

## Creation



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Orthodox Christians believe that God is "the Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible". The world is not eternal; only God is eternal. He created the entire world out of nothing: "for he spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood forth" (Ps. 33,9).

Man cannot determine the manner in which the world came into being; for it is not an object of scientific examination, for it transcends man's "rational" ability (his logic). Man is part of created reality, he cannot become an "observer" of the manner in which he himself was created!

The world is not of the same nature with God; "by nature" it is entirely different. The world is not a creation from the essence of God, "light from light" but the fruit of God's volition and freedom; there is an insurmountable chasm separating God's essence from the essence of the created world.

God need not have created the world. The world, however, was pre-eternally in God's "thought". Thus the creation of the world does not mean a change in God's life. The world came into being according to God's plan and at a time which pre-eternally existed in God's will.

Before making visible creation, God created the spiritual world, i.e. the angels: "When the stars were created, all my angels with a loud voice praised me", says God to Job (Job 38,7). Neither angels nor men existed pre-eternally. Angels are spiritual persons. They were created in time and are limited by space; the swiftness, however, of the angelic nature allows them to act everywhere; only God is not limited by space.

Also, the angels, like men, were created mutable, but through God's grace and their own disposition, they became firm and unshakable in virtue and remain faithful in their original mission: to glorify God and to minister unto man's salvation (Isaiah, 6,3; Luke 2,14; Hebr. 1,14).

Man was from the beginning created as body and soul; man's soul did not pre-exist. Holy Scripture states: "And God created man, taking earth from the ground and breathed into his face the spirit of life, and man became a living being" (Gen. 2,7).

Underlining the distinction between the Creator and the creatures, the Orthodox Christian does not make an idol of nature or of himself. He does not hope that in "identifying" with nature, he will broaden his existence; he does not seek out certain apocryphal transcendental powers within nature, believing that by "activating" them he will solve the problems he faces. His hope has reference to God the Creator, for He has created us from the beginning "according to His image" with a purpose to achieve the "according to the Image" (Gen. 1,26); he does not refer

to the created world or to his own self. The meaning of life is to be found in achieving the "according to the likeness", our Archetype, which is outside our own essence and not "within us".

All that exists was created by God "very good"; "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1,31). The Orthodox Christian therefore evaluates all of material creation positively.

All things are the fruit of God's love, all things are sanctified in the Orthodox Church: not only man's soul, but his body as well, and all of material creation: all things contain within them the "seed" of perfection and are foreordained to life, free from corruption and death.

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Its Faith, Worship and Life

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