

Creation - The Creation of Human Beings & Life in Paradise

The Six Days of Creation - Genesis 1

❖ Methodology

❖ Patristic Consensus and the Phronema of the Church

❖ A fundamentally different enquiry than the Positivist Empirical Method but does not mean it is a strictly metaphorical account.

◆ St. Gregory the Sinaite says that there are 8 types of visions, two of which are of the Kingdom (the end) and of the 'composition of visible things' (Philokalia 4 "On Commandments and Dogmas"). Additionally, St. Isaac the Syrian describes seeing God create the cosmos (Homily 37, english edition). From these two types of visions we may infer that Fathers are describing by Divine Revelation that which is of the beginning or the source of creation.

❖ Genesis is not a modern History nor a story on equal footing with other "origin myths."

◆ "We are proposing to examine the structure of the world and to contemplate the whole universe, beginning, not from the wisdom of the world, but from what God taught His servant when He spoke to him in person and without riddles." (St. Basil, *Hexaemeron* 6.1)

❖ Our measurement and contemplation of them is not done "quantitatively but theologically." This means that they are not part of scientific inquiry and its methods, and further that we turn to the Fathers for the theological vision of the creative acts. The Fathers characterize them all as "sudden, instantaneous."

❖ All the 'laws of the world' are because of God's command given during the 'six days' (St. Basil, *Hexaemeron* 2.1, FC 46, pp 26-29)

❖ He [Moses] did not look forward to a late and leisurely creation of the world out of a concourse of atoms. (St. Ambrose, *Hexaemeron*, 1.2, FC 42, pp. 5,7)

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- ❖ Both a single act interpretation that holds the days as merely a literary device or as a really long epoch represented by 'a day' are rejected by the Fathers.
- ◆ These ideas come in the earliest presentation from Philo, Clement, and Origen - one is a Jewish philosopher and the other two are of questionable Christian teaching - later the idea of Genesis as a metaphor was developed by Blessed Augustine.
- ◆ Neither position is held by any other Father. Rather, the *Fathers' Consensus* holds 'immediate creation' in 6 successive 'creative acts.'
- ◆ St. Athanasius characterizes the six creative acts as coming from six singular commands, not one for each 'kind' mentioned. (*Four Discourses against the Arians*)
- ❖ The Days of Creations
 - ❖ Creation *Ex Nihilo*
 - ◆ There was nothing then God willed and, without any gap in time, the Son as Word of God caused and the Spirit as enlivener moved and there was creation.
 - ◆ "And God said..." to indicate The Father's Word i.e. Christ is indicated from the beginning (cf John 1:1ff; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16)
 - ◆ "The Father is the original cause of all things that exist, the Son is the creative cause, and the Spirit is the perfecting cause - such that [everything] subsists by the will of the Father, is brought into being by the Energy of the Son, and is perfected by the presence of the Spirit." (St. Basil the Great)
- ❖ The Creative Acts build one on the other
 - ❖ On Day 1 there is Nothing then there is Darkness and Light establishing Time / Rhythm
 - ❖ Then on Day 2 a "firmament" is created.
 - ◆ That is "a certain firm nature which is capable of supporting the fluid and unstable water." Which we should "imagine as some place which tends to separate the moisture, and lets the rare and filtered part pass through into the higher regions, but lets the coarse and earthly part drop below, so that, by the

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gradual reduction of the liquids, from the beginning to the end the same mild temperature may be preserved." (St. Basil the Great)

❖ Then on Day 3, there is a separation of waters from the land. This is a command for waters to have movement to gather. A command which the waters still follow. As well as the command for the plant life to come forth.

◆ Plant life exists before the Sun exists

- "(Moses) shows you that everything was accomplished before the creation of the sun, so that you might ascribe the ripening of the fruits not to it, but to the Creator of the universe." (St. John Chrysostom)
- "The adornment of the earth is older than the sun, that those who have been misled may cease worshipping the sun as the origin of life." (St. Basil)

❖ Then on Day 4 the creation of the Sun and Moon and stars

◆ Important to note that light already exists without the 'orb of the sun.' Light and the Sun/stars are not synonymous for the Fathers.

- "The sun did not yet exist [on the other days of creation], nor the moon, lest men might call the sun the first cause and father of light, and lest they who are ignorant of God might deem it the producer of what grows from the earth.... If the creation of light had preceded, why now is the sun in turn said to have been made to give light?... At the time [the First Day] the actual nature of light was introduced, but now this solar body has been made ready to be a vehicle for that first-created light." (St. Basil)

- The previously existing light becomes contained into sources ie stars.

❖ Then on Days 5 & 6 the creation of the animals and the command to "be fruitful and multiply" is given.

◆ The command is to the water and to the land to produce the plants and animals.

- "The soul of brute beasts did not emerge after having been hidden in the earth, but it was called into existence at the time of the command." (St. Basil)

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- "The earth at God's command immediately brought forth creeping things, beasts of the field as companions to the wild beasts; it brought forth as many beasts as were necessary for the service of him who, on that very day, transgressed the commandment of his Lord" (St. Ephraim)

◆ Spiritual meaning of 'Be fruitful and multiply' for human beings

- "To the animals deprived of reason He therefore said "increase" according to bodily development, in the sense of completing nature; but to us the "increase" is according to the interior man, in the line of progress that leads to God. This is what Paul did, stretching out towards that which is ahead, forgetting that which he leaves behind (Phil. 3:13). Such is the increase in spiritual things...."Multiply": This blessing concerns the Church. Let the Divine word not be limited to a single individual, but let the Gospel of salvation be preached throughout the earth. "Multiply": to whom is this order addressed? To those who give birth according to the Gospel...Thus, these words apply equally well to the animals deprived of reason, but they acquire a particular meaning when we have to do with the being who is in the image with which we have been honored. (St. Basil the Great)

"According to its kind"

- ❖ A principle that has direct relevance to the Doctrine of the Resurrection and against the "transmigration of souls" and changeable essences (transformation of kinds into new kinds).

◆ "The earth, when it heard, "Let it bring forth vegetation and the fruit trees," did not produce plants which it had hidden in it; nor did it send up to the surface the palm or the oak or the cypress which had been hidden somewhere down below in its womb. On the contrary, it is the Divine Word that is the origin of all things made. "Let the earth bring forth" **not, let it put forth what it has, but, let it acquire what it does not have**, since God is enduing it with the power of active force." (St. Basil)

- ❖ However, we do not need to be precise about the limits of the various "kinds" and further this does not map directly onto the modern biological concept of species or

some further part up the taxonomy ladder. The Father's have in mind mainly creatures who are capable of producing a fertile offspring.

◆ "There is nothing truer than this, that each plant either has seed or there exists in it some generative power. And this accounts for the expression "of its own kind." For the shoot of the reed is not productive of an olive tree, but from the reed comes another reed; and from seeds spring plants related to the seeds sown. Thus, **what was put forth by the earth in its first generation has been preserved until the present time, since the kinds persisted through constant reproduction... preserving the succession of the kinds through resemblance, until it reaches the very end.** It begets a horse as the successor of a horse, a lion of a lion, and an eagle of an eagle; and it continues to preserve each of the animals by uninterrupted successions until the consummation of the universe... as if established just recently, nature, ever fresh, moves along with time." (St. Basil)

◆ This even applies to the heavenly creatures:

- "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being; understood by the things that are made' (Rom. 1:20); and neither the light is as the night, nor the sun as the moon; nor the irrational as rational man; nor the Angels as the Thrones, nor the Thrones as the Authorities, yet **they are all creatures, but each of the things made according to its kind exists and remains in its own essence, as it was made.**" (St. Athanasius the Great, *Four Discourses against the Arians* 2.19, NPNF 2 4, pp, 358-59).

◆ St. Ambrose uses this principle of ability to kinds to reproduce themselves to talk about "unnatural unions."

- "Fish know nothing of union with alien species. They do not have unnatural betrothals such as are designedly brought about between animals of two different species as, for instance, the donkey and the mare, or again the female donkey and the horse, both being examples of unnatural union. Certainly there are cases in which nature suffers more in the nature of defilement rather than that of injury to the individual. **Man as an abettor of hybrid barrenness is responsible for this.** He considers a mongrel animal more valuable than one of

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a genuine species. You mix together alien species and you mingle diverse seed." (St. Ambrose of Milan)

◆ St. Ambrose relies on this principle of the preservation of kinds to give a homily on the parable of the wheat and the weeds/tares.

- "The Son of Man sowed one and the devil sowed the other. For that reason the nature of each is distinct, since the sowers are opposed. **Christ sows the Kingdom of God, whereas the devil sows sin. How, therefore, can this kingdom be of one and the same race as sin? "This is the Kingdom of God," He says, "as though a man should cast seed into the earth."** (Mark 4:26)."

❖ The Doctrine of the Resurrection tied to "same kinds"

◆ "Whereas we learn from Scripture in the account of the first Creation, that first the earth brought forth "the green herb" (as the narrative says), and that then from this plant seed was yielded, from which, when it was shed on the ground, the same form of the original plant again sprang up, the Apostle, (I Cor 15:35ff) **it is to be observed, declares that this very same thing happens in the resurrection also;** and so we learn from him the fact, not only that our humanity will be then changed into something nobler, but also **that what we have therein to expect is nothing else than that which was at the beginning.**" (St. Gregory of Nyssa)

❖ At the heart of the 'preservation of kinds' is the rejection of a single nature or soul that binds or runs through all things that is only changing its appearance in time or space.

◆ "Those who would have it that the soul migrates into natures divergent from each other seem to me to obliterate all natural distinctions; co-blend and confuse together, in every possible respect, the rational, the irrational, the sentient, and the insensate; **if, that is, all these are to pass into each other, with no distinct natural order secluding them from mutual transition.** To say that one and the same soul, on account of a particular environment of body, is at one time a rational and intellectual soul, and that then it is cavered along with the reptiles, or herds with the birds, or is a beast of burden, or a carnivorous one, or swims in

the deep; or even drops down to an insensate thing, so as to strike out roots or become a complete tree, producing buds on branches, and from those buds a flower, or a thorn, or a fruit edible or noxious - **to say this, is nothing short of making all things the same and believing that one single nature runs through all beings; that there is a connection between them which blends and confuses hopelessly all the marks by which one could be distinguished from another.**"
(St. Gregory of Nyssa)

The Creation of Man - Genesis 2

- ❖ Now the earth is ready for humanity, also created on the Sixth Day. All these creative acts have as their pinnacle Humanity. Creation was created so that humanity could see God's goodness and wisdom and to fulfill a particular purpose.
- ❖ God's response to Job's despair (38-39): "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding." (38:4) and Job's answer, "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further." (40:4-5) are a demonstration of how we are to view creation as God's awesome work.
- ❖ We can pair this with Psalm 8's characteristic phrase: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" to understand the Creator-creature distinction and humanity's place in the cosmos.
- ◆ "God created everything not only for our use, but also that we, seeing the great wealth of his creations, might be astonished at the might of the Creator and might understand that all this was created with wisdom and unutterable goodness for the honor of man, who was to appear." (St. John Chrysostom)
- ◆ "[God] not content to contemplate Himself, by a superabundance of goodness, He saw fit that there should be some things to benefit by and participate in this goodness." (St. John of Damascus)
 - The six creative acts are to show the ascent and orderliness of participation in the lower to the higher that arrives at the soul/spirit only contained in Human

Beings which allows humans to draw close to God and be His 'image and likeness'.

❖ Man's creation in Genesis 2 is not a separate day, but a zeroing in on the creation of humanity.

❖ The Creation of Man is here described ontologically, not chronologically. Adam is created instantaneously according to time as described in chapter 1 of Genesis and in chapter 2 the 'order' is to show the care with which God took to create Adam and Eve.

❖ The Godhead Deliberates

❖ "Here it says how God created. If the verse had simply said that God created, you could have believed that He created [man] as He did the beasts, the wild animals, the plants, the grass. This is why, to avoid your placing him in the class of wild animals, the Divine word has made known the particular art which God has used for you: God took of the "dust from the earth." (St. Basil)

❖ "When we hear in the account of Moses that God took dust from the earth and formed man, and we seek out the meaning of this utterance, we discover in it the special good disposition of God towards the human race. For the great Prophet notes, in his description of the creation, that God created all the other creatures by His word, while man He created with His own hands.... We do not say that the Divinity has hands ... but we affirm that every one of these expressions indicates a greater care on God's part for man than for the other creatures." (Bl. Theodoret of Cyrus)

❖ "Here, man is not yet, and there is a deliberation over man. God did not say, as for the other beings: "Let man be!" Recognize the dignity that belongs to you. He did not cause your origin by a commandment, but there was a consultation in God in order to know how to introduce into life this living being worthy of honor... Why did God not say, "Make," but "Let Us make man"? It is so that you might recognize the sovereignty. He desires that in bringing your attention on the Father, you would not deny the Son; He desires you to know that the Father has created by the Son

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and that the Son has created by the will of the Father, and that you should glorify the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Holy Spirit." (St. Basil)

❖ Man is the mixing or joining of the intellectual/spiritual/invisible world and the material/visible world.

◆ "Now the Creator-Word, determining to exhibit this, and to produce a single living being out of both (the invisible and the visible creation, I mean) fashions man; and taking a body from already existing matter, and placing in it a breath taken from Himself (which the Word knew to be an intelligent soul, and the image of God), as a sort of second world, great in littleness, He placed him on the earth, a new angel, a mingled worshipper, fully initiated into the visible creation, but only partially into the intellectual; king of all upon earth, but subject to the King above; earthly and heavenly; temporal and yet immortal; visible and yet intellectual; halfway between greatness and lowliness; in one person combining spirit and flesh; spirit because of the favor bestowed on him, flesh on account of the height to which he had been raised; the one that he might continue to live and glorify his benefactor, the other that he might suffer, and by suffering be put in remembrance, and be corrected if he became proud in his greatness, a living creature, trained here and then moved elsewhere; and to complete the mystery, deified by its inclination to God." (St. Gregory the Theologian)

◆ "Marking the order of the creation of man as stated by Moses, some say that the soul is second to the body in order of time, since God first took dust from the earth and formed man, and then animated the being thus formed by His breath. And by this argument they prove that the flesh is more noble than the soul, that which was previously formed [more noble] than that which was afterwards infused into it... Nor again are we in our doctrine to begin by making up man like a clay figure, and to say that the soul came into being for the sake of this; for surely in that case the intellectual nature would be shown to be less precious than the clay figure. But as man is one, **the being consisting of soul and body, we are to suppose that the beginning of his existence is one, common to both parts**, so that he should not be found to be antecedent and posterior to himself, as if the bodily element were first in point of time, and the other were a later addition... For as our nature is conceived as twofold, according to the apostolic

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teaching, made up of the visible man and the hidden man, **if the one came first and the other supervened, the power of Him that made us will be shown to be in some way imperfect, as not being completely sufficient for the whole task at once**, but dividing the work, and busying itself with each of the halves in turn.”
(St. Gregory of Nyssa)

❖ Dust and being formed by God's hands speak of our lowliness and exaltedness simultaneously. We are both at the same time! But we become more exalted when we come to God's breathing a soul into us.

◆ "The **soul is the breath of God**, and while being heavenly, it endures being mixed with what is of the dust. It is a light enclosed in a cave, but still it is divine and inextinguishable.... The Word spoke, and having taken a part of the newly created earth, with His immortal hands formed my image and imparted to it His life; because **He sent into it the Spirit, which is a ray of the invisible Divinity.**"
(St. Basil)

◆ "To show us that it was pleasing to God's love of mankind to make this thing created out of earth a participant of the rational nature of the soul, through which this living creature was manifest as excellent and perfect. "And He breathed into his face the breath of life": that is, **the 'in breathing' communicated to the one created out of earth the power of life, and thus the nature of the soul was formed.** Therefore Moses added: "And man became a living soul." ... What does "a living soul" mean? An active soul, which has the members of the body as the implements of its activities, submissive to its will." (St. John Chrysostom)

❖ This means that the "living soul" is one that controls the body and guides it. The inverse would be a 'dead soul' or one that is like the animals that only follows the animal drives and instincts; it has no will but only 'survival drives' as the animals that lack this breath of God do.

◆ "As brute life first entered into the world, and man, for the reason already mentioned, took something of their nature (I mean the mode of generation), he accordingly took at the same time a share of the other attributes contemplated in that nature; for the likeness of man to God is not found in anger, nor is pleasure a mark of the superior nature; cowardice also, and boldness, and the desire of gain,

and the dislike of loss, and all the like, are far removed from that stamp which indicates Divinity. These attributes, then, human nature took to itself from the side of the brutes." (St. Gregory of Nyssa)

❖ In the "image and likeness" of God

❖ Different Fathers have emphasized various aspects of mankind as the 'image of God' (dominion over the earth, reasoning, freedom, a three-part composition {body, soul, spirit/nous}). However, St. Gregory of Nyssa gathers them all into one phrase says it is the 'abundant gifts of God to man':

◆ "The perfect form of goodness is here to be seen by His both bringing man into being from nothing, and fully supplying him with all good gifts. But since the list of individual good gifts is a long one, **it is out of the question to apprehend it numerically.** The language of Scripture therefore expresses it concisely by a comprehensive phrase, in saying that **man was made "in the image of God"** For **this is the same as to say that He made human nature participant in all good;** for if the Deity is the fullness of good, and this is His image, then the image finds its resemblance to the Archetype in being filled with all good."

❖ However, the 'likeness of God' is a *potentiality* that may be matured.

◆ "In the first structure it is given us to be born in the image of God; **by free will there is formed in us the being in the likeness of God...** God has given the power for this; if He had created you also in the likeness, where would your privilege be? Why have you been crowned? And if the Creator had given you everything, how would the Kingdom of Heaven have opened for you? But **it is proper that one part is given you, while the other has been left incomplete: this is so that you might complete it yourself** and might be worthy of the reward which comes from God." (St. Basil the Great)

The Characteristics of Paradise

❖ A Spiritual & Material Reality, simultaneously

❖ St. Symeon the New Theologian teaches in Homily 45 that the Garden was a special physical place made after the seventh day, not as a 'unique creation' but formed by

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work, like that of a city planner or king separating portions of his kingdom for certain purposes.

◆“For after He had created everything else, and made man also, and rested on the seventh day from all the works which He had begun to do, He planted Paradise in Eden in the East as a royal dwelling, and led into it as king the man whom He had made.”

◆He made creation in seven days as an "image of the ages which were subsequently to pass in time" and He "planted" Paradise outside of the seven days (Genesis 2.8-9) to be as an "image of the future age" He concludes that Paradise was made on the eighth day because "it does not have any cyclical movement" while the seven days are part of the cycle of time.

❖"As you hear that, "God planted a garden eastward in Eden," the word "planted" understand of God in a God-befitting way, that is, that He commanded; but regarding the following words, believe that **Paradise precisely was created and in the very place where the Scripture has assigned it.**" (St. John Chrysostom)

- St. John Chrysostom is also adamant that the rivers flowing from the peak of paradise are actual rivers, and he tells us to "stop up our hearing against" those that say they are only an allegory or metaphor for something immaterial ie Origen.

❖Equated with the "third heaven" in St. Paul's Vision (2 Corinthians 12), but also a part of the "history of the earth"

◆"If Paradise, then, is of such a nature that Paul alone, or one like Paul, could scarcely see it while alive, and still was unable to remember whether he saw it in the body or out of the body, and moreover, heard words that he was forbidden to reveal, if this be true, how will it be possible for us to declare the position of Paradise which we have not been able to see and, even if we had succeeded in seeing it, we would be forbidden to share this information with others? And, again, since Paul shrank from exalting himself by reason of the sublimity of the revelation, how much more ought we to strive not to be too anxious to disclose

that which leads to danger by its very revelation! The subject of Paradise should not, therefore, be treated lightly." (St. Ambrose)

- ❖ A unique protected garden of which the plants combine material and spiritual.
 - ◆ "Eden is a place in which there was planted by God every kind of fragrant plant. It is neither completely incorruptible, nor entirely corruptible. Placed between corruption and incorruption, it is always both abundant in fruits and blossoming with flowers, both mature and immature. The mature trees and fruits are converted into fragrant earth which does not give off any odor of corruption, as do the trees of this world. This is from the abundance of the grace of sanctification which is constantly poured forth there." (St Gregory of Sinai)
 - ◆ St. Symeon the New Theologian echoes this, he says the substance of the trees and plants of paradise are "incorrupt" they "never spoiled and never ceased, but were always fresh and sweet and furnished for the first-created ones great satisfaction and pleasantness." Fruits to match the "incorruptible ones" who inhabited Paradise whose bodies "although material and yet spiritual" were placed there "as an immortal king over an incorrupt world, not only over Paradise, but also over the whole creation which was under the heavens." (Homily 45)
- ❖ Lives of Saints give testimony of visiting Paradise or the Garden. A primary example is St. Euphrosynos the Cook (Sept 11) taking an apple from Paradise and bringing it to others to eat.

Commands of God to Adam in Garden.

- ❖ Eve did not hear these commands of God, we assume she only hears of them secondhand through Adam on his authority.
- ❖ To Till and Work (Gen 2:15)
 - ❖ "To till." What was lacking in Paradise? And even if a tiller was needed, where was the plow? Where were the other implements of agriculture? The "tilling" [or "working"] of God consisted in tilling and keeping the commandment of God, remaining faithful to the commandment.... Just as to believe in Christ is the work of

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God (John 6:29), so also it was a work to believe the commandment that if he touched (the forbidden tree) he would die, and if he did not touch it, he would live. The work was the keeping of the spiritual words... "To till and to keep it," it is said. To keep it from whom? There were no thieves, no passersby, no one of evil intent. To keep from whom? To keep it for oneself; nor to lose it by transgressing the commandment; to keep Paradise for oneself, observing the commandment." (St. John Chrysostom)

❖ St. Nilus of Sinai, calls *prayer* 'the tilling of Paradise,' and the guarding against evil thoughts after prayer, ie *watchfulness*, he calls 'keeping.'

❖ "From these testimonies it is clear that God, having created man according to His image and likeness, conducted him into a Paradise of sweetness to **till the immortal gardens, that is, the most pure, exalted, and perfect Divine thoughts**, according to St. Gregory the Theologian. And this means nothing else than that he remained, as being **pure in soul and heart, in contemplative, grace-filled prayer, sacredly working in the mind alone, that is, in the sweetest vision of God, and that he manfully preserved this, it being the work of Paradise**, as the apple of his eye, lest it ever decrease in his soul and heart. Wherefore, great is the glory of sacred and Divine mental prayer, whose verge and summit, that is, beginning and perfection, were given to man by God in Paradise, and so it is from there that it has its beginning." (St. Paisius Velichkovsky)

❖ Trees from which to eat and to not eat (Gen 2:16-17)

❖ "Everywhere in Paradise every kind of tree blossoms, everywhere they are abundant in fruit; only in the center are there **two trees as an object of battle and exercise**." (St. John Chrysostom)

❖ Tree of Knowledge is given to partake of in the proper time, only after the proper spiritual maturity is reached.

◆ "The tree of knowledge itself was good, and its fruit was good. For it was not the tree, as some think, but the disobedience, which had death in it. For there was nothing else in the fruit than only knowledge, but knowledge is good when one uses it discretely. But Adam, being yet an infant in age, was on this account as yet

unable to receive knowledge worthily." (St. Theophilus of Antioch, *Letter to Autolytus* 1.25, ANF 2)

◆ "[God gave] a Law, as a material for his free will to act upon. This law was a commandment as to what plants he might partake of, and which one he might not touch. This latter was the tree of knowledge; **not, however, because it was evil from the beginning when planted; nor was it forbidden because God grudged it to us**, let not the enemies of God wag their tongues in that direction, or imitate the serpent. But it would have been good if partaken of at the proper time; **for the tree was, according to my view, Contemplation, upon which it is only safe for those who have reached maturity of habit to enter**, but which is not good for those who are still somewhat simple and greedy; just as neither is solid food good for those who are yet tender and have need of milk." (St. Gregory the Theologian)

◆ "The **tree of knowledge of good and evil is the power of discernment by multiple vision, and this is the complete knowing of one's own nature**. Of itself it manifests the magnificence of the Creator and it is good for them that are full-grown and have walked in the contemplation of God - for them that have no fear of changing, because **in the course of time they have acquired a certain habit of such contemplation, It is not good, however, for such as are still young and are more greedy in their appetites**, who, because of the uncertainty of their perseverance in the true good and because of their nor yet being solidly established in their application to the only good, are naturally inclined to be **drawn away and distracted by their solicitude for their own bodies**." (St. John of Damascus)

❖ Two ways to gain Knowledge of Good and Evil - disobedience and observation

❖ Fr. Seraphim Rose: "Everyone, in order to become a mature Christian and to be established in the way of doing good, has to know about evil. **He has to know what it is that he has chosen not to do. And this knowledge can be gained without falling into great sins, if you are willing to take the examples of others.** If you are able to see, almost as if it is your own experience, when someone else makes a tremendous sin, and if you are able to see the result of that sin, then you

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can make that part of your experience without falling into sin.

Evidently, that is what Adam could have done. If he had resisted this temptation, he would have seen that it was a temptation, that everything was not perfect, and that there was someone out to get him. Then if a second temptation had come, he would have seen that the serpent (or whatever else was used by the devil) was out to make him fall. He would have begun to realize that there really is such a thing as evil: an evil will that makes him want to lose his Paradise. Through this he could have attained that knowledge of evil and eventually tasted of that tree.

The tree itself represents the knowledge of evil, since tasting of it meant disobeying the commandment. Adam learned about evil through his disobedience. He chose the way of sin and thereby discovered in bitter experience what it meant to be evil, and then to repent of that evil and come back to goodness.