

THE LIFE OF ADAM

Caxton added this life to his edition of the Golden Legend, but it was not a part of Voragine's original.

The Sunday of Septuagesima (i.e., the third Sunday before Lent) beginneth the story of the Bible, in which is read the legend and story of Adam which followeth.

THE CREATION

In the beginning God made and created heaven and earth. The earth was idle and void and covered with darkness. And the spirit of God was borne on the waters, and God said: Be made light, and anon light was made. And God saw that light was good, and divided the light from darkness, and called the light day and darkness night. And thus was made light with heaven and earth first, and even and morning was made one day.

The second day he made the firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament from them that were above, and called the firmament heaven.

The third day were made on the earth herbs and fruits in their kind.

The fourth day God made the sun and moon and stars, etc.

The fifth day he made the fishes in the water and birds in the air.

The sixth day God made the beasts on the earth, every one in his kind and gender. And God saw that all these works were good and said: *Faciamus hominem, etc.* Make we man unto our similitude and image.

Here spake the Father to the Son and Holy Ghost, or else as it were the common voice of three persons, when it was said "make we," and "to our," in plural number.

Man was made to the image of God in his soul. Here it is to be noted that he made not only the soul with the body, but he made both body and soul.

As to the body he made male and female. God gave to man the lordship and power upon living beasts. When God had made man it is not written: *Et vidit quod esset bonum, quia in proximo sciebat eum lapsurum.* For yet he was not perfect till the woman was made, and therefore it is read: "It is not good the man to be alone."

Thus in six days was heaven and earth made and all the ornation of them. And then he made the seventh day on which he rested, not for that he was weary, but ceased his operation, and showed the seventh day which he blessed. Thus be shortly showed the generations of heaven

and earth, for here be determined the works of the six days and the seventh day he sanctified and made holy.

ADAM PLACED IN THE GARDEN OF PARADISE

God had planted in the beginning Paradise a place of desire and delices. And man was made in the field of Damascus; he was made of the slime of the earth. Paradise was made the third day of creation, and was beset with herbs, plants and trees, and is a place of most mirth and joy. In the midst whereof be set two trees, that is the tree of life, and that other the tree of knowing good and evil. And there is a well, which casteth out water for to water the trees and herbs of Paradise.

This well is the mother of all waters, which well is divided into four parts. One part is called Phison. This goeth about Inde. The second is called Gijon, otherwise Nilus, and that runneth about Ethiopia, the other two be called Tigris and Euphrates. Tigris runneth towards Assyria, and Euphrates is called fruitful, which runneth in Chaldea. These four floods come and spring out of the same well, and depart, and yet in some place some of them meet again.

Then God took man from the place of his creation and brought him into Paradise, for to work there, not to labour needily, but in delighting and recreating him, and that he should keep Paradise. For like as Paradise should refresh him, so should he labour to serve God.

And there God gave him a commandment. Every commandment standeth in two things, in doing or forbidding. In doing he commanded him to eat of all the trees of Paradise, in forbidding he commanded that he should not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This commandment was given to the man, and by the man it went to the woman. For when the woman was made it was commanded to them both, and hereto he set a pain, saying: Whatsoever day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die by death.

THE CREATION OF EVE

God said: It is not good a man to be alone, make we to him an helper like to himself for to bring forth children.

Adam supposed that some helper to him had been among the beasts which had been like to him. Therefore God brought to Adam all living beasts of the earth and air, in which he understood them of the water also, which with one commandment all came tofore him. They were brought for two causes, one was because man should give to each of them a name, by which they should know that he should dominate over them, and the second cause was because Adam should know that there was none of them like to him.

And he named them in the Hebrew tongue, which was only the language and none other at the beginning.

And so none being found like unto him, God sent in Adam a lust to sleep, which was no dream, but as is supposed in an extasy or in a trance; in which was showed to him the celestial

court. Wherefore when he awoke he prophesied of the conjunction of Christ to his church, and of the flood that was to come, and of the doom and destruction of the world by fire he knew, which afterward he told to his children.

Whiles that Adam slept, God took one of his ribs, both flesh and bone, and made that a woman, and set her tofore Adam. Which then said: This is now a bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.

And Adam gave her a name like as her lord, and said she should be called virago, which is as much as to say as made of a man, and is a name taken of a man. And anon, the name giving, he prophesied, saying: Because she is taken of the side of a man, therefore a man shall forsake and leave father and mother and abide and be adherent unto his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh; and though they be two persons, yet in matrimony and wedlock they be but one flesh, and in other things twain. For why, neither of them had power of his own flesh.

They were both naked and were not ashamed, they felt nothing of the moving of their flesh, ne to refrain them as we now do, for they stood both in the state of innocence.

THE FALL

Then the serpent which was hotter than any beast of the earth and naturally deceivable, for he was full of the devil Lucifer, which was deject and cast out of heaven, had great envy to man that was bodily in Paradise, and knew well, if he might make him to trespass and break God's commandments, that he should be cast out also. Yet he was afeard to be taken or espied of the man, he went to the woman, not so prudent and more prone to slide and bow. And in the form of the serpent, for then the serpent was erect as a man.

Bede saith that he chose a serpent having a maiden's cheer, for like oft apply to like, and spake by the tongue of the serpent to Eve, and said: Why commanded you God that ye should not eat of all the trees of Paradise?

This he said to find occasion to say that he was come for. Then the woman answered and said: *Ne forte moriamur*, "lest haply we die," which she said doubting, for lightly she was flexible to every part.

Whereunto anon he answered: Nay in no wise ye shall die, but God would not that ye should be like him in science, and knowing that when ye eat of this tree ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil, he as envious forbade you.

And anon the woman, elate in pride and willing to be like to God, accorded thereto and believed him. The woman saw that the tree was fair to look on, and clean and sweet of savour, took and ate thereof, and gave unto Adam of the same; happily desiring him by fair words. But Adam anon agreed, for when he saw the woman not dead he supposed that God had said that they should die to fear them with, and then ate of the fruit forbidden.

And anon their sight was opened that they saw their nakedness, and then anon they understood that they had trespassed, for anon their flesh began to move and stir to concupiscence. For before that they had eaten of the forbidden fruit, the movings were repressed and closed as in young children.

And then, after they had sinned, they were opened like springs of water and began to move, and then they were expert and knew them. And like as they were inobedient to their superior, right so their members began to move against their superior, which is reason, and they felt their first moving in their privy members, and thereof they were ashamed. And thus they knew that they were naked, and they took fig leaves and sewed them together for to cover their members in manner of breeches.

And anon after, they heard the voice of our Lord God walking, and anon they hid them. Our Lord called the man and said: “Adam, where art thou?” Calling him in blaming him and not as knowing where he was, but as who said: “Adam, see in what misery thou art.”

Which answered: I have hid me, Lord, for I am naked.

Our Lord said: Who told thee that thou wert naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree for bidden?

He then not meekly confessing his trespass, but laid the fault on his wife, and on him as giver of the woman to him, and said: The woman that thou gavest to me as a fellow, gave to me of the tree, and I ate thereof.

And then our Lord said to the woman: Why didst thou so?

Neither she accused herself, but laid the sin on the serpent, and privily she laid the fault on the maker of him.

The serpent was not demanded, for he did it not of himself, but the devil by him. And our Lord, cursing them, began at the serpent, keeping an order and congruous number of curses. The serpent was the first and sinned most, for he sinned in three things. The woman next and sinned lese than he, but more than the man, for she sinned in two things. The man sinned last and least, for he sinned but in one.

The serpent had envy, he lied, and deceived, for these three he had three curses. Because he had envy at the excellence of man, it was said to him: Thou shalt go and creep on thy breast; because he lied he is punished in his mouth, when it was said: Thou shalt eat earth all the days of thy life. Also he took away his voice and put venom in his mouth. And because he deceived, it was said: I shall put enmity between thee and woman, and thy seed and her seed. She shall break thy head, etc.

In two things the woman sinned, in pride and eating the fruit. Because she sinned in pride, he meeked her, saying: “Thou shalt be under the power of man, and he shall have lordship over thee, and he shall put thee to affliction.” Now is she subject to a man by condition and

dread, which before was but subject by love; and because she sinned in the fruit, she is punished in her fruit, when it was said to her: “Thou shalt bring forth children in sorrow.” In the pain of sorrow standeth the curse, but in bringing forth of children is a blessing. And so, in punishing, God forgat not to have mercy, which is to be noted, etc.

And because Adam sinned but only in eating of the fruit, therefore he was punished in seeking his meat, as it is said to him: “Accursed be the earth in thy work,” that is to say for thy work of thy sin, for which is made that the earth that brought forth good and wholesome fruits plenteously, from henceforth shall bring forth but seldom, and also none without man's labour, and also sometime weeds, briars, and thorns shall grow. And he added: “Thereto shalt thou eat herbs of the earth,” as who saith thou shalt be like a beast or jument [mare]. He cursed the earth because the trespass was of the fruit of the earth and not of the water. He added thereto to him of labour: “In the sweat of thy cheer thou shalt eat thy bread unto the time thou return again into the earth” – that is to say till thou die, for thou art earth, and into earth thou shalt go again.

Then Adam, wailing and sorrowing the misery that was to come of his posterity, named his wife Eve, which is to say, mother of all living folk.

Then God made to Adam and Eve two leathern coats of the skins of dead beasts, to the end that they bare with them the sign of mortality, and said: “Lo, Adam is made as one of us, knowing good and evil, now lest he put his hand and take of the tree of life and live ever,” as who saith: beware and cast him out, lest he take and eat of the tree of life.

And so he was cast out of Paradise, and set in the field of Damascus where as he was made and taken from, for to work and labour there. And our Lord set Cherubim to keep Paradise of delight with a burning sword and pliant, to the end that none should enter there ne come to the tree of life.

THE CHILDREN OF ADAM AND EVE

After then that Adam was cast out of Paradise and set in the world, he knew his wife and engendered Cain, the fifteenth year after he was made, and his sister Calmana. They came out of Paradise virgins, as Methodius saith, and when Adam was made, he was made a perfect man as a man of thirty years of age when he was but one day old, and he might well have gotten many children tofore Cain, but after another fifteen years was Abel born, and his sister Delbora.

CAIN SLAYS ABEL

When Adam was an hundred and thirty years of age, Cain slew Abel his brother. Truth it is, after many days Cain and Abel offered sacrifice and gifts unto God. It is to be believed that Adam taught his sons to offer to God their tithes and first fruits. Cain offered fruits, for he was a ploughman and tiller of earth, and Abel offered milk and the first of the lambs, Moses saith [i.e., in the Book of Genesis], of the fattest of the flock. And God beheld the gifts of Abel, for he and his sacrifices were acceptable to our Lord; and as to Cain his sacrifices, God beheld them not, for they were not to him acceptable, he offered withies [willow branches] and thorns.

And as some doctors say, fire came from heaven and lighted the sacrifice of Abel, and the gifts of Cain pleased not our Lord, for the sacrifice would not be light nor burn clear in the light of God. Whereof Cain had great envy unto his brother Abel, which arose against him and slew him.

And our Lord said to him: Where is Abel thy brother?

He answered and said: I wot never, am I keeper of my brother?

Then our Lord said: What hast thou done? The voice of the blood of thy brother crieth to thee from the earth, wherefore thou art cursed, and accursed be the earth that received the blood of thy brother by his mouth of thy hands. When thou shalt work and labour the earth it shall bring forth no fruit, but thou shalt be fugitive, vagabond, and void on the earth.

This Cain deserved well to be cursed, knowing the pain of the first trespass of Adam, yet he added thereto murder and slaughter of his brother.

Then Cain, dreading that beasts should devour him, or if he went forth he should be slain of the men, or if he dwelt with them, they would slay him for his sin, damned himself, and in despair said: My wickedness is more than I can deserve to have forgiveness, whoso find me shall slay me.

This he said of dread, or else wishing, as who said, "would God he would slay me." Then our Lord said: Nay not so, thou shalt die, but not soon, for whosoever slayeth Cain shall be punished seven sithes more, for he should deliver him from dread, from labour and misery, and added that he should be punished personally sevenfold more. This punishment shall endure to him in pain unto the seventh, Lameth, whosoever shall slay seventh Cain shall loose seven vengeance.

Some hold that his pain endured unto the seventh generation, for he committed seven sins. He departed not truly, he had envy to his brother, he wrought guilefully, he slew his brother falsely, he denied it, he despaired and damned, he did no penance.

And after he went into the east, fugitive and vagabond. Cain knew his wife which bare Enoch, and he made a city and named it Enoch after the name of his son Enoch. Here it showeth well that this time were many men, though their generation be not said, whom Cain called to his city, by whose help he made it, whom he induced to theft and robbery. He was the first that walled or made cities; dreading them that he hurted, for surety he brought his people into the towns.

THE DESCENDANTS OF CAIN

Then Enoch gat Irad, and Irad Mehujael, and he gat Methusael, and he gat Lameth, which was the seventh from Adam and worst, for he brought in first bigamy, and by him was committed first adultery, against the law of God and of nature, and against the decree of God. This Lameth took two wives, Adah and Zilla; of Adah he gat Jabal which found first the craft to make folds

for shepherds and to change their pasture, and ordained flocks of sheep, and departed the sheep from the goats after the quality, the lambs by themselves, and the older by themselves, and understood the feeding of them after the season of the year.

The name of his brother was Jubal, father of singers in the harp and organs, not of the instruments, for they were found long after, but he was the finder of music, that is to say of consonants of accord, such as shepherds use in their delights and sports.

And forasmuch as he heard Adam prophesy of two judgments by the fire and water, that all things should be destroyed thereby, and that his craft new found should not perish, he did do write it in two pillars or columns, one of marble, another of clay of the earth, to the end that one should endure against the water, and that other against the fire. Josephus saith that the pillar of marble is yet in the land of Syria.

Of Zilla he begat Tubal-cain, which found first the craft of smithery and working of iron, and made things for war, and sculptures and gravings in metal to the pleasure of the eyes, which he so working, Tubal, tofore said, had delight in the sound of his hammers, of which he made the consonants and tunes of accord in his song.

Noema, sister of Tubal-cain, found first the craft of diverse texture.

LAMETH SLAYS CAIN

Lameth was a shooter, and used to shoot at wild beasts, for none use of the meat of them, but only for to have the skins for their clothing, and lived so long that he was blind and had a child to lead him. And on a time by adventure he slew Cain. For Cain was alway afeard and hid him among bushes and briars, and the child that led Lameth had supposed it had been some wild beast and directed Lameth to shoot thereat, and so, weening to shoot at a beast, slew Cain.

And when he knew that he had slain Cain, he with his bow slew the child, and thus he slew them both to his damnation; therefore as the sin of Cain was punished seven sithes, so was the sin of Lameth seventy sithes and seven. That is to say seventyseven souls that came of Lameth were perished in the deluge and Noah's flood; also his wife did him much sorrow, and evil-entreated him. And he being wroth said that he suffered that for his double homicide and manslaughter, yet nevertheless he feared him by pain, saying: Why will ye slay of me? he shall be more and sorer punished that slayeth me, than he that slew Cain.

THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM

After that Abel was slain, Strabus saith that Adam avowed no more to have to do with his wife, but by an angel he brake the vow, because a son should be born to God. Yet nevertheless Josephus said that when Abel was slain and Cain fled away, Adam thought of procreation of children, and so when he was one hundred and thirty years old he engendered Seth like to his similitude, and he to the image of God.

This Seth was a good man, and he gat Enos, and Enos Cainan, and Cainan begot Malaleel, and Malaleel Jared, and Jared Enoch, and Enoch Methuselah, and Methuselah Lamech, and Lamech Noah.

And like as in the generation of Cain the seventh was the worst, so in the generation of Seth the seventh was the best, that was Enoch whom God took and brought him into Paradise, unto the time that he shall come with Elias for to convert the hearts of the fathers into the sons.

And Adam lived after he had begotten Seth eight hundred years, and engendered sons and daughters. Some hold opinion thirty sons and thirty daughters, and some fifty of that one and fifty of that other. We find no certainty of them in the Bible. But all the days of Adam living here in earth amount to the sum of nine hundred and thirty years.

THE DEATH OF ADAM AND THE TREE OF MERCY

And in the end of his life when he should die, it is said, but of none authority, that he sent Seth his son into Paradise for to fetch the oil of mercy, where he received certain grains of the fruit of the tree of mercy by an angel. And when he came again he found his father Adam yet alive and told him what he had done. And then Adam laughed first and then died. And then he laid the grains or kernels under his father's tongue and buried him in the vale of Hebron; and out of his mouth grew three trees of the three grains, of which trees the cross that our Lord suffered his passion on was made, by virtue of which he gat very mercy, and was brought out of darkness into very light of heaven. To the which he bring us that liveth and reigneth God, world without end.

The [iconography of Adam and Eve](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

Scanned by Robert Blackmon. bob_blackmon@mindspring.com.

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halsall@fordham.edu

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