

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

15 The LORD God took the man
and put him in the garden of Eden
to till it and keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man,

‘You may freely eat
of every tree of the garden;

17 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.’

Now the serpent was more crafty
than any other wild animal
that the LORD God had made.

He said to the woman,

‘Did God say,
“You shall not eat
from any tree
in the garden”?’

2 The woman said to the serpent,

‘We may eat
of the fruit of the trees in the garden;

3 but God said,
“You shall not eat
of the fruit of the tree
that is in the middle of the garden,
nor shall you touch it,
or you shall 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,
who was with her,
and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both
were opened,
and they knew
that they were naked;

and they sewed
fig leaves together
and made
loincloths
for themselves.

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up
by the Spirit
into the wilderness
to be tempted
by the devil.

²He fasted
for forty days and forty nights,
and afterwards he was famished.

³The tempter came
and said to him,

'If you are the Son of God,
command these stones
to become loaves of bread.'

⁴But he answered,

'It is written,
"One does not live
by bread alone,
but by every word
that comes
from the mouth of God."' '

⁵ Then the devil took him
to the holy city
and placed him
on the pinnacle
of the temple,

⁶saying to him,

'If you are the Son of God,
throw yourself down;

for it is written,

"He will command his angels
concerning you",

and

"On their hands
they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot
against a stone." '

⁷Jesus said to him,

'Again it is written,

"Do not put the Lord your God to the test." '

⁸ Again, the devil took him
to a very high mountain
and showed him
all the kingdoms of the world
and their splendour;

⁹and he said to him,
'All these I will give you,
if you will fall down
and worship me.'

¹⁰Jesus said to him,
'Away with you, Satan!

for it is written,

"Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him." '

¹¹Then the devil left him,
and suddenly angels came
and waited on him.

Reading Genesis This Week

Lent starts with framing the human condition,
from the second creation myth in Genesis
too easily, lazily read as 'The Fall'

Honouring the play-on-words and sounds of Hebrew,
'*adamah* clay and '*adam* human,
Adam proper name, *Havva* life-giver
ish breath, *ish* man, *ishah* woman
Yahweh using clay, breath to make a hermaphrodite human,
'took the human and set them in the garden of Eden,
to work it and to watch it.'
(then, in the text omitted in the lectionary,
God split the hermaphrodite 'hu-man into 'wo-man' and 'man'
taking one side from the other side)

What's the original human full condition, then gendered,
placed in a garden, with sufficient gifts, and modest limit?
Vegan consumption is permitted (not other creatures)
but one tree prohibited, with mortal consequences if chosen.

The straw opponent, butt of many jokes:
original sin confused as sexual orientation or expression
An alternative, from Matthew Fox and others:
original blessing, choices that matter, relationship with God

At least, in a less misogynist or heterosexist reading,
Havva claims agency first, reasons and chooses
Adam simply apes her

Try taking a fig leaf sometimes, to sew it –
this is comedy –
God provides real clothing as they leave Eden

What are we 'no longer' and 'not yet'
what fulfills our divinely created and intended humanity, how?

Reading the Gospel This Week

Lent starts with Jesus' temptation in desert
this year's Matthew version longer than Mark 1:12-13
in different order than Luke 4:1-13

If Hevva and Adam faced the serpent *han-na-has*
Jesus faces Satan, tempter, devil,
satan, ho peirazōn, diabolou

If Genesis poses universal human nature and destiny
Matthew starts with messianic role – what we expect of Jesus
(then, if that's Jesus' job, what's ours?)

Jesus turning stones to bread:
is that simply charitable relief,
or technological problem fixing?
How does either (mis)construe our human condition and need?

Jesus throwing himself down from a height:
is that entrusting survival to God,
or 'committing class suicide', spiritual pride?
How does either (mis)construe our human condition and need?

Jesus bowing to devil, so all bow to Jesus:
is that confusing religion and politics
or claiming mediation between divine and human?
How does either (mis)construe our human condition and need?

If we can sort out Jesus' job, then ours as body of Christ,
in relation to universal human nature and destiny –
we can critique others' (mis)constructions
and repent or turn from our errors
individually as mortals,
collectively as church,
universally as humanity...