

The Temptations of Jesus and the Redemption of Adam

Introduction: Jesus, the New Adam

In all of his life Jesus presents himself as *our model*. He is “*the perfect man*,” who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. (CCC 520)

In reality *it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear*. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come, Christ the Lord, *Christ the new Adam*, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, *fully reveals man to himself* and brings to light his most high calling. (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* 22)

The Creation of Adam, the first Man

So God created man (Heb *adam*) in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them... And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. (Gen 1:27, 31)

In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens... then the LORD God formed man (Heb *adam*) of dust from the ground (Heb *adamah*), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made 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 the knowledge of good and evil... Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and guard it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may freely eat of every tree in 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 surely die.” (Gen 2:4, 7-9, 15-17)

The Catechism on the Creation of Man (CCC 357-374)

1. God created man in his “image and likeness”: Men are sons of God; He is our Father
2. God created Man perfect: He was “very good”
3. God created the whole universe for Man: He gave him “dominion” over the earth
3. God created the whole human race from the first man, Adam (Pius XII, *Humane Generis*, 37)
4. God created Man body and soul: a physical and spiritual being
6. God created Man in perfect harmony with God, himself, Eve, and all creation
7. God created Man immortal: not subject to death
8. God created man free: free to love and free from slavery to sin

The first man was not only created good, but was also established in friendship with his Creator and in harmony with himself and with the creation around him, in a state that would be surpassed only by the glory of the new creation in Christ... Adam and Eve were constituted in an original “state of holiness and justice.”...As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die. The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman, and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called original justice. The mastery over the world that God offered man from the beginning was realized above all within man himself: *mastery of self*. The first man was unimpaired and ordered in his whole being because *he was free from the triple concupiscence that subjugates him to the pleasures of the senses, covetousness for earthly goods, and self-assertion*, contrary to the dictates of reason (CCC 374-377)

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The Fall of Adam: the Threefold Temptation

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?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; 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.’” 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. So when the woman saw that the tree was *good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise*, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to *her husband, who was with her*, and he ate. (Genesis 3:1-6)

1. The Threefold Temptation of Adam and Eve: the Fruit of the Tree was
 - a. “Good for Food”
 - b. “A Delight to the Eyes”
 - c. “Desirable to Make One Wise”
2. This Corresponds to St. John’s Description of the Threefold Lust

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, *the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life*, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever. (1 John 2:13-17)

3. The Threefold Lust/Concupiscence: (a.k.a. The “Unholy Trinity”)

a. “Lust of the Flesh”	Pleasure	Sex
b. “Lust of the Eyes”	Possessions	Money
c. “Pride of Life”	Pride	Power

3. Know Anyone with Disordered Desires/Addictions for These?
 - a. Lust of the Flesh: Food, Drink, Alcohol, Fornication, Adultery, Pornography, Drugs
 - b. Lust of the Eyes: Money, Clothes, Cars, Houses, Investments, Gambling, Covetousness, Workaholics
 - c. Pride of Life: Selfishness, Self-Absorption, Egotism, Anger, Idolatry

The Catechism on the Results of the Fall

Scripture portrays the tragic consequences of this first disobedience. Adam and Eve immediately lose the grace of original holiness. They become afraid of the God of whom they have conceived a distorted image—that of a God jealous of his prerogatives. *The harmony in which they found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed: the control of the soul’s spiritual faculties over the body is shattered; the union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations now henceforth marked by lust and domination. Harmony with creation is broken: visible creation has become alien and hostile to man. Because of man, creation is now subject “to its bondage to decay.”* Finally, the consequence explicitly foretold for this disobedience will come true: man will “return to the ground,” for out of it he was taken. *Death makes its entrance into human history.* After that first sin, the world is virtually inundated by sin. (CCC 399-401)

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The Redemption of Adam: the Threefold Temptation of Christ

And Jesus, fully of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the desert, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”

And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, “To you I will give all this power and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours.” And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’”

And [the devil] took him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the Temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; for it is written, ‘He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you,’ and, ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. (Luke 4:1-13)

1. The Threefold Temptation of Christ:
 - a. Stone into Bread (Lust of the Flesh; Pleasure)
 - b. All the Kingdoms of the World (Lust of the Eyes; Possession)
 - c. “If You Are the Son of God” (Pride of Life; put God to the test)
2. Are These Real Temptations? *Yes*, for Jesus is fully Human, except without Sin
 - a. 1st Temptation: To end the pain and hunger of fasting
 - b. 2nd Temptation: To win the kingdoms of the world from Satan *without the Cross*
 - c. 3rd Temptation: To display his power and glory as Son of God (cf. the Cross)
3. Purpose: to undo the Sin of Adam

Adam

The Garden of Eden
Tempted by the Devil
The Threefold Lust:
Pleasure, Possession, Pride
Fails the Test

Jesus

The Desert of the Fallen World
Tempted by the Devil
The Threefold Victory:
Self-Mastery, Detachment, Humility
Passes the Test

The Catechism on the Temptation

The Gospels speak of a time of solitude for Jesus in the desert immediately after his baptism by John. Driven by the Spirit into the desert, Jesus remains there for forty days without eating; *he lives among wild beasts, and angels minister to him*. At the end of this time Satan tempts him three times, seeking to compromise his filial attitude toward God. *Jesus rebuffs these attacks, which recapitulate the temptations of Adam in Paradise and of Israel in the desert*, and the devil leaves him “until an opportune time.” The evangelists indicate the salvific meaning of this mysterious event: *Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation... In this, Jesus is the devil’s conqueror: he “binds the strong man” to take back his plunder [Mark 3:27]*. Jesus’ victory over the tempter in the desert anticipates victory at the Passion, the supreme act of obedience of his filial love for the Father. (CCC 538-39)

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The Threefold Battle with Satan: Fasting, Almsgiving, and Prayer

“*When you fast*, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Amen, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:16-18)

“*When you give alms*, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Amen, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:2-4)

“*And when you pray*, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Amen, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:5-7)

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matt 6:19-21)

1. The Three Commands of Jesus regarding Holiness
 - a. Fast: temporary renunciation of food and drink
 - b. Give Alms: give money, food, and possessions to the poor and/or the Church
 - c. Pray: “the raising of one’s mind and heart to God” in conversation (CCC 2559)
2. Purpose: to overcome in us the Threefold Temptation of Adam
 - a. Fasting (Conquers the Lust of the Flesh; Pleasure)
 - b. Almsgiving (Conquers the Lust of the Eyes; Possessions)
 - c. Prayer (Conquers the Pride of Life through Humility)
3. When do we do these? All the time, but especially during Lent
By the solemn forty days of *Lent* the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert. (CCC 540)

Conclusion

Christ enables us *to live in him* all that he himself lived, and *he lives it in us*. “By his Incarnation, he, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man.” We are called only to become one with him, for enables us as the members of his Body to share in what he lived for us in the flesh as our model: “*We must continue to accomplish in ourselves the stages of Jesus’ life and his mysteries* and often beg him to perfect and realize them in us and in his whole Church.... *For it is the plan of the Son of God to make us and the whole Church partake in his mysteries and to extend them and continue them in us and in his whole Church*. This is his plan for fulfilling his mysteries in us.” (CCC 521)

1. What kind of Man does Christ call each of us to be?
 - a. A Man of Chastity: who is not enslaved to Lust (Sex, Food, Drink)
 - b. A Man of Worship: Your Treasure is in Heaven/“Worship the Lord Your God alone”
 - c. A Man of Humility: overcome the sin of Pride through Prayer