

Amsterdam Lectures 2011-12:

Eastern Orthodox Theology: a Personal Introduction

Lecture IV: What went wrong? Sin and death. Handout

We begin with the contrast between the beauty of creation as God intended it, and what we experience in our own lives. Genesis 1-2, the twofold creation story, is succeeded by Genesis 3, the story of Adam's disobedience.

The story of Adam a pendant to the story of the Second Adam: Sin is replaced by Redemption. The story of Adam a story: for it is by telling ourselves stories that we seek to understand the world and our place in it.

The 'Fall'. Actually the Fathers rarely talk about the fall in an objective way, rather they talk about what happened in the Paradise of delight.

The two arcs of theology: Creation – Deification/Theosis, and Fall – Redemption.

For Orthodox theology it is the former that is primary, and is never to be lost sight of.

- Therefore, Orthodox theology views the Fall from the perspective of the Resurrection. The example of the icon called the Resurrection, *Anastasis*, in which Christ is depicted, standing on the broken gates of Hell, often with bits of the lock scattered around, and reaching out his hands to Adam and Eve and leading them out of Hell.
- From the perspective of Orthodox teaching, the Fall is mostly about *death*, rather than *sin*. It is death that has been introduced into the world by the Fall, and death that is overcome by Christ's resurrection.

Athanasios' twofold treatise—Against the Nations and On the Incarnation—and the way he presents Creation and Fall.

The account of Adam: historical or representative/mythical? Not a distinction that the Fathers would have easily made.

The legacy of death and sin:

- Ancestral sin, in Eastern theology
- Original sin, in the theology of the Augustinian West

Who is Adam?

- The human and the cosmic
- Darwin, evolution and the problem of the 'first couple'
- Humans and the rest of the lower creation: animals and plants

The figure of Adam in the Church's liturgy and imagination:

- Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise
- St Silouan's poem, 'Adam's Lament'