

# Creation of Eve

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In Genesis 1 God creates man and woman simultaneously, but in Genesis 2, God creates each distinctively, Adam out of the raw material, *mud* and Eve out of the raw material, *Adam’s rib*.

There is no contradiction here. *Every new human being receives his body from other bodies, but his soul comes directly from God in a unique act of creation.*

- In both accounts there is one essential fact: God stands at the origin of the sexes. God created man, and he created woman as man’s natural complement.

## II. ORIGINAL HUMAN EXPERIENCES

Pope John Paul II, in his magnificent work, the *Theology of the Body*, argues that the second and third chapters of Genesis speak of “original human experiences” which “are always at the root of every human experience.”

In the Garden of Eden there were three “original human experiences: “solitude [or loneliness], original unity, and nakedness.” We will talk about the other two later.

Solitude was the result of Adam’s realization that he was unique among all the creatures of God’s kingdom. Adam experienced solitude, the first original human experience, because he discovered that only his body, among all the bodies in the universe, expressed a person.

### A. Adam Experiences Loneliness

Through his experiences in the Garden Adam matures and learns about himself. Adam named the animals and had an awareness, a consciousness, of this act. By reflecting on this experience, he came to know himself as different from the animals.

- Adam discovers that he had a mind [intellect] – he can think, unlike the animals.

Also, when God warns Adam not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he was confronted with the possibility of choosing.

- Adam came to know his power to choose; he discovered his will.

### **B. Adam Learns for his Experiences**

Thus, through solitude he knew himself as a person with the powers of thinking and choosing.

This was a self-discovery. Adam, from his own experiences knew that God had made him as a person in the image and likeness of God. He came to know that he was a person with a mind, will and body and that there was no other being like him on the earth.

Thus, he experienced solitude, or loneliness.

Man’s knowledge in the Garden was of two types:

- one was revealed knowledge, and
- the other was knowledge obtained through experience and reason.

### **C. No Suitable Companion**

Adam [man] needs to be able to live in a full and deep union with another of his kind. The animals were also created by God, but they cannot provide complete companionship. Something is missing.

## **III. GOD CREATES WOMAN**

But God is not yet finished with creation. In Chapter 1, seven times the sacred text says, “*And God saw that it is good . . .*” after each act of creation. Now, suddenly, God says “*It is not good . . .*” What is not good?

***“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”***

So God creates woman giving her a body, similar to that of man, but with unique sexual differences, to enable the man and woman to express their love for each other.

Being alone is not good because God is not alone. Within the One God are three distinct, equal Persons in a communion of love.

- Fellowship between man and God was good, but man alone, without an equal, could not be fully in God’s image.
- Man must be in communion with others like himself, and in that communion he reflects the Blessed Trinity.

Man’s companion will be one who can help him carry out his work of fruitfulness and dominion -"a helper fit for him."

**Read: Genesis 2:18-24**

*[18] Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."*

*[19] So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.*

*[20] The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him.*

*[21] So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh;*

*[22] and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.*

*[23] Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*

*[24] Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

*[25] And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.*

**A. Naming the Animals**

God now parades [symbolically] every creature before Adam, and Adam names each one of them. By bringing him the animals one by one, God shows Adam that he is *different* from the animals. *"But for the man there was not found a helper fit for him."*

Adam realizes that as a human being he is alone on planet earth. There is no one else like him in the whole world. He experiences profound loneliness or solitude.

During the naming "man becomes aware of his own superiority, that is, he cannot be considered on the same footing as any other species of living beings on the earth."

**B. Creation of Eve**

*So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a*

*woman and brought her to the man.*

In order for there to be a second human, God goes into Adam’s body and creates Eve.

We can hardly imagine the joy Adam must have experienced when he awakens from a deep sleep to see Eve standing beside him. In delight he cries out, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”

- Finally, here is someone who shares equally his humanity, like him and yet not him – someone who can complete him.

Not only is the woman, like her husband, a human person, but with her husband she makes up the human species, Man. Human nature is total: it is neither in the man alone, nor in the woman alone, but in the two together.

- Now indeed the creation of the human being is complete: “man becomes the image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion” [John Paul II, TOB].
- And from that point on, God shares the divine prerogative of creating human life with them and their offspring.

They now can procreate in the act of sexual union, an act which takes on a sacred nature in this context because it not only perpetuates the creation of life, which is a divine act but also because the life it produces bears God’s image.

### **C. Adam Names Eve**

Not only does Adam contribute his rib to the formation of Eve’s body, so that she is “bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh,” he also names her Eve “because she is to be the mother of all the living.” [Gen 3:20].

By naming Eve, Adam bestows on her an identity that relates to her great vocation to be our first mother.

### **D. Two in One Flesh – Original Unity**

*Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

In these words the sacred writer depicts the institution of marriage as something established by God at the very dawn of creation.

After the original loneliness, encompassing as it did the profound longing for another human being, Adam and Eve discover the immense joy of a loving union

expressed in and through their bodies. They experience the profound unity of a mutual and total giving of themselves to each other in love.

- This is the experience of original unity.

The purpose of sexual union, referred to euphemistically in Gen. 2:24 as "cleaving" and becoming "one flesh," is revealed by the context to be the perpetuation of what happened when God went into Adam’s body to produce another human being.

The creation of human life is meant to be a source of joy for man. When Adam beheld Eve, he did not moan, "Oh no, not another mouth to feed!" He was delighted in her being.

Sexual union is meant to continue this joy, within the covenant of marriage. That is why the text of Genesis immediately refers to marriage after God’s creation of Eve, and Adam’s delight in her.

The simple phrasing of the two becoming "one flesh" covers the entire explanation of sexual union. It is an act that unites man and woman so closely that they are like one person, as Eve had once been "one flesh" with Adam because she came out of him.

Marriage is the primordial sacrament! God intends us to know Him through our experience of marriage. God intends us to know him through our experience of love.

### **E. Naked and not Ashamed**

*And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.*

At first glance this line at the end of the chapter seems misplaced – like a throw-away line, yet Pope John Paul II calls this the “key” for understanding God’s original plan for man and woman.

- Original nakedness indicates a total defenselessness before the other, an absence of barriers, because of a total trust in the sincerity of their gift of self to each other.
- They experienced sexual desire only as the desire to love in God’s image. There is no shame [or fear] in love. “Perfect love casts out fear” [1 John 4:18].

Nakedness reveals the spousal meaning of the body which is “the body’s capacity of expressing love: that love precisely in which the person becomes *a gift and – by means of this gift – fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence*” [63].

- “The fact that ‘they were not ashamed’ means that the woman was not an ‘object’ for the man nor him for her” [75].
- “Only the nakedness that makes woman an “object” for the man, or vice versa, is a source of shame. This is lust – the use of the other for personal gratification.

In the beginning, sexual desire was not experienced as a compulsive urge, but as the desire to make a sincere gift of self – to love as God loves. It was an experience filled with grace.

Since Adam and Eve were perfectly integrated when they first saw one another, the elements of their love were in perfect harmony. Intellect, will, and emotions were perfectly integrated.

- Lacking integration because of original sin, it is impossible for us to experience nakedness as our first parents did.

Shame exists with sin, but the expression of true love is not a sin. Therefore our first parents rejoiced in their mutual self-donation expressed through their [naked] bodies.

# Temptation and Fall

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*I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your seed and her seed;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Freedom, Harmony, and Love

In our study of Genesis we are now approaching the time when human history takes a dramatic turn.

For two chapters we have been enthralled with what we have seen of God’s power, creativity, and love. Previously, we took the time to watch the creation of man and woman, thinking about all the implications. In all of this, we have had a growing understanding of God and man.

We have seen that God is One Who hallows time and space, making distinctions in them for the purpose of holiness.

- He provides for every need His creatures have - both for their physical and spiritual appetites.
- They will work and procreate, reflecting God’s own life.
- As male and female, they will share a communion of equals.
- They will be free to choose to love God, as He freely chose to create and love them.

We observed in the Garden that man has a mind with which to think (he recognized that the animals were not his equals), a will with which to choose, and senses to experience his life.

- For his mind, God gives man truth - what he needs to **know** in order to live.
- For his will, God gives man a choice between good and evil - what he needs to **do** in order to live.

- For his senses, God puts man inside of great beauty - to bear witness to the goodness of God.

The life God gave to man and woman in the Garden was perfectly suited to His design for them. The tranquility, harmony, and innocence there resulted from all things being exactly how God intended His creation to be.

### D. Catastrophe

It didn’t last. Now we must brace ourselves to understand what happened next. We don’t want familiarity with this part of the story to rob us of its importance.

In this session, we will examine the test that Adam and Eve underwent.

- Did we see it coming?
- Do we wonder whether God failed man by allowing him to be tempted this way?
- Are we incredulous that man succumbed?
- What really lies at the heart of the human story if it begins with such a catastrophic failure?

Chapter 3 is divided into three sections. This section will examine the temptation and fall. The next two will deal with the consequences. It is important to note that Chapter 3 uses symbols and imagery to tell the story of the fall.

Here is what the Catholic Church teaches.

**CCC 390** The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man. Revelation gives us certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents.

## II. THE SERPENT

### Read: Genesis 3: 1

[1] Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, `You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?"

Who is the serpent? Where does he come from? Why did God allow him into the Garden? Read Rev. 12:3-9 and 20:2 to see how the Bible describes him outside of Genesis.

### A. Who is the serpent?

The serpent symbolizes the devil, a personal being who tries to frustrate God’s plans, and lead men to perdition [hell]. In the Book of Revelation the devil is describes as ***“that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.”***

He is described as a great red dragon, with seven crowned heads and ten horns. In the heavenly vision from Revelation, the crowns and horns represent his tremendous power.

He is a creature that strikes fear and dread into the souls of mere men.

### B. What is he like?

To begin with, the serpent’s appearance is frightening.

Even if he did not appear as the dragon of Revelation, it was certainly not as a common snake. In Hebrew the same word is used for serpent and dragon. It was a frightening figure in Hebrew thought. If you can’t imagine a dragon, picture a coiled rattlesnake, ready to strike.

### The Catechism has this to say about the devil.

**CCC 391** Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy.<sup>266</sup> Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called "Satan" or the "devil".<sup>267</sup>

The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: "The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing."<sup>268</sup>

### C. Where did he come from?

Even though it is the beginning of our human history, we feel as if we are coming in on another story already in progress. How did God get such an enemy? There are only hints at the explanation in Scripture.

The Church teaches that Satan, who was an angel, rejected God and His reign (see CCC 391-395).

**392** Scripture speaks of a sin of these angels.<sup>269</sup> This "fall" consists in the free choice of these created spirits, who radically and irrevocably *rejected* God and his reign. We find a reflection of that rebellion in the tempter's words to our first parents: "You will be like God."<sup>270</sup> The devil "has sinned from the beginning"; he is "a liar and the father of lies".<sup>271</sup>

**393** It is the *irrevocable* character of their choice, and not a defect in the infinite divine mercy, that makes the angels' sin unforgivable. "There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death."<sup>272</sup>

**394** Scripture witnesses to the disastrous influence of the one Jesus calls "a murderer from the beginning", who would even try to divert Jesus from the mission received from his Father.<sup>273</sup> "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil."<sup>274</sup> In its consequences the gravest of these works was the mendacious seduction that led man to disobey God.

**395** The power of Satan is, nonetheless, not infinite. He is only a creature, powerful from the fact that he is pure spirit, but still a creature. He cannot prevent the building up of God's reign.

It is a great mystery that providence should permit diabolical activity, but "we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him."<sup>275</sup>

This angelic rebellion manifests itself in an attack on God's human creatures. The devil, who is in the form of a serpent here, ignores Adam, the one placed in charge of the garden. His pitch to Eve is, in itself, an act of insubordination, perfectly in keeping with his character.

#### **D. The Mystery of Evil**

The serpent could never have gotten into the garden without God's permission. In the first chapter of Genesis, we saw that God created all things. There cannot be, among any of the creatures, a power equal to or independent of Him. Even though the serpent is clearly evil, he did not get into the garden by some horrible cosmic accident.

We find that we cannot help but ask, "Why?? Why would God let a diabolical enemy into the garden to tempt the humans?" If we took seriously the rich details of God's goodness in the first two chapters, we must conclude that, however it may appear to us, His goodness is not violated in this episode. Ultimately, evil and the suffering it causes are mysteries.

#### **E. Sin and Grace**

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote that "There is nothing to prevent human nature's being raised up to something greater, even after sin; God permits evil in order to draw forth some greater good.

- St. Paul says: 'Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more' and

- the Exultet sings, ‘O happy fault which gained for us so great a Redeemer!’” (CCC 412)

### III. THE DEVIL’S STRATEGY

**Read: Genesis 3: 2-6**

*He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?"*

*[2] And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden;*

*[3] but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"*

*[4] But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die.*

*[5] For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

*[6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.*

#### A. Overview

The devil’s temptation strategy is very realistically described here:

- he falsifies what God has said,
- raises suspicions about God’s plans and intentions, and finally,
- portrays God as man’s enemy.

#### B. Sowing Confusion

Satan begins by asking the woman a question that confuses her about what God really said. Not only that, he completely by-passes Adam, who was in charge of the garden, speaking instead to Eve. He appears to be no respecter of authority - a usurper, in fact.

The serpent questions the woman: “Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?”

What God really said was: *"You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."*

The woman tries to restate what God has said but – perhaps intimidated by the unexpected power and presence of the devil – she distorts God’s word by adding a prohibition to God’s command:

“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: “You shall not eat it *or even touch it*, lest you die.”

### **B. The Devil is a Liar, and . . .**

Having planted a seed of doubt by his initial question, Satan goes on to contradict directly what God has said; he implies that God is lying to the Adam and Eve in order to protect his [God’s] own position and to keep from them a power and knowledge that is rightfully theirs:

“You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it you will be like gods who know what is good and what is bad.”

### **F. . . a Murderer**

The serpent wants Eve to eat the fruit and die. Why would he have such contempt for the human creatures? Jesus called Satan “a liar and murderer from the beginning” [John 8:44].

What have they done to deserve such hatred? It is at this point in Genesis that we begin to sense that we cannot get answers to these questions from this story alone.

### **C. Satan’s Offer [Genesis 3:4-5]**

***But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."***

Everything the serpent offers is already true, although not in the way he pretends. Let’s take the things he says one at a time:

- ***"You will not die."*** It is true already that Adam and Eve were intended for immortality, which is evident in the presence of the Tree of Life in the garden.
- ***"Your eyes will be opened."*** Their eyes are already open. Adam saw Eve when God presented her to him and burst into delight at the sight of her.
  - Gen. 2:25 tells us that Adam and Eve saw each other’s nakedness without shame. There is nothing lacking in their eyesight.

- **"You will be like God."** Adam and Eve are already like God in the greatest of possible ways for a created being.
  - They were made in His image, and they continue His work on earth.
- **"Knowing good and evil."** They know what God has revealed to them good and evil, although they have not yet experienced it.
  - ***The serpent suggests not that they shall experience evil (for where is the attraction in that?) but that they will be able to determine for themselves what is good or evil.***
  - This temptation strikes at the heart of their relationship with God.
  - Can they trust God to be the only reliable authority about what is good and evil?
  - Don't they want to figure it out for themselves?

John tells us that Satan "is a liar and the father of lies." Satan is adept at lying under the cover of partial or twisted truth. When he says "You will not die," there is a grain of truth in it. Adam and Eve do not die physically the moment they eat the fruit.

Their death was a spiritual one, and, as we will see, it happened immediately. This characteristic of Satan - mixing a half-truth with a lie - is what makes him so cunning and dangerous.

The serpent wants her to exercise freedom from God. He describes a life that could be hers for the taking. He urges her to throw off restrictions on her behaviour, to be independent and autonomous.

Implicit in this temptation is a taunt: "Don't be such a creature. Have you no pride?"

#### **D. The Woman Yields to Sin**

The woman then yields to the threefold appeal of the forbidden fruit.

***So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.***

This is Satan's strategy to get us to disobey God and commit sin. The same pattern is repeated with the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness by Satan.

1. First, Satan attempts to sow doubt; then
2. He directly contradicts God's word – he calls God a liar; and then

3. He appeals to certain human desires – coveting with the eyes; wanting to be powerful, wise, and independent.

The first humans fell prey to Satan’s arousal of their desires. They ate of the fruit, but then “the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked . . .”

## Summary

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1. The glorious relationship that existed between God and His human creatures is revealed to be rooted in freedom.
  - As God is free, so are His creatures.
  - The life He designed for them depended on their cooperation.
  - Obedience would enable them to fulfill their destiny; disobedience would bring death.
2. Man’s love for God, in order to be free and genuine, had to be tested.
  - The devil, a fallen angel who had rebelled against God and refused to serve Him, was allowed to enter the Garden to tempt Adam and Eve.
  - He appears, in the form of a serpent, as a usurper, contradicting God and presenting himself as one with greater knowledge and with more interest in the creatures’ well-being than God.
  - Through cunning deception, he disguises the gifts that are already theirs from God, which they can preserve through obedience, as appealing new possibilities that can only be gained through disobedience.
3. Adam, whose responsibility it was to guard the Garden and his bride, silently stands by doing nothing.
  - His trust in God is not enough to make him give himself to the work of opposing the enemy.
  - He is not willing to suffer whatever that might have required of him.
  - He does not even cry out for help.
4. Eve, finding herself having to answer the question put to her by the enemy, reminds herself of what she knows to be true. Perhaps rattled by her husband’s passivity, she tries to strengthen her resolve not to eat the forbidden fruit by adding a prohibition that God Himself had not given.
5. Without anyone to counter the serpent’s insinuations, and perhaps believing that, by his silence, Adam had already given up on God, she turns her attention to the visible realities before her, forgetting the invisible ones.
  - If Adam counted God’s Word for nothing, why should she still foolishly cling to it?
  - She eats the fruit, which has a tremendous appeal to her.

- And instead of Adam leading her away from danger, he follows her into the heart of it.

## Questions

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1. What does the serpent want Eve to do? What possible motivation could he have? Why do you think he approached Eve and not Adam?
2. How do you suppose the serpent got into the garden? What question does this make you ask about God?
3. Go back and read Gen. 2:15. What should Adam be thinking at this point?
4. Describe the pattern of the spiral of sin from the Bible and in your own words.
5. Look carefully at the offer the serpent makes to the woman. How much of his suggestion was already true, without the woman having to eat the fruit?
6. Where is Adam during all this? What possible reason could there be for his silence?
7. Where is God during all this? What possible reason could there be for His silence?

## Preparation for Week #4

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Read:

1. Genesis: Chapters 3 and 4 - RSV Catholic Edition;
2. *Come and see Catholic Bible Study – Genesis*: Chapters 3 and 4
3. The Navarre Bible: Genesis – Chapters 3 and 4