] Like the New Testament, the faithful community came first, with the Scriptures following, not the other way around.

Hebrews "sacrificed to demons, and not to God" (Deut. 32:17), and David declares "For all the gods of the nations are demons" (Ps. 95 (96):5—LXX).

1. As Orthodox, we believe that God revealed himself as the Creator who made everything that is out of nothing, *ex nihilo* (2 Macc. 7:28).
    a. As Orthodox, we confess in the Nicene Creed: "I believe in *one* God, Father Almighty,[3] *maker* of heaven and earth, and of *all things*, visible and invisible." (*italics added for emphasis*).
    b. We proclaim in the Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom, that God is the one "who brought us from non-existence into being."
    c. *The Shepherd of Hermas* (a 2nd century writing, included as Scripture in Codex Sinaiticus and regarded as such by St. Athanasios [☩ 373]), "Believe thou first and foremost that there is one God who created…all things, and brought them out of non-existence into being." St. Athanasios wrote: To turn away from God is to return to "nothingness" or non-existence, because "it is God alone who exists."[4]

2. God *creates* all things by his Word and/or by making them with his hands (a human-like description of God); he does not have sexual relations with a female deity who then "births" anything in creation. As Orthodox, we believe there is no female deity in the Trinity, because God in his essence is unknowable and beyond gender.[5] Yet, in revealing himself to us, God has chosen to use masculine imagery.

3. God makes all things out of love, not out of necessity, compulsion, nor loneliness, as did Atum in the Egyptian myth, and all of creation is a sign of his love.

IV. ***In* the *beginning*** (*En archē*—when the article is absent, it describes, defines, characterizes and qualifies; when present, the article is like pointing a finger at something). As Orthodox, we know more about this "beginning."

A. John's gospel begins with the same words, *En archē*, but being "the theologian," he fills in an important detail: the Word that the God speaks is Christ, who as the Word and Son of the Father is divine, and yet becomes flesh and "pitched his tent" (a reference to the tabernacle) among us as the God-Man.

B. St. Paul uses *archē* in reference to Christ: "He is the head of *the* body… who is *the* beginning/*archē*" (Col 1:18).

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[3] In Greek, the article is absent before *Father*, which emphasizes the nature of the one God as Father. A better English translation would be, "in one God, an Almighty Father…"

[4] St. Athanasius, *Incarnation*, p. 30.

[5] The grammatical gender of the word for "spirit" is feminine in Hebrew (רוּחַ, *rūach*), neuter in Greek (πνεῦμα, *pneûma*) and masculine in Latin (spiritus). The neuter Greek *πνεῦμα* is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew רוּחַ. The pronouns used to address the Holy Spirit, however, are masculine. In these languages, however, all nouns are divided into genders, which simply indicate the ending used in their declension. It may or may not have anything to do with the "gender" of the person the noun indicates; for example, "uncle" in Russian is дядя (dyadya) which has a "feminine" ending, but an uncle is certainly not a woman! However, God has revealed himself as "male" in the Scriptures, so we use that gender as "adequate" for talking about God.

C. The risen Christ describes himself to St. John on Patmos as, "I AM the Alpha and the Omega, beginning/*archē* and end" (Rev 21:6).

D. As Orthodox Christians then, we could translate the opening verse of Genesis as: *By Christ, God made the heavens and the earth*, as we indeed confess in the Symbol of Faith: "…in one Lord, Jesus Christ…by whom all things were made;" and the icons of creation show Jesus as the One who creates.

V. **There are 2 separate creations.** The first creation is referred to in passing and is often overlooked by many Protestant commentators: *In the beginning, the God made the heavens.*

A. The Jews referred to the divine realm in the plural, חשמים, *hashamim*, and Jesus used the plural in the Lord's Prayer, as found in the Gospels.[6]
   1. The heavens were understood as being the dwelling place of God and his angels, not the place where the departed went—that was Sheol or hades.

B. According to the teaching of the Church, *the heavens* here refers to the creation of the heavenly powers (angels) who were made prior to the creation of the earth.
   1. St. Ambrose says: "The angels, dominions and powers…were already in existence when the word was created." He is supported by Scripture, because God askes Job, "To what were the earth's foundations fastened, or who laid her cornerstone? *When the stars were made, all my angels praised me in a loud voice!"* (Job 38:6-7.)[7]

   2. St. Gregory: "As the goodness of God could not find satisfaction in contemplating himself, he wished to spread this goodness ever further, so… God first thought of the angelic heavenly powers and thought became act…As his *first creation* was pleasing to him, he then devised *another* world, material and visible" (italics added for emphasis).

   3. According to both Jewish and early Christian tradition, a favorite archangel, Lucifer (meaning "light-bearer") was appointed by God to be the guardian of the earth, and especially the garden (*parádeisos*) which was about to be created. (Spoiler alert: He appears in chapter 3 in the garden!)

C. A first rebellion, or "fall" of these angelic powers.
   1. Lucifer became envious that human beings were going to be created, not only in God's image, but also that they were created "for immortality," and the angels were to serve them as their guardians (*cf.* Wisdom of Solomon 2:23-24a).
      a. The Anaphora of St. Basil, recalling God's mercy toward us, says, "thou didst appoint angels as guardians."

[6] The plural, *heavens*, in the Lord's Prayer is found in *The Orthodox Prayer Book* first published in 1959 by the "Russian Day" Committee of Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties, Pennsylvania, and later by St. Tikhon's Press, South Canaan, PA. It is also used in the Liturgy Books of ROCOR.

[7] Italics added for emphasis. Punctuation follows Church of Greece text, not the *OSB*.

2. The Church sees Isaiah 14:12-15 as a description of Lucifer's attitude, and the LXX even names him: "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer…" Notice that in these verses, Lucifer boasts that he will equal God five times with, "I will….."

3. Because of Lucifer's pride, ambition, and arrogance, "a war took place in the heaven: Michael and his angels made war on the dragon, and the dragon and his angels made war… the dragon was hurled down…and his angels were thrown down with him. (Rev. 12:7-9, *EOB*) These fallen angels are now demons.
   a. Jesus tells his disciples that he "saw Satan having fallen like lightning from the heaven," (Lk 10:18) confirming for us the truth of Rev. 12.
   b. Bishop Kallistos Ware writes, "For Orthodoxy the fall of the angels is not a picturesque fairy-tale, but spiritual truth."

VI. **The beginning of the second creation:** *…and the earth. And the earth was invisible and empty.*

A. *invisible* = ἀόρατος, "unable to be seen; invisible;" the words from this opening verse in Genesis forms the opening lines of the Creed, "maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible" / ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων.
   1. "light" had not been created, so all was in darkness.
   2. everything was under the watery chaos,[8] so the land was not able to be seen.

B. *empty = akataskeúastos, a* means "without;" *kata* means "according to;" *skeuos* means "objects, things."

C. *darkness was upon the abyss;*
   1. We are not told much about this. This seems to be the primordial condition in nearly all creation stories.
   2. Darkness is not "evil," rather, darkness is the absence of light. Darkness is, in a sense, a "no thing;" it is not created.

D *the abyss*;[9] as there is no natural port along Israel's coastline, and the Hebrews were not sailors but desert dwellers; the deep was a fearful thing to them.
   1. The *great sea monsters* and *this dragon* dwelt there (Gen 1:21; Ps 103:26; Amos 9:3b, *serpent* in *OSB* is *drákōn* in LXX, "dragon").
   2. Jonah in belly of great sea monster, refers to it as the "belly of hades" (Jonah 2:3).
   3. The abyss was considered to be the home of demons (*cf.* Lk 8:31), and later, the place of the dead (Rom 10:7).
   4. During Theophany, Ps 73 (74) is read, with the verses, "Thou hast triumphed over the sea by thy power; thou hast crushed the heads of dragons upon the water. Thou hast shattered the heads of the dragon;"[10] and Ps 76 (77) with the verse, "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee and were afraid; the depths (ἀβυσσοι)

[8] This watery chaos is what is referred to in Psalm 68 (69)…"Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul…."
[9] abyss, ἄβυσσος, "bottomless; the sea; the abyss; chaos."
[10] *OSB* text revised.

were troubled." The Theophany icon shows Jesus in the Jordan, with the "demons" hiding in the water.

5. At baptisms, the Priest breathes[11] upon the baptismal water and prays, "…sanctify this water by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit…that *no demon of darkness* may conceal himself in this water…." (italics added).

VII. ***the* Spirit of God was rushing above the water. The 3rd Person of the Trinity is revealed to us as Christians.**

A. The watery abyss represents Chaos; God's Spirit keeps Chaos "at bay," but if God releases his control and restraint, Chaos (darkness and water) will come rushing back in, (the story of Noah and the flood—Gen. 7:11, "the fountains of the abyss...and the floodgates of heaven...).
   1. Darkness and Chaos are inter-related: the demons come out when it's dark!
      a. Priest's prayer over us at Vespers: "Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and the approaching night, from every foe, from all adverse powers of the devil…."
      b. The Scots, or the Welsh, came up with this prayer: "From ghoulies and ghosties, and long-leggedy beasties, and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord, deliver us!"

B. *was rushing*; imperfect form of verb *epiphérō*, "to rush (upon); to be borne along; to attack, assault;" implies continuous action; a participial form of this word is found in Acts 2:2: "a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind…and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit;" Luke is telling us that Pentecost is the beginning of God's new creation, using the language of Genesis.
   1. *OSB* uses *hovering*, and a lot of commentators make a big deal out of this word, with its imagery of a mother hen [or a helicopter…which would be nonsense to the Biblical world!]

[11] *Spirit*, in both Hebrew (*ruach*) and Greek (*pneuma*) is the same word used for "breath" and "wind." When the Priest breaths over the Catechumens, or over the baptismal water, he is invoking the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus "breathed" on his apostles, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22-23).

a. 1st problem is that this is the Hebrew text, which again, the *OSB* unfortunately uses. The definition of "hovering" is "to remain floating, suspended, or fluttering in the air; to remain in an uncertain state; to waver."[12] In other words, the Hebrew imagery of the Holy Spirit is static and/or wavering uncertainly. The Greek word found in the LXX, on the other hand, shows an active motion: the Spirit rushes above, or is borne along above the water.[13]
b. Secondly, it misses the connection to Acts 2 and Pentecost.
c. A form of this word is found in Jeremiah 18:14b, and the *OSB* reads, "Will water turn aside when violently pushed (φερόμενον) by the wind?"
d. Because the Hebrew word means *hovering over a brood*, evangelical Protestant Bibles[14] and feminist theologians use this and similar passages to make the Holy Spirit a "she,"[15] and they incorporate this feminine language into their "inclusive / expansive" language liturgies.

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"Day by Day"

I. *God said*…Creation of light, and the Trinity is revealed:

A. As Christians, we understand that it is the Father speaking his Word which goes forth, carried along by the Spirit/Breath, and accomplishes the Father's command (*cf.* Ps 32 (33):6 and Isaiah 55:10-11).
   1. Words have "power;" they can build us up, or bring us down, heal us, or hurt us. Therefore, lepers must cover their mouths as they cry out, "Unclean" (*cf.* Lev 13:45b), because although they are describing themselves, if the word "unclean" was not blocked, it would make those who heard it unclean as well.

   2. What makes God the God, is that he speaks, he communicates with his people (*cf.* 1 Kingdoms 3:9; Heb 1:1-2); false gods (idols) cannot speak, even though "they have mouths" (Ps 113:12-13).

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[12] www.thefreedictionary.com/hovering.

[13] I could not find "hover" as a definition for *epiphérō* in any Greek Lexicon I have, nor online, nor in any translation of the Septuagint I have, other than the *OSB,* which uses the NKJV here. I have checked the following Greek lexicons: *Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*, Expanded Edition, Bernard A. Taylor; 2009. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament,* Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, 11th Impression, 1968. *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Zondervan Publishing House, 9th Printing, 1973. LXX translations checked: *The Septuagint with Apocrypha,* Lancelot Brenton, 1980. *A New English Translation of the Septuagint,* Pietersma and Wright, editors; 2007. *The Lexham English Septuagint,* Penner and Brannan, editors; 2019.

[14] Some of these include: Evangelical Heritage Version, Holman Christian Standard Bible, God's Word Bible, The Message Bible, New International Version (NIV), New King James (the basis of the *OSB*), New Living Translation.

[15] An example is the hymn, "She is the Spirit," found in at least 8 church hymnals. The first verse reads:

She sits like a bird, *brooding* over the waters. *Hov'ring* on the chaos of the world's first day;
She sighs and she sings, *mothering* creation, waiting to *give birth* to all the Word will say." (italics added).

In addition to the heresy of giving birth to creation, the "first day" is also incorrect, according to the LXX.

B. *Let light come into being (genēthētō,* aor impv, implies instantaneous action).
   1. Light is created to shine into the abyss, foretelling Christ's descent into hades: "All now is filled with light: heaven and earth and the lower regions" (Paschal Matins, Ode 3; *cf.* John 1:5).
      a. Light is a symbol of God's presence – that's why we light candles in church, and why at certain times the Royal Doors are opened, so the Uncreated Light of God (symbolized by the sanctuary) can shine on us.

   2. *GOD separated between the light…*
      a. God brings order to creation by his acts of separating, [16] first, separating light from darkness.
         i. The concept of *separating* is an important religious concept of Judaism, which the Priestly source ties back to creation; *e.g.*, what makes a *kosher* kitchen? According to Torah law, kosher cooking must insure the strict *separation* of meat and dairy foods. In kosher homes, different cutlery and dishware are used for dairy and meat products.

C. *GOD* named *the light Day…*
   1. Hebrew understanding of *naming*: To "name" someone or something, or to know its name, meant having power over that person/thing. The name conveys the nature and essence of the thing named (*cf.* Jesus with Legion, Mk 5:8-9.)
      a. When God "names" his creation, it is clear that the creation is subject to God and is not divine.
      b. By naming Day and Night, God takes possession of them and exerts his lordship over them, *ie*, these are not gods or goddesses as in Egyptian or Greco-Roman mythology (Hemera was goddess of the day and her sister Nyx was goddess of the night), but are creatures, made and controlled by the God (*cf.* Ps. 73 (74):16a).
      c. The darkness (chaos), which was present in the beginning of the story, is now brought under God's lordship with God naming it *Night.*

D. And GOD saw the light, that *it* was good (*kalós*, "perfect; free from defects").

E. *it came to be evening and it came to be morning,* one day.
   1. How are we to understand the "days" in Genesis 1? *Both* as literal "24 hour days" *and* as theological language. However, Genesis is <u>not</u> a scientific explanation of "how" creation happened, rather it is a <u>religious confession</u> explaining "the meaning" of creation. To make Genesis something other than that is to misuse the Scriptures.
      a. To understand the meaning the early Hebrews gave to Genesis 1, it is necessary to understand these days as literal days; but to understand them from a Christian perspective, it is necessary to understand that a "day" is not a measurement of time (*chronos* in Greek), but rather a "season of God's activity" (*kairos*). *Both*

[16] *OSB* reads "divided," using the NKJV text. While it may be nit-picking, I believe there is a difference between "dividing" and "separating." The LXX reads, *diechōrisen*, which all my lexicons translate as "separating," or "to make go away," not "dividing."

understandings are *theologically* correct. This concept of a day as "God's time of activity" is clear in the Greek, because the days are not called, "the first day, the second day, the third day," etc. because the article is not present; so the correct reading of the LXX is, "*one* day, a second day, a third day," etc.[17]

b. "Time" is a human creation, God is always in the eternal "present," *i.e.,* he is outside of "time." Therefore, the psalmist is correct when he says, "a thousand years in thy sight are… like a watch in the night" (Ps. 89 (90):4; and St. Peter reminds us, "with the Lord one day (*mia ēmera* – same words used in Gen 1:5) is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8).

c. The prophets often spoke of "the Day of the Lord," a definite season when God will act, but this does not mean a literal 24-hour day, *e.g.*, Isaiah 2:12 *ff.*; Ezek. 30:3; Hosea 2:21; Micah 2:4).

2. According to Genesis, the day begins at evening.
   a. The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday for the Jews. This is why the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs of the thieves crucified with Jesus broken and their bodies taken down from the cross on Friday afternoon, because the Sabbath began at sunset (John 19:31).
   b. Theologically, the pattern is we move from the darkness of death to the light of Christ (the "Dayspring" or "Orient" as we sing at Nativity) and eternal life.
   c. The Orthodox Church follows this pattern, as the Vesper service *begins* the day; so, Vespers on "Saturday" night uses the troparia and kontakia, etc. of Sunday. "Saturday" night Vespers begins Sunday.

II. 2nd Day: Creation of a dome and separation of waters.

A. *dome* = *stereōma* (στερέωμᾰ); "a dome; an arch; a firmness."
   1. On this day, God not only speaks, but he gets involved making the dome, which in ancient times was made by hammering out the metal until it was hard, and he names it Sky, or "heaven," but this "heaven" is neither where God dwells nor where the departed go.

   2. The dome's purpose is to hold back water above the earth; when the floodgates in the dome are opened, the water above the dome falls as rain or snow (*cf.* Gen. 7:11, 8:2; Ps. 148:4b).
      a. The separated water is now encircling the earth: water above the dome comes down as rain or snow; the water under the earth becomes springs and wells.

   3. The architecture of an Orthodox temple follows this description in Genesis, and our churches are built according to "the pattern" of creation (Heb 8:5).
      a. Western cathedrals were built to make us seem small and remind us of how insignificant we are; Orthodox temples, on the other hand, are meant to "embrace" us, and with the icons on the walls and ceilings, make us feel like

[17] Unfortunately, the *OSB* reads, "the second day…"

we are a part of God's family.[18] Western spires or steeples are intended to make us look up to the sky, but in Orthodox temples, we look up at the center dome and see the Lord (Pantocrator) looking down on us. The architecture of Western churches is not very biblical in my opinion.

B. And GOD saw that *it* was good, and it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a second day.

III. 3rd Day: The land is revealed and brings forth vegetation.

A. God now just speaks the Word, which goes forth and causes the water under the sky to be gathered, forming seas and lakes, but the water is also gathered beneath the earth, forming the water table.

B. The land is evidently under the water, and so it is seen when waters uncover the earth (*cf.* Exodus 14:21, when the Red Sea is parted, the dry land is seen).

C. God names the dry land Earth and the gathering of water, Seas; they are creatures, not gods, nor is the earth made from the body of a goddess. (*e.g.*, Gaia, Greek goddess of the earth, or Egyptian god Geb, the sea gods Poseidon / Neptune).
   1. Another clarification that the "gods" of the Gentiles are nothing.

D. The earth is given a fertility role by God, who commands the earth to "bring forth plants and fruit-bearing trees." God is less directly involved with this creation, and unlike the pagan myths, there is no sexual union between a god and goddess, nor is there a fertility goddess, such as Hegemone, the Greek goddess of plants, specifically making them bloom and bear fruit, or Pomona, Roman goddess of fruit trees, gardens, and orchards.
   1. Two kinds of vegetation: that which the seed just falls off (grass) and trees whose seed is encased in its fruit.
   2. St. Ambrose "Let everyone be informed that the sun is not the author of vegetation…The sun is younger than the green shoot, younger than the green plant."

E. And GOD saw that *it* was good. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a third day.

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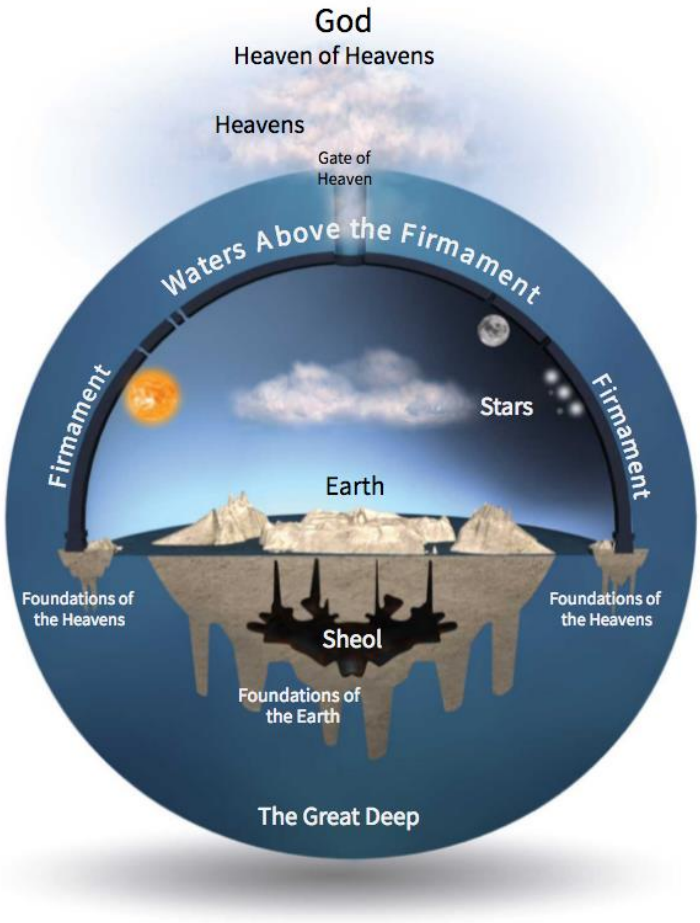
[18] This was the reaction of an evangelical when he visited an Orthodox Church from "A Protestant Learns About Greek Orthodoxy," on You Tube: "Catholic churches are made to make you feel small, but to communicate the authority of the church, where this [an Orthodox Church] is more like the concept of the Round Table. It's designed to make you feel like you're a part of the Church, like you're a part of this…of a cloud of witnesses that you're surrounded by, who are alive and with you…."

The Dome of the Firmament:
The Created World according to the First Chapter of Genesis



First Tuesday of Great Lent

As we begin the second day of saving abstinence, we cry to Thee, O Lord: Pierce the hearts of us Thy servants with compunction and accept the prayers we offer Thee in fear. Grant us without stumbling to complete the course of the Fast, and bestow upon us cleansing and great mercy.[1]

Genesis 1:14-23

1 [14]And GOD said, "Let light-giving bodies come into being on the dome of the sky for illumination of the earth, to separate between the day and between the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years; and let them be for illumination on the dome of the sky, so as to give light upon the earth." And it became so. And GOD made the two great luminaries, the greater luminary to rule the day, and the lesser luminary to rule the night and the stars. And GOD set them on the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, and to rule the day and the night, and to separate between the light and between the darkness. And GOD saw that *they* were good. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a fourth day.

[20] And GOD said, "Let the waters bring forth living creeping things, and birds flying above the earth beneath the dome of the sky." And it became so. And GOD made the great sea monsters, and all creatures among creeping things which the waters brought forth according to their kind, and every winged bird according to kind. And GOD saw that *they* were good. And GOD blessed them, saying, "Begin increasing and multiplying and filling the waters in the seas, and let the birds begin multiplying upon the earth." And it became evening, and it became morning, a fifth day.

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[1] Seasonal hymn following the 3rd reading of the Psalter. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, *The Lenten Triodion*, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2001. p. 210-211.

IV. 4th day: Creation of sun, moon, and stars.

A. Like the dome, God not only speaks on this day, but he makes the sun and moon and *sets* them on the dome, perhaps emphatically showing they are mere creatures, not deities.

1. After spending years in Egypt, the Hebrews learned that the principal gods of Egypt were the gods of the sun, moon, and stars, and it was evidently difficult for the freed Hebrews to not want to worship these (see Deut. 4:19-20).
   a. Horus, Egyptian god of the sky, one of the most significant ancient Egyptian deities, was worshipped from at least the late prehistoric Egypt until the Ptolemaic Kingdom and Roman Egypt.[1]

2. Notice that "light" existed from day one; the sun and moon are not the source of light, but have specific purposes: *for signs and for seasons and for days and for years… and to give light upon the earth.*
   a. In both Hebrew and Greek understanding, "God is light" (1st John 1:5), and his *brightness* or *splendor* can be seen. The Jews referred to this *brightness* of God as *shekinah YHWH,* and it was expressed in the LXX and New Testament by the Greek word δόξα (doxa), *brightness, splendor.* When the 8th Day comes, the "Day without evening," Christ will be the only Light. (*cf.* Rev 21:23, 22:5).

B. This 4th day, with the sun and moon now giving light to the earth, the earth now becomes "visible."

C. And GOD saw that *they* were good. And it came to be evening, and it came to be morning, a fourth day.

V. 5th day: Creation of creatures that fill the seas and the sky.

(These next 3 days begins filling the earth with "objects").

A. As on the 3rd day, God commands the sea to bring forth both reptiles (including the great sea monsters) and flying birds.

[1] The Egyptian god Horus was one of the creator gods. **He took the form of a falcon and flew up at the beginning of time as part of the creation.** His right eye represented the sun and his left eye represented the moon. With the power of the sun and the healing of the moon, Horus ruled both the day and the night. Unfortunately, today the "Eye of Horus" is a very popular tattoo.

1. God is once again involved with making all these—synergy between God and the waters, so these creatures have a closer relationship to God than the plants and trees.
    a. There is no primordial struggle nor dualism as in pagan myths.
    b. The water takes on a generative nature as well as the earth.
        i. Just as the water of the sea brought forth life, so the water of baptism brings forth new life ("the laver of regeneration").
        ii. St. Basil the Great: "…not even the water that remained in the slime and ponds was idle or without its contribution in creation. For clearly frogs and mosquitoes and gnats were generated from them." (a little humor?)

B. And GOD blessed them...
    1. The first blessing, and he commands that they begin and continue multiplying (procreation is a divine command and gift).

C. And GOD saw that *they* were good. And it became evening, and it became morning, a fifth day.

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First Wednesday of Great Lent

O Lord, Thou hast consecrated and granted unto us this light-giving season of abstinence. Enable all of us to pass through it in compunction and sincerity, living in peace by the power of Thy Cross, O Thou who lovest mankind[1]

Genesis 1:24—2:3

1 [24] And GOD said, "Let the earth bring forth a living creature according to kind, tetrapods,[a] and
creeping things, and wild animals of the earth according to kind." And it became so. And GOD
made the wild animals of the earth according to kind, and the livestock according to their kind,
and all the creeping things of the earth according to their kind. And God saw that *they* were good.

[26] Then GOD said, "Let us make humanity[b] according to our image[c] and according to *our* likeness,
and let them rule the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and the livestock, and all the earth,
and all the creeping things, those creeping on the earth."

[27] And GOD made the human being,
according to God's image he made him,
male and female made he them.

And GOD blessed them, saying, "Begin increasing and multiplying and filling the earth, and become lord over her, and rule the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and all the livestock, and all the earth, and all the creeping things, those creeping on the earth."

[29] And GOD said, "See, I have given to you every sowable herb propagating seed that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has in itself fruit of sowable seed shall become food for you and for all the wild animals of the earth, and for all the birds of the sky, and for every creeping thing which creeps on the earth, the one having in itself a soul of life. Every green plant will be for food." And it became so. And GOD saw all the things which he had made, and behold, *they* were very good! And it became evening, and it became morning, a sixth day.

2 And so, the sky and the earth and all their ornamentation were completed. And on the sixth[d]
day, GOD finished his works, the things that he made, and he rested from all his works which

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[1] Seasonal hymn following the 3rd reading of the Psalter. Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, *The Lenten Triodion*, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2001. p. 229.

[a] transliteration of Greek *tetrapoda*; Latin would be *quadrupeds*. I prefer to use Greek whenever possible.

[b] *ánthrōpon*, a human being as opposed to an animal; mankind; humanity. Here and vs. 27a.

[c] *eikóna*, "icon."

[d] *sixth*, *ektē;* this is an important change in the LXX from the MT, because on the 6th Day,(article present in LXX) that is, on Friday, Jesus "finished" his work on the Cross (see John 19:30, where Jesus uses the same root word for "finished.). Unfortunately, the *Orthodox Study Bible* uses the Hebrew text here, missing this change in the number of the days.

he had made on the seventh[e] day. [3]And GOD blessed the seventh day and sanctified her, because on her he rested from all his works that GOD had begun to make.[f]

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"I AM the good shepherd! I know my own, and I am known by my own." (John 10:14)

VI. 6th day – Friday: 2 creations—animals and human beings.

A. Synergy again between God and the earth: God makes the "warm-blooded" animals with the earth, thus establishing a unique relationship between them to the earth and to God.

B. A major change in wording in verse 26: Creation of the humanity.
   1. *GOD said, "Let <u>us make</u> humanity…*
      a. For the Jew, the Hebrew word for God here is *Elohim,* and it is plural (the Gods), and is understood to be the royal 1st person "we/us;" the Jews understand this to be God consulting with his heavenly powers (perhaps as seen in Job 1:6).
      b. For us, the fathers teach that this is a revelation of the Trinity: the Father (note in Greek the article is present, "the God" who is the Father), invites the Son of the Father and the Holy Spirit of the Father, to make human beings.
      c. *humanity = ánthrōpon* (Greek); *adám* (Hebrew): both words mean both humanity (collectively) or man (singular, and usually male), as opposed to animals—*e.g.*, anthropology.

C. *according to our image* (*eikona* / icon)
   1. An icon is never an exact "image" of the person represented, but there is no doubt as to who that person is.
      a. The Hebrew word means something more like a statue.
         i. Rulers would have statues of themselves placed throughout their empire to remind the people that they were subjects to that ruler. Theologically, this means that human beings are made to be God's statues (icons) placed throughout the world to remind all of creation that they are subjects to God.
         ii. St. John Chrysostom: Humanity is "the golden statue which was bright and shining" to represent God on the earth.
         iii. This means that every human being is the icon of God, and we honor that image in them, regardless of any other "human" difference between us.

[e] seventh, *ebdomē.*

iv. The apostle James writes: "...with our tongue we curse those who are made in the image of God...My brethren, this should not be!" (James 3:9b, 10b – *Eastern Orthodox New Testament*).

D. *and according to likeness* (*omoiōsin*)
   1. The Fathers interpret this "likeness" of God to our free will in choosing the virtues.

   2. St. Basil says: "We possess the image by our creation; we are conformed to the likeness by free choice."

   3. The "image" of God is given to each person; but we must grow into the "likeness" of God through ascetic struggles. We can either become more God-like, or less God-like, depending on our choices, actions, and thoughts.

E. *let them rule the fish of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and the livestock...*
   1. Notice the plural, *let them, i.e.,* like the Trinity of Persons in agreement, mankind together is to rule over creation. This is not a permission slip for an individual to assert dominion over the earth and creation.

   2. As a community, humanity is to love and care for creation just as God does (*cf.* Ps. 49 (50):10-12; Proverbs 12:10a; Job 12:7-10: Deut. 22:1-3a, 4, 6).

F. *And <u>GOD made</u> the human being, according to God's image <u>he made</u> him, male and female <u>made he</u> them.*
   1. *make...made, poiéō*, means "to build, to make; to create." It is stated three times, the way the Greek expresses the superlative form (which is why we say things 3 times as Orthodox, *e.g., Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal...*) which shows the special relationship God has with humanity. The Trinity alone "builds" mankind.

   2. St. Basil says: "God did not say, as he did for the others, 'Let humanity come into being,' or 'Let the earth bring forth humanity.' God has not initiated your origin by a command!"

   3. There is an equality of the sexes in this story: *male and female he made them*.
      a. St. Basil says: "The woman possesses, like the male, that which has been created in the image of God. Equally honorable are both their natures, equal their virtues, equal their reward, and alike in their condemnation."
      b. The equality is that both natures, male and female, though different and distinct, are equal in honor. Equality does not mean being "the same as."
      c. God created and blessed only two genders: male and female.

G. *GOD blessed them, "Be increasing and multiplying…and become lord over the earth….*
   1. For Christians, the creation of mankind is the pinnacle of creation and the point of this revelation.
      a. For the Jewish priests who kept this revelation, however, the point of this revelation is yet to come.

2. God blesses the humanity and gives his first commandment to humanity: *be multiplying*.

3. As mankind increases, *they* are to be *lord over the earth*.
   a. *katakyrieusate*; *kata* = "according to;" *kyrie* = "lord;" "to exercise complete dominion; to be master over; to rule"—"but not rape" the earth. (Prof. William Griffin, Sewanee, TN).
   b. However, mankind is not God, so humans are not given the right or authority to spill blood of another human being or of the animals, ("in the blood is the life"). Therefore, God says, "*I have given to you every sowable herb propagating seed that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has in itself fruit of sowable seed; to you it shall be for food...*"
   c. Because we were first created to be vegetarians, caring for the animals, not eating them, we fast on Wednesdays and Fridays from meat, and during the major Fasts of Lent, Nativity, and the others, we become vegetarians for many days.
      i. A bumper sticker I saw read "The Orthodox Church is 49% Atkins friendly," meaning we fast 51% of the year.

H. And it became evening, and it became morning, a sixth day. And so the sky and the earth and all their ornamentation were completed.
   1. God looks over everything he made, and *they were very good*—emphatic. There is now order and harmony, with everything in perfection. There is nothing bad or sinful in itself in creation.

VII. 6th and 7th days: completion of creation and the Sabbath

A. *And GOD finished* (*sunetélesen*) *his works on the sixth* (*ektē*) *day...*
   1. Unfortunately, the *OSB*, using the NKJ text, misses the key word, "sixth," found in the Septuagint.

   2. The reason this is so important is because the sixth day is Friday, the day Jesus is crucified, and it is on the 6th day he says from the Cross "It is *finished* (*tetélestai*) [John 19:30]. On "Great and Holy Friday," the 6th day of the week, Jesus *finishes* his work of restoring his creation, likening "us to the image of his glory,"[1] and in his death, he rests on the "Great and Holy Saturday," the Great Sabbath.[2]

B. God *rested on the seventh* (*ebdomē*) *day from all his works which he had made. And GOD blessed the seventh day and sanctified her....*
   1. "Rested," *katapauō*, means "to bring to an end; stop; rest." God does not rest because he is tired nor wearied, but because he has brought his work to an end.

   2. The keeping of the Sabbath (which is Saturday, not Sunday) became the unique, distinguishing practice of Judaism, because it was a law given by God (Ex 20:8 *ff*).

[1] 2 Cor. 5:17; From the Anaphora of St. Basil's Liturgy.
[2] John 19:31b.

God himself observed this law during the Exodus by not providing manna on the Sabbath (Ex 16:23-27); the keeping of the Sabbath was so important that if one did not keep the Sabbath, the penalty was death (Ex 31:12 *ff*). This is why the days in this story are also to be understood as literal 24-hour days, for they lead to the Sabbath.

a. Because mankind is created in the "likeness" of God, and because God rested on the Sabbath day, when people observe the Sabbath, they are actualizing that likeness of God in themselves. Thus, observing the Sabbath became a faith statement that the Jews worshipped the One God who himself rested.
b. As Jesus points out, God made the Sabbath for mankind to give him rest one day a week. It is a gift from God. No other culture besides Judaism (and Christianity) gave people a day to rest.
c. Because of mankind is made from the earth, the earth itself was given a Sabbath rest every seven years (Lev.25:1-4).

3. It is easy to understand why the Jewish leaders disliked Jesus; he overturned their understanding of the Sabbath!
   a. Most of the "conflict" stories in the gospel center around the Sabbath.
      i. Jesus (as new Moses) corrects the Pharisees' legalistic understanding of the Sabbath: "the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath," and "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matt 12:8, 12b).
      ii. This conflict happens early. Matthew's story in chpt 12 happens In Mark's gospel, this occurs in 2:23-28, Jesus saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Immediately following this, the Pharisees "plotted…how they might destroy him." (Mk 3:1-6).
      iii. In Luke: conflict happens fairly early: 6:1-11. See also 13:10-17 and 14:1-6.

4. Jesus, who first gave the law concerning the Sabbath, obeys his law: having completed his work on the 6th day (Friday), he now keeps the Sabbath (Saturday), the 7th day, resting in the tomb. During Vespers of Great and Holy Saturday we sing: "This is the day of rest, on which the Only-begotten Son of God rested from all his works. He kept the Sabbath in the flesh."
   a. Confronted by the Jews for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus answers, "My Father is working until now, and I also work" (John 5:17-18). Fr. Alexander Schmemann of blessed memory wrote, "Christ's repose in the tomb is an 'active' repose...By His death Christ tramples down death."[3]
   b. The healing of the woman with a spirit of infirmity foreshadows Christ's descent into hades on the Sabbath to raise up Adam who has been bound by hades, for he asks, "Ought not this woman...whom Satan has bound...be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" (Luke 13:10-17), as well as the healing of the man with a withered hand, for Jesus says, "Who among you, having one sheep, and if this one should fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will not take hold of it and raise it up? (Matt. 12:9-14).

[3] Introduction, Great and Holy Saturday booklet, OCA.

5. As Orthodox, Saturday, the Sabbath, has always been observed as a special day of the week, surpassed only by Sunday, the Day of Resurrection.
    a. While we in the West call the 7th day "Saturday" named after the pagan Roman god Saturn, the Orthodox East calls that day "Sabbath:" Σάββατο (Sábbato) in Greece, Суббóта (*Subbóta*) in Russian;[4] moreover, the lectionary readings for Saturdays form their own cycle, different from Sundays and the weekdays.
    b. The Orthodox Church remembers on Saturdays those "who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord," because their bodies are keeping the Sabbath rest in the tomb.
        i. The Orthodox Church also sets aside several Saturdays throughout the year as "Memorial Saturday" for the departed. In the Russian tradition, these are: the Saturday before Meat-fare Sunday; Saturday before Cheese-fare Sunday for the Monastics; Saturdays before the 2nd and 3rd Sundays in Lent; and Saturday before Pentecost.
    c. One of the criticisms of the Roman Catholic church by us Orthodox is that the Latin church fasted on Saturdays during Lent and the Ember Days.[5] In Orthodoxy, although we count both Saturday and Sunday in the 40 days of Great Lent, there is a "lessening" of the fast on those days.

C. Notice that the usual ending for each day, *it became evening and morning*, is absent on this 7th day.
    1. St. Basil writes that this day has "kinship with eternity," the 8th Day, which has no ending. This Sabbath day finds its fulfillment on Pascha, the 8th Day, the Day of the Lord, when through Jesus' resurrection, that day ushers in the true "never-ending Day" (*cf.* Deacon's words following Communion: *O Christ…grant that we may more perfectly partake of thee in the never-ending Day of thy kingdom.*

VIII. The Orthodox Christian understanding of creation at the Last Day.

A. This creation, which God declares "good," will not be destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ.
    1. There are 2 words in Greek for "new:" καινός (*kainós*), which means "new "in the sense a having a "renewed" character; and νέος (*néos*), which means "new" as in a replacement. When the New Testament talks about a "new heaven and earth," καινός is the word generally used.

    2. "God loves His creation and doesn't plan on replacing it with a newer model...God didn't create the universe only to destroy it. It is important for Orthodox Christians to understand that the Fifth Ecumenical Council (A.D. 553) ...solemnly and

[4] Interestingly, even during the Communist rule, the atheists were unable to change the Orthodox Christian name of Saturday, Суббóта, nor the name of Sunday, Воскресенье (voskresenye), "the Day of Resurrection."

[5] This was in times past. The Roman church today has done away with nearly all fasting. "The current practice of fast and abstinence... specify that all Fridays throughout the year, and the time of Lent are penitential times... Catholics must also observe the Eucharistic Fast, which...involves taking nothing but water or medicine into the body for one hour before receiving the Eucharist." en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fasting_and_abstinence_in_the_Catholic_Church

specifically condemned a false teaching that asserted the final destruction of matter."[6]

a. Irenaeus of Lyons stated that the essence of this world in its present fallen state will be changed, not destroyed, because God saw everything that He had made, and it was good.
b. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 350) writes, "Let us not sorrow, as if we alone died; the stars also shall die; but perhaps rise again. And the Lord rolls up the heavens, not that He may destroy them, but that He may raise them up again more beautiful."
c. St. Symeon the New Theologian writes concerning 2 Peter 3:10: "How, then, are all things to be dissolved? In just the way that a copper vessel, when it has grown old and become quite spoiled and useless on account of rust, is taken by the craftsman and put in the fire to be re-forged by him and formed again as new. In the same way, creation, too, after having grown old and been spoiled by our sins, is dissolved in fire by the Maker of all, and then forged anew and transmuted, and becomes incomparably brighter and newer than the world which we now see."

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[6] *A Second Look at the Second Coming*, T. L. Frazier, Conciliar Press, Ben Lomond, CA, 1999. P. 285. The following quotes from the Fathers are also taken from this book.

Great is the power of Thy Cross! It has made the flower of abstinence to grow with the Church; it has stripped bare and uprooted the sinful greed that Adam showed in Eden. Adam's greed brought death to men, but the Cross brings immortality and incorruption to the world. As though from some new river of Paradise, there flows from it the quickening stream of Thy Blood mingled with water, restoring all to life. Through this Thy Cross make sweet the Fast for us, O God of Israel, great in mercy.[1]

Genesis 2:4-24
(Another Story of Creation)

2 [4]This is the book of *the* genesis[a] of heaven and earth, when they came into being. *On* the day the Lord GOD[b] made the heaven and the earth, and all green plants of *the* field before it came to be upon the earth, and all herbage of the field before it sprang up, for GOD had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no person[c] to till the earth. But a fountain rose up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth. And GOD molded the human *body*, dust from the earth, and blew into his face *the* breath of life, and mankind became a living soul.

[8]And the Lord GOD[a] planted an *enclosed* paradise[b] in Eden toward the east, and there he placed the man whom he had molded. And GOD furthermore made to spring up out of the earth all trees beautiful to sight and good for food; and the tree of life[c] in the midst of the orchard, and the tree for knowing what is knowable of good and evil….

[10] Now a river flows out of Eden to water the paradise. From there it divides into four sources: A name for the one is Phison; it is the one encircling all the land of Euilat, there where the gold is. Now the gold of that earth is good; the dark-red precious stones[d] and the green stones are there also. And a name of the second river is Geon; this is the one encircling all the land of Ethiopia. And the third river is Tigris; this is the one going opposite the Assyrians. And the fourth river, it is the Euphrates.

[15] And the Lord GOD took the man whom he had molded and placed him in the paradise of delight to till and keep it. And the Lord GOD commanded Adam, saying, "Thou shalt eat for food from all

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[1] From Thursday Vespers on *Lord, I called*. *The Lenten Triodion*, p. 254.

[a] *book of the genesis* in Greek is βίβλος (Bible of) γενέσεως (*geneseos*).
heaven here means the sky, or the bottom part of the dome, not the dwelling place of God.

[b] When GOD appears in the text, the article is present in the Greek, reading literally *the God*.
An *Italicized* word means that this word is not in the Greek text but is added to the English translation.

[c] *man* = *anthropos,* "a human being as opposed to an animal; a person; a man (meaning both male and/or collective, *mankind*). In these first verses, *man* may best be understood as the collective concept of *mankind.* It is only in the later verses that the Greek changes *anthropos* to *Adam*.
From this we learn that" a body without the soul is dead, but a soul without the body is a ghost." To be a complete human being, body and soul must be united together as one. Thus, we believe that at the Second Coming of our Lord, the dead bodies will be raised in a mysterious way and reunited with the soul, so we can be a completed person.

[a] This follows Codex Vaticanus, the Church of Greece text reads, *GOD.*

[b] *An* enclosed *paradise* = παράδεισον ("paradise")—see Notes.

[c] lit, *the life*, here and following chapter is Christ, *cf.* Jn 14:6.

[d] anthrax, coal, carbuncle; emeralds

trees that are in the orchard; but ye shall not eat from the tree for knowing good and evil; for on whatever day that ye eat from it, ye shall die by death."

[18] And the Lord GOD said, "It is not (*ou*) good that the man is alone. We[e] will make him a helper corresponding to him." And so, GOD formed out of the earth all the animals of the field, and all the birds of the sky, and he brought them to Adam to see what he would name them. And anything, whatever Adam named each living creature, this was its name.

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Jesus said: "Amen, I tell you: today, you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43).
"To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the Paradise of my God." (Apocalypse of St. John 2:7b).

I. This story seems to have been kept by the Jews who settled in Jerusalem and kept the Davidic line of kings in the Southern Kingdom. It may have been passed down from Moses through an oral tradition, and perhaps was influenced by their time in the wilderness during the Exodus. Like the first story, it is a statement of faith, affirming that the one God created everything, but answering different questions than the first story.

   A. Some of the questions this story answers are: "What is our purpose in life?" "What is the relationship between a man and a woman?" "Why do we marry?"

   B. Some differences in vocabulary and style from chapter 1:
      1. God is very anthropomorphic (human-like).

      2. It emphasizes a close relationship between human beings and the earth.

      3. It reflects a nomadic life in the desert, but at the same time, there may be some familiarity with the gardens of Babylon.

      4. "The Lord GOD" is used often in this chapter.
         a. Κύριος ὁ Θεός; If one were to translate this phrase literally from the LXX, it would read, "Lord *is* the God." This was the LXX way of translating the Hebrew, "YHWH Elohim." Of course, YHWH, a form of the verb "to be," was never pronounced, and so the word "Adonai / Lord" was used in its place. The rabbis who produced the LXX simply put this in the Greek. What is interesting in this grammatical construction is that "Lord" would be the name of "the God," not a title. It would be like *ego eimi*, I AM the Being One. The heterodox who want to exclude "Lord" from their liturgies as being "masculine" do not realize that they are really excluding God's Name!

      5. There is a completely different order of creation.

      6. Marriage as the focal point of story; instituted /created by God.

[e] *We* is the reading of the LXX (*cf* 1:26); *OSB* reads *I*, using NKJV (Hebrew) text.

II. The setting of this story is very different than the first story:

A. All is an arid wasteland without vegetation, as opposed to "the abyss" in previous chapter.

B. Two things needed for "life:" (1) rain to water the ground, and (2) someone to till it.
   1. The sky, the earth, and "the humanity"[1] are evidently all made on the same day (notice that there is no mention of seas or lakes in this story).

   2. *but a fountain would rise up from the earth and water the whole face of the earth.*
      a. From our Orthodox perspective, just as Christ is the "beginning" and the Word in chapter 1, so according to Gaius Marius Victorinus,[2] Christ is the "fountain who rose up from the earth" in this story (a foreshadowing of the Resurrection as Christ rises up from the earth).
      b. Just as water gives life to the desert, so Christ gives life to his creation.

III. The dual nature of humanity.

A. This fountain rises up to make clay so God could mold the human *body,* dust from the earth.
   1. God takes the moistened dust, and like a potter, molds the human body.[3]
      a. Close association of humanity (Heb = *adám*) to the earth/ground (*adamáh*).
         i. Our physical body is made from the earth and water.
            α. Most of the human body is water, with an average of roughly 60%.[4]
      b. *molded = plassō*; "to manufacture; to mold or form."
         i. God "formed man with his holy and pure hands"—1st Clement 15:7.
         ii. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, the first to write a commentary on Genesis, and St. Irenaeus of Lyon (both in 2nd cent.), both refer to the Logos and the Spirit as "the two hands of God," by which he made all things.
         iii. God as potter "reveals a God who focuses closely on the object being created and takes painstaking care to shape each one into something useful and beautiful."[5]

   2. *dust from the earth;* like the insignificant particles floating around in the air.
      a. God takes what is "nothing" to make a human being who is "for a short time less than *the* angels," crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:7, *Orthodox New Testament*).
      b. St. Gregory of Nyssa: "'God took of the dust of the earth and fashioned man.' In this I have discovered the two affirmations, that humanity is nothing, and that

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[1] Fr. Eugen Pentiuc uses this word as a translation of *anthrōpos* in his lecture on Genesis.

[2] Victorinus, an African by birth, became a member of the Roman senatorial class converted to Christianity around 355. He wrote treatises on the Holy Trinity, defending the adequacy of the Nicene Creed's usage of *homoousios*, and he wrote several commentaries on the Scriptures.

[3] This story implies that this body is a male body.

[4] www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/what-percentage-of-the-human-body-is-water.

[5] *New Interpreter's Bible,* Vol. 1, p. 349.

humanity is great. If you consider nature alone, humanity is nothing and has no value; but if you regard the honor with which he has been treated [by God], humanity is something great!"

B. *blew into his face* the *breath of life, and the man became a living soul.*
   1. *blew / breathed = enephúsēsen* (root word, *emphysáō*; think "emphysema").
      a. *a breath of life*; in Greek, *pnoēn*; Heb, *nismat*. Both mean primarily a "wind" which is blowing, much like the Spirit which was "rushing" upon the abyss in chapter one; *pnoēn* is also the word used in Acts 2:2 on the Day of Pentecost.

   2. Fr. Thomas Hopko says that this breath / wind of life is a gift from God by which humanity "participates in God's own divine, uncreated existence."

C. This "wind" from God is for us a symbol of the Holy Spirit who is "the Lord, the Giver of life." Before this "life-giving" breath, the body was dead; the "breath," or Spirit of God, makes the body come alive.
   1. In John 20:22, we read that Jesus "breathed (*enephúsēse*) on the apostles, bestowing on them the Holy Spirit."

   2. In 3 Kings (Heb 1 Kings) 17:21, Elijah "breathed (*enephúsēse*) on the dead child three times."[6]

   3. Liturgically, we still practice this "life-giving" breath.
      a. At the Reception into the Catechumenate: *The priest breathes gently in the face of the catechumen,* and at Baptism, during the 4th exorcism of the catechumen, *The priest breathes gently in the form of a cross over the mouth, brow and breast….*; and at the blessing of the water and the oil, *The priest breathes on the water;* and he *breathes upon the vessel containing the oil three times….*[7]

   4. According to our liturgical tradition, this *breath of life* is "a robe woven by God," "a robe of light," "the brilliance of immortality" (Vespers for Forgiveness Sunday). This will be important to understand the story in chapter 3 about "the fall."

IV. The uniqueness and purpose of humanity.

A. We are composed of matter and spirit. The angelic powers are pure spirit, but non-material; whatever is "animal, vegetable, and mineral" is matter, but not spiritual in composition.

B. Being both spirit and material in nature, humanity is created to be "Eucharistic creatures," offering up the material creation as priest in spiritual worship and thanksgiving.
   1. Fr. Alexander Schmemann: "All rational, spiritual and other qualities of man, distinguishing him from other creatures, have their focus and ultimate fulfillment in

[6] Unfortunately, the *OSB* reads, "stretched himself upon him," following the Hebrew text of the NKJV.
[7] Reception into the Catechumenate and Baptism, OCA text.

this capacity to bless God…*homo sapiens*…yes, but first of all, *homo adorans.* The first, the basic definition of man is that he is *the priest*. He stands in the center of the world and unifies in his act of blessing God, of both receiving the world from God and offering it to God…."

a. *Thine own of thine own we offer unto thee, on behalf of all and for all* (Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy).

C. Notice that in this story, a human being is created before anything else, which is the opposite of the first story.

V. God, the wealthy gardener who plants a garden.

A. παράδεισος, *parádeisos* ("paradise"—a Persian loanword), expansive walled gardens of the First Persian Empire which are formal, symmetrical and most often, enclosed, having a gate. The most traditional form is a rectangular garden split into four quarters with a pond in the center. It is usually filled with fruit trees and flowers. The Greek word also means "an orchard" and "a park for animals."

1. The enclosed garden of paradise has a door, allowing one to enter or leave; *cf* architecture of Orthodox Churches: the area behind iconostasis represents the heavens or Paradise, accessible by the doors in the iconostasis. Notice that the Gospel Book and the Eucharistic Gifts proceed from the Royal Door, as Christ comes to us in his words of the Gospel and in the eucharistic Bread and Wine, as the "gate of Paradise is once again opened to us.

B. God, as the gardener, plants the paradise, and "made to spring up out of the earth all trees beautiful to sight and good for food."

1. The trees come up from the ground, just as the man was made from the earth. As in the first story, man was originally created to be a vegetarian, eating the "fruits of the earth," and not the animals, who have not yet been created in this story.

2. Mary Magdalene was correct in thinking that Jesus is *the Gardener* (*o kēpourós*) in John 20:15b, because he is the One who originally planted a garden.

3. According to St. Gregory of Sinai, a monastic of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries who advanced the practice of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer and, with St. Gregory Palamas established Mount Athos as a center of Hesychasm, Paradise "is always rich in fruits, ripe and unripe, and continually full of flowers. When trees and ripe fruit rot and fall to the ground they turn into sweet-scented soil, free from the smell of decay...because of the great richness and holiness of the grace ever abounding there."

C. *there he placed the man.*

1. God placed "Adam" in Paradise, because that's where he desires us to be. To be in Paradise is to be in communion with God, to enjoy God's presence, and to share in his life.

a. "In thine abundant compassion and mercy, O Fashioner of the creation and Maker of all, thou hast taken me from the dust and given me life, commanding me to sing thy praises with thine angels. In the wealth of thy goodness, O Creator and Lord, thou hast planted in Eden the sweetness of Paradise, and bidden me take my delight in fair and pleasing fruits that never pass away." (Canticle One, Matins for Forgiveness Sunday).

2. Eden is a definite place in this story, although we no longer know where that is.

VI. Two special trees: *the tree of life in the midst of the orchard, and the tree for knowing what is knowable of good and evil….*

A. The *tree of life* for us is a type of the Cross, and of Christ himself. This tree stands in the *middle* (*en mesō*) of the garden, just as Jesus was crucified on the life-giving Cross "in the midst" or between the two thieves; and he stood in the midst (*to meson*) of his apostles breathing new life and the Holy Spirit upon them (Jn 20:19).
   1. In an Orthodox temple, the dome is in the middle of the building, with Jesus, who is Life, looking down from the heavens upon us as the Pantocrator (All Mighty).

B. The *tree for knowing what is knowable of good and evil…*
   1. Usually translated as being in the middle of the garden as well, but the syntax in both the LXX and MT is awkward. Maybe this" tree of knowing" is in the middles of the garden, or perhaps it is in some other place in the garden! The grammar is uncertain, as if something has dropped out from the text.
      a. *knowing* (LXX = *ginō'skō*; MT = *yadah*], "is not the abstract comprehension of concepts and theories, but the active and existential interpenetration of the knower and the known. Thus, when the Bible speaks of a man knowing a woman, it is referring to the act of sexual intercourse. To *know* good and evil, then, is to be *personally engaged* in the performance of both good and evil acts."—George F. Cronk, *Message of the Bible* (italics added).

   2. "This tree provided a boundary beyond which Adam and Eve could not go, acting like the curtain in the Old Testament Tabernacle that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies, where the Tree of Life was...The patristic consensus tells us that, before the Fall, Adam in his natural state had a heart illumined by the All-holy Spirit. Adam's partaking of the Tree [of Knowledge] disrupted the natural balance of perception, and his reasoning capacity became the primary faculty of perception. This caused a usurping of the primary faculty of the heart, resulting in confusion and a darkening of perception....St. Maximus says the world itself is the Tree of Knowledge."[8]

VII. Four Rivers—perhaps a latter addition to story.

A. The Fathers see this as an allegory of the Gospel, the Life-giving River which *flows out of Eden*, then is *divided into four sources*: the four accounts of the Gospel.

[8] Archimandrite Sergius, *Acquiring the Mind,* pp. 86-87.

1. "The Church encloses fruitful trees within her walls. She waters these trees with four rivers, that is, with the four Gospels, from which she bestows the grace of baptism by the salutary and heavenly bath. Can he who is not inside the Church be watered from the fountains of the Church?"—St. Cyprian (☩258).

2. ...*gold of that earth is good*... notice that all precious stones also come from the earth.

VIII. Creation of the Animals and Birds.

A. (Dating myself) Herman's Hermits: "Second verse, same as the first:" *the Lord GOD took the man...and placed him in the paradise of delight*[9]....
   1. "God created man for immortality and made him an image of His own eternity" (Wisdom of Solomon 2:23).

   2. "From the beginning God wanted man to be immortal."—St. Chrysostom.

   3. "When thou didst form man by taking dust from the earth, and didst honor him with thine own image, O God, thou didst set him in the paradise of delight, promising him immortal life and the enjoyment of eternal good things in the observance of thy commandments...." (Anaphora of St. Basil).

B. *to till and keep it… the Lord God commanded Adam... but from the tree for knowing good and evil, ye shall not eat…*
   1. Man is given a relatively simple task: to till and keep the garden, and to enjoy eating from every tree, except one: the tree for knowing good and evil.
      a. "The fruit of that one tree, whatever else it may signify, was unlike every other fruit in the Garden; it was not offered as a gift to man. Not given, not blessed by God; it was food whose eating was condemned to be communion with itself alone, and not with God. It is the image of the world loved for itself, and eating it is the image of life understood as an end in itself."—Fr. Alexander Schmemann, *For the Life of the World.*

   2. God now names the man "Adam" for the first time in the Septuagint text.

C. *ye shall not* (*ou*)[10] *eat from it; for on whatever day that ye eat from it, ye shall die by death."*

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[9] *of delight* is found in the Church of Greece text; following Codex Vaticanus, the *OSB* omits this.

[10] οὐ/ μή: οὐ "is clear cut, point-blank negative, objective, final;" μή/*mē* "is weaker, milder…with hesitancy…[it] leaves the question open for further remarks or entreaty; οὐ closes the door abruptly." οὐ μή, combined, state "denials or prohibitions emphatically."

As a way of illustrating the differences, imagine "a young man proposing to his lady friend. If she answers him μή, it may only mean that she wants to be coaxes a little longer, or that she is still in a state of uncertainty; if she responds οὐ, he may as well get his hat" and forget proposing; if she responds οὐ μή, he needs to look for someone else; the door is closed! (*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament,* H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey. MacMillan Co., 1955).

1. God does not say, "I will kill you;" rather, by disobeying God, we separate ourselves from the One who is Life, and thereby we bring death upon ourselves.
    a. "God did not make death...for he created all things that they might exist" (Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-14). Death is an "un-natural" part of creation, brought into existence by humanity's free will and disobedience (more about this is chapter 3).
    b. "Woe to thee, my wretched soul! Thou hast received authority from God to take thy pleasure in the joys of Eden, but he commanded thee not to eat the fruit of knowledge. Why hast thou transgressed the law of God?"

2. There is no mention of the tree of life…it seems to have dropped out of the story until chapter three.

D. *the Lord GOD said, "It is not (ou) good that the man is alone!*
    1. alone = *mónon*; not only "alone," but also "unwed; in isolation; apart." This is first time God declares something "not good." Ps. 132 (133) tells us what is good: "for brethren to *dwell together* in unity...." (italics added).

    2. *We will make him a helper…God formed…the animals*, domestic and wild, and the birds, from the same ground the man was formed, indicates close ties between humans and animals, but a "helper" was not found.
        a. "*We*" is understood by the fathers to be the Trinity, *cf* chapt 1.

E. God lets Adam name the animals—*cf* chapt 1, where God does the naming.
    1. To name something meant the one naming knew and/or perceived the purpose or essential being of the one being named; *e.g.*, "Adam" comes from the Hebrew word "adamáh" meaning the "earth /ground," showing the direct connection of Adam to the ground from which he was molded. God changes Abram's name to Abraham, meaning "father of many nations;" Joshua/Jesus means "God saves."

    2. Naming someone can also indicates a lordship over them or bestowing upon them a change in their status or relationship to the one naming them. The animals and birds are subservient to Adam because he gives them their names. The relationship between man and animal is now one of friendship.
        a. "The animals came to Adam as to a loving shepherd. Without fear they passed before him in orderly fashion, by kinds and by species. They were neither afraid of him, nor were they afraid of each other…."—St. Ephraim (✞ 373)
        b. A loving shepherd names his sheep (*cf.* John 10:3b), and the priest of a parish calls his parishioners by name as they receive Holy Communion.
        c. Notice fish are not mentioned in this story.

    3. Adam lives in full communion with God, with greater honor than the angels, for "the angels tremble and the Cherubim and Seraphim dare not look up [to see God—*cf* Is. 6:2]; Adam was able to converse with God as a friend with a friend." (St. John Chrysostom).

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First Friday of Great Lent

With great gladness let us accept the proclamation of the Fast; for if Adam our forefather had fasted, we should not have suffered banishment from Eden. The fruit that brough death upon me was pleasant to the eyes and good for food. Then let us not be taken prisoner by our eyes; let not our tongue delight in costly foods, for once they have been eaten, they are worthless. Les us shun all greed: then we shall not become slaves to the passions which follow an excess of food and drink. Let us sign ourselves with the blood of Him who for our sakes willingly was led to death, and the destroying angel will not touch us; and may we eat the Holy Passover of Christ for the salvation of our souls.[1]

Genesis 2:20—3:20

2 [20] And Adam gave names to all the *domestic* animals, and to all the birds of the sky, and to all the beasts of the field; yet for Adam, no helper like him was found.

[21] And so GOD[a] cast a trance upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one *rib* of his side and filled up flesh in its place. And GOD built the side he had taken from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam. [23] And Adam said,

> "This now is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh;
> she shall be named 'wife,' because she was taken out of her husband."

For this reason, a man will leave *behind* his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. And the two were naked, both Adam and his wife, and they were not ashamed.

3 Now the serpent was *the* shrewdest of all the wild animals that *were* upon the earth, which the Lord GOD had made. And the serpent said to the woman, "Why[b] is it that GOD said, 'Ye shall in no wise (*ou mē*)[c] eat from any tree of the garden—?'"

[2] And said the woman to the serpent, "We shall eat from the fruit of the tree of the garden, but from the fruit of the tree, the one in *the* midst of the garden, GOD said, 'Ye shall not (*ou*) eat from it, and you shall in no wise (*ou mē*) touch it, in order that ye might not (*mē*) die.'"

[4] And said the serpent to the woman, "Not (*ou*) by death shall ye yourselves die; for GOD knew that on whatever day ye eat from it, your eyes would be opened, and you would be like gods, knowing good and evil."

[6] And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing for the eyes to look at, and it was beautiful to contemplate, and having taken from its fruit, she ate; and she also gave

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[1] *Aposticha* from Friday Matins. *Lenten Triodion*, p. 272.

[a] When GOD appears in the text, the article is present in the Greek, reading literally *the God*. See note about "The Lord GOD" in commentary of Chapter Two.

An *Italicized* word means that this word is not in the Greek text but is added to the English translation.

[b] LXX reading, *Why…*; *OSB* uses Hebrew text here.

[c] See notes on Chapter 2: οὐ μή, combined, state "denials or prohibitions emphatically."

to her husband with her, and they[d] ate. And the eyes of the two were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord GOD walking about in paradise at evening, and both Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord GOD in the midst of the wood of the garden. And the Lord GOD called Adam and said to him, "Adam, where are you?" 10 And he said to him, "I heard the sound of thee walking about in the garden, and I was afraid, because I am naked, and so I hid myself."

11 And GOD said to him, "Who told you that you are naked, unless perhaps you have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, 'of this one alone, do not eat from it?"
And Adam said, "The wife, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

13 And the Lord GOD said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"
And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 And the Lord GOD said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed from all the domestic animals and from all the wild beasts, those upon the earth! Upon your chest and belly you shall go, and earth you shall eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and between the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he will carefully watch your head, and you will carefully watch his heel."

16 And to the woman he said, "Multiplying, I will multiply your pains and your groaning! In pains you will bring forth children, and you will return to your husband, and he will have lordship[e] over you."

17 Then to Adam he said, "Because you obeyed the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, 'of this one alone, not to eat from it,' cursed is the ground in your labors! In pains you will eat from it all the days of your life! Thorns and thistles she will spring up for you, and you will eat the herbage of the field. By your face's sweat you shall eat your bread[f] until you return to the earth from which you were taken; because earth you are and into earth you will depart!"

20 And Adam called the name of his wife Zoe,[g] because she is mother of the living.

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[d] *they ate* follows the LXX; *OSB* follows NKJV Heb, *he ate.*
[e] lordship = *kyrieusei*, "dominate, be master."
[f] artos, "leavened bread."
[g] In LXX, Ζωή.

"For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones...This mystery is great; but I speak in regard to Christ and in regard to the Church." – St. Paul (Ephesians 5:30, 32).

IX. A helper made corresponding to the man.

A. *Yet for Adam, no helper like him was found. And GOD cast a trance upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one* rib *of his side and filled up flesh in its place. And GOD built the side he had taken from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam.*

1. God casts a trance or a "mystical sleep" (*ekstasis* = "ecstasy") upon Adam, and he slept (*ypnōse* = "hypnosis;" "to sleep; a euphemism for *dying*).
    a. *ekstasis* is "a state of being brought about by God, in which consciousness is wholly or partially suspended" (also used in Gen.15:12 when God makes a covenant with Abram); it is also associated with astonishment and/or terror; literally, "being beside oneself." (*Lexicon,* Arndt, Gingrich).

2. What God takes out of Adam in unclear; both LXX and MT read simply "one of his side" (*mían tōn pleurōn*); but whatever it is, God *built /constructed* (*oikodomeō*) it into a woman.
    a. "God did not create another substance" to make woman," (St. Chrysostom), rather, he "divided" it to form "a partner of dialogue," (Fr. Eugen Pentiuc).
    b. There is not, however, the same equality of sexes here as in chapt 1; the woman is made in order to be "a helper" to the man.

X. That which is separated by God is now brought back together.

A. Whereas the animals are drawn to Adam and simply come to him, God now brings the woman to Adam, showing a closer relationship of the woman and man to God.
    1. We now have recorded Adam's first spoken words, because he can now converse with another human being who is able to respond to him.

B. "…*she shall be named wife* (γυνή) *because she was taken out of her husband* (ἀνδρός).
    1. The usual translation, *she shall be called 'woman' because she was taken from man,* misses this marriage connection.

a. In Greek, *gynē´* can mean not only "woman," but also "wife" or "bride;" *andrós* can mean not only "a mature male," but also "husband," the one "with whom a woman is to have sexual intercourse."
   i. In Hebrew and English, the word "man /male" is included in the word for woman: in Hebrew, "she shall be called *ishah* (אִשָּׁה) for she was taken from *ish* (אִישׁ); in English, "wo*man*" from "man." However, even in English slang, "woman" can indicate one's wife, and "man" can mean one's husband.

2. Notice that Adam names his wife. She is different from the animals, for although they were molded from the ground as was Adam, this "wife" is of the same essence as her husband. In naming her, Adam defines their relationship as "husband and wife."

XI. The Pinnacle of the Story: The Mystery of Marriage[1]

A. *A man will leave* behind *his father and mother and will be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*
   1. *joined* from *proskolláō, "to glue something to; to stick to; to attach."*
      a. In separating the woman from the man, God creates the two genders. In marriage, these genders are brought back together.
      b. Contrary to today's "alphabet soup genders", in both chapter one and two it is clear that God created only two genders: male and female.

XII. Creation of a new humanity in Christ.

A. While Christ "slept a deep sleep" of death on the cross, a soldier pierced his side (*tēn pleuran*, John 19:34), and his bride, the Church, was built from his side, through the water (baptism) and blood (eucharist) which flowed from his side.
   1. St. Paul quotes Gen 2:24 in his letter to the Ephesians (Eph 5:32), saying it refers to the conjugal mystery between Christ and his Church, and declares that "having been baptized into Christ, there is no longer male and female, for all are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).
      a. The soul (*psychē* in Greek; *anima* in Latin; *neshma* in Hebrew) are all feminine in gender, so the soul of every human being is "feminine; thus, in baptism, "all are one "feminine" soul" united to Christ, the Bridegroom, which is why St. Paul says "there is no longer male and female..." not that the genders are "blended" or unimportant otherwise. This is the mystery of Holy Baptism.

[1] It is interesting to note that many of the "Fathers regard sexual relations (even in the context of marriage) as a consequence of the fall [*e.g.,* St. Athanasios the Great and St. Chrysostom]. St Chrysostom claims that if man had not transgressed, God would have multiplied the human race in a different way; the same view being held by St. Maximus the Confessor." – footnote, p 83, *Acquiring the Mind of Christ.* Perhaps this was what Jesus was alluding to when he says, "In the resurrection [at the last day] they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30).

2. St. John Chrysostom says, "It was from his side that Christ fashioned the Church, as he had fashioned Eve from the side of Adam…as God took from Adam's side to fashion a woman, so Christ has given us blood and water from his side to fashion the Church."

3. St. Ambrose says, "If the union of Adam and Eve is a great mystery of Christ and the Church, it is certain that as Eve was bone of the bones of her husband and flesh of his flesh, we also are members of Christ's body: bones of his bones and flesh of his flesh."

4. Blessed Augustine writes, "Even in the beginning, when woman was made from the side of the sleeping man, which had no less a purpose than to symbolize prophetically the union of Christ and his Church. Adam's sleep was a mystical foreshadowing of Christ's death, and when his dead body, hanging from the cross, was pierced by the lance, it was from his side that there issued forth that blood and water that, as we know, signifies the sacrament by which the Church is built up. 'Built' is the very word the Scripture uses in connection with Eve…so too, St. Paul speaks of 'building up the body of Christ,' which is his Church. Therefore, woman is as much the creation of God as man is. If she was made from the man, this was to show her oneness with him; and if she was made in the way she was, this was to prefigure the oneness of Christ and the Church."

XIII. Naked but clothed with the divine light!

A. We teach very clearly that in Paradise, Adam and Eve, although outwardly naked, *were clothed with divine light*—they were *already* "like God" by grace, dwelling in the presence of God (what *theosis* is all about), so, of course, they were not ashamed.
   1. From the services of Forgiveness Sunday:
      a. "Thou clothed me in Eden with a divinely woven garment."
      b. "I was once clothed in the brightness of immortality…."

Summary:

A. Whereas the creation of male and female is at the same time in chapter one, with the Sabbath being the focus of creation, in chapter two the focus is on God establishing marriage, that the humanity separated by God into gender might be brought back together. However, the genders are male and female; a "union" of male with male, or female with female, would not be image of how God created us, and therefore would be foreign to the understanding of this Scripture.

B. It is important to keep these stories separate, and not try to combine them into one story. If those who kept the stories found in Genesis had wished to combine these two stories, they would have done so! We need to honor the integrity of the Scriptures and their setting in the life of the faithful community, realizing that they were written to answer different questions than what we ask today, yet the truth which was revealed by God in them is just as important for us today as it was for them. As we say in the Creed, the Holy Spirit "spoke by the prophets," whose words we have preserved for us in these Scriptures.

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"As in Adam all die, in Christ all will be made alive."– St. Paul (1 Cor. 15:22).
"For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."—St. Paul (Gal. 3:27).

I. Enter the mysterious serpent, with its "shiftiness" and dual nature.

A. The serpent, *shrewdest / phronimō'tatos*, "wisest, most intelligent, most clever." *Cf.* Jesus' command, "become wise (*phrónimoi*) as the serpents...." (Matt. 10:16).

1. If this story goes back to a revelation to Moses, both he and the Hebrew people would have known about the Egyptian goddess Wadjet, patroness of the Nile Delta and the protector of all of Lower Egypt, and one of the earliest deities of the Egyptians. She was depicted as a cobra, and this image of her became the uraeus symbol used on the head ornaments of pharaoh. Because the Hebrews served as slaves to the Egyptians, the image of a serpent would have well represented an authority figure as well as an oppressor or adversary.

2. The Rod of Asclepius takes its name from the god Asclepius who was associated with healing and medicinal arts in Greek mythology. In honor of this god, a particular type of non-venomous snake was often used in healing rituals, and these snakes crawled around freely on the floor in dormitories where the sick and injured slept… The significance of the serpent has been interpreted in many ways; sometimes the shedding of skin and renewal is emphasized as symbolizing rejuvenation. Products deriving from the bodies of snakes were known to have medicinal properties in ancient times.[2]

3. The Hebrews being led through the wilderness for 40 years were very familiar with the deadly bite of the serpents. But Moses is commanded to make a copper serpent and put it on a signal pole, and anyone who was bit by a serpent would be healed by looking upon the copper serpent (Num. 21:5-9). Thus, we see the dual nature of the serpent. The serpent "as both the cause and the cure for illness…the word *phármakon*…the Greek word for 'cure' in the medical sense [is] simultaneously …the word for 'poison.'"[3]

[2] Rod of Asclepius, Wikipedia.
[3] Jonathan Pageau, "The Serpents of Orthodoxy," *Orthodox Arts Journal*.

4. Serpents on the Bishop's staff: "One of the most surprising images one is faced with considering Orthodox liturgical symbolism is the bishop's staff sporting two snakes flanking a small cross atop it… The first hurdle we [in the West] must overcome is the perception that the Western bishop's staff...is really a shepherd's staff, whereas the Orthodox have this strange snake bearing object. In fact, for a millennia at least, the western crosier was also identified with a serpent as medieval crosiers attest....We wonder though, how can such an image of serpents, both in the East and West be appropriate for the very symbol of a Bishop's authority? Many will point to the Biblical story of the bronze serpent, somehow prefiguring Christ, as the basis for this use of serpents on the bishop's staff. This is a perfectly sound explanation, though it is insufficient to create a complete picture. If we are to look a Moses as the origin of this image, we should look earlier. The very first time we encounter a staff in the Bible, at least a staff that is related to divine authority, is at the burning bush [see Exodus 4:1-5 when Moses' staff becomes a serpent]. The very first time we encounter a staff of divine authority, it is immediately linked to a serpent.[4]

An Orthodox Bishop's staff

Western Medieval crosier with lion and serpent

5. The phenomenon of the Holy Snakes of the Virgin Mary has been occurring for centuries during the festivities to the Theotokos between August 5 and August 15 on the island of Cephalonia, Greece. The small black snakes appear at the church on the site of a monastery. The myth about these snakes is attached to the year the monastery was attacked by pirates in 1705. The nuns prayed fervently to the Virgin Mary for protection and were subsequently transformed into the snakes to avoid being taken as prisoners. The snakes have a small cross on their head and their tongues are also in the shape of a cross, and they appear in and around the courtyard of the church, on the walls and on the bell tower. The snakes show no fear while the services are held and are harmless during the festivities.[5]

B. "You're the devil in disguise…" (to quote Elvis Presley and show my age).
   1. According to St. Gregory Palamas, Satin did not have the courage to deceive mankind face-to-face, so he used fraud and craftiness, appearing in the form of a snake.
      a. "Satan the deceiver, using the serpent as his instrument, enticed me…." (Forgiveness Sunday Vespers).

[4] Jonathan Pageau, "The Serpents of Orthodoxy," *Orthodox Arts Journal*.
[5] See Holy Snakes, Orthodox Wiki.

b. The usual term for the devil or his demons is *dra'kōn* (*e.g.* Ps 90:13b; 103:26; Jer.9:11; Rev.12:3, 7, 9 (here also associated with "the great serpent"); the use of *o'phis* in this story suggests that the "dragon" disguised himself as a snake.

2. According to St. Ambrose, the devil did not approach the man who had received the heavenly command from God, but he approached her who had learned of it from her husband; for she had not received from God the command which was to be observed.

3. St. Irenaeus ("champion of women?") says that Eve was tempted because she was the stronger person, for "she did by herself alone resist the serpent, and it was after holding out for a while and making opposition that she ate…whereas Adam, making no fight whatsoever, nor refusal, partook of the fruit handed him by his wife!"
4. Why was Satan the serpent in paradise? Evidently, this was not a concern to the Hebrew people. See for example Job 1:6 and 2:1 for the devil being present with the angels before the Lord.
   a. Lucifer was appointed by God to be the guardian of Paradise (see Commentary at Gen 1: V, B, 3)

II. "Preamble to sin: Eve's three mistakes"[6]

A. The trick question to Eve: "*Why is that GOD said, 'Ye shall in no wise* (ou mē) *eat from any tree of the orchard—*"[7]
   1. A silly and misleading question because there is no answer to a "Why" question other than "Because." Children will keep asking "Why" to every answer a parent gives. Eve should have laughed and walked away.

   2. The serpent then *misquotes* God, suggesting God is sadistic. He asks, "Why would God place them in an orchard, then forbid (*ou mē*, emphatic) them to eat from any of the trees?"

B. Eve's first mistake**:** she entered into an argument with an animal. She had no need to explain anything to a reptile; rather her partner for dialogue is her husband. Notice that Eve is not surprised that an animal is speaking to her![8]
   1. "Why did you disgrace yourself, departing from the one for whom you were created…why did you agree to enter into conversation with the serpent?"—St. Chrysostom.

   2. "Thou wast the appointed ruler over creeping things and wild beasts: why then hast thou conversed with a creature that crept upon the earth, destroying souls? And

[6] Taken from teaching lecture of Fr. Eugen Pentiuc.
[7] Unfortunately, the *OSB* uses the MT of the *NKJV* here.
[8] Balaam is not surprised that his donkey speaks to him (Numbers 22:21-31).

why hast thou taken the destroying enemy as thy counselor? O my wretched soul, how hast thou been deceived!" (Vespers, Forgiveness Sunday).

B. Eve's Second mistake:
   1. Eve, in her desire to "be right," tries to defend God (who needs no one to defend him!)[9] and interrupts the serpent vigorously: "We *shall* eat from the fruit of the tree of the garden,
      a. "The serpent's first utterance…is better construed as the beginning of a (false) statement that is cut off in midsentence by Eve's objection that the ban is not on *all* the trees."[10]

   2. Eve then creates her own world: "...but from the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of paradise...."
      a. The *tree of life* is in the middle of paradise (see chap 2:3), but it is not clear where the tree of knowing good and evil is... it is simply "in the midst of the garden"—the tree of life has apparently dropped out of this story. Even if both trees are in the middle, Eve is still wrong because Adam and Eve were not forbidden to eat of the tree of life which is definitely in the middle of the orchard.

C. Eve's 3rd mistake: she misquotes God, adding her own words to what God said.
   1. Eve, like the serpent, makes God to be sterner and harsher than he really is, because she said, *GOD said, Ye shall not (ou) eat from it, **and you shall in no wise (ou mē) touch it**, in order that ye might not (mē) die.'"*
      a. Has Eve been mulling over in her thoughts the serpent's suggestion that God is being sadistic, and is now changing Eve's thinking about God, that he is "a hard man" (*cf* Matt. 25:19 *ff.*)?
      b. The devil tries "misquoting" the Scriptures to Jesus as well (Matt. 4:3-10).
      c. Many "preachers" pick and choose Scripture to match their (mis)understanding of God today.
      d. Eve may not have known exactly what death was, since death was non-existent at this time, but she knew it must be something bad.

III. Three ways Eve sinned or "missed the target."

A. Sin (*amarti'a*) comes from an archery term meaning "to miss the target."

B. The serpent suggests that God is a liar: "*Not (ou) by death* (thanátō) *shall ye yourselves die* (apothaneísthe)."
   1. *thanátō* can mean "death as divine judgment or penalty." What the serpent says here is actually true: God did not impose death on mankind as a penalty; rather, when one disobeys God, the source of life, one thereby distances oneself from the source of life, the consequence being death.

[9] *Cf.* Psalm 50 (51):6b LXX: "...be victorious when thou art judged." St Ambrose: "He who is to judge us disdains not to be brought to judgment, that he may be justified in his saying, and clear when he is judged."
[10] Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses.*

2. *apothaneísthe* (ἀποθανεῖσθε – future middle, 2nd pers pl), "to die; "to lose eternal life," (*cf.* Rom. 7:9b, "sin revived, and I died / ἀπέθανον'). St. Paul didn't physically die when he wrote this, but sin "kills" us spiritually.

3. Eve sins by believing the serpent (to whom she attributes authority and knowledge), not God! Eve is now thinking that God cannot be trusted.
   a. As Elder Thaddeus wrote, "Our thoughts determine our lives," so Eve's thoughts, inspired by the devil, now determine her actions...she will take of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

C. Secondly, the serpent suggests that God is hiding something from her: *God knew that on whatever day ye eat from it, your eyes would be opened, and you would be like gods.*
   1. Maybe the "shrewdest animal" knows more than the One who created it? Adam and Eve were already "gods" by grace, sharing in the divine life (*cf.* Ps 81:6). Her second sin is, as St. Paul says, she "exchanged the truth about God for the lie…and revered the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25).

   2. The deceiving serpent continues planting seeds of doubt in her thoughts: "Is God the real deceiver? Can he be trusted to look out for my best interests?"

   3. Pride now enters: "I know what's best for me."

D. Perhaps Eve always wondered about that "forbidden" tree, like a child being told to keep out of the cookie jar. Her 3rd sin is that she now focuses her attention on that tree, and suddenly she saw that it *the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing for the eyes to look at, and it was beautiful to contemplate.* Instead of struggling to drive these thoughts from her mind, she *contemplates* upon the tree, so her desires /" passions" take hold of her.
   1. "…let us still the passions of our soul; let us subdue the rebellious instincts of the flesh" (Forgiveness Sunday Matins)

   2. "The image of God in us is our reason, for reason is 'the master of the passions.'" (St. Basil)

   3. "Eve is the first to teach us that sight, taste, and the other senses, when used without moderation, distract the heart from its remembrance of God. So long as she did not look with longing on the forbidden tree, she was able to keep God's commandment carefully in mind. But after she had looked at the tree with longing, touched it with ardent desire and then tasted its fruit with intense sensuality, she…gave way to passion. All her desire was to enjoy what was immediately present to her senses…" (St. Diadochus of Photice)[11]

[11] A theologian, mystic, and bishop of Photice in the 5th century, he was a staunch defender of orthodox Christological doctrine. His treatises on the ascetic life have influenced Eastern Orthodox and Western spirituality.

4. "Sin is to do anything apart or separate from God. Adam and Eve failed to be 'eucharistic' people because they ate the fruit of this tree 'in secret.' It was something they 'took' by themselves, rather than 'receiving' it from God. Moreover, they could not have offered it up to God, because God had commanded them no to eat from that tree; so their disobedience would be clearly seen by offering up that which they were forbidden to have!"

5. 'Sin' is anything that implies that I am independent from God, rather than dependent upon him."[12]

6. "Until recently you were satisfied with what you had, you did not fantasize; but now you look...with lust, and you give your heart to [this]."[13]

E. *…having taken from its fruit,[14] she ate; and she also gave to her husband with her, and they ate.*
   1. "Eve hastened to eat before her husband that she might become head over her head, that she might become the one to give commandment to that one by whom she was to be commanded, and that she might be older in divinity than that one who was older than she in humanity." (St Ephraim)[15]

IV. Orthodox understanding of Sin's Consequences: *they knew that they were naked… and they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord GOD.*

A. The Orthodox understanding of "Original" Sin is very different from the Western understanding. This sin brought about the loss of the "bright garment of immortality" in which Adam and Eve were first clothed, so they now stand "naked" and mortal before God.[16] This sin allowed death to enter the human race, both physically and spiritually. However, "Sin is spiritual death," (St. Gregory Palamas) and physical death simply follows years later.
   1. "When Adam ate, he died immediately in his soul, and after 930 years he also died in his body. For as death of the body is the separation of the soul, so also the death

[12] Fr. Frank Marangos.
[13] Taken from Elder Thaddeus' book, *Our Thoughts*, p. 86. Although he says this in a different context, it still seems applicable to Eve's situation.
[14] *fruit* (*karpós*), actually has two different meaning in Greek: 1, fruit (either from a tree or from the womb) and 2, the wrist or palm of the hand. A pun might be that Eve took the "fruit" with her "palm." So where did we get the idea that it was an apple? St. Jerome made his own pun in Latin, by translating this "fruit" as *malus*, which in Latin means both "apple" and "evil." "St. Jerome had many different fruits to pick from for his translation, but he chose the apple due the dual meaning and what it represented in the narrative." [aleteia.org/2018/12/13/how-st-jeromes-pun-made-apples-the-forbidden-fruit/]. So, the West has thought of the "evil" fruit as the "apple," based solely on a Latin pun!
[15] I'm reminded of a magazine's cover story around 1993 when the Episcopal church had ordained their third woman as a "bishop." The three women were pictured wearing "high church" copes and miters, and the caption was their quote: "Now we have the power."
[16] This understanding of Adam and Eve being "clothed" with immortality and the divine nature before the fall is an important understanding in Orthodoxy. I think this is a foreign concept to Protestants, and perhaps, to Roman Catholics.

of the soul comes when the grace of the Holy Spirit of God is removed from it. It was pleasing to God to create man that he may be able to live as the angels." (St. Simeon the New Theologian).

Adam and Eve clothed with red garments, symbolizing the clothing of divinity, then driven out of Paradise in fig leaves.

2. "Thou didst cloth me in Eden with a divinely woven garment; but, persuaded by the devil, I was stripped naked; I who was once clothed in the brightness of immortality…." (Forgiveness Sunday Matins)

3. "They were not ashamed because the brightness with which they were clothed. It was when this brightness was stripped from them after they had transgressed the commandment that they were ashamed because they were naked." (St. Ephraim)

4. "While sin and disobedience had not yet come on the scene, they were clothed in that brightness from above which caused them no shame…through their transgression they consequently divested themselves of the brightness surrounding them…" (St. Chrysostom)

5. In an ancient writing, *The Book of Adam and Eve,*[17](*BA&E*) it is written: "Adam wept and said, 'O God, when we dwelt in Paradise…we saw the angels…but now we do not see as we were used to…' Then the Lord God said, 'When thou wast under subjection to me, thou didst have a bright nature within thee…but after thy transgression thy bright nature was withdrawn from thee."

B. Remoteness from God and one another—lack of humility.
   1. Adam and Eve now "hide" themselves from one another, by sewing fig leaves into loincloths. They no longer turn to God for help but believe they must help themselves.
      a. Biblical humor, often not understood, but providing true insight: Fig leaves are extremely rough on the skin and cause the skin to itch. Adam and Eve were promised by the serpent that they would now be "wise as gods;" but the first thing they do after eating of the tree was really dumb! When we try to do

[17] See Introduction to Genesis for information on this non-canonical, but important, book.

something apart from God, relying on our own "wisdom," it usually *rubs* us the wrong way! (Pun intended).

b. Humanity now "hides" from God in all sorts of ways (*e.g.,* Psalm 13 (atheism), "death of God," secular humanism).

2. Passing the buck: *The wife, whom thou gavest to be with me!*
   a. Self-justification; the paradox: we desire "to be God," but we are unwilling to take responsibility for our actions.
   b. Adam blames God: not '*M*y wife deceived me,' but 'the wife *thou* gavest me.' So it is…when a man has not the fortitude to accuse himself, he does not hesitate to accuse God himself [for his troubles]." (St. Dorotheos of Gaza)[18]
   c. "Adam does not accuse himself of having consented to his wife, but pushes the fault off upon her…Adam cunningly tried to attribute his sinning to God himself, for he added, 'whom thou gavest me.' Nothing is as characteristic of sinners as to want to attribute to God everything for which they are accused." (St. Augustine)

3. Eve follows suit by blaming the snake.

V. God as the "hound of Paradise"

A. *The Lord GOD called Adam, "Adam, where are you?"* God pursues us even in our sinfulness (*cf.* Lk 15:3-10; Lk 19:10).
   1. *cf.* Psalm 22: 6: "And thy mercy shall *pursue* me all the days of my life…."[19]

   2. Being the source of goodness, God, even after our failures, calls us anew, not effacing entirely from our mind the knowledge of good, even if we have turned away from virtue through sin. This is what God, at present, also does for Adam in calling him although he has hidden himself, saying to him: 'Adam, where art thou?' Adam, in fact, had been placed there by God for the purpose of working and guarding Paradise; he had received this place from Him to be his own. *Having distanced himself from there by disobedience,* it is proper that he should hear from God: 'Where art thou?' (italics added--St. Didymus the Blind)[20]

   3. "Wishing to save Adam, thou didst come down to earth. Not finding him on earth, O Master, thou descended to hades *seeking* him…Adam was greatly afraid when God walked in Paradise; now, with joy he sees God *stalking* hades' depths…." (Matins of Holy Saturday—italics added)
      a. "Where are you?" is not the call of an angry God seeking to punish Adam, but the call of a concerned, loving Father seeking his child who is not in his usual place.

[18] St. Abba Dorotheos was a 6th century monk in the desert of Egypt, becoming well known for his sermons.
[19] LXX text.
[20] Although blind at the age of four, he became the head of the Catechetical School in Alexandria, Egypt in the 4th century.

B. God invites Adam to confess his sin: *unless perhaps you have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, 'of this one alone, do not eat from it?"*
   1. "God shows consideration for their limitations so as to demonstrate his own loving kindness, and he invites them to make admission of their faults." (St. Chrysostom)

   2. "After Adam had done wrong God gave him a chance to repent and be forgiven, and yet he kept being stiff-necked and unrepentant. For God came to him and said, 'Adam, where are you?' instead of saying, 'Why did you sin? Why did you go astray? Are you not ashamed?' as if clearly urging him to say, 'Forgive me!'" (St. Dorotheos of Gaza)

   3. "It is as though God said, 'Do you really think that you can hide from me? Do you imagine that I do not know what you have done? Will you not say, "I have sinned?" Say, O scoundrel, "Yes, it is true, Master. I have transgressed thy command. I have fallen by listening to the woman's counsel. I am greatly at fault for doing what she said and disobeying thy word. Have mercy on me!"' But Adam does not humble himself…for had he said this he might have stayed in Paradise!" (St. Symeon the New Theologian)[21]

C. God as equal opportunity confessor, invites Eve to confess: *"What is this you have done?"*
   1. "God came to Eve as if saying, 'If you would only say, "Forgive me!" She only answered, "The snake deceived me," as if to say, the snake did wrong; what concern is that to me?" (St. Dorotheos of Gaza)

   2. "See the Lord's loving kindness and the surpassing degree of his long-suffering; he shows patience and withholds action. He asks a question, receives a reply, and questions them further as if inviting them to excuse themselves to that he might seize the opportunity to display his characteristic love regarding sinners, even despite their fall." (St. Chrysostom)

VI. Consequences of Sin

A. God does not give the serpent an opportunity to say anything but renders judgment on the serpent: *you are cursed from all the animals.*
   1. The serpent will now be alone, cut off from the rest of the animal world; it will eat dirt, it will craw, unable to raise its "hands" toward heaven in prayer and supplication.
      a. "Whereas aforetime the serpent was the most exalted of all beasts, now it was changed and became scaly, and the lowest of them all, and it crept on its chest and went on its belly. And whereas it was the fairest of all beasts, it had been changed, and was become the ugliest of them all. Instead of feeding on the best food, now it turned to eat the dirt. And, whereas it had been the most beautiful of all the beasts, all of which stood silent before its beauty, it was now

[21] One of three saints given the title *Theologian* (others being St. John the Apostle and St. Gregory of Nazianzus). He was abbot of the monastery of St. Mamas in the 11th century.

abhorred of them. And, again, whereas it dwelt in one beautiful place to which all other animals came; and where it drank, they drank also of the same; now, after it had become venomous, by reason of God's curse, all beasts fled from it and would not drink of the water it drank but fled from it!" (*BA&E*)

2. It is clear that the serpent is not a god or goddess, but a creature made by God.

B. The first messianic prophecy is given: *I will put enmity… between your seed and her seed….*
   1. *Seed* in Greek is *spermatos*, so ***her seed*** is impossible, because only males have sperm. The fathers see this as foretelling the Theotokos' conception of Christ "without seed."[22]

   2. *he will watch…:* The child to be born from this virginal conception will be a male, who will go after the serpent's head with the heel of his[23] foot, *trampling down death by death.*[24]

C. Notice that God does not curse Eve, but there are consequences to her sin which she will bear.
   1. ["*Because* you listened to the serpent instead of to your husband"—these words are implied:] *In pains* (*lu'pē*) *you will bring forth children*....
      a. pains = *lu'pē*, "physical and/or mental pains; sorrows; grief." Eve will have both physical pain and mental sorrow when a child is born, for the child is brought into a fallen world, outside Paradise.

   2. Yet, in spite of the pains of childbirth, she *will return to her husband, and he will have lordship over her.*
      a. The wife was fashioned to be in a helper and a person to dialogue with her husband, but now the relationship has changed; she is now to be in subordinate position to him (*cf.* Eph 5:22-23).
         i. "The Lord said to Eve, 'In the beginning I created you equal in esteem to your husband, and my intention was that in everything you would share with him as an equal, and as I entrusted control of everything to your

[22] Identification of the "seed of the woman" with Jesus goes back at least as far as Irenaeus (180 AD), who (along with several other Church Fathers) regarded this verse as "the first messianic prophecy in the Old Testament". Saint Serapion, a fourth-century bishop of Thmuis in the Nile Delta, wrote the following: The woman does not have seed, only man does. How then was that (Gen 3:15) said of the Woman? Is it not evident that there is here question of Christ, whom the holy Virgin brought forth without seed? As a matter of fact, the singular is used, "of the seed", and not the plural, "of the seeds". The seed of the woman is referred to again in Revelation 12:17. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seed_of_the_woman).

[23] It should be pointed out that the Vulgate used by the Latin church reads, *her heel*. There are those who attribute this to Jerome as a "mistranslation," and others suggest it was a later scribal error. While Rome has been rather insistent that it is "her heel," (*i.e.,* the Virgin Mary's heel), the Septuagint uses αὐτός (masculine pronoun, "his") at this place in this verse. The teaching of the Orthodox Church is that it is Christ's heel, not the Theotokos' heel.

[24] A tradition found in some old eastern Christian sources holds that the serpent's head was crushed at Golgotha, described as a skull-shaped hill at the center of the Earth, where Shem and Melchizedek had placed the body of Adam. (en.wikipedia/Seed)

husband, so I did to you; but you abused your equality of status. Hence, I subject you to your husband.'" (St. Chrysostom)

b. *will return* (*apostrophē'*) *to your husband*; implied: *from whom you were taken and formed.*

D. Equal punishment given to Adam: he is not cursed, but there are similar consequences for him.

1. *Because you listened to the voice of your wife… cursed is the ground in your labors! In pains* (*lu'pē*) *you will eat from her….*
   a. The ground [MT *adamah*] is cursed instead of Adam.
   b. Adam will experience the same *pains* as Eve in trying to make the earth "bring forth" good things—notice humans are still only allowed to be vegetarians.
   c. While women groan bearing children, men will eat in the sweat of their face; the "till and keep" of chapt. 2:15b now becomes "labors" for Adam.
   d. As the wife *will return* to her husband, so Adam (both specific and *mankind*) will *return* (*apostre'psai*) to the ground, from which you were taken [and formed].

2. The whole of creation is disrupted (*cf.* Rom 8:21).
   a. "…creation was 'very good,' that in all of spiritual and palpable creation there reigned peace—that is, in accord, a bond, a harmony, joy, bliss. Consequently, all that was created by God was in union [*cf Great Litany,* "for the union of all"], a bond, a mutual relationship, and communion with its Creator, God, and among itself. All was in peace and agreement until man himself—the king of nature—disrupted it. With the fall of man, the bond of all creation was upset, and out of a peaceful agreement there followed a hostile uprising, sown into God's creation by the enemy of peace and love."[25]
   b. "We have fallen, and because of the Fall of man, all of creation suffers, for man was created to be the master of the material world. The material world was created as sublime, not coarse and rough as it is today. After Adam transgressed the Lord' commandment, everything became coarse...Nature is waiting for us to be delivered in order that it, too, might be delivered from corruption, for in it present state it is corrupt and changeable...we are to be blamed for the fall of all things."[26]

VII. The "Fall" of Humanity—but not so "great a fall" as in Western understanding[27]

A. According to St. Irenaeus,[28] Adam "was a child, not yet having his understanding perfected. It was necessary that he should grow and so come to his perfection."

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[25] *How our Departed Ones Live,* Monk Mitrophan, translated by Archpriest John R. Shaw, Holy Trinity Publications, Jordanville, NY. 2015, p. 325.

[26] Elder Thaddeus, *Our Thoughts*, pp, 124-125.

[27] See appendix, "Ancestral Sin" for comparison between Western and Orthodox understanding.

[28] (c. 130-202) was bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, which is now Lyons, France. His writings were formative in the early development of Christian theology. He was a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, who himself was a disciple of the Apostle John the Theologian.

The fall was therefore not a full-blown rebellion but a childish spat, a desire to grow up before their time and have everything *now!* [As at least one Orthodox priest has pointed out, the tree of life was not off limits to Adam and Eve, only "not now," which is why it had to be safe guarded after the fall.]

1. "Adam fell, not from a great height of knowledge and perfection, but from a state of underdeveloped simplicity; hence he is not to be judged too harshly for his error."[29]

2. "Humans at their first creation were therefore perfect, not so much in an actual as in a potential sense. Endowed with the image [of God] from the start, they were called to acquire the likeness by their own efforts (assisted of course by the grace of God)."[30]

B. Death becomes a Blessing.
   1. Death "releases one from pain; he is freed from suffering; death banishes the griefs and the cares and puts an end to the various passions of the body. Evil is not made immortal."[31]

   2. Death restrains our pride—God "made the body corruptible for the benefit of the soul; retraining its arrogance and destroying its pride." St. Chrysostom)
      a. God "acts in this way not because he hates or abhors his creation, but because he is concerned for it…. Death…obliges us to recognize our insignificance and our nothingness. It contains and restrains our arrogance and our egotism."

      b. St. Irenaeus likens death to the whale that swallowed Jonah: it was only in the depths of the whale's belly that Jonah could turn to God and do his will. Similarly, death and suffering appear evil, but without them we could never come to know God.

C. Middle Eastern mind loves playing with opposites / dualities.
   1. The Tree of Knowing Good *and* Evil; to "know" is to participate in something. In eating from this tree, mankind is now able to not only participate in evil, but to also participate in the good, and to freely choose the good.
      a. A joke that comes to mind is the initial bite of an apple is good, until you notice half of worm still in the fruit!

   2. Love is not love unless it is freely given. In paradise, Adam and Eve could have been "obedient to a command," but the choice remains: is it simply out of obedience for fear of punishment, or is it a desire to obey because one loves the giver of the commandment? [*Cf.* Jesus' words to his Apostles, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15)].

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[29] Timothy (Bishop Kallistos) Ware, *The Orthodox Church.*

[30] Ibid.

[31] This and the following quotes are from Nikolas P. Vassiliadis, *The Mystery of Death.*

3. The "image of the serpent…shows the general duality of the serpent symbol, for although it is right to say the serpent brought about a great evil, it is better to acknowledge the serpent brought about both good and evil, causing us to experience God as *mercy* and *rigor*" (italics added). [32]
    a. "One of the most important words related to *phármakon* (meaning both *poison* and *remedy, medicine*) is *pharmakós*, the 'sacrificial victim.' *Pharmakós* was the word used to describe the animal killed in the public sacrifices."
    b. On the cross, Jesus becomes the *pharmakós*, who is both God and Sacrifice, who dispenses God's *phármakon*, "healing" and "judgment," as the diagonal footrest on the cross represents the "good thief" who returned to Paradise, and the "bad thief" who descended to hades.
        i. "Truly, Adam, because of a tree, became estranged from Paradise. But the thief because of the Tree of the Cross came to reside in Paradise. The former, when he tasted of the fruit, disobeyed the commandment of the Creator; and the latter, when he was crucified with thee, confessed that thou art a God disguised, and cried, 'Remember me in thy kingdom.'" (From the Troparia on the Beatitudes in the 4th Tone).
        ii. In the midst, between the two thieves, thy Cross became a balance-beam of righteousness: For the one was carried down to hades by the burden of his blasphemy; the other was lightened of his sins and brought to the knowledge of God. O Christ our God, glory to thee! (Prayer at the 9th Hour).

4. St. Ephraim writes, "Greatly saddened was the Tree of Life when it beheld Adam stolen away from it; it sank down into the virgin ground and was hidden—to burst forth and reappear on Golgotha" as the Cross.

5. Elder Thaddeus writes, "After the Fall everything fell apart. God, being Love, knew that created beings would not be able to remain in the state they were created in, and so He gave them all the time from the Creation to the Dread Judgment to come to their senses and return to the bosom of their Heavenly Father, to become one with Absolute Good and Absolute Love."[33]

[32] Jonathan Pageau, "The Serpents of Orthodoxy," *Orthodox Arts Journal*, here and the following quotes.
[33] Elder Thaddeus, *Our Thoughts*, p. 130.

VIII. Glimpses of Redemption—*Not* the Judge and absolute Sovereign God of Calvinism.

A. The hope of the resurrection is shown: "God did not say 'till you disappear, till you… become decomposed into nothingness,' but rather, 'till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken'…for when I created you, I took you from there, so also am I able to take you again." (St. Chrysostom)

B. Adam now names his wife *Zōē* (*Life*; *Living*), placing her in submission to him.
   1. Zoe (Eve) is still a virgin, foretelling "the Virgin" who becomes the new mother of all the living, for she gives birth to the One who is the Life (Jn. 14:6).

C. Death now enters the picture, but a glimpse of a future ransom.
   1. Death is a part of the fallen world; it is unnatural and is not something God created (see Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-14a, 16; 2:23-24).
      a. "When man disobeyed thee, the true God who had created him, and was led astray by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death through his own transgression, thou, O God, in thy righteous judgment didst send him forth from paradise into this world...providing for him salvation through rebirth in thy Christ himself." (Anaphora of St. Basil)

   2. *The Lord GOD made for Adam and his wife tunics of skin, and he clothed them.*
      a. God, looking at the itchy loincloths of Adam and Eve, probably in a combination of laughter at their folly and compassion for their situation, in essence says, "These are not going to work,"—so God clothes them in clothes made of skin.
      b. The fathers understand this in two ways:
         i. The "skin" is now what we know as the skin on our bodies, *i.e.*, Adam and Eve now become "flesh" which is capable of decay in death. They have lost the divine nature which was theirs at first. And:

2. an animal (*a sheep or lamb?*) had to be killed in order for God to make these tunics. So, death now enters into the animal kingdom, with slain animals providing essentials for human beings.

c. This fallen world is now a world of death, arrogance, disease, estrangement, loneliness, hunger, brokenness, etc.

d. But, "in the fullness of time," God "could not endure to behold mankind oppressed by the Devil," so he came and saved us,[34] becoming the "Lamb of God," giving himself "as a ransom to death, in which we were held captive…"—not to "satisfy" the anger or "honor" of the Father, nor "pay the penalty or debt" the Father legally demanded, but to make "for all flesh a path to the resurrection from the dead."

e. Therefore, in baptism, God clothes us again as we sing: "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on (*been clothed in*) Christ.

An Appendix to Genesis 3
"Original Sin"
Western Understanding *v.* Orthodox Understanding

Augustine of Hippo: "*Massa damnata*"

Augustine was a bishop in North Africa in the 400's. He studied law and philosophy, and wrote theological works, although he was not a systematic theologian. In his youth, he rejected his mother's Christianity, choosing to live a pagan life and had a mistress or two for years. He believed it was impossible to attain absolute truth. He later converted to Christianity and was eventually chosen as a bishop. He knew Latin, but not Greek, so he had very little knowledge of the Eastern Fathers and could not read the Scriptures in their original Greek, although he argued against Jerome using the Hebrew text for the Old Testament in the Vulgate. In the Roman confession, he is one of the "Doctors," revered for his theology, which have influenced nearly every Western confession's theology. "There was no important doctrinal issue in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that was unaffected by the study of Augustine…How the West viewed and still views the church, the sacraments, grace, original sin, the natural state of man, and salvation is traceable to him."[1]

In the Orthodox Church, there is some debate about whether he is should be called saint or blessed. We certainly respect his episcopal leadership, but much of his theology is outside Orthodoxy.

So, what did Augustine teach? According to *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church:*

> Augustine maintained that man was created with certain supernatural gifts which were lost by the Fall of Adam. As a result, man suffers from a hereditary moral disease, and is also subject to the inherited *legal* liability for Adam's sin; and from these evils we can be saved solely by the grace of God…The whole human race is one *massa peccati* (mass of sins), and everyone deserves to be damned from birth; we are simply a *massa damnata* (a damned crowd, a mass to be damned), out of which God has elected some souls to receive His unmerited mercy. There is no other explanation of the elect and non-elect than the inscrutable wisdom of God, and babies who die unbaptized go into everlasting perdition.

(My comment: This implies that God, who called his creation of mankind "good," totally changes his mind, and now says, as my Lutheran professor of theology paraphrased Augustine, "Thou art dung!")

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[34] From the Blessing of Water at Baptisms and Theophany.
From the Anaphora of St. Basil.

[1] Jordan Bajis, *Common Ground.*

Augustine taught that Adam and Eve "were endowed from the start with all possible wisdom and knowledge; theirs was a realized, and in no sense potential, perfection."[2] But after the fall, the human will was totally damaged. Originally, humans were both *posse peccare* (able to sin) and *posse non peccare* (able not to sin); after the fall, the only choice we have is *posse peccare*—we can do nothing now but sin;[3] we have lost our free-will, to the extent that we cannot willingly turn back to God. We are so bad that grace has nothing to build on, so God has to extend *prevenient* grace to us in order for us to have faith. Since we were all potentially present in Adam's seed, and since Adam is guilty of sin, his guilt is now a part of his seed, and since, for Augustine, sexual intercourse is itself sinful, and since it is the means through which sin is passed down, all of us inherit Adam's *guilt!*

Anselm of Canterbury: *"Satisfaction to an Outraged God."*

Anselm was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093-1109. As a theologian and philosopher, he was a leader in Scholasticism, "defending the faith by intellectual reasoning[4] instead of employing arguments built on Scriptural and other written authorities" and by this defended the *filioque* in the Creed. In 1098 he wrote, *Cur Deus Homo?* – "Why the God/Man?" which was considered the most contribution to the theology of the Atonement in the West during the Middle Ages. "It interpreted the doctrine [of Atonement] in terms of the satisfaction due to the outraged majesty of God." He interpreted "Christ's death as a sufficient vicarious satisfaction for the sins of the world, which was made possible because of the sinlessness of His human nature and its hypostatic union with the Second Person of the Trinity."[5] In his book, *Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy*,[6] Fr. Andrew Damick gives us a quote from Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*: "It is impossible for God to lose his honor; for either the sinner pays his debt of his own accord, or, if he refuse, God takes it from him....[subjecting] him...by torments, even against man's will, and thus shows that he is the Lord of man, though man refuses to acknowledge it of his own accord. And here we must observe that as man in sinning takes away what belongs to God, so God in *punishing* gets in return what pertains to man." (italics added). Anselm was declared a Doctor of the [Latin] Church by Pope Clement XI in1720. For various reasons, Anselm's teachings are not recognized by the Orthodox Church, nor is he a "Saint." His influence in Western Evangelicalism however is great.

The Roman Catholic View: An Augustinian /Anselmian Legalism

"The foundation of the Roman Catholic teaching lies in (a) an understanding of the sin of Adam as an *infinitely great offense* against God; (b) after this offense there followed the *wrath* of God; (c) the wrath of God was expressed in the *removal of the supernatural gifts* of God's grace; and (d) the removal of grace drew after itself the submission of the spiritual principle to the *fleshly principle*, and a falling deeper into sin and death. From this comes a particular view of the redemption performed by the Son of God: in order to restore the order which had been violated, it was necessary first of all to give satisfaction[7] for the offense

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[2] Timothy (Bishop Kallistos) Ware, *The Orthodox Church.*

[3] For Inquiring or former Episcopalians [and Calvinists], read Articles IX, X and XIII of the Thirty-nine Articles: "…every person born into this world, it deserveth [*ie* man's fallen nature] God's wrath and damnation"…"The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God"…."Works done before the grace of Christ…are not pleasant to God…we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

[4] From an Orthodox perspective, our "intellectual reasoning" fell with "the Fall." Anselm did not understand the *nous* of Orthodoxy. One can see in him the beginning of the "Anglican tripod" of Scripture, *Reason*, and Tradition, although Anselm would give Reason preference over the other two.

[5] The previous quotes are from *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd edition, F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone, editors, Oxford University Press, 1974.

[6] 2nd edition, Ancient Faith Publishing, 2017.

[7] Influenced by Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* (Why the God/Man). "Although the Protestant Reformers rejected much of Roman Catholic teaching, they too accepted the Anselmian concept of satisfaction. Indeed, the main point of

given to God, and by this means to *remove the guilt* of mankind and the punishment that weighs upon him"… "The work of redemption was interpreted [in the West] as a "satisfaction…in order that [the wrath of] God might be appeased; this was done by the Savior when He accepted death on the Cross…."[8]

The Roman Catholics teach that when Adam disobeyed God, he "stained" [*maculo*] the seed producing all succeeding generations. The stain and the consequences of his sin now pass down to every human being from the moment of conception. Every person shares Adam's guilt, the loss of supernatural gift of grace, and is declared guilty and must pay the punishment or make restitution to God for the inherited sin and guilt. The Virgin Mary, in order not to pass this "stain" on to her son, had to be conceived herself "without the stain," an exceptional act of God which is called the Immaculate Conception of Mary, not of Jesus. Mary becomes then, in the words of Fr. Thomas Hopko of blessed memory, "the great exception" to the human race, rather than "the great example."

Protestants:
"The Roman Catholic and Protestant 'lived situations' are much more comparable and compatible with each other than either is with the Orthodox."[9]

"In the west it is usual to think of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism as opposite extremes; but to an Orthodox they appear as two sides of the same coin. [Alexis] Khomiakov calls the Pope 'the first Protestant,' 'the father of German rationalism,' and by the same token he would doubtless have considered the Christian Scientist an eccentric Roman Catholic…for Protestantism was hatched from the egg which Rome had laid."[10]

"Orthodox teaching does not merely differ from Western Christianity in *content*, but the reason for the difference is equally important...It is easier for Protestants and Catholics to understand each other, even if they fundamentally disagree on their conclusions, than for Orthodox and Catholics [*and therefore, Protestants*—ed] to understand each other.[11]

Martin Luther: *simul justus et peccator*
Luther, an Augustinian monk, received his Doctor of Theology in Wittenberg, Germany where he was also a professor of Scripture in the 1500's. "His deep pessimism led him to affirm the total depravity of mankind and the uselessness of human reason, whereas his personal need for a 'gracious God' created the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's *merits* [italics added] by faith alone, without any human cooperation. Even baptism could not restore man's freedom for the good…man is, in fact, wholly under the power of evil and *can do nothing but sin* [italics added]. Justification is something which is accomplished…by a kind of legal fiction, according to which God *regards* sinful man as righteous, owing to the merits of Christ, though in reality man remains as sinful as before, hence, "at the same time justified and [still a] sinner," *simul justus et peccator* …'original righteousness' which at creation was an integral part of human nature, was irretrievably lost by the Fall; man…no longer is free to do the good, but now lives in bondage to the rule of sin."[12]

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contention between Roman Catholics and Protestants was not over whether or not God's justice, honor, or wrath needed to be satisfied, but whether man could add anything to that satisfaction in penance." Clark Carlton, "Satisfactionism," Saint Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church website.

[8] Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology.*

[9] Thomas Hopko, *Women and the Priesthood.*

[10] Ware, *The Orthodox Church.*

[11] Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou, *Thinking Orthodox: Understanding and Acquiring the Orthodox Christian Mind*,

[12] *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church.*

Therefore, "sin boldly," and "Love God and do what you will" Luther would say, since *everything* we do is sinful. Since we are justified by faith alone (*sola fides*), it really does not matter if one does "good" or "bad" things, as long as one "has faith." It is said that Luther once compared humanity to a "dung pile covered by snow;" too put this in "evangelical terms," the blood of Jesus *covers* us, or we are "washed in the blood." Thus, an imputed grace is just a "candy coating" on the outside which does not affect the inner humanity, nor is one called to "change" [repent] inwardly. Luther did away with "sacramental confession."

John Calvin, the Lawyer: "The Sovereignty of God and the Nothingness of Mankind"
Calvin was an attorney in Geneva, Switzerland in the 1500's. Although he was never ordained nor educated in theology, he claimed he had received a mission from God to restore the church to her "original purity."

He taught that in the state of innocence before the Fall, man could attain to blessedness through his own natural powers; the Fall, *which was willed by God* [italics added] substantially change human nature so that now all man wills and does is sin. We are no longer free but follow necessarily either the attraction of concupiscence[13] or of grace. All works outside the Christian faith are sins, and therefore the person committing them was *guilty* and must *be punished*. Even good works of Christians are intrinsically evil, though covered and not counted as sins through the imputed merits of Christ. Calvin's extreme emphasis of the omnipotence of God, which takes no account of his justice and mercy, led his doctrine of *absolute predestination*. According to this teaching, before creation, God predestined some of his creatures to salvation and others to damnation. So, God wills the damnation of those who are not of the elect, and there's nothing any one can do about it.

Is there a way to know who is part of "the elect"? Yes and no: the elect are blessed by God, so they have wealth, health, etc. ["Prosperity" theology]; "the reprobates" receive no blessings from God. Even though it counts for nothing, the elect will do good works as a sign of their election; however, if "the reprobates" do good works, those likewise are not benefit to them, and are still considered "sinful."

This theology naturally leads to a behavior that allows those who see themselves as part of the elect, *i.e.*, those who have great wealth, perhaps are owners (or CEO's, etc.) of large corporations, need not care about those who work for them, because they are obviously part of the "reprobates" whom God has already condemned to hell. So, if God "hates" them, why shouldn't the elect also hate them?

Beginning in 1541, Calvin ruled Geneva as a theocratic regime. Geneva forbade the taking of oath, card playing, and it regulated the sale of intoxicants. Attendance at the sermon was required under penalty of a fine, and "certain persons of good life and repute" were appointed to keep an eye upon the life and conduct of all citizens. All holy days and Saints days were abolished, although Christmas could be observed (the Puritans and many Presbyterians in the American colonies however banned the celebration of Christmas, as there "was no scriptural basis" that December 25 was Christ's birth date).

Calvin claimed that a Christian can know the will of God, and the State must be subject to "the church"—*ie*, to Calvin. Calvinism became the State religion of the Netherlands, created the Huguenots in France, influenced the Church of England, and has subtly affected the Roman Catholic church; all these groups came to America, where Calvinism is alive and well, and were TULIP: **T**otal Depravity; **U**nconditional Election; **L**imited Atonement (Christ died only for the elect); **I**rresistible Grace; and **P**erseverance of the Saints ("Once saved, always saved") is preached.

[13] "to have the heart set upon a thing; lust, not limited to sexual desire but includes all going forth from heart and will toward what God would not have us to have or to be"

The Orthodox Understanding: Adam Weeping Outside the Gates of Paradise. Death and Decay, Yes; Inherited Guilt and Loss of Free Will, No! Union with Christ, not 'imputed grace."

"Banished from the joys of Paradise, Adam sat outside and wept, and beating his hands upon his face he said, 'I am fallen, in thy compassion have mercy on me.'"—*Ikos,* Forgiveness Sunday Matins

"O miserable soul, thou hast departed far from God through thy carelessness…thou has been led down into decay. How art thou fallen!"—*Canticle Six,* Forgiveness Sunday Matins

"The arena of the virtues has been opened. Let all wishing to struggle for the prize now enter…for those who strife lawfully are justly crowned. Taking up the armor of the Cross, let us make war against the enemy….If we long to dwell in Paradise, let us abstain from all needless food…let us persevere in prayer…let us still the passions of our soul; let us subdue the rebellious instincts of the flesh…let us set out upon the path to heaven…." —Forgiveness Sunday Matins

"The term 'original sin' itself comes from Augustine's treatise *De Peccato Originale*….In Greek there are two terms used to express this concept, usually translated 'original sin' and 'ancestral sin'…[ancestral sin] does not suggest anything as strong as Augustinian 'original sin'…In the expression 'original sin,' the West often includes original *guilt,* which so clouds the divine potential in man that the term becomes burdensome. There is, of course, no notion of original *guilt* [italics added to guilt both times] in Orthodoxy. The Western notion compromises the spiritual goal of man, his *theosis*, and speaks too lowly of him…The balanced Orthodox view is that man has received death and corruption through Adam (original sin), though he does not share Adam's guilt."[14]

"Without minimizing the effects of the fall, [the Orthodox Church] does not believe that it resulted in a 'total depravity'…The divine image in man was obscured but not obliterated. His free choice has been restricted in its exercise, *but not destroyed*. Even in a fallen world, man is still capable of generous self-sacrifice and loving compassion. Even in a fallen world, man still retains some knowledge of God and can enter by grace into communion with him."[15] [italics added]

"After his first fall, man *himself* departed in soul from God and became unreceptive to the grace of God which was opened to him; he ceased to listen to the divine voice addressed to him, and this led to the further deepening of sin in him.

"However, God has never deprived mankind of his mercy, help, grace, and especially to his chosen people; and from this people there came forth great righteous men such as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and the later prophets. The Apostle Paul…lists a whole choir of Old Testament righteous ones.

"One must not see the essence of sin—including original sin—only in the dominance of the fleshly over the spiritual, as Roman Catholic theology teaches. Many sinful inclinations, even very serious ones, have to do with qualities of a *spiritual* order: such, for example, is pride….Sin is also present in evil spirits who have no flesh at all….Thus, original sin is understood by Orthodox theology as a sinful inclination which has entered into mankind and has become its spiritual *disease*.

"This is the way in which the 'Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs' defines the result of the fall into sin: 'Fallen through the transgression, man became like the irrational creatures. That is, he became darkened

[14] Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology.*
[15] Ware, *The Orthodox Church.*

and was deprived of perfection and dispassion. But he was not deprived of the nature and power which he had received from the All-good God. For had he been so deprived, he would have become irrational, and thus not a man. But he preserved that nature with which he had been created, and the free, living and active nature power, so that, according to nature, he might choose and do the good, and flee and turn away from evil.'"[16] [italics added]

"The Greek Fathers emphasized human freedom in the work of salvation. This emphasis strikingly contrasts with Augustine's language [*ed*. and shared by the Reformers]. St. John Chrysostom writes, 'We must first select good, and then God adds what appertains to his office; *he does not act prior to our will*, so as not to destroy our liberty'….

"In the Orthodox Church the idea of grace has kept something of the vernal freshness which the word *charis* evoked to the Greek minds: an idea of luminous beauty, free gift, condescension and harmony…Clement of Alexandria coined the word 'synergy' in order to express the action of these two conjoined energies: grace and human will. The term and idea of synergy…represent…the doctrine of the Orthodox Church."[17]

"The sacraments of the Orthodox Church *are not directed at appeasing or propitiating God and His justice*; rather, they are used to restore communion with the One who is Life by conquering death and its inseparable offspring, sin. Christ destroys what St. Nicholas Cabasilas (1322-1391) calls 'the triple barrier' of separation from God: by His Incarnation, He destroys the separation in nature; by His death on the cross, He destroys the separation by sin; and by His resurrection, He destroys the separation of death."[18]

For we believe that at birth a person has a pure *nous:*[19] his nous is illuminated, which is the natural state. The inheritance of ancestral sin...lies in the fact that the body inherits corruptibility and mortality, which, with the passage of time, and as the child grows and passions develop, darkens the noetic part of his soul....By holy Baptism we are not getting rid of guilt from ancestral sin, but we are being grafted onto the body of Christ, the Church, and are acquiring the power to conquer death. (Hierotheos Vlachos [b. 1945], *Life After Death*).

The Orthodox Church takes these passages seriously:

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 – "choose life."
Joshua 24:14-15 – "choose for yourself."
Psalm 7:12- LXX = "not inflicting wrath"; MT = "having indignation every day!"
Jeremiah 38:29-30 – "each shall die in his own sin."
Ezekiel 18:1-9 – "the one who is righteous…will surely live."
Romans 6:5-6 – "if we have been united with him…our old humanity was crucified with him…"
Galatians 2:20 – "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."
Ephesians 2:22 – "In Christ, you too are built up into a dwelling-place of God in the Spirit."
Philippians 2:13 – "For it is God working with (ἐν) you both to will and to work.

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[16] Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*.
[17] A monk of the Eastern Church, *Orthodox Spirituality: An Outline of the Orthodox Ascetical and Mystical Tradition.* (italics added, to contrast Orthodox teaching with Roman Catholicism and Calvinism's "Prevenient Grace."
[18] Archimandrite Sergius, *Acquiring the Mind*. p.88. (italics added).
[19] *nous* is rather difficult to translate exactly into English. It means, *mind and thought, opinion; soul and heart; it is that aspect of the human mind that has the capacity to contemplate God. A person has two centers of knowing: the* nous*, which is the appropriate organ for receiving the revelation of God that is later put into words through the reason, and the reason which know the sensible world around us.* [This quote taken from Eugenia S. Constantinou's book, *Thinking Orthodox: Understanding and Acquiring the Orthodox Christian Mind.*]

Second Monday of Great Lent

Come, let us cleanse ourselves by almsgiving and acts of mercy to the poor, not sounding the trumpet or making a show of our charity. Let not our left hand know what our right hand is doing; let not vainglory scatter the fruit of our almsgiving; but in secret let us call on Him who knows all secrets: Father, forgive us our trespasses, for Thou lovest mankind.[1]

Genesis 3:21—4:7

3 [21] And the Lord GOD made tunics of skin for Adam and his wife, and he clothed them.
And GOD said, "Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now perhaps he might reach out his hand and take of the tree of life and eat, and he will live unto the age."

And so, the Lord GOD sent him forth out of the paradise of delight to work the ground out of which he was taken. And he cast Adam out and made him dwell opposite the paradise of delight; and he posted the Cherubim and the flaming sword which turns, to guard the way to the tree of life.

4 And Adam knew Eve[a] his wife, and having conceived she bore Cain and said, "I have acquired a man[b] through GOD." And she proceeded to bear his brother Abel. And Abel became a shepherd of sheep, but Cain was working the ground.

[3] And it came about after *some* days *that* Cain brought an offering from the fruits of the earth to the Lord, and Able also brought from the firstborn of his sheep and of their fat portions. And GOD looked upon Able and upon his gifts, [5]but upon Cain and upon his offerings he paid no attention. And it distressed Cain exceedingly, and he fell in countenance. [6]And *the* Lord GOD said to Cain,

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[1] *Aposticha* from Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers, *Lenten Triodion,* p. 312.
[a] LXX reads Εὔαν (Eyan). This is the first time the LXX uses "Eve."
[b] *a man* is *ánthrōpon.*

“Why have you become deeply grieved, and why has your countenance fallen? If you offer rightly but do not divide rightly, have you not sinned? Calm down! Its[c] recourse will be to you, and you will rule it.”

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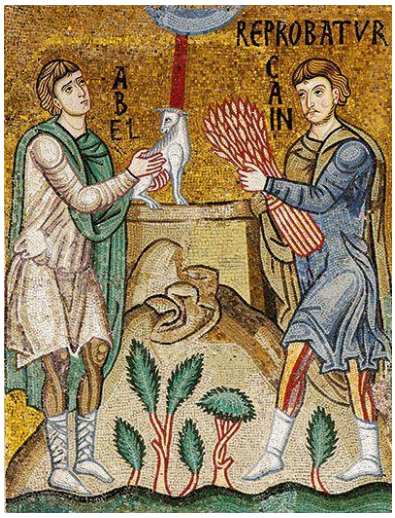

[c] Although this could be translated “his” meaning “his brother,” “its” referring to sin seems the better reading, as God tells Cain he can “rule over sin” when it comes again.

VIII. Adam Cast out of Paradise.

A. Sadness, which should lead us to repentance and humility.

1. "Adam sat before Paradise…and wept…'O Paradise, no more shall I take pleasure in thy joy; no more shall I look upon the Lord my God and Maker, for I shall return to the earth…O merciful and compassionate Lord, to thee I cry aloud: I am fallen, have mercy on me!'" [1]

2 "O ranks of angels, O beauty of Paradise and all the glory of the garden: weep for me… O blessed meadow, trees and flowers planted by God, O sweetness of Paradise: let your leaves, like eyes, shed tears on my behalf, for I am naked[2] and a stranger to God's glory. No longer do I see thee nor delight in thy joy and splendor, O precious Paradise. For I have angered my Creator and naked I have been driven out into the world!"

3. "Almighty God, have mercy and take pity on the work of thy hands. *I have cut myself off* from the choir and thine angels; but I entreat thee, loving Lord, reject me not." (italics added).

4. "Banished from the joys of Paradise, Adam sat outside and wept, and beating his hands upon his face he said: 'I am fallen, in thy compassion have mercy on me'…O Paradise, share in the sorrow of thy master…and with the sound of thy leaves pray to the Creator that he may not keep thy gate closed forever…"

5. "When [Adam and Eve] came to the opening of the gate of the orchid, and saw the broad earth spread before them, covered with stones large and small, and with sand, they feared and trembled, and fell on their faces from the fear that came upon them…because, whereas before they had been in the garden, beautifully planted with all manner of trees, they now saw themselves in a strange land, which they knew not and had never seen." (*BA&E*)

6. "Adam and Eve wept for having come out of paradise, their first abode…and they wept bitterly over what they had done…and they came to the cave…and Adam said to Eve, 'Look at this cave…what is it compared with the garden? What is the gloom of this cavern, compared with the light of the garden? What is this overhanging ledge of rock to shelter us, compared with the mercy of the Lord which overshadowed us? What is the soil of this cave compared with the garden? This ground, strewed with stones compared to that planted with delicious fruit trees?' And Adam said, 'Look at your eyes and mine, which before saw angels in heaven…but not we do not see as we did! Our eyes have become flesh; they cannot see in like manner as they saw before'…Then they entered the cave, and Adam saw…the roof of the cave that covered him overhead, so that he could see neither

[1] This and following are from Forgiveness Sunday Matins, *Lenten Triodion,* Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware.

[2] *Naked* here again means no longer clothed with the divine nature, "a stranger to God's glory/brightness".

heaven nor God's creatures, and he wept and smote heavily upon his breast, and Eve sat weeping." (*BA&E*)

B. The Loving Concern of God: *And GOD said, "…Perhaps Adam might reach out his hand and take from the tree of life and eat and he will live until the age."*
   1. "Lest Adam and Eve, after having eaten of this tree, live forever and remain in eternal lives of suffering after they were clothed with a curse, God forbade them to eat that which he had been prepared to give them…while they were still clothed with brightness." (St. Ephraim)
      a. The exile of Adam from Paradise was an indication of "divine guardianship rather than indignation." (St. Chrysostom)

   2. God "did not stop loving [Adam and Eve] at that point…far from ceasing to care for him, God *displays further concern* for him in his desire to…return him to his previous position of dignity." (St. Chrysostom—italics added).
      a. "Thou didst not turn thyself away forever from thy creature, whom thou hadst made, O Good One, nor didst thou forget the work of thy hands, but through the tender compassion of thy mercy, thou didst visit him in various ways... and when the fulness of time had come, thou didst speak to us through thy Son himself…so that those who were dead in Adam might be made alive in thy Christ." (Anaphora of St. Basil)

   3. "There is a complete absence of any hint of a 'vengeful God' in chapters 1-3. YHWH is somewhat sad in his rendering of judgments and curses."[3]

Cain and Able

"By faith Abel offered to God a sacrifice greater in quality than Cain...
and by it he being dead, yet speaks."– St. Paul (Heb. 11:4).

I. The Shepherd and the Farmer

A. *Eve... bore Cain…*
   1. Even though Adam and Eve are now cast of Paradise, Eve acknowledges that she acquires her son 'through GOD,' so God is still with them, even outside the garden.[4]
      a. "...when man disobeyed thee...thou, O God...didst send him forth from paradise into this world...[yet] thou didst not turn thyself away forever from thy creature whom thou hadst made..." (Anaphora of St. Basil).
      b. Cain is the first person to be "born," rather than "made" by God. However, God is still involved by "forming" the person in the womb (Psalm 138:15; Isaiah 44:2; Jeremiah 1:5).

[3] William A. Griffin, former Professor of Old Testament, Sewanee, Tennessee.
[4] As Christians we understand that God is present no matter where we are, as we pray in "O heavenly King: *who art everywhere present, filling all things.*

c. A woman was formed out of a man; now a male child comes forth out of a woman.

2. In Hebrew, Cain (*Qayin*) resembles *qanah* ("get / acquire"), which may be an explanation of his name. However, in the ancient Egyptian *Book of Adam and Eve*,[5] (*BA&E*) there is another explanation for his name:
   a. Eve brought forth her first-born son and with him a daughter…they named the son Cain and the daughter Luluwa.[6] The meaning of Cain is 'hater,' because he hated his sister in their mother's womb…but Luluwa means 'beautiful,' for she was more beautiful than her mother. (*BA&E*)

3. Parents' hope: Could this be the son to fulfill God's prophecy concerning the serpent?[7]

B. *And she proceeded to bear his brother Abel. And Abel became a shepherd of sheep, but Cain was working the ground.*
   1. There is a tradition in Judaism[8] that Cain and Able were twins, based on the wording in the first verse: Eve *proceeded* [or *continued*] *to bear his brother Abel,* which implies that the births followed a single conception. Again, grammatically speaking, the clear pattern in the Old Testament is "*N.* knew his wife, and having conceived she bore *N.*" This pattern is missing when it comes to Abel, allowing the interpretation to be that both brothers were conceived at the same time. If this is the case, this story sets the stage for further conflicts between twin siblings in the O.T., *e.g.,* Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:21-33) and Perez and Zerah (Gen. 38:27-30).

   2. The name Abel sounds like Hebrew word meaning 'puff of air,' or 'frail.' Obviously, this son was not the one prophesied about, yet because of his "frailty," perhaps he needed more attention from his parents, causing jealousy in Cain? (*cf.* story of Joseph and brothers, Gen 37:3-4, 11).
      a. "Frail" Abel becomes a shepherd, but "strong" Cain was a farmer, relying on his strength to work the ground, which had been cursed (chapter 3).

   3. Cain was hard-hearted…and when his father made an offering, he would remain behind and not go with him. But Abel had a gentle heart and was obedient to his father and mother, and he prayed and fasted. Adam and Eve went with Abel to show him how to offer up his gift on the altar, but Cain took no pleasure in offering. (*BA&E*)

II. The Two Offerings: "Is Mankind able to offer acceptable worship to God outside Paradise?" is the Question left hanging after Adam and Eve are expelled from Paradise.

[5] See Introduction to Genesis for information on this non-canonical, but important, book.
[6] Some sources in the Eastern Orthodox traditions give Cain's twin sister the name *Calmana*, *Calmanna*, or *Azrun*.
[7] See Gen. 3:15.
[8] www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3840320/jewish/Twins-in-the-Bible.htm

A. *Cain brought an offering the fruits of the earth to the Lord, and Able also brought of the firstborn of his sheep and of their fat portions. And GOD looked upon Able, and upon his gifts, but upon Cain and upon his offerings he paid no attention.*

1. Abel was very discerning in his choice of offerings, whereas Cain showed no such discernment. Abel selected and offered the choicest of his firstborn and of his fat ones, while Cain either offered young grains or certain fruits that are found at the same time as the young grains. Even if his offering had been smaller than his brother's, it would have been as acceptable, had he not brought it with such carelessness. Because Cain had taken such little regard for the first offering that he offered, God refused to accept it in order to *teach* Cain how he was to make an offering. (St Ephraim—Italics added)
   a. The *fat portions* Abel offered may have been "the fat in a sheep's tail, which... is considered a great delicacy and is used as a spread on bread in much the same way as we use butter."[9]
   b. Abel had to prepare his offering, offering the best firstborn of his sheep and preparing the fatty spread to offer with love to God. "The silence of the text with regard to the quality of Cain's gift is most telling..."[10] Cain may have simply grabbed some grains or fruit, which, evidently, were not even the "first fruits" of his crop, out of simply "doing his duty" of offering a sacrifice.

2. Cain behaved haughtily and pushed his brother away from the altar, in order to offer his own upon it, with a proud heart. But Abel set up stones, and upon that, offered up his gift with a humble heart.[11] Cain cried to God to accept his offering, but Abel prayed to God to accept his. Then a divine fire came down and consumed Abel's offering. (*BA&E*)
   a. Fire falls from heaven to devour Elijah's sacrifice (3 Kings l8:36 *ff*).
   b. *BA&E* makes it clear that Adam and Eve tried to teach their children how and what to offer God. In Paradise, God taught Adam and Eve what the offering is that God desires (*cf.* Ps. 50:19; Micah 6:8; Matt 5:23-25). A sheep had been sacrificed in order to provide clothes of skin for Adam and Eve. A ram was sacrificed instead of Isaac. Sheep become the Passover meal. Jesus is called the Lamb of God by John the Baptist.
      i. 'Our text makes it clear that there are only two choices: *to worship God as He has prescribed and thereby anticipate that it will be received or, invent our own modes of worship and be quite certain such worship will be rejected.* Given these two options, why would anyone choose the second?'[12]

B. *And it distressed Cain exceedingly, and he fell in countenance.*

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[9] "Translator's Introduction," *The Psalter According to the Seventy*, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, p.18.
[10] Tim Hegg, "Parashah Three: Genesis 4:1-26;" Torahresource.com/pdf-weekly-parashah.
[11] *Cf.* Psalm 50 (51):19.
[12] Hegg, Genesis 4:1-26. Italics in original.

1. St Ephraim must have known *BA&E*, for he writes: “Cain was angry because his brother’s offering had been accepted, when the fire had come down and distinguished between the offerings. His face became gloomy because there was laughter in the eyes of his parents and his sisters. God said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face gloomy? Instead of being filled with anger, tears ought to be flowing from your eyes. If you do well, I will accept it.’ Cain’s offering was not accepted because of his spitefulness and his lack of good will.”

2. God does not reject Cain, but his offering. However, Cain’s pride was hurt, so he takes it personally. He is the firstborn, the stronger of the two. How could God not accept his offering? His pride is his sin. He could have humbled himself and asked his brother if he might give Cain a sheep—but that would mean the “strong” brother would have ask for help from the “weak” brother!

C. *And* the *Lord GOD said to Cain, “Why have you become deeply grieved, and why has your countenance fallen? If you offer rightly but do not divide rightly, have you not sinned? Calm down! Its recourse will be to you, and you will rule it.”*

1. God gently asks Cain why he has become sorrowful, giving him an opportunity to confess his anger and jealousy. God sees Cain ‘boiling over’ inside, and commands him to ‘still’ his passions. When one feels “hurt,” that is a sign of pride, and that hurt usually turns to anger.
    a. St. Makarios of Egypt (295-392) sent a young monk to a cemetery to rebuke and then to praise the dead. Upon his return from the cemetery, St. Makarios asked him what the dead said to him. The young man replied, “They were silent to both praise and reproach.” The Saint replied, “If you wish to be saved, be as one dead. Do not become angry when insulted, nor puffed up when praised.”

2. God tells Cain that if he “calms down” and learns to control his passions, by giving up his anger, though sin will indeed return to him, he can learn to “rule it.” (*Cf.* 1 Peter 5:6-9a).

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Second Tuesday of Great Lent

I have sinned against Thee countless times, and I await countless torments: gnashing of teeth and weeping that finds no comfort, the fire of Gehenna, darkness and the dwelling of the damned. Give me tears, O righteous Judge, that I may gain remission and release from my wickedness, as I fast and cry to Thee: Take pity on me, Christ my Master, in Thy great and abundant mercy.[1]

Genesis 4:8-16

8 And Cain said to Abel, his brother, "Let us walk through the field."[a] And it happened while they were in the field *that* Cain rose up against Abel, his brother and killed him.

9 And *the* Lord GOD said to Cain, "Where is Abel, your brother? And he said, "I do not (*ou*) know. I am not (*mē*) my brother's keeper, am I?"[b] And *the* Lord said, "What have you done? *The* voice of *the* blood of your brother is crying out to me from the earth. And now, you are cursed from the earth, which opened wide her mouth to receive the blood of your brother from your hand; because you will work the ground and she will not (*ou*) continue to yield her strength to you. Moaning and trembling shall you be upon the earth."

13 And Cain said to *the* Lord GOD, "My crime[c] is too great for me to be forgiven! If thou art driving me out from *the* face of the earth today, and I will be hidden from thy face, I will be moaning and trembling upon the earth, and it will be that anyone finding me will kill me."

15 And *the* Lord GOD said to him, "Not (*ou*) so! Anyone who kills Cain will release seven acts of vengeance." And *the* Lord GOD placed a sign for Cain so that none would destroy him who found him.

16 Then Cain went out from the face of GOD and lived in *the* land of Nod,[d] opposite Eden.

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[1] On "Lord, I called," 2nd Sunday of Lent Vespers on Sunday evening. *Lenten Triodion,* p. 331.

[a] This follows LXX; the *OSB* omits this phrase, following the *NKJV* Hebrew text here.

[b] *mē* expects "no" for an answer.

[c] *crime* is *aitía*; "crime; charge; accusation."

[d] Naíd in LXX.

III. "Murder most foul." *And Cain said to Abel, his brother, "Let us walk through the field."*[1] *And it happened while they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother and killed him.*

A. In Cain's pride, envy, and hatred, had he already killed his brother before he physically killed his brother? (Matt 5:21-22a).
   1. Cain invites his brother to join him in the field, the very place Cain gathered his offerings. Now, instead of sacrificing a lamb, Cain sacrifices his brother.

B. *BA&E*: Cain said to Abel, 'O brother, I very much wish you would come with me into the field, to enjoy yourself and to bless our fields and our flocks, for you are righteous, and I love you very much.' And Abel consented to go. Cain said, 'Go before me,' and Abel went ahead of him. Then Cain smote him with his staff, blow upon blow. Then Cain, the hard-hearted and cruel murderer, took a large stone and hit his brother upon his head, until his brains oozed out. Then Cain began to dig the earth to bury his brother, and he cast his brother into the pit he had dug and covered him with dirt. But the ground would not receive Abel but cast him out at once. Again, Cain buried him, and again, the ground cast him out; and this happened a third time as well.

C. *And the Lord God said to Cain, "Where is Abel, your brother? And he said, "I do not know. I am not (mē) my brother's keeper, am I?"*
   1. Cain's answer is flippant to God, showing his anger, as he lies: "I don't know" (with *ou* being a strong negative...could be translated as "I have no idea!")

   2. *mē* expects 'no' for an answer—I'm not supposed to shepherd a shepherd, am I? Cain's answer implies that 'keeping' someone is God's job (*cf* Num 6:24; and Ps. 120 (121):5, 7-8), so God should know where Abel is, and if he doesn't, then God is not doing his job! (He puts the blame on God, as did Adam!)
      a. St John the Almsgiver, Patriarch of Alexandria (+619) devoted all the wealth of his diocese to helping those whom he called 'my brethren, the poor,' for he said, 'they alone can really help us and bestow upon us the kingdom of heaven!'
      b. Prince Vladimir Monomachos (1113-1125) wrote, 'Above all things, do not forget the poor…give to the orphan, protect the widow, and do not permit the mighty to destroy anyone.'

D. God gives Cain a chance to confess: *What have you done?*
   1. God appeared to Cain in kindness, so that if he repented, the sin of murder that his fingers had committed might be effaced by the compunction on his lips. (St Ephraim).

   2. *BA&E*: When God said to Cain, 'Where is your brother?' God said it in mercy, to try and make him repent. For if Cain had repented at that time and said, 'O God, forgive me my sin and the murder of my brother,' God would have forgiven him his sin.

[1] This follows LXX; the *OSB* omits this phrase, following the *NKJV* Hebrew text here.

IV. Abel's blood cries out. *Your brother's blood cries out to me…you will be groaning and trembling on the earth.*

A. "In the blood is the life" (Deut 12:23a); "blood" (Heb = *dam*) related to "ground" (*adamah*). Although an animal had to be killed in order to provide a tunic of skin for Adam and Eve, now a brother is killed by a brother. Mankind was not given permission to kill a human being, because the life is in the blood, and only God has the right to take life. The blood of an animal must be poured upon the horns of the altar, the "life" of the animal given back to God.

1. The fathers teach that "the one who dies unjustly, because of an unjust death, goes where all the saints of God are...And the first above all of these was the righteous Abel. He was killed by Cain, not because he did anything to harm or grieve his brother, but because he honored God. However, his unjust death became a cause for God to honor him and to prepare the righteous Abel for a more glorious crown on account of his most unjust murder."[1]

B. Cain is now cursed: *you will work the ground and she will not continue to yield her strength to you,* so his "profession" as a farmer becomes even more difficult, because the earth herself will work against him.

V. Cain, the unrepentant. *And Cain said to the Lord God, "My crime[2] is too great for me to be forgiven!*

A. Instead of falling down and begging forgiveness from God, Cain, now being spiritually even more distant from God, cannot see God as he really is, a God willing to forgive, and Cain falsely believes that God cannot or will not forgive him.

1. *aitía*, "blame; crime; a reason for capital punishment;" usual word for *guilt* is *enochē*.
    a. In this passage in the MT = *chawoni* (עֲוֹנִי) means "my punishment." This same word is used in Ps. 37 (38):19 (18): "I will declare *chawoni* /my iniquity" [RSV]; in the LXX, the word is *anomian*, "lawlessness, iniquity, transgression." Also, in 3 Kgs (1 Kgs) 17:18: …have you come to bring *chawoni* /my sin to remembrance?" [RSV]; LXX = *adiki'as*, "unrighteousness, wrongdoing."[3]

2. In OT, Hebrew *asam* means "guilt," but points to the breach in relationships that sin causes, and in particular to the indebtedness that results…*asam* is a debt for which we must make amends…the NT has no word equivalent to *asam*…sins are called 'debts' in Matthew's text of the Lord's Prayer, but the idea of making restitution has vanished: the debts that others owe us must simply be written off, modeled on God's action toward us: we must forgive, as he forgives us. "[4]

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[1] Nikolaos P. Vassiliadis, *The Mystery of Death,* p.248.
[2] *crime* is *aitía*; "crime; charge; accusation."
[3] The *OSB* follows the *NKJ* Hebrew text here.
[4] biblestudytools.com/dictionary/guilt

3. Luke's text of Lord's Prayer reads, "forgive us our sins / *amarti'as*/ as we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted / *ophei'lonti* / to us."

VI. The Murderer now fears he will be murdered!

...and it will be that anyone who finds me will kill me." And the Lord GOD said to him, "Not so! Anyone who kills Cain will release seven acts of vengeance." And the Lord GOD placed a sign for Cain so that none would destroy him who found him.

A. Cain had no qualms about killing Abel; but now he lives in fear that he will be killed.

B. St Chrysostom sees Cain's "trembling" as the sign on Cain: "The sight of Cain's palsied limbs was a lesson for all he met…His trembling, his fear, the mental torment that never left him, his physical paralysis kept him, as it were, shackled. They kept him from leaping again to any other deed of bold folly…."
   1. According to a Jewish tradition, the signs God placed included: 1) God marked (branded?[5]) a letter on his Name on Cain's forehead indicating that God was with him; 2) God place a horn on Cain's forehead; and 3) [my favorite] God gave him a dog to be with him to protect him (*cf.* Tobit 11:4).[6]

C. Cain accused God of not doing his job, keeping Abel, but now, "God will be Abel's brother's keeper. God's mercy embraces the murderer!"[7]

VII. Away from God: *Then Cain went out from the face of God and lived in the land of Nod, opposite Eden.*

A. Cain not only physically distances himself away from God, but this is also a sign of his continual distancing himself away from God spiritually. "He now lives as a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, living with the burden of the unjust murder, and with the constant fear that he, too, would someday be murdered.[8]

B. There is nothing else about Cain and his descendants beyond chapter 4 in rest of Old Testament. Indeed, in Genesis 5:1-6, neither he nor Abel are mentioned in the genealogy of Adam and Eve, but Seth is the first one mentioned.

C. As Fr. Nikolay often reminds us, our relationship to God is never static; we are either moving toward God, or away from him. Generally, we go back and forth between these two, but for Cain, he decided to continue going away from God.

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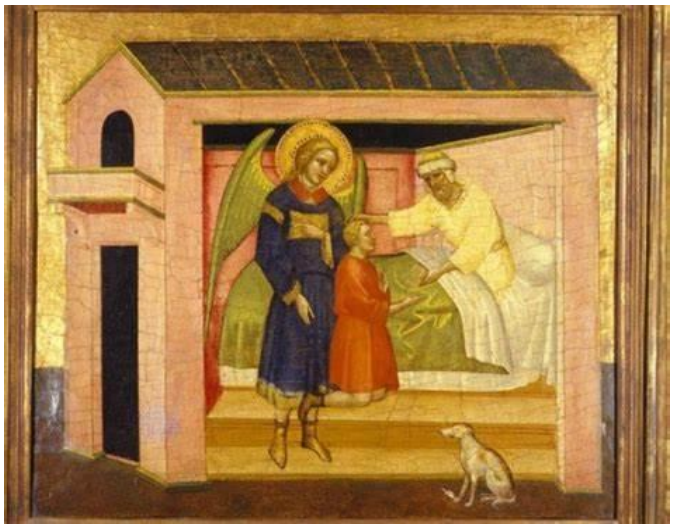
[5] *Cf*. Galatians 6:17, "...for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus branded (*stigmata*, "to burn in marks, to brand) on my body." *EOB* translation. Slaves were often branded with their owner's mark to indicate the owner, much like cattle are branded.

[6] The Vulgate actually has more verses about Tobit's dog: Tobit 6:1 reads, "And Tobias went forward, and the dog followed him..." and inserts after LXX 11:7, "Then the dog, which had been with them in the way, ran before, and coming as if he had brought the news, shewed his joy by his fawning and wagging his tail." [vulgate.org/ot/tobias_11.htm]

[7] *New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol I, p. 374.

[8] *Mystery of Death,* p. 331.



Tobit’s dog, Tobit 11:4