

THE CREATION

DEACONS' MEETING – MODULE 2 – PART 2

Man as a Priest

Church Father and OT Jewish Rabbinic teachers saw the creation as the blueprint of the Tabernacle and the Church in the NT

Day 1	Creation Heavens are stretched out like a curtain (Gen. 1:1. Ps 103:2)	Tabernacle Tent (Exodus 26:7)
2	Firmament (Gen. 1:2)	Temple Veil (Ex. 26:33)
3	Waters below firmament (Gen. 1:9)	Laver of bronze sea (Ex. 30:18)
4	Lights (Gen. 1:14)	Light stand (Ex. 30:18)
5	Birds (Gen. 1:20)	Winged cherubim (Ex. 25: 20)
6	Man (Gen. 1:27)	Aaron the high priest (Ex. 28:1)
7	Cessation (Gen. 2:1) Blessing (Gen. 2:3) Completion (Gen. 2:2)	Cessation (Ex. 39: 32) Mosaic blessing (Ex. 39:43) Completion (Ex. 39:43)

These tabernacle-creation parallels mean that, if the **creation is God's 'cosmic temple'**, then the garden of Eden is the **first holy of holies** – the first altar or sanctuary – and **Adam is the first priest**.

Read within the greater context of scripture, Adam's responsibilities in the garden of Eden are primarily priestly, not agricultural.

Vocation of the Priest

We need to consider what the priest's main task and purpose is.

The priest's key role is to **celebrate the sacraments**, and the main characteristic of a sacrament is that man takes natural material (bread, water, wine, oil) and offers it back to God in thanksgiving, while asking Him to make it a means of imparting His grace and mercy to us.

Man, as priest of creation, is **not** called to **dominate creation**, nor even to merely take care of it, but to **offer it back to God**. In this way, creation becomes far more than the means of man's sustenance; it becomes a means of thanksgiving, blessing, sanctification and salvation.

Furthermore, man does **not simply use raw materials**; he uses his **creative powers to fashion them into something different** to what they were at first.

Eucharist is the prime example of man's creativity and God's grace:

At the Eucharist, we do not offer **wheat and grapes**, but **bread and wine**. God, in turn, sanctifies it. Man makes the bread and wine from the materials God has given him, offers what he has made to God, and God transforms it into the **Body and Blood** of Christ for the **forgiveness of sins and eternal life**.

And this act of offering creation back to the Creator is expressed above all in the prayer of the **anaphora** at the **Divine Liturgy**.

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Creation as Sacramental Work of the High Priest

Bearing this sacramental purpose in mind, the must therefore be sacramental in nature as well.

- Baptism (Genesis 1: 2-4)

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

- Myron (Genesis 2:7), Priesthood as well

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

- Communion (Genesis 2:9)

And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

- Priesthood (Genesis 1-3)

- Matrimony (Genesis 2:25-29)

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

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Priesthood in Afterlife

It is no coincidence, given that man **before the fall was made for priestly work**, that in the last book of the Bible, **the Book of Revelations**, redeemed humanity is described as carrying out the same work:

“Blessed and holy are they who have a part in the first resurrection... they will be **priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years”.** (Rev. 20:6).

“You were slain and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you made them to be a kingdom and **priests serving our God, and they will reign on the earth”.** (Rev. 5: 9-10).

“To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, **priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever”.** (Rev. 1: 5-6)

Man is getting his priesthood from The Son, the High Priest, directly.
He is **ORDAINED** for this rank.

HELPER IN SACRAMENTAL LIGHT

Bearing this **sacramental purpose of man** in mind, the creation of **Eve as Adam's 'helper'** must also be seen in a sacramental light.

The purpose of Eve in relation to Adam is all too often viewed in terms of procreation, but this is not actually the main purpose of Eve; **she was created to assist Adam in his priestly duties.**

She was **not made to simply bear children or to be the servant of man**, but to participate as a helper in man's sacramental purpose in life.

Of course, this does not exclude child-birth. **The key characteristic of sacrament is offering God's creation back to the Creator, then child-birth is the greatest sacrament: the offering of another human life to God for Him to consecrate it and transfigure it by His grace.**

But woman's role in procreation must always be seen in sacramental terms, because Eve's role as a helper is directly connected to Adam's role as a priest.

Therefore, the Orthodox Church does not consecrate Women to priesthood, but consecrate them to female deaconship. This rank assists the priests (bishops, presbyters, deacons) in carrying the sacraments.

Understanding of OT and NT

Bearing all of this in mind, whenever we read Genesis, and the scriptures in general, we should always be aware that we must read it within the greater context of scripture.

When we read the Old Testament, we must read it in the light of the New Testament, which shows us the true meaning of the symbolism, imagery, history, poetry and prophecies of the Old Testament. This is particularly true of Genesis.

We have to look beyond the imagery and simple language of Genesis, which all too often hinder us from perceiving its fundamental message: that man was made by God to worship Him, to make good use of the Image of God in man, to make something of God's creation and give it back to Him in praise and thanksgiving, in order that He in turn may impart to us His Divine Grace which transforms us into God's likeness.

In short: the message of Genesis is that God made man to be [priest of creation](#).