



Back to Basics with the *Law of God* Part 3: The Gospel in the Old Testament



A Straightforward Teaching of Orthodox Christianity based upon
the Slobodskoy *Law of God* Study Book

Priest Justin Patterson / Fall 2018

What is the Law of God?

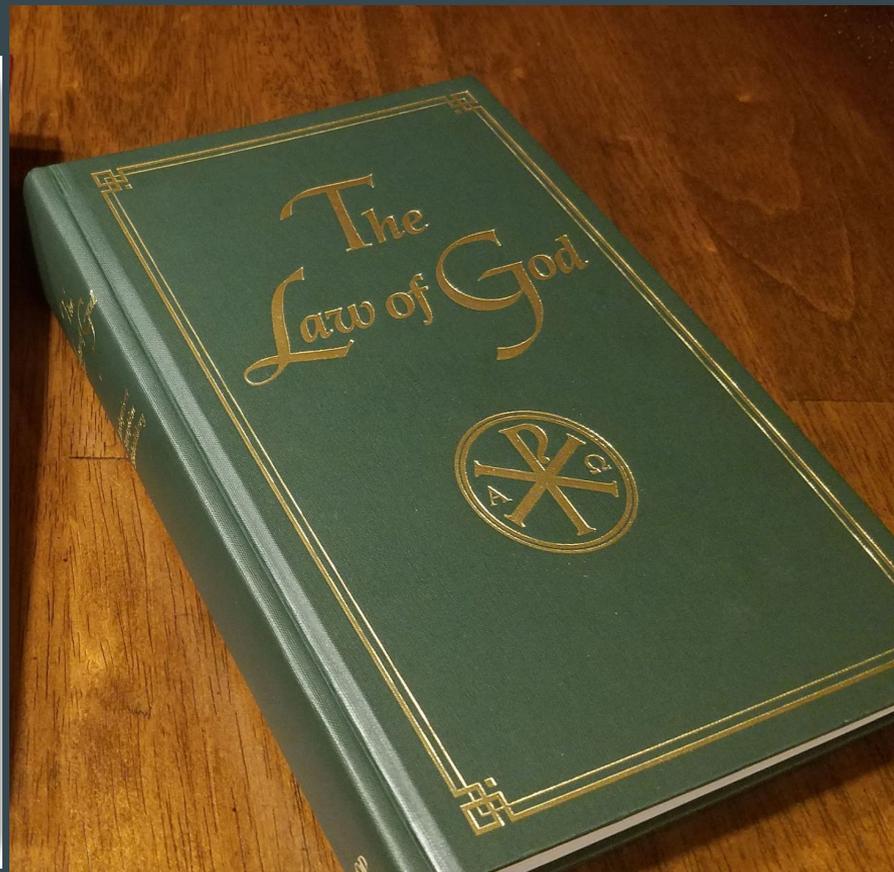
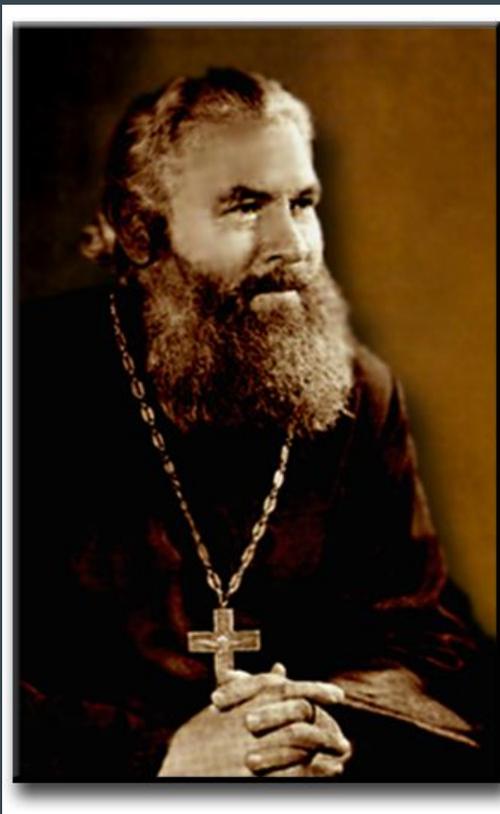
The Law of God

“For Study at Home
and at School”

Compiled by
Archpriest Seraphim
Slobodskoy 1912-71

Holy Trinity Press in
Jordanville

1966; English 1993



But What is the Law of God?

Law of God (Закон Божий)

= Russian Sunday School!

So this book is simply one priest's attempt to put together a "basic" yet traditional Russian Orthodox teaching manual--geared for older children!



Week 1: “Part One, Basic Concepts”



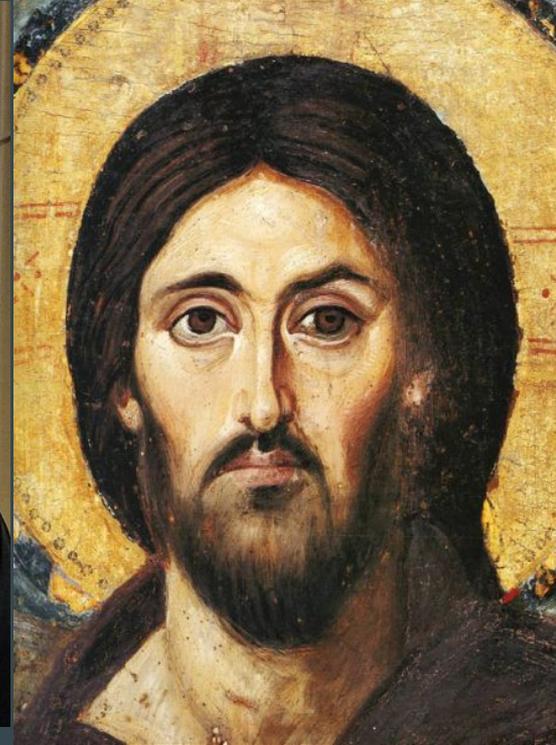
This included:

- Creation by God *ex nihilo*
- Basic Concepts of God (including divine revelation as being key)
- An introduction to the Holy Trinity
- The attributes of God
- Exploring what sin is
- The sign of the Cross
- The church building (temple)
- We also began introducing prayer...

Week 2 (Last Week): Iconography & “The Prayers”

W/ icons we observed:

- How God is portrayed in icons (Christ, the Trinity, the Spirit)
- How the Mother of God is depicted
- How the saints and angels are depicted in icons
- Nimbuses/halos



Last Week's Thoughts on Prayer Generally

+Importance of Sign of the Cross (carefulness!)

+Posture During Prayer (standing, bowing)

+3 broad categories of prayer:

1. Prayers of Praise & Thanksgiving
2. Prayers of Petition
3. Penitential Prayers

+Disposition in Prayer (peace, focus, fasting, purity)



Last Week: More on Where and How We Can Pray to God

“We can pray to God everywhere because God is everywhere: at home, at church, on every path.

The Christian must pray every day:

- Morning and evening
- Before and after eating
- Before and after every kind of work

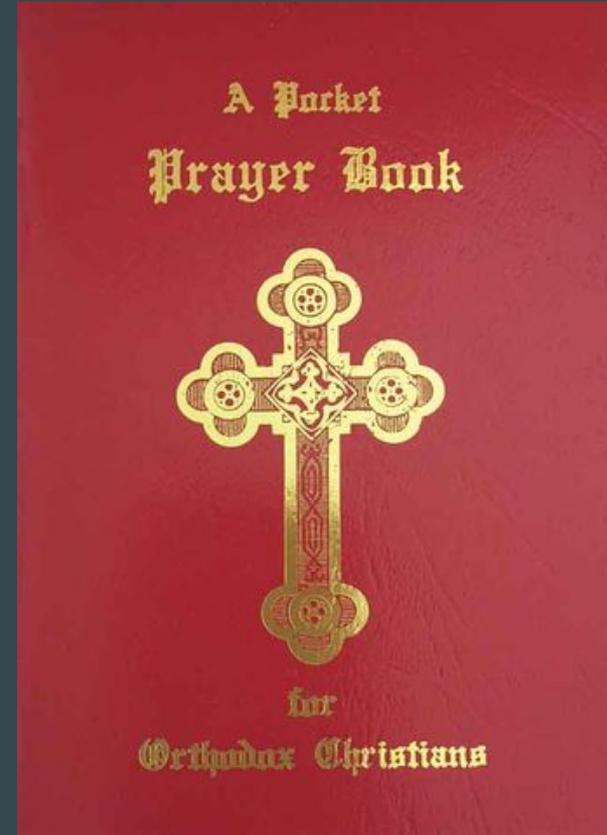
Last week, we emphasized the two broad categories of prayer (2 wings)

- Prayer at home or private prayer
- Public prayer or prayer at church



Last Week: “The Prayers”

- Arrow prayers
- Trisagion Prayers (Opening Prayers)
 - The Lord’s Prayer
- Prayers Related to the Theotokos
- Prayers Related to the Saints, Angels, and Cross
- Prayers for the Living
- Prayers for the Repose
- Morning Prayers
- Evening Prayers
- Prayers Before & After Eating

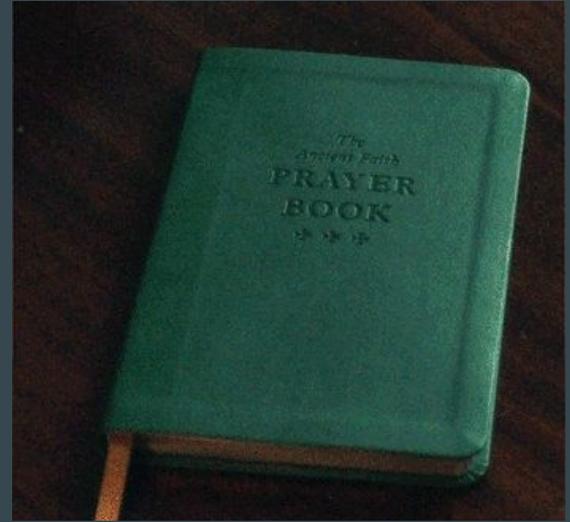


Prayers of Need

- Before & After Lessons [pp. 67-68]

In *Ancient Faith Prayer Book*:

- Before spiritual reading, p. 119
- Before reading Gospel, p. 120
- On entering and leaving church, pp. 120-121
- Before a journey, p. 122
- Before and after work, p. 123
- Before using the internet, p. 124
- Needs Related to Health, pp. 125-128
- For a Single Person Seeking Spouse, p. 128
- For Married Couple, p. 129
- For Moving into New Home, p. 130
- For Conception, p. 130
- For an Expecting Woman, p. 131
- In a Difficult Labor, p. 132
- Needs Related to Children, pp. 133-135
- For a Soldier in Warfare, p. 136
- In Times of Need or Temptation, pp. 137-138



Various Akathists of Need

- THE Akathist to the Mother of God (St. Romanus the Melodist)
- Akathist for One Fallen Asleep
- Akathist to Martyr Varus (Outside Baptism!)
- Akathist for Help in Time of Trouble
- Akathist to the Mother of God “Inexhaustible Cup” (Addictions)
- Akathist to the Mother of God “Softener of Evil Hearts”
- Akathist to the Mother of God “Nurterer of Children”
- Akathist to the Mother of God “Pantanassa” (Healer of Cancer)
- Akathist to St. Panteleimon the Great-Martyr & Healer
- Akathist to St. Luke of Simferopol “Compassionate Healer”
- Akathist to St. Ksenia (Mental Health)
- Akathist “Glory to God for All Things” (Thanksgiving)
- Akathist to Jesus Christ “Light of Those in Darkness”
- Akathist to the Mother of God “Joy of All Who Sorrow”
- Akathist of Repentance for Those Children Have Perished Through Abortion
- Akathists to various saints for various needs
- Akathists related to various feast days...

“The Book of Needs,” including services for...

- All the Sacraments including Monastic Tonsure, Blessing of Waters, Christian Burial, and Consecration of a Temple
- Blessing vestments, icons, iconostases, crosses, liturgical vessels, etc...
- Special blessings on certain feasts (e.g., candles on Feb. 2, palms on Palm Sunday, eggs and meat at Pascha, fruit at Transfiguration, flowers at Dormition, etc...)
- Insomnia, demonic possession/oppression of person/place, increase of love, prisoners, etc...
- Various degrees of home blessing, flock and crop blessing, vehicle and boat blessing, etc...
- Various needs associated with death and remembrance
- Various calamities (e.g., drought, flood, inclement weather, pandemic, civil war, earthquake, tempest, famine)
- Various civil celebrations (e.g., New Year, national holidays, start of school year)
- Various needs (childbearing, travel, before beginning work, special request, thanksgiving)
- Various blessings (learning, new construction, digging well, bees, new ship, etc...)

This Week: The Gospel in the Old Testament

From the introduction to the Old Testament chapters [*excerpts from p. 76*]

The focus already on the big big picture:

- Humanity's high calling to live always in God's love
- Humanity breaking God's will
- God's desire to save and restore them
- The Old Covenant as preparation for the New Covenant



Full Disclosure...

... We are spending a lot of time going through the days of creation and how Fr. Seraphim sees them. We will move a LOT faster once we get make it through them all.

Chapter 1: Creation of Heaven, the Invisible World

A summary of the creation of the angelic powers and the fall of Satan and his demonic hosts from the ranks of the angelic beings.

[*excerpts from pp. 77-78*]



Chapter 2: Creation of the Earth & Visible World

[*excerpts from Fr. Seraphim's intro to the Creation of the Visible World, pp. 79--83*]



Creation Series
Icons by Michael Kapeluck
Set of all 8 large icons, SKU 008341

Chapter 2: Creation of the Earth & Visible World (Day 1)

*[excerpts from “Day 1,”
pp. 82-83]*

Key point: need for
scientific humility,
because new insights will
always come.



Chapter 2: Creation of the Earth & Visible World (Day 2)

The creation of the firmament

[excerpt from pp. 84-85]

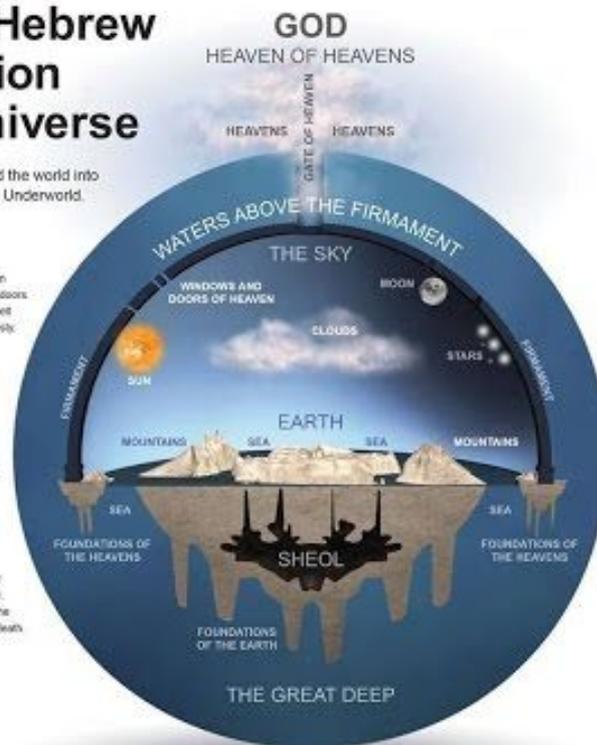
Ancient Hebrew Conception of the Universe

The ancient Israelites divided the world into Heaven, Earth, Sea, and the Underworld.

They viewed the sky as a vault resting on foundations—perhaps mountains—with doors and windows that let in the sun. God dwelt above the sky, hidden in cloud and majesty.

The world was viewed as a disk floating on the waters, secured or moored by pillars. The earth was the only known domain—the realm beyond it was considered unknowable.

The Underworld (Sheol) was a misty or dusky prison from which no one returned. Regarded as a physical place beneath the earth, it could be reached only through death.



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Chapter 2: Creation of the Earth & Visible World (Day 3)

*[short excerpt from p.
86]*

[Fr. Justin opinion: Fr. Seraphim is perhaps overly-concerned with making everything fit neatly and scientifically into a pre-arranged order...]

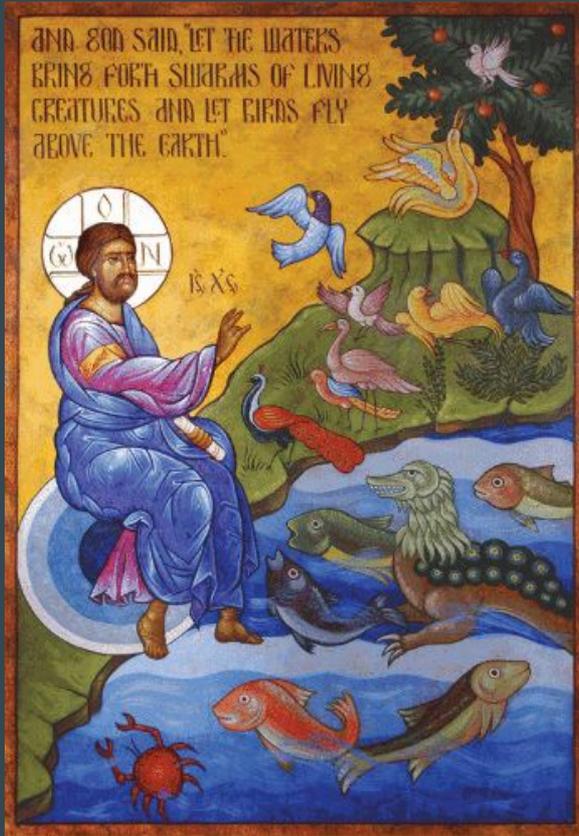


Chapter 2: Creation of the Earth & Visible World (Day 4)



[*excerpts, pp. 89-90*]

Chapter 2: Creation of the Earth & Visible World (Day 5)



[*excerpts pp, 91-92*]

Chapter 2: Creation of the Earth & Visible World (Day 6)



[*excerpts from pp. 94-95*]

Fr. Seraphim admits “micro-evolution” but clearly is uncomfortable by any more concessions to evolutionary theory. Regardless, Orthodox Christians must affirm God as “creator of heaven and earth,” though are free to see him using various means to create that do not necessarily track with the timeline of Genesis.

Chapter 2: Adam, Eve, & Sabbath Day

[excerpt pp. 96-97]



Chapter 3: How God Created the First People

[excerpt p. 99]



Chapter 4: Life of First People in Paradise

[*excerpts from pp. 100-103*]

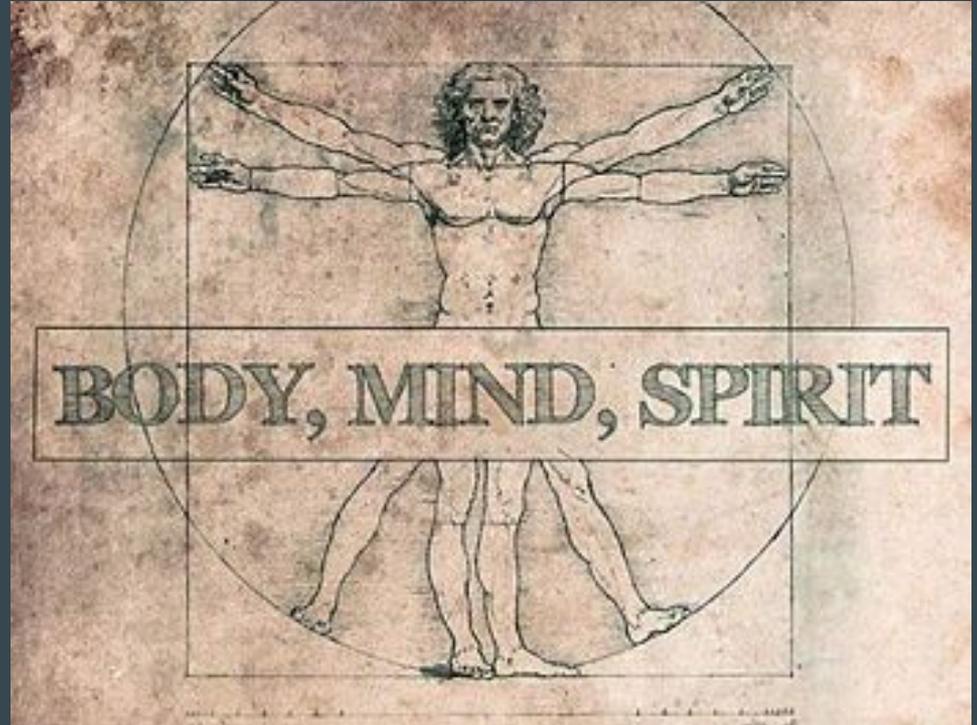
BODY:

SOUL:

1. Brain
2. Heart
3. Will

SPIRIT:

1. Fear of God
2. Conscience
3. Thirst for God



Chapter 5: The Fall Into Sin

[excerpts from p. 104]



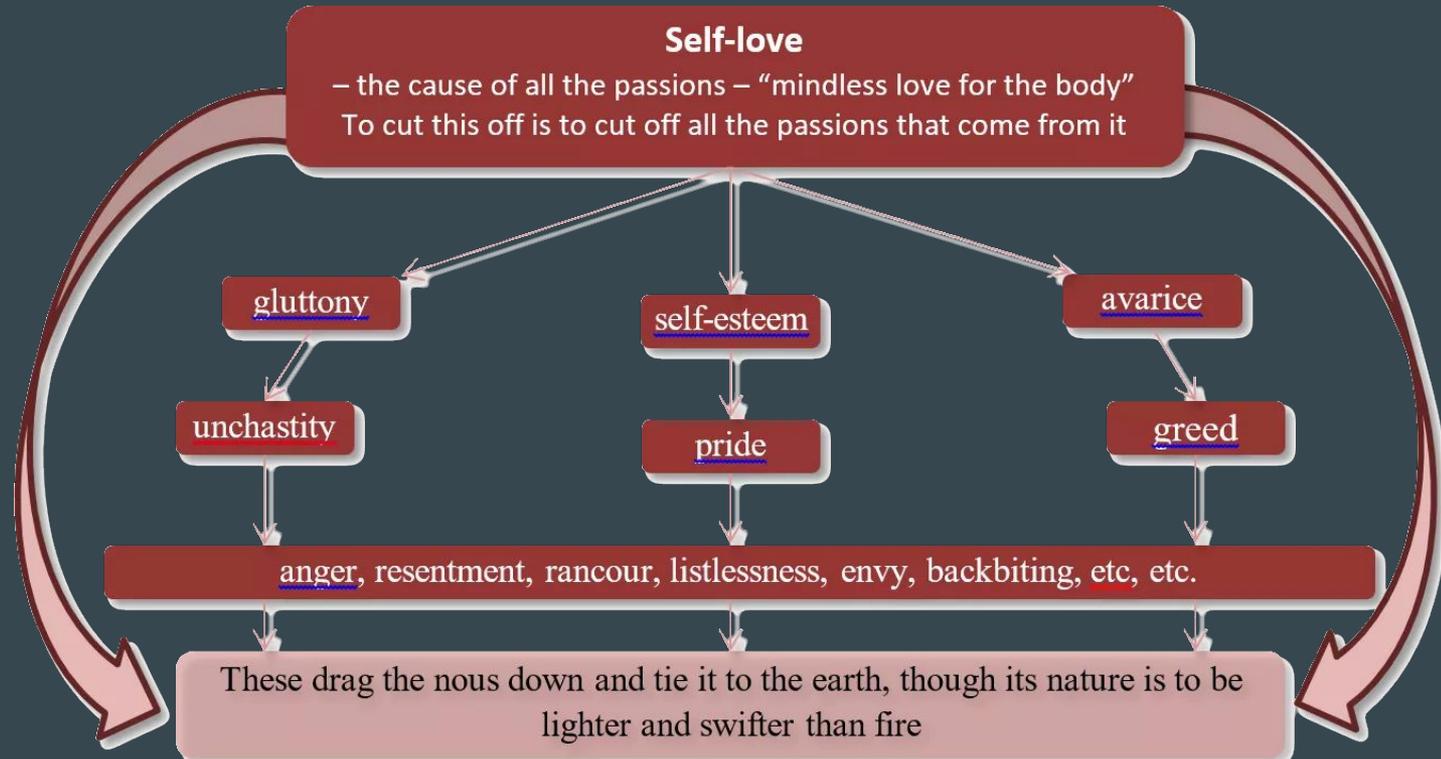
Chapter 6: The Results of Fall into Sin and Promise of Savior

[*excerpts, pp. 105-107*]



Chapter 7: Discussion of the Fall into Sin

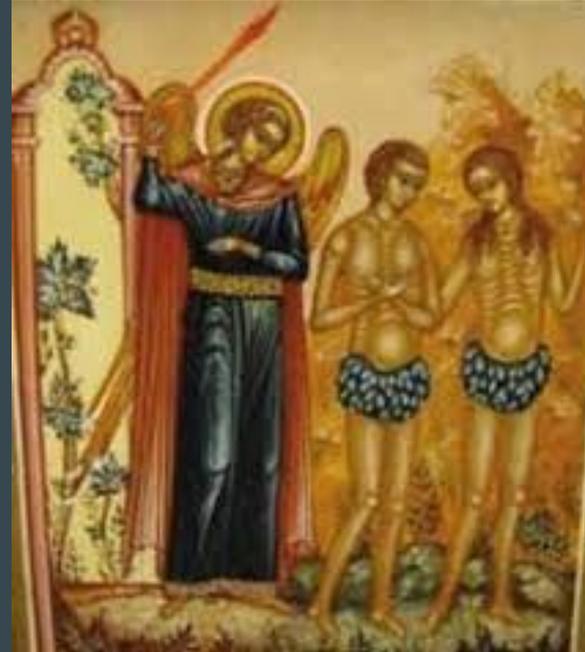
[*excerpts pp.*
108-109]



Chapter 7: ...Side Question

“Why did the Lord God permit the First Man to Fall into sin? And if He permitted this, why did the Lord not simply (“mechanically”) return them after the Fall to their former state of life in Paradise?”

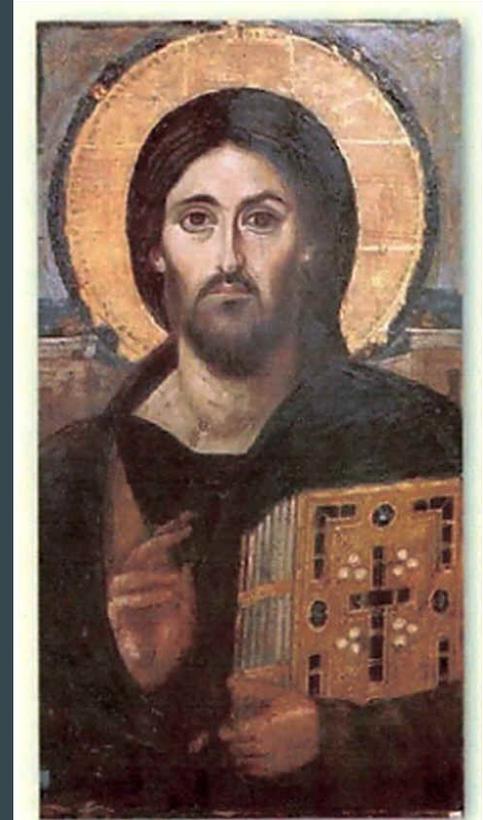
[*excerpts pp. 110-111*]



Chapter 7: Concerning Image and Likeness of God

Image of God: “found in the qualities and powers of the soul,” the image of God is a “given”

Likeness of God: depends upon our “the direction of our spiritual abilities.” Fr. Seraphim writes: “If a man only loves himself , lies, makes enemies, does evil, cares only for earthly good, thinks only about his body and does not care for his soul, then such a person ceases to be in the likeness of God and becomes like a beast, and can finally become like an evil spirit, a devil.”



Chapter 8: Cain and Abel

[*excerpts pp. 113-114*]



Next Week: The Old Testament up to Christ