

## QUESTION 102

### Man's Location, i.e., Paradise

The next thing to consider is man's location, i.e., Paradise. On this topic there are four questions: (1) Is Paradise a corporeal place? (2) Is Paradise a place fit for human habitation? (3) What was man placed in Paradise for? (4) Was it fitting for man to be made in Paradise?

#### Article 1

##### Is Paradise a corporeal place?

It seems that Paradise is not a corporeal place:

**Objection 1:** Bede says, "Paradise reaches to the lunar circle." But no earthly place can be like that, both because (a) it is contrary to earth's nature that it should be so high up (*tantum elevaretur*), and also because (b) the region of fire, which consumes earth, lies under the lunar globe (*sub globo lunari*). Therefore, Paradise is not a corporeal place.

**Objection 2:** As is clear from Genesis 2:10-15, Scripture mentions that four rivers have their source in Paradise. But the rivers that are named in that passage have obvious sources in other places, as is likewise clear from the Philosopher in *Meteorologia*. Therefore, Paradise is not a corporeal place.

**Objection 3:** Some have very diligently inquired into all the places in the habitable regions of the earth (*omnia loca terrae habitabilis*), but they make no mention of the location of Paradise. Therefore, Paradise does not seem to be a corporeal place.

**Objection 4:** The tree of life is described as existing in Paradise. But the tree of life is something spiritual; for Proverbs 3:18 says of Wisdom, "She is a tree of life for those who lay hold of her." Therefore, Paradise is likewise a spiritual place and not a corporeal place.

**Objection 5:** If Paradise is a corporeal place, then the trees in Paradise must be corporeal. But this does not seem to be the case, since corporeal trees were produced on the third day, whereas Genesis 2:8-9 talks of the trees being planted in Paradise after the work of the six days. Therefore, Paradise is not a corporeal place.

**But contrary to this:** In *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 8 Augustine says, "There are three general opinions about Paradise: One is held by those who claim that Paradise is to be understood only corporeally; the second is held by those who claim that it is to be understood only spiritually; and the third is held by those who take Paradise in both ways. This last opinion, I acknowledge, seems right to me."

**I respond:** As Augustine says in *De Civitate Dei* 13, "Let no one silence what can plausibly be said by way of a spiritual understanding of Paradise—as long as there is a belief in the most faithful truthfulness, preserved by the narrative, of the history of the events." For what is said about Paradise in Sacred Scripture is proposed in the manner of a historical narrative (*per modum narrationis historicae*), and in everything that Scripture hands down in this way there is a historical truth (*veritas historiae*) which should be held on to as the foundation and upon which the spiritual interpretations are to be built.

Therefore, as Isidore says in *Etymologiae*, Paradise is "a place set up in the East, the word for which is from the Greek and is translated by the Latin for 'garden' (*hortus*)." Now the site is appropriately said to be in the East. For it is necessary to believe that Paradise was set up in the most noble part of the whole earth. And since, as the Philosopher makes clear in *De Caelo* 2, the East is the right side of the heavens, and since the right (*dextera*) is more noble than the left (*sinistra*), it was appropriate for God to situate the earthly Paradise in the East.

**Reply to objection 1:** Bede's words are not true if they are taken in their most obvious sense.

However, they could be taken to mean that Paradise rises up to the place of the lunar globe not in terms of its height, but according to a certain likeness. For in Paradise “the air is at a constant moderate temperature (*perpetua aeris temperies*),” as Isidore says, and in this it is like the celestial bodies, which are not subject to contrary extremes (*quae sunt absque contrarietate*). And the reason why the lunar globe is mentioned more often than the other spheres is that the lunar globe is the boundary of the celestial bodies closest to us (*versus nos*) and, in addition, of all the celestial bodies it is the moon that is most like the earth. It even has nebulous shadows, as if it were verging on opaqueness.

Now there are some who claim that Paradise was reaching up to the lunar globe in the sense that it reached up to the middle part of the atmosphere, where rain and wind and things of this sort are generated. For control over these evaporations is attributed especially to the moon.

However, if this were true, then the place would not be fit for human habitation, both because the weather is especially inclement there (*ibi est maxima intemperies*), and also because that place is not congenial to the human constitution, in the way that the lower atmosphere closer to the earth is.

**Reply to objection 2:** As Augustine says in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 8, “One should hold that since the place of Paradise is very far removed from human cognition, the rivers whose sources are said to be known went underground at some point and after a long course through many regions came up to the surface in other places. For who is ignorant of the fact that this is what many streams commonly do?”

**Reply to objection 3:** The place in question was cut off from where we live by obstacles—such as mountains or oceans or some very hot region—which cannot be crossed. And this is why the writers of various regions made no mention of the place.

**Reply to objection 4:** The tree of life is a material tree that is so called because, as was explained above (q. 97, a. 4), its fruit had the power to conserve life. And yet it signified something spiritually, just as the rock in the desert was something material and yet signified Christ (see 1 Corinthians 10:4).

Similarly, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a material tree that was so named because of something that would happen in the future. For after man ate of it, he learned, through the experience of punishment, what the difference was between the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. And yet, spiritually, the tree was also able to signify free choice, as some claim.

**Reply to objection 5:** According to Augustine, on the third day plants were produced not in actuality but only with respect to certain seminal natures (*rationes seminales*), and after the work of the six days both the plants in Paradise and the other plants were produced in actuality.

By contrast, according to the other saints, one must claim that all the plants were produced in actuality on the third day, including the trees of Paradise, and that what is said about the planting of the trees in Paradise after the work of the six days is to be understood as having been said by way of a recapitulation. This is why our text says, “And the Lord God *had planted* a Paradise of pleasure from the beginning” (Genesis 2:8).

## Article 2

### Was Paradise a place fit for human habitation?

It seems that Paradise was not a place fit for human habitation (*non fuerit locus conveniens habitationi humanae*):

**Objection 1:** Men and angels are both alike ordered toward beatitude. But angels were immediately, from the beginning, made inhabitants of the place of the blessed, viz., the empyrean heaven.

Therefore, that is where man's place to live should have been set up as well.

**Objection 2:** If a place is fitting for man (*debetur homini*), then it is fitting for him either by reason of his soul or by reason of his body. If by reason of his soul, then the place that is fitting for him is heaven, which seems to be the soul's natural place, since the desire for heaven is instilled into everyone. On the other hand, if by reason of his body, then the place that is fitting for him is no different from the place that is fitting for the other animals. Therefore, there is no way in which Paradise was a place fit for human habitation.

**Objection 3:** A place that contains nothing located within it is senseless. But after the sin Paradise was not a place of human habitation. Therefore, if it is a place fit for human habitation, then it seems that it has been made by God for nothing.

**Objection 4:** A place with a temperate climate (*locus temperatus*) is fitting for man because he has a temperate constitution. But the place of Paradise did not have a temperate climate. For it is said to be located on the equator (*sub aequinoctiali circulo*), which seems to be a very hot place, since twice a year the sun passes over the tops of the heads of those who live there. Therefore, Paradise is not a place fit for human habitation.

**But contrary to this:** Damascene says of Paradise, "It was a Godly region, and it was a worthy dwelling place for the one who was made in God's image (*secundum imaginem Dei*)."

**I respond:** As was explained above (q. 97, a. 1), man was incorruptible and immortal not because his body had a disposition for incorruptibility, but because he had a power of the soul for preserving the body from corruption. Now the human body can be corrupted both from within and from without. As was explained above (q. 97, a. 4), it is corrupted from within by the loss of moisture through old age, and the first man was able to counteract this sort of corruption by taking nutrition. Among the things that corrupt the body from without, the main one seems to be an extreme air temperature (*distemperatus aer*), and so this sort of corruption is counteracted mainly by the temperateness of the air.

Now in Paradise both these types of counteraction are found, since, as Damascene says, Paradise "is a place shining through with very temperate, very fine, and very pure air, always decorated with flowering plants." Hence, it is clear that Paradise is a place fit for human habitation, in keeping with the state of initial immortality.

**Reply to objection 1:** The empyrean heaven (a) is the highest of all corporeal places and (b) lies beyond all mutability.

Given the first of these features, it is a place congenial to the angelic nature, since, as Augustine says in *De Trinitate* 3, "God governs the corporeal creature through the spiritual creature." Hence, it is fitting that the spiritual nature should be set up above everything corporeal, as if presiding over it.

On the other hand, given the second of these features, it is a place appropriate for the state of beatitude, which is grounded in maximal stability. So, then, the place of beatitude is fit for angels according to their nature, and that is why they were created there.

However, the place of beatitude does not befit man according to his *nature*, since he does not preside over all corporeal creatures in the sense of governing them; instead, it befits him only by reason of *beatitude*. Hence, he was not put into the empyrean heaven at the beginning, but instead he was to be transported there in the state of ultimate beatitude.

**Reply to objection 2:** It is ridiculous to claim that there is a natural place for the soul or for any spiritual substance. However, a special place may be attributed to an incorporeal creature because of some sort of fittingness (*per congruentiam quandam*).

Thus, the earthly Paradise is a place that is fit for man both with respect to his soul and with respect to his body, viz., insofar as his soul had a power for preserving the human body from corruption—something that did not belong to the other animals. And so, as Damascene says, "Nothing

non-rational lived in Paradise,” even though by a certain dispensation the animals were brought there to Adam by God, and even though the serpent entered there by an act of the devil.

**Reply to objection 3:** It is not the case that this place is senseless because men do not live there after the sin—just as it is likewise not senseless for man to have been given a certain sort of immortality that was not going to be preserved. For things of this sort make God’s kindness manifest to man, and they also make manifest what man lost by sinning.

Still, it is said that Enoch and Elijah are now living in that Paradise.

**Reply to objection 4:** Those who claim that Paradise is located on the equator are of the opinion that a place on the equator has a thoroughly temperate climate, because day and night are equal all of the time, and because the sun is never so far from the inhabitants that they would have an abundance of cold weather. Neither—so the claim goes—do they have an excess of hot weather, since even if the sun passes directly overhead, it nonetheless does not stay in that position for a long time.

However, in *Meteorologia* Aristotle explicitly claims that the region in question is uninhabitable because of its heat. This seems more likely, since some lands in which the sun is never directly overhead are intemperately hot just because of their closeness to the sun.

But whatever the truth might be about this, one should believe that Paradise was set up in a place with a very temperate climate, either on the equator or somewhere else.

### Article 3

#### Was man put into Paradise to cultivate it and to guard it?

It seems that man was not put into Paradise to cultivate it and to guard it (*ut operaretur et custodiret illum*):

**Objection 1:** What was introduced as a punishment for sin would not have existed in Paradise in the state of innocence. But as Genesis 3:17 says, the cultivation of the soil (*agricultura*) was introduced as a punishment for sin. Therefore, man was not put into Paradise to cultivate it.

**Objection 2:** Guarding is unnecessary where there is no fear of a violent invader. But in Paradise there was no fear of a violent invader. Therefore, it was unnecessary to guard Paradise.

**Objection 3:** If man was put into Paradise to cultivate it and to guard it, then it seems to follow that man was made for the sake of Paradise, and not vice versa—which seems false. Therefore, man was not put into Paradise to work in it and to guard it.

**But contrary to this:** Genesis 2:15 says, “The Lord God took the man, and put him into the Paradise of pleasure as something to cultivate and guard (*posuit illum in Paradiso voluptatis ut operaretur et custodiret illum*).”

**I respond:** As Augustine points out in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 8, there are two ways to understand this passage from Genesis.

On one interpretation, God put man into Paradise in order for God Himself to cultivate and to guard man—to cultivate him, I repeat, by justifying man, in order that He might guard man against every sort of corruption and evil. For if God’s operation withdraws from man, then man is continually in the dark (*continuo obtenebratur*), just as the air becomes dark if the influx of light ceases.

The second possible interpretation is that man is the one who is to cultivate Paradise and guard it. Nor would this work have been laborious, as it was to be after the sin. Rather, it would have been pleasant, because of the experience of the power of nature. Moreover, the sort of guarding in question would not have been against invaders, but would instead have been for the purpose of man’s guarding

Paradise for himself, lest he lose it by sinning. And all of this redounded to man's good, and in this sense Paradise is ordered to the good of man, and not vice versa.

**Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3:** The replies to the objections are clear from what has been said.

#### Article 4

##### Was the man made in Paradise?

It seems that the man was made in Paradise (*homo factus est in Paradiso*):

**Objection 1:** The angels were created in the place of their habitation, viz., the empyrean heaven. But before the sin Paradise was a place fit for human habitation. Therefore, it seems that the man ought to have been made in Paradise.

**Objection 2:** The other animals are conserved in the place of their generation, e.g., fish in water and walking animals on the earth, from which they were produced. But as has been explained (q. 97, a. 4), man would have been conserved in Paradise. Therefore, he ought to have been made in Paradise.

**Objection 3:** The woman was made in Paradise. But the man has more dignity than the woman. Therefore, *a fortiori*, the man ought to have been made in Paradise (*multo magis vir debuit fieri in Paradiso*).

**But contrary to this:** Genesis 2:15 says, "God took the man, and put him into Paradise."

**I respond:** Paradise was a place fit for human habitation, given the lack of corruption in the initial state. But this lack of corruption belonged to man not by his nature, but by a supernatural gift from God. Therefore, in order that this gift might be imputed to God's grace and not to human nature, God made man outside of Paradise and afterwards put him into Paradise, in order that he might live there for the whole time of his animal life. Afterwards, when he had attained his spiritual life, he was to be transported to heaven.

**Reply to objection 1:** The empyrean heaven is a place fit for the angels even with respect to their nature, and that is why they were created there.

**Reply to objection 2:** The same thing should be said in reply to the second objection. For the places in question were fit for the animals with respect to their nature.

**Reply to objection 3:** The woman was made in Paradise not because of her own dignity, but because of the dignity of the principle from which her body was formed. The children likewise would have been born in Paradise, because the parents had already been put there.