

The Fall and the Composition of Humanity

Creation of Eve

❖ Adam names the animals (Gen 2:18-20)

❖ "The words "He brought them to Adam" show the wisdom of Adam, and the peace which existed between the animals and man before man transgressed the commandment. For they came together before man as before a shepherd filled with love; without fear, according to kinds and types, they passed before him in flocks, neither fearing him nor trembling before each other.... **It is not impossible for a man to discover a few names and keep them in his memory. But it surpasses the power of human nature, and is difficult for him, to discover in a single hour thousands of names and not to give the last of those named the names of the first.... This is the work of God, and if it was done by man, it was given him by God.**" (St. Ephraim the Syrian)

❖ But there is none that would be a suitable 'helpmeet' for Adam in the following the commands of God.

❖ Male and Female (Gen 2:21-24)

❖ The Creation of Eve

◆ Eve along with Adam is formed after the image of God as a relation to the material and spiritual existence. The creation of humanity as in the "image and likeness of God" has to do with our common nature, rather than our sexual differentiation; the two sexes are an expression of a common nature.

◆ This account in Genesis 2 of the Creation of Man is about the composition of Humanity and Human beings. It is narrative that holds up both our common singular nature and our division by sex/ gender at the same time.

- "Woman was made out of the rib of Adam. She was not made of the same earth with which he was formed, **in order that we might realize that the physical nature of both man and woman is identical and that there was one source for the propagation of the human race.** For that reason, neither was man created together with a woman, nor were two men and two women created at the

beginning, but first a man and after that a woman. God willed it that human nature be established as one." (St. Ambrose)

- "Taking a certain small part from an already prepared creation, from this part He made a whole living being. What power does the Highest Artist, God, have to produce from this small part the composition of so many members, to arrange so many organs of sense and form a whole, perfect and complete being which could converse and, **because of its oneness of nature, furnish the man great consolation!**" (St. John Chrysostom)

❖ Naming the Woman

◆ "This now": that is, the one who has come to me after the animals is not such as they; they came from the earth, but she is "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Adam said this either in a prophetic way or, as noted above, according to his vision in sleep. And just as on this day all the animals received from Adam their names according to their kinds, so **also the bone, made into a woman, he called not by her proper name, Eve, but by the name of woman, the name belonging to the whole kind.**" (St. Ephraim)

◆ St. John Chrysostom believes that verse 24 is Adam's words as a prophecy of marriage and not a commentary by the Author:

- "Is it not clear that, since before the transgression he was a participant of the grace of prophecy, he saw all this with his spiritual eyes?"
 - That is he somehow saw how the woman was made despite being asleep and saw what her purpose and relation to him is.

❖ Their Bodies (Gen 2:25)

❖ Naked and Unashamed

- ◆ "They were not ashamed because they were clothed with glory." (St. Ephraim)
- ◆ "God wanted us to be dispassionate like that [nude but unmoved bodily by the lack of clothing], for that is passionlessness to the highest degree." (St. John of Damascus)

❖ Immortal and Incorruptible State [Potentially]

- ◆ "The first man [was] not subject to either cold or heat" (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* 45)
- ◆ St. Symeon the New Theologian stated that it was only after the fall that Adam and Eve "began ... to be cold and shiver" (*Catechetical Discourses* 5.7, trans. C. J. de Catanzaro, p. 97)
- ◆ St. Seraphim of Sarov has a robust teaching:
 - "Adam was created to such an extent immune to the action of every one of the elements created by God, that neither could water drown him, nor fire burn him, nor could the earth swallow him up in its abysses, nor could the air harm him by its action in any way whatsoever. Everything was subject to him as the beloved of God, as the king and lord of creation, and everything looked up to him, as the perfect crown of God's creatures. Adam was made so wise by this breath of life which was breathed into his face from the creative lips of God, the Creator and Ruler of all, that there never has been a man on earth wiser or more intelligent than he, and it is hardly likely that there ever will be. When the Lord commanded him to give names to all the creatures, he gave every creature a name which completely expressed all the qualities, powers and properties given it by God at its creation. Owing to this very gift of the supernatural grace of God which was infused into him by the breath of life, Adam could see and understand the Lord walking in Paradise, and comprehend His words, and the conversation of the holy Angels, and the language of all beasts, birds, and reptiles and all that is now hidden from us fallen and sinful creatures, but was so clear to Adam before his fall. To Eve also the Lord God gave the same wisdom, strength, and unlimited power, and all the other good and holy qualities."
- ◆ St. Dorotheos of Gaza in *Spiritual Instructions* characterizes their state before Fall this way: "In the beginning, when God created man, He placed him in Paradise and adorned him with every virtue, giving him the commandment not to taste of the tree which was in the midst of Paradise. And thus he remained there in the enjoyment of Paradise: in prayer, in vision, in every glory and honor, having sound senses and being in the same natural condition in which he was created, For God created man according to His own image, that is, immortal, master of

himself, and adorned with every virtue. But when he transgressed the commandment, eating the fruit of the tree of which God had commanded him not to taste, then he was banished from Paradise, fell away from the natural condition, and **fell into a condition against nature**, and then he remained in sin, in love of glory, in love of the enjoyments of this age, and of other passions, and he was mastered by them, for **he became himself their slave through the transgression.**"

◆ St. Symeon the New Theologian (Homily 2) teaches us **one additional very important aspect.**

- As a creature man is changeable, "although he had the means and the possibility, with; the help of God not to be subject to alteration and change."
- In this state no law was necessary to do good it was naturally so. The command not to eat of the 'one tree' was to teach Adam that he was changeable and the warning reinforced this pedagogy.

◆ Our Resurrected Bodies will be just like this, as they were before the Fall in the Garden

- "The **resurrection promises** us nothing else than **the restoration of the fallen to their ancient state**; for the grace we look for is a certain **return to the first life, bringing back again to Paradise him who was cast out from it**. If then, the life of those restored is closely related to that of the angels, it is clear that the life before the transgression was a kind of angelic life, and hence also our return to the ancient condition of life is compared to the angels." (St. Gregory of Nyssa)

❖ Adam and Eve were fully adults physically and in these glorified state, but they were not spiritually mature.

♣ "If they [Adam and Eve] were children, as those without say, [Moses] would not have said they "were both naked, and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2:25); nor would he have said, "Adam knew Eve his wife" (Gen. 4:1), if they had not been young adults. The names Adam bestowed should be sufficient to convince us of [the level of] his wisdom. And the fact that [Moses] said he will till and keep it (Gen. 2:15) should

make known to us Adam's strength, The law that was set for them testifies to their full maturity, and their transgression of the commandment should bear witness to their arrogance." (St. Ephraim the Syrian)

The Fall (Gen 3)

❖ The Temptation and the Tempter

❖ "Many ask: How did the serpent speak? With a human voice, or with a serpent's hissing, and how did Eve understand? Before the transgression Adam was filled with wisdom, understanding, and the gift of prophecy... The devil noticed both the wisdom of the serpent and Adam's opinion of it, because the latter considered the serpent wise. And so he spoke through it, so that Adam might think that the serpent, being wise, was able to mimic the human voice also." (St. John Chrysostom)

❖ "The serpent was accustomed to man, and approached him more readily than it did other living creatures, and held intercourse with him with delightful motions. And hence it was through it that the devil, the prince of evil, made his most wicked suggestion to our first parents" (St. John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith* 2.10)

❖ Why tempt them?

◆ "Through the envy of the devil death came into the world? (Wisdom 2:24). The cause of envy was the happiness of man placed in Paradise, because the devil could not brook the favors received by man. His envy was aroused because man, though formed in slime, was chosen to be an inhabitant of Paradise. The devil began to reflect that man was an inferior creature, yet had hopes of an eternal life, whereas he, a creature of superior nature, had fallen and had become part of this mundane existence." (St. Ambrose)

◆ Also, Theodoret of Cyrus (not a saint) in *Questions on Genesis* (32, LEC 1, pp. 72-73) Answers the question of how and why the Devil wanted to tempt Adam and Eve in a similar way.

- ❖ Eve was the target of the demonic attack because she only heard the command through Adam and not directly from God, it was easier to twist the command in her memory and subvert the hierarchy God established.
- ❖ "[The devil] aimed to circumvent Adam by means of the woman. He did not accost the man who had in his presence received the heavenly command. He accosted her who had learned of it from her husband and who had not received from God the command which was to be observed. There is no statement that God spoke to the woman. We know that He spoke to Adam. Hence we must conclude that the command was communicated through Adam to the woman." (St. Ambrose)
- ❖ St. Ephraim adds that part of Eve's sin lay in her trying to usurp Adam's headship and 'seniority': "She hastened to eat before her husband that she might become head over her head, that she might become the one to give command to that one by whom she was to be commanded and that she might be older in divinity than the one who was older than she in humanity." (*Commentary on Genesis 2.20*)
- ❖ The success of the attack was because the appeal was to **a weak link in the desire of humanity, all humanity for both ate the fruit, to want to achieve the promise on their own without God.**
- ❖ "The tempting word would not have led into sin those who were tempted if the tempter had not been guided by their own desire. Even if the tempter had not come, the tree itself by its beauty would have led their desire into battle. Although the first ancestors sought an excuse for themselves in the counsel of the serpent, they were harmed more by their own desire than by the counsel of the serpent." (St. Ephraim)
- ❖ What was the Sin? Can we name it?
 - ❖ Adam's sin in breaking the command is Pride, ingratitude and apostasy from God. There was no bodily concern or reason for the sin, it was a turn from trusting God and His command and His Providence.
 - ❖ Now post-*Fall*, we sin differently since we have an abundance of needs and concerns, choosing a sinful action to abate the 'chastisements' pronounced by God.

- “We do not patiently bear the temporal chastisements of God and do not give thanks for them but becoming presumptuous as if we were enemies of God we go in a certain sense against that Divine decree that states in the sweat of thy face thou shall eat thy bread (Gen. 3:19), and we exert all our strength so as to find repose and we do not find it because there is no opportunity for us to escape from labors and sweats, and from this being yoked to needs, no matter what we might do. (St. Symeon the New Theologian Homily 10)
- If we are grateful for these and we confess that we are "justly condemned to them for the ancestral sin" we will have repose from them in death "given by God," then enjoy the resurrection of the new Adam, Jesus Christ. This is so because of the uniting of God to human nature that gives to humanity the Holy Trinity.

◆ How *the Fall* manifests in each of us.

- “When therefore man isn’t preoccupied in making another distinction, except that between the bodily sensation of pleasure and pain, he disobeys the divine command. He eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He has, in other words, **the irrationality of feeling as the only norm of discernment in the service of conserving the body.** And by it **he is totally captured by pleasure, as that which is good, and avoids pain, as that which is evil.**” (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Questions to Thalassios*, 43 PG 90.412-13)
- Man’s whole attention and measurement of life becomes seeking pleasure, comfort and calls pain and discomfort evil.

❖ Immediate Result of the Disobedience (Gen 3:8)

- ❖ Awareness of their physical nakedness was a result of their spiritual vision being lowered which is the same as losing God's grace that clothed them, their vision became “passionate.”
- ◆ "Being deprived of the grace from on high for the transgression of the commandment, they saw also their physical nakedness, so that from the shame that took hold of them they might understand into what an abyss they had been cast by the transgression of the Masters commandment... When you hear, "their

eyes were opened," understand this to mean that (God) gave them to feel their nakedness and the loss of the glory which they had enjoyed before the eating... Do you see that the word "opened" refers not to the bodily eyes, but to mental vision?" (St. John Chrysostom)

- ❖ A second result of the disobedience, the closeness of God or His presence is no longer felt purely as a positive thing. Rather, they try to hide from God. However, God is long-suffering and extends chances for repentance to Adam and Eve.
- ◆ "Pay heed to the Lord's love of mankind and His extreme lack of ill will. He could, without even vouchsafing a reply to the one who had performed such a sin, have immediately subjected him to the punishment which He had already decreed beforehand for the transgression; but He is long-suffering, delays, asks and listens to the answer, and again asks, as if evoking the guilty one to justify himself in order that when the matter had been revealed He might show him His love of mankind, even after such a transgression." (St. John Chrysostom)
- ❖ God seeks them out and a dialog and an argument with God ensue (Gen 3:9-13)
 - ❖ Adam and Eve were given the chance to seek forgiveness and did not. They were given this chance because he was deceived into apostasy by the serpent.
- ❖ St. Ambrose teaches that the "questions" God asks is like God is saying, "a reproof."
 - ❖ "From what condition of goodness, beatitude, and grace, He means to say, have you fallen into this state of misery? You have forsaken eternal life. You have entombed yourself in the ways of sin and death."
 - ❖ "[God] asks about this not because He did not know: He knew, and knew perfectly; but in order to show His love of mankind He condescends to their weakness and calls them to confess their sin." (St. John Chrysostom)
- ❖ Instead of taking the chance to repent, Adam then Eve make excuses and avoid the truth of their actions.
 - ❖ He begins with Adam as the head then asks Eve, each claims they are not responsible and blames another. Adam blames Eve, Eve blames the snake. Since there is no repentance and honest responsibility, God 'curses' or chastises these three.

- ❖ "If our first ancestors had desired to repent even after the transgression of the commandment, then, even though they would not have restored to themselves what they had before the transgression of the commandment, at least they would have been delivered from the curses that were uttered to the earth and to themselves." (St. Ephraim the Syrian)
- ❖ "After the fall, (God) gave (Adam) the opportunity to repent and be pardoned, but his neck remained unbending. For (God) came and said to him: "Adam, where art thou?" That is, from what glory into what shame have you come? And then, when He asked him why he sinned, why he transgressed, He prepared him especially so that he might say: "Forgive me.?" But there was no humility! Where was the word "forgive?" There was no repentance, but the complete opposite. For he contradicted and retorted: "The woman whom Thou gavest me, deceived me." He did not say, "My wife deceived me," but "the woman whom Thou gavest me," as if to say: "this misfortune which Thou hast brought on my head." For thus it always is, brethren: When a man does not wish to reproach himself, he does not hesitate to accuse God Himself. Then (God) came to the woman and said to her: "And why did you not keep the commandment" As it were, He especially hinted to her: At least you say "forgive," so your soul might be humbled and you might be pardoned. But again He (did not hear) the word "forgive." For she also replied: "The serpent beguiled me," as if to say: "The serpent sinned, and what is that to me?" What are you doing, wretched ones? Repent, acknowledge your sin, have pity on your nakedness. But neither of them wished to accuse himself; neither had the least humility. And so you see now clearly to what our state has come, into what great misfortunes we have been led by the fact that we justify ourselves, that we hold to our own will and follow ourselves." (St. Dorotheos of Gaza)
- ❖ Genesis 2:17 is a declaration of the death of the soul if disobedient. Restoration could be possible if acknowledged, but this did not happen so in Genesis 3:19 God gives the chastisement for lacking repentance.
 - ◆ "Know from this that if they had repented, they would not have been banished from Paradise and condemned to return to the earth form which they had been taken." (St. Symeon the New Theologian Homily 66)

The Curses

- ❖ The curses parallel the earlier commands and follows the reverse order of the 'blaming.' Everything that they experienced that was once spiritual and immortal now becomes material and intensive physical work.
- ❖ "In their expulsion from [the Garden of Eden], we can notice three divine ordinations: "be fruitful and multiply" (1:28), "I have given you... food" (29), "the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (2:15). The same three acts—procreation (marriage), eating, and labor were corrupted by the original sin and became curses. (*There Is No Sex in the Church!* p. 17, Fr. Sergei Sveshnikov)
- ❖ The Snake (Gen 3:14-15)
 - ❖ Christ is the fulfillment of the prophecy and curse given to the serpent, which spiritually also relates to the Devil.
 - ❖ "He [Christ] has therefore, in His work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam, and trampled upon his head, as you can perceive in Genesis that God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; He shall be on guard for thy head, and thou shalt be on guard for His heel." For from that time, He Who should be born of a woman, [namely] from the Virgin, after the likeness of Adam, was preached as keeping watch for the head of the serpent. This is the seed of which The Apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians, that the law of works was established "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19). This fact is exhibited in a still clearer light in the same Epistle, where he thus speaks: "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). For indeed the enemy would not have been fairly vanquished, unless it had been a man [born] of a woman who conquered him. For it was by means of a woman that he got the advantage over man at first, setting himself up as man's opponent (St. Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against Heresies*, 5.21.1)"

◆"Since Eve in Paradise fell into the sin of disobedience while still a virgin, the obedience of grace came in its turn through the Virgin, when she was told of the descent from heaven of Christ's incarnation, and life immortal. For in Paradise God tells the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." But there is no example of a woman's seed, unless, as the obscure saying suggests, the "enmity" is taken to mean Eve's enmity towards the progeny of the snake itself, and of the devil who dwelt in the snake, and his envy. And in fact, the whole cannot have its complete fulfillment in Eve. But it will truly be fulfilled in the holy Seed, the elect Seed, the unique Seed, the Seed which originated from Mary alone, and not from union with a man. For He came to "destroy" the "crooked dragon serpent that flees" (cf. Ts. 27:1, LXX)... And so the Only Begotten came from a woman for the destruction of the serpent, that is, of heresy, corruption and deceit, imposture and iniquity." (St. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 78.18-19, GCS 37.469, trans. Frank Williams, vol. 2, pg. 61)

❖ To Eve/Woman (Gen 3:15-16; 20)

❖ Notice Eve receives a prophecy that one of her children will crush or bruise the serpent, albeit this will be painful, as well as a 'chastisement.'

◆ "[Eve's seed] shall bruise thy [the snake's] head, and thou shalt bruise his [Eve's male son] heel."

◆ Eve is also finally named "Mother of all living" by Adam. Before she was named after the sexual differentiation and now for the role she is to play as a mother.

- This hints toward our later topic of sexuality by its placement after *the Fall*.
- Also, note that this act parallels Genesis 2:20 now all the creatures of God have names. Eve has an additional 'name' She is called 'woman' for her sexual differentiation and Eve for her role as *the* mother.

❖ "The abundance of good things brought you to such great ingratitude, therefore, so that you might not be given over to yet greater self-will, I am laying upon you a bridle, and I condemn you to sorrow and groaning. I shall arrange that your giving birth to children, a source of great consolation, will begin with sorrow, so that in

daily grief and sorrow in giving birth you might have a constant reminder of how great was this sin and disobedience... At first I created you equal in honor (to your husband) and wished that, being of one dignity with him, you might have communion in everything with him; and I entrusted to you, as to your husband, authority over all creatures. But since you did not make fitting use of the equality in honor, for this I am subjecting you to your husband.... I subject you to him and proclaim him your lord, so that you might acknowledge his authority; since you are unable to lead, therefore, learn to be a good subject." (St. John Chrysostom)

◆ Sexual difference and roles, especially in marriage and procreation, are part of the fallen state, but they also become a means redemption.

❖ To Adam/Man (Gen 3:17-19)

❖ "Thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." See how after his [Adam's] disobedience everything was not as it had been before in his life! [God] says, "I, bringing you into this world, wanted you to live without afflictions, without labors, without cares, without sorrows; to be in contentment and prosperity and not be subject to bodily needs, but to be a stranger to all this and enjoy perfect freedom. But since such freedom was not of benefit to you, I will curse the earth so that henceforth it will not be as it was formerly, giving forth fruit without sowing and cultivation, but will do so only with great labor, exertion and cares. I will subject you to constant afflictions and sorrows, and force you to do everything with exhausting efforts, that these tormenting labors might be for you a constant lesson to behave modestly and know your own." (St. John Chrysostom)

❖ All of creation now is under this new state of corruption and travail "groaning" to teach humanity the lesson of humility and the need to work (Romans 8:19-22).

❖ "Adam was placed as lord and king of all the creatures... captivity, there was taken captive together with him the creation which served him and submitted to him, because through him death came to reign over every soul." (St. Macarius the Great)

❖ "Just as the creation became corruptible when your body became corruptible, so also when your body will be incorrupt, the creation also will follow after it and become corresponding to it." (St. John Chrysostom)

❖ "The decree of God, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," just like everything else laid upon mankind after the fall, will be in effect until the end of the age. But by God's mercy, through the power of the extraordinary sacrifice of Christ, in the future age it will no longer have any effect, when the general resurrection will occur, which resurrection could not possibly occur unless the Son of God Himself had risen from the dead, Who had died for the abolition of the above-mentioned decree and for the resurrection of the entire human nature." (St. Symeon the New Theologian)

❖ The Coats of Skin (Gen 3:21)

❖ Not the giving of bodies, ie a gnostic interpretation, but changing their nature into mortal, corruptible, and vulnerable bodies, so now all die regardless of personal sin or not. It is also a fashioning of a physical covering for their now self-evident nakedness and vulnerability.

❖ Many ways of seeing the coats of skin.

◆ St. Gregory of Nyssa in *On Virginity*, interprets the "coats (or garments) of skins" in a literal sense: "And after that [the fall], they covered themselves with the skins of dead animals" (NPNF 2 -5, p. 358). In *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, he interprets them in a figurative sense, associating them with "such accretions [as] sexual intercourse, conception, parturition, impurities, suckling, feeding, evacuation, gradual growth to full size, prime of life, old age, disease, and death" (p. 465). In *On Those Who Have Fallen Asleep*, he relates the "garments of skin" to the passions: "The garments of skin have all the properties belonging to an irrational nature: pleasure, anger, gluttony, greed, and similar tendencies which allow man to choose between virtue and evil" (GNO 9.55, trans. Richard McCambly). Finally, in *Catechetical Oration 8*, he associates the "garments" specifically with physical mortality (NPNF 2-5).

❖ "When he [Adam] sinned, and hence was going to die, he received garments of skins, which were from dead animals, and which were a symbol of the mortality that through sin was added to him" (St. Athanasius, *On the Passion and Crucifixion of the Lord*, PG 28.2214).

❖ Cast out of Paradise (Gen 3:22-24)

❖ "If Adam had rashly eaten from the one tree he was commanded not to eat from, how much faster would he hasten to the one about which he had not been so commanded? But it was now decreed that they should live in toil, in sweat, in pains, and in pangs. Therefore, lest (Adam and Eve), having eaten of this tree, live forever and remain in eternal lives of suffering, [God] forbade them to eat, while they were clothed with a curse, that which He had been prepared to give them before they incurred the curse and when they were still clothed with glory. [God did this] lest this life-giving gift that they would receive through the tree of life become misery, and thus bring worse evil upon them than what they had already obtained from the tree of knowledge." (St. Ephraim, *Commentary on Genesis* 2.35.1-2)

❖ We are all Adam

❖ "Each of us is Adam, that is, a corruptible and mortal man, not by reason of our own sin, but by reason of the disobedience of our first ancestor Adam, from whose seed we come; so each of us is of Christ, immortal and incorrupt, not for the sake of our own virtues, but for the sake of obedience of the second Adam, Who is Christ our Lord who came down from Heaven; we become bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. ...

Every man, from the first day of his birth (from the moment of his conception), is already subject to corruption and death, and there is required a great and Divine power so as to recreate him for incorruption and immortality. (St. Symeon the New Theologian, Homily 38)