

Creation and the Fall

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

(Jn. 1:1-5, NABRE)

“Among all the Scriptural texts about creation, the first three chapters of Genesis occupy a unique place. From a literary standpoint these texts may have had diverse sources. The inspired authors have placed them at the beginning of Scripture to express in their solemn language the truths of creation—its origin and its end in God, its order and goodness, the vocation of man, and finally the drama of sin and the hope of salvation.”

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 289)

CREATION

1. Once upon a Garden, God strolled throughout His recent creation, admiring its goodness, beauty and vastness, taking delight in all of its splendor and grandeur.
2. Having extracted light from the dismal depths of the nothingness of darkness,¹ brilliance now shone upon each of His handiworks. The rolling green slopes of the Earth are spotted with arrays of delicate flowers of the colors of the spectrum, emitting odors of sweet perfume contrasted with the denseness of mighty forests with towering stately trees - - And it was good.²
3. God contemplates from the deep recesses of the chasms and canyons to the massive majestic mountains with their snow covered caps - - And it was good.
4. He toys with many of His animals that respond in curious wonderment of His presence with amazement and homage - - And it was good.³
5. At the shore of the sea, He recalls the raising of the land from the mysterious waters, and relishes the action of the forceful waves slapping, like sounds of thunder, against the edges of the roughed coastline - - And it was good.⁴
6. The waters teem with life of all sorts, and above the Earth let birds fly below the firmament of Heaven - - And it was good.⁵
7. The azure sky is sprinkled with white cotton-like puffs; clouds that will carry life-sustaining rain to the earth below - - And it was good.
8. The seasons are permanently fixed; earthly time is set. The brightness of day is separated from the night with its flickering and glittering multitude of galaxies, planets and stars - - And it was good.⁶
9. Perfect order is established; universal nature is complete. His creation is immense, all encompassing – And it was good.
10. But Creation is not complete until the preeminent and dominant creation is formed - - a being for whom all creation was planned - -**Man** - -a creation unlike any other, clearly distinct from all other.

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

11. "God created Man in His image, in the image of God He created him."⁷
12. God said, "Let them *have dominion* over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the

¹ Gen. 1:2

² Gen. 1:4

³ Gen. 1:24-25

⁴ Gen. 1:9-13

⁵ Gen. 1:20-23

⁶ Gen. 1:14-19

⁷ Gen. 1:26

tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.”⁸

13. Adam and his mate Eve are thus created in God’s image and likeness, endowed with faculties beyond all other creatures, infused with intellectual instincts, **free will**, reasoning and in friendship with God - - **created in a state of holiness and original justice to share in the Divine Life**. This ultimate creation is enriched with a unique spiritual make-up which shares with the very essence of God - - Perpetual (Eternal) Life.
14. God surrenders all of His Creation to Mankind, giving full authority over the use and management of all His creation with only one prohibition - - *“Not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil lest you die.”*⁹

THE FALL – Man’s Original Sin

15. Adam and Eve were tempted by the deceiver,¹⁰ who is also referred to as the devil, the father of lies,¹¹ and Satan. In St. John’s vision in the Book of Revelation, we are told, *“The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it.”*¹²
16. The deceiver said, *“You certainly will not die. No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad.”*¹³
17. Adam and Eve chose their own desires, based on a lie, over God’s will and plan. Sin entered the world through their decision to choose themselves over God and his plan. The sin of DISOBEDIENCE.
18. Through the Fall, the harmony within the human heart and life was destroyed, and such moral chaos affected creation. Adam and Eve became aware of their sinful condition and were driven from the Garden. They were forced to live *“By the sweat of their brow.”*¹⁴ The beauty and harmony of God’s creative plan was disrupted - - this was not the way it was meant to be. They lost paradise and its gifts, and death and suffering became part of human experience both in himself and in Creation.
19. The sin of Adam and Eve is called “Original Sin” which we inherit from them as their descendants. It is a deprivation, a loss of the original holiness and righteousness with which our first parents were created. But all is not lost! God addressed the three agents of the Fall, i.e. Satan, Eve¹⁵ and Adam and shared His Redemptive Plan to

⁸ Gen 1:26

⁹ Gen. 2:17

¹⁰ Is. 32:7

¹¹ Jn. 8:44; Rev. 12:9

¹² Rev. 12:9

¹³ Gen. 3:4-5

¹⁴ Gen 3:19

¹⁵ Gen 3:8-24

bring Mankind back to His Friendship.¹⁶

CONSERVATION AND ECOLOGY¹⁷

20. God gave Adam and Eve dominion over all that He created. He said to them, “*Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth. God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food; and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it happened. God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.*”¹⁸
21. God’s creation was “*very good*” and God entrusted all of His creation to the stewardship of man to respect the integrity of Creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.
22. The gift of dominion can be understood in three ways;
- It is not a right but a privilege
 - It is a dominion of service through respecting creation
 - It is a moral duty to preserve and promote creation, but these three complement each other
24. We should be aware of environmental destruction, loss of habitat for creatures and people, unsustainable consumption of global resources. We must take action to manage and conserve the goods of the earth so that future generations may share in the resources God has provided.

Key Points

- ❖ Man was created, in God’s image, for God’s purpose
- ❖ God gave man dominion over all created things
- ❖ Man was not created as a slave but given free will, the ability to choose
- ❖ God did not set physical boundaries in the garden to prevent man from making bad choices
- ❖ From the beginning God allowed man to be tempted
- ❖ God tried to protect man from harm by telling him what would be harmful to him
- ❖ Man’s sin was one of disobedience

¹⁶ Gen 3:15

¹⁷ Reference may be made to Pope Francis’ recent encyclical (*Laudato Si – On care of our Human Home*) on this subject.

¹⁸ Gen. 1:28-31

- ❖ After the disobedience man's relationship with God, nature, self and others was fractured
- ❖ Man's fall from grace was not the end of a sad story but the beginning of salvation history