

Glossary

Allegorical An interpretive way to read a text in which things in the text stand for or mean something other than what they literally are. The New Testament uses allegory as one means to interpret the Old Testament. For example St. Paul writes in Galatians 4:22-31, “For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ... Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now. ... So, brethren, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.” In the text Paul interprets the real women Hagar and Sarah to stand for two types of covenant; he interprets the real persons, Hagar and Sarah, to mean something other than just being two women. This method of interpretation does not deny the literal meaning of the text, but says there is a deeper meaning if you read the text with the right understanding. If you take the time to study Paul’s allegory, you realize it is quite complex, and far beyond that to which the plain reading of the passage leads.

Anamnesis This is the Greek word for “remembering.” In the Divine Liturgy for example we remember all the events of salvation that have happened for us – the cross, the tomb, the resurrection, the ascension and Christ’s sitting at the right hand of the father. This form of remembering goes far beyond recalling a past event, for it is a form of remembering which says we are making ourselves present in these events because they are real, and we are declaring the reality of these events in our life today. The resurrection of Christ is important not because it happened 2000 years ago, but because we also participate in it and it is our salvation. “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his” (Romans 6:3-5). We remember what Christ accomplished for us whenever we liturgically celebrate baptism and the Eucharist. Our “remembering” Christ’s saving actions is the very basis for our faith in God and hope in the future. We do not live by “blind” faith, but by remembering all the things which God had done for us.

Ancestral Sin (see also Original Sin) Ancestral Sin is a terminology many Orthodox writers prefer to use regarding the first sin of Eve and Adam, rather than the phrase “original sin.” Original sin under the influence of St. Augustine and then later Reformation writers took on specific connotations that are not completely accepted by Orthodox writers. “Original sin” in Western Christian thinking often carries with it notions of inherited guilt and an inherited imperfect human nature. The Orthodox tended, despite the Fall, to still see human nature positively – the indelible “image of God” remains natural to humans. There is something naturally good about God’s created human beings despite our having sinned. Generally in Orthodox thinking what is emphasized more than sin is death – it is mortality that we inherit from our ancestors because of sin. A key scriptural passage is Romans 5:12 - “*Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned...*” It is death that spread to all humans, not sin nor the guilt of the original sin.

Antediluvian The word for describing the world before the catastrophic flood of Genesis 6-9. Antediluvians are all the people from Adam and Eve to Noah. All of the antediluvians named in Genesis die before the flood occurs, except of course for Noah, his sons, and their wives, who are the only antediluvians to survive the flood and thus carry the human race into the world that we know. Noah and

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his family are symbolically prototypes of all Christians who are carried by the Church, another ark, over the power of death into life purified of all sin.

Anthropomorphic The term applied to God when God is described as acting in an almost human way, or when human characteristics are attributed to Him. For example, God is said to walk in the garden in Genesis 2 or He shuts the door of the ark in Genesis 7. We do not have a language adequate to describing God, and so we use human terms and phrases to help us understand His relationship to us. In a certain way it is taking the Genesis teaching that humans are created in God's image, and then reading back into God's deeds human actions, motivations and emotions and making God into the likeness of humans. Theological truth in this case does not have commutative properties – the fact that we are in God's image and likeness does not mean He therefore is in our image and likeness. Anthropomorphic writing is a form of literalism, but exactly because of its literal implication it also becomes a major rationale for needing a higher degree of symbolic, metaphorical or figurative thinking when reading Scripture for full understanding.

Christocentric A way of interpreting the Old Testament in which Jesus Christ is the key that helps us unlock the meaning of the text. Christ said, "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me" (John 5:39). We believe the main purpose of the Old Testament is to bear witness to Christ. Christ Himself taught the Scriptures to His disciples in this way: "And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). Whatever other truth the Old Testament contains – moral, prophetic, literal, historic – we believe in Christ the biblical verses are fully expounded.

Eschaton The final ending of the entire universe when all things in heaven and on earth are transfigured by the Lord's final judgment and God's Kingdom is fully established. "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelations 11:15)

the Fall Refers to the original sin of Adam and Eve in eating the forbidden fruit recorded in Genesis 3. At that moment humanity fell from God's grace, we were expelled from paradise and made to live in the world suffering the effects of this sin. Mortality, sickness and suffering are all part of the world as a result of sin.

Incarnation The word literally means to "take on or become flesh." For Christians, this is THE revelation of God found in Jesus Christ who is God incarnate. In John 1:14 we read that Jesus is the Word of God became flesh. God became flesh in Jesus Christ – He was the Son of God, second person of the Trinity and He became human. We believe the great revelation of God in Christ is that God has united Himself to humanity in order to save us.

Literalism A method of interpreting scripture in which one limits one's reading to attempting to discern the "plain" meaning of the text – just reading exactly what it says. While much of scripture can be read literally, a completely literal reading of Genesis 1-11 creates numerous irreconcilable inconsistencies and contradictions in the text, and imposes an absolute anthropomorphic understanding on Theology. Early Christians often felt the "plain" reading of the text was not necessarily the best reading of the text. They believed the scriptures as the Word of God were a deep well with life-giving meaning and that to simply drink of the surface water is to miss the depth that the text held. In America some Christians (known as literalists) assume that for the scriptures to be "true" they must be literally, historically and scientifically factual. Yet we know that the Scriptures also contain metaphor, poetry, parables and cannot be read only in a literal way. In addition the New Testament is full of examples of interpreting the Old Testament in non-literal ways – as allegory, prophecy, typology, figuratively, metaphorically and symbolically. The Scriptures do not say they have to be read literally. They do say that they are "inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tim 3:16), and sometimes we come to these benefits by reading the text in ways other than only literally. To demand that every single verse of the Scriptures must be read literally is to impose on the Bible a slavish

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reading of the text. St. John Chrysostom said, "We ourselves are not the lords over the rules of interpretation," rather we are to discover from the reading of the Bible how the Scriptures understand themselves. Obviously when we read the New Testament we realize the authors of the Christian Scriptures use many and varied methods when they interpret the Old Testament texts.

Original sin The very first sin committed by humans – the eating of the forbidden fruit by Adam and Eve. The major consequences of this sin were that Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise and they became mortal beings as have all of us. Some Orthodox writers prefer to call the first sin "ancestral sin" as they feel the term "original sin" as a result of Western Christian ideas has become completely and wrongfully identified with inherited sin and inherited guilt. Orthodox writers tend to emphasize mortality as the significant result of the first sin, and the trait which all humans inherit from their ancestors as a result of sin.

Patristic Refers to the Fathers of the Church – those teachers universally recognized by the Church as defending and teaching the official dogma of the Church. Most often it refers to writers from about the 4th- 8th Centuries of Christianity.

Postlapsarian Anything that occurs to humans or the cosmos after the sin of Adam and Eve. All of the events of Genesis 4-11 are postlapsarian. The only prelapsarian events are described in Genesis 1:1-3:5.

Postmodernism A philosophical way of understanding the world which emerged in the late 20th Century. Generally postmodernism denies that there is one story (like the Bible) which ties all humans together or which explains humanity. It accepts that everyone's worldview is equally valid and that there is no one universal truth for all. Good and bad, right and wrong, true and false, all represent ideas completely limited by one's perspective and perception. Thus postmodern thinking is very much a form of the Theory of Relativity being applied to morality, ethics, theology, and truth. Postmodernism has become a common influence in how we currently understand and relate to our world. This is true whether or not we agree with its basic premises. It is a way of seeing the world that is expressed commonly through the modern media.

Prototype A prototype is the first of a thing that symbolically stands for all other things like it that come after it in time. Often the prototype helps us to recognize the real and significant thing which comes later in history. Adam is the prototype of all sinful humans, but Christ is a prototype of the new human being no longer under the power of sin. Early Christians frequently saw in the Old Testament stories prototypes of Christian ideas. The ark for example is a prototype of the Church. Abel is a prototype of all righteous men who are persecuted by the ungodly and who endure even death at the hands of the violent. Frequently a prototype might be compared to the drawings and models of a thing before the real thing is built. They help us to recognize the reality of which they were but a foreshadowing. Once the building is constructed we fully realize what the drawings were all about.

Septuagint Almost 200 years before Jesus is born the Jews decide to translate their scriptures from Hebrew and Aramaic into the Greek language. They did this to make their scriptures more universally accessible to the people of the world. The Septuagint was accepted as the authentic and official scriptures of the Jews (not just the scriptures in translation, they believed the Septuagint was inspired scriptures). Early Christians relied mostly on the Septuagint for their understanding of the Old Testament. About 100 years after the death of Christ the Jewish rabbis officially declared the Septuagint was not authoritative scripture for Jews because the Christians made such extensive use of it to explain and defend their own beliefs that Jesus is the Messiah. The Septuagint contains a number of Scriptural passages and even entire books which are no longer found in the Jewish Scriptures. It is important to remember the Septuagint was a translation of the Jewish Scriptures done by Jews themselves long before Christianity existed. The first Christians made extensive use of these Scriptures because they were considered inspired by the Jews of the First Century.

Source Theory A theory of modern biblical scholarship which believes that some of the variations and inconsistencies in the Old Testament scriptures can be explained by the fact that different authors writing at varied times contributed to the composition of the Jewish scriptures. This doesn't question the inspiration of the text, but says books such as Genesis were not written by one person but are really a compilation of writings that one editor eventually wove into the text we accept in the Bible. Like any form of interpretation, Source Theory is a tool that can help us understand the Scriptures. All tools are good servants and bad masters. If we use them to help us understand the text, rather than have them determine the meaning of the text, they are helpful. A miner's pick can help him uncover gold, but it cannot tell the miner whether the gold is real or iron pyrite, "fool's gold." Source Theory reminds us that much of Genesis originally existed in oral form – stories that belonged to the entire community. As such, they didn't have just one author, but had an entire community which preserved and authenticated the story. It was common in oral communities that more than one version of a story might be told, and yet accepted as authoritative. Source Theory has helped uncover that fact.

Teleology The idea that the entire universe is being directed toward a pre-determined goal or end. This pre-ordained and planned goal to which God is directing all things actually governs what God allows in the universe. Teleology is embraced by Christians, Jews, Muslims. Teleology is rejected by strict adherents to evolution who say the events of the universe are random, not planned, and are not moving toward any particular goal; the fittest survive at any given time, thus there is no particular meaning to the universe. Deists also, although they believe God exists, reject a notion that God is guiding every particular event in the universe or that God intervenes in history. So they too reject teleology, but tend to see God as a benevolent force who isn't imposing His will on all things.

Typology This is one means of biblical interpretation in which events which happen in ancient times are seen as a form of prophecy which help us recognize later acts of God. The original event or person or passage is viewed as a "type" of things to come. Adam is the first man and Christ is the New Adam, so Adam is a type. Melitios of Sardis (d.190) says typology is like the sketches and models that craftsmen make before they make their real product. When they are building the intended product the sketches and models help us realize what the craftsman is doing. The sketches and models may be partial and incomplete but the final and intended product reveals what the sketches and models were all about. The ark is a type of the church, the flood a type of baptism. The Patristic writers frequently made use of typology as a way to understand the scriptures, as did the New Testament writers in their use of the Old Testament. Melitios says the innocent Abel slain by his brother is a type of all the righteous who have been murdered, including Christ.

YHWH The actual Name of God (like any first name) which the Old Testament writers use when referring to God by Name rather than calling Him by the generic word "God." God revealed His Name to Moses in the burning bush. The Name was always considered sacred and was never commonly pronounced. Jewish documents left out the vowels to help keep the pronunciation of God's Name sacred and used only the four consonants (thus the name of God written as YHWH is called the Tetragrammata). In Source Theory there is one particular "source" – author or editor – the J-Source, who uses God's Name whenever referring to God. Not all Old Testament writers used God's Name when referring to God.