

Genesis: Adam & Eve Tuesday 28th July 2020

Last week we read the creation narrative found in Genesis 1:1 – 2:4, but did you know that there are actually two creation stories in Genesis? The second one, written earlier than the first, is our reading for today.

Prayer before (or after) reading the Holy Bible

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Come, O Holy Spirit,
and fill us with the gifts of knowledge and wisdom.
Strengthen us, we pray, with heavenly grace,
so that we may grasp with our minds,
treasure in our hearts,
and carry out in our deeds,
all the teachings of your Holy Book
which lead to salvation.
Amen.

Let's begin by reflecting on this second creation account found at Gn 2:4–24.



'The Lord God fashioned man of dust from soil...' (Gn 2:7)

The Hebrew word for soil/earth is '*adamah*' and this is where we get the name Adam from. What makes Adam unique from other living creatures is that God breathes life into him.

***'Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life,
and thus man became a living being.'* (Gn 2:7)**

It wasn't just fresh air that God put into Adam's nostrils that gave him life. God breathed His own breath into man, he breathed His own Spirit. The Spirit of God gave Adam both physical life, '*bios*', and supernatural life, '*zoe*'. The early Church Fathers chose to use the Greek word '*zoe*' in their translation of Genesis because it conveyed that Adam was given more than just physical life, he was given supernatural life. The biblical scholar and Catholic theologian Scott Hahn writes:

'God didn't just breath air into Adam's nostrils; he breathed life - spiritual life, eternal life, divine life. He breathed his own life into Adam. He gave Adam the life that from all eternity the Father is always communicating to the Son and that the Son is receiving and communicating right back to the Father'.

(Scott Hahn from his book '*Hope to Die*)



Human life is so sacred for us as Roman Catholics because we believe that at the moment of conception God breathes life into our very bodies. Life that doesn't just animate us in a physical sense, but life that allows us to be in communion with our Creator. What separates us from the chimpanzee is '*zoe*', the Lord our God's Spirit living within us.

In this second creation narrative, we encounter God's commandment regarding the Tree of Knowledge.

'Then the Lord God gave the man this admonition, 'You may eat indeed of all the trees in the garden. Nevertheless, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you are not to eat, for on the day you eat of it you shall most surely die.' (Gn 2:16-17)



The above quote is very often misinterpreted. Some people assume that God wants to limit human beings' knowledge and keep them in ignorance. This is not the case. Why would God, who has given Adam life from His own breath, want to imprison His creation in darkness? *'The knowledge of good and evil'* in this context is a divine commandment from God reminding humanity not to take upon itself the arrogance to decide what is right and wrong. However, as we know Adam ignores his Creator and makes himself an equal of God therefore mistakenly assuming that he knows what is just and unjust, what is truth and what is false. It is only God who can judge, not the modern world with its distorted values and misconceived beliefs.

***'The Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a help mate.'* (Gn 2:18)**

Adam is incomplete. God sees this and creates Eve to be his partner so that the gift of love can be experienced by man and woman. Love can only truly be born in relationship with another and manifests itself in giving and receiving. Now Adam and his equal partner Eve, whose name means '*mother of all living*', establish the beginnings of marriage.

***'This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh!... This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.'* (Gn 2:23-24)**

Adam and Eve are living in a state of original holiness. They are complete, the world is perfect, family life rooted in love is established and all is well. However, as we will read next week a serpent enters this world and there are consequences!

God Bless and keep praying
Fr. O'Brien