

CREATION

The story of the creation as it appears in the book of Genesis is not intended to be a complete record of what happened from the beginning of the world but is a selective history telling only the minimum of facts needed to understand the Theology of Salvation.

In the beginning, God created heaven and the earth. This is to be understood as God creating the universe out of nothing i.e. there was no pre existing material before the creation.

God created the universe without effort. The universe and all that it contained was created by God's personal will expressed in His Word, let there be... This Creator Word is the Logos, the Word of God "by Whom Thou hast created every thing visible and invisible" as we say in the Liturgy.

At first the world was without shape, empty and dark.

God then started by creating light that remedied the darkness that existed at first.

Then God separated the water into two parts, one on earth and the other above the firmament. This firmament was a dome or a canopy of thick cloud that covered the whole earth before the deluge (flood). This is evident from the fact that in the beginning there was no rain on earth (Gen 2:5). This canopy produced a green house effect that kept the earth in a tropical climate. At the time of the flood, this "water above the heaven" came down as rain that continued for 40 days and 40 nights.

After this separation of waters, God caused the water that is below the heaven to be organized into seas so that dry land may appear. This remedied the earlier condition of the earth being without form or shape.

The next step in the process of creation was to remedy the condition of the earth being void or empty, that is when God created plants and vegetations, and later, animals to populate the earth.

All these steps of the creation were done by the will of God expressed in His Word or Logos.

The Holy Spirit "the life giver" and the third person of the Holy Trinity participated in the process of creation as evident from Gen. 1:2 where we are told that "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters".

The creation of the sun on day 4 of the creation presents a question, how were the 3 days before the sun calculated? The answer is that a day of the creation needs not be understood as 24 hours for "one day is with the Lord a thousand years" (2Pet 3:8).

The creation of man:

Now, a new stage in the process of creation is opened as is evident from the verse, "and God said let us create man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth". (Gen 1:26).

The word "let us" implies consultation among the three persons of the Holy Trinity about this important step.

The word "in our own image after our own likeness" does not mean that man will look physically like God because how can man look like God Who has no body like ours? The meaning of this verse becomes evident from the next verse ..and let them have dominion .. God created man in the image of His authority. God who has authority over the whole universe, out of His love to mankind gave man authority over all the earth. Saint Gregory the Theologian emphasizes this in his Liturgy where he says: "Thou hast wrought in me the image of Thine authority". We find further evidence for this in the following verse: "and God created man in His own image . in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them. This means that both male and female were

created equal having the same God-given authority, rather than the same physical likeness of God, for how can both man and woman be like God?

And God blessed them and said: be fruitful i.e. gave them permission to procreate.

Notice that man was created vegetarian (Gen 1:29).

Chapter 2 of Genesis gives a more detailed account of the creation of man. From dust was man formed then God breathed into his nose the breath of life. This made man a very special creature because God did this only to man. So, man's soul, being a breath of God became immortal.

Creation of Eve:

Eve was formed out of Adam, and the Lord decreed that she shall be a "help meet for him" that is someone to help him who is equal to him. God created Eve of Adam and not out of the dust and this serves two purposes. The first is what we just said that she will be equal to him and not like the other creatures on whom Adam was given dominion.

The other purpose was shown in God's decree: "therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be one flesh". This was the rule of monogamy that God has decreed since the beginning one man and one woman being united in marriage to become one flesh. For in marriage, Eve which was created as part of the flesh of Adam is joined to him so they become one flesh once more.

Both Adam and Eve were in a state of innocence, they were naked but not ashamed.

The fall:

God created man in His image i.e. gave him authority over all the earth, but demanded that man would acknowledge God's authority over him and never to question this. This is evident from God's commandment to man not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The serpent comes into the picture being driven by the devil. It goes first to the woman and tries to deceive her by first distorting God's command. "Is it true that God said that you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Eve corrects this distortion, but adds another distortion of her own. She tells the serpent that only one tree is forbidden, but adds that we cannot even touch it!. So the fall starts with a lie. The serpent then explains to Eve that knowing good and evil makes one equal with God i.e. makes one morally autonomous, independent of God to decide for himself what is good and what is bad. This was the real sin, man's rejection of God's authority over him, the mutiny of the creature against the Creator.

Results of the fall:

Man broke the commandment of God and had to be punished. The first result of sin is shame, man becomes ashamed of seeing his wife, he becomes ashamed of seeing or rather being seen of God, so he hides from God. Man loses his friendship with God.

One sin leads to another, for when God asks him about what he had done, instead of confessing his sin he blames God by saying the woman that You made for me made me do it!

Adam was told that from now on he will have to toil for his bread. From now on he will eat his bread in sorrow. So man started to acquire the Psychological problems of sorrow, anxiety and depression which were unknown to him before he clamored to know good and evil.

Eve was punished by the pains of childbirth. She was also socially demoted to a subservient position to man: "and he shall rule over you". Eve was created as Adam's equal but through sin she now loses her equality and has to take a second place both socially and economically. This was the

case until Christ came and paid the wages of man's sin and restored the woman to equality with man.

God also said that he will put enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman. As a result of this man now expects his life to be a constant struggle against evil. Every moment of his life he will have to contend with his old enemy, the serpent (Satan).

With the bad news came the good news of salvation, a glimpse of hope emerges from this bleak situation when God promises that the seed of woman (Christ) shall bruise the head of the serpent (Satan)

Cain and Abel:

Man is now driven out of the garden of Eden (Eden is hebrew for Joy or pleasure, hence the synonym: paradise of Joy). He starts working the land. He starts begetting children both boys and girls. The story of two of his children is related to us as an example of man's life after falling from the grace of God. Both Cain and Abel offer sacrifices to God, and here is the proof that rituals for worshipping God were known to man since the very beginning. God accepts Abel's sacrifice because he was a just man, and rejects Cain's sacrifice because he was evil (not because his sacrifice was less valuable than his brother's). Cain then kills Abel.

The all-knowing God foresees this and even warns Cain of his impending sin, leading him to the right way. "And the Lord said unto Cain, why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door and unto thee shall be his desire and thou shalt rule over him". (Gen 4:6,7). The all compassionate Lord Who desireth not the death of the sinner but rather that he return and live, showed unto Cain that if he does well, then his sacrifice will be accepted. He warns him of his impending sin, and tells him that it is in his power to resist (thou shalt rule over him), but he chooses his way.

Cain is banished from God, but is given a mark on his forehead, so that if any man tries to kill him, this shall be a warning to him. God gave permission to Cain's children to take a seven fold revenge for their father, and gave him the mark to warn of this.

Cain becomes an outlaw, he pursues a worldly life and prospers. He has many descendants who form a materialistic civilization, building cities, but are far from God. They represent "the world".

At the end of Genesis 4, we are told of one of the descendants of Cain named Lamech, who has two wives i.e. breaks God's rule of monogamy. This man boasts that he has killed a man (some claim that he actually killed his grand father Cain). He asks his two wives to revenge him seventy seven fold if he gets killed! This is given to us as an example that already polygamy and murder are prevalent in the world, and that the spirit of revenge has increased much more than what God has allowed.

Seth:

Among Adam's many sons and daughters, one son, Seth is mentioned by name. This is because out of the seed of Seth will come another line of people who are to become "the children of God". Seth begets a son, Enos and once Enos was born, a significant thing happens: "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26) i.e. men that came from the seed of Seth started to pray to the Lord. Now we have the children of God (the seed of Seth and the children of the world (the seed of Cain), living in a world full of violence and immorality. In spite of this we hear of a righteous man, one of the descendants of Seth whose name was Enoch. This man was so good that

the Lord took him to heaven when he was at the tender age of 365 years (the average age was 900 years). This the bible relates to us so that we may know that ever since the beginning there were both saints (Enoch) and sinners (Lamech).

Sons of God..daughters of men:

Unfortunately, it was not long before the "sons of God" started to become corrupt. They lusted after the "daughters of men" i.e. women born to the descendants of Cain, worldly women who knew not God but lived for pleasure and "fun". "And they took them wives of all which they chose" (Gen 6:2). Again here we see the sin of polygamy creeping into the lives of the sons of God. People chose the world over God The whole of mankind gradually drifted to evil.