

Uncreation in the Old and New Testaments:
Genesis 3 and Romans 1

Introduction

“Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.”
— John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

I. Uncreation in the Old Testament: The Story of the Fall, Its Consequences, and Theological Meaning (Gen. 3: 1-24)

A. The story of the fall (vv. 1-7)

1. The temptation (vv. 1-5)

- a. The serpent's question (v. 1)
- b. The woman's answer (vv. 2-3)
- c. The serpent's response: two lies
 - 1.) You shall not die (v. 4)
 - 2.) You will be like God (v. 5)

2. The act of covenant disobedience and the awareness of nakedness (vv. 6-7)

B. The consequences of the fall (vv. 8-24)

1. The separation/alienation of man from God (vv. 8-9)

Gen. 3:8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

2. The separation/alienation of man from himself (v. 10)

Gen. 3: 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

3. The separation of man from woman (v. 12)

Gen. 3:12 And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

4. Curse on the serpent (vv. 14-15)

Gen. 3:14 And the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly shall you go, And dust shall you eat All the days of your life; Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.

5. Curse on the woman (v. 16)

Gen. 3:16 To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

6. Curse on the man and creation and the sentence of death (vv. 17-19)

Gen. 3:17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; **Cursed is the ground** because of you; **In toil you shall eat of it** All the days of your life. Gen. 3:18 "Both **thorns and thistles** it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field; Gen. 3:19 By the **sweat of your face** You shall eat bread, Till you **return to the ground**, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return. "

7. Separation from the Garden of Eden (vv. 22-24)

Gen. 3:23 therefore the \Lord\ God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. Gen. 3:24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.

C. The theological meaning of the Uncreation in the OT

1. Human beings seek to be independent of God and self-legislating
2. The vandalism of shalom (Neil Plantinga)
3. The loss of a sacramental understanding of the cosmos

II. Uncreation in the New Testament: The Noetic Effects of Sin (Romans 1: 18-32)

A. Knowledge of God available via creation (1: 18-20)

1. God's wrath poured out for suppressing the knowledge of God (v. 18)
2. The knowledge of God within (v. 19)
3. The knowledge of God without (v. 20)

B. Knowledge of God rejected via rebellion (**NOETIC EFFECTS OF SIN**) (1: 21-23)

1. Ungodly and unthankful ("they did not honor Him as God or give thanks")
2. Futile speculations ("they became futile in their speculations")
3. Darkened hearts ("their foolish hearts were darkened")
4. Deceived fools ("professing to wise, they became fools")

5. Gross idolaters (“exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for . . . corruptible man . . . birds . . . animals . . . crawling creatures”)

C. Moral results of the rejection of the knowledge of God (1: 24-32)

1. Heterosexual and homosexual immorality (vv. 24-27)

2. Reprobate or depraved mind (vv. 28-32)

D. Theological meaning of the uncreation in the NT

1. Man’s intrinsically religious nature (*divinitatis sensum; semen religionis*) is thoroughly corrupted by sin.

2. No human being is spiritually objective or morally neutral; all people worship God or an idol, are in Christ or in Adam, are citizens of one kingdom or another.

3. Faith will always be integrated with learning; worldviews will always undergird all educational/scholarly enterprises; the question is simply “which faith” or “which worldview”?

4. Faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ restores us to God, renews the mind and reason, and establishes a biblical *Weltanschauung* rooted in truth as the basis for all educational/scholarly endeavors.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Prov. 1: 7

“Unless you believe, you will not understand.”

“Faith seeking understanding.” — Augustine and Anselm

Musical meditation: *The Doctrine of Wisdom*. Composed by William Mathias; Conducted by Elizabeth Patterson; James E. Jordan, Jr., organist; sung by *Gloriæ Dei Cantores* (Singers to the Glory of God), a 44 voice choir from Cape Cod, Mass.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the Knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Amen.