

From Protology to Eschatology: Ioannis Zizioulas's Contribution to a Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of Original Sin

This paper will focus on the interpretation of the human fall in the theology of Ioannis Zizioulas and will ask to what extent his thought may contribute to contemporary reflection on the doctrine of original sin. Its point of departure will be Zizioulas's conviction that eschatology is not merely one among the various dogmatic treatises, nor simply the "last chapter" of dogmatic theology, but rather the fundamental perspective of theological reflection as such. Within this framework, the fall of the human being cannot be understood merely in protological terms as the loss of an original perfection, but rather as the loss of a future eschatological fulfillment. From this perspective, the human being did not lose "paradise" – in a word, the past – but rather communion with God – in a word, the future.

The paper will show how Zizioulas interprets the fall not primarily as a fall into a state of misery, suffering, and subjection to mortality, but as a falling away from an authentic mode of existence in communion, as the actualization of the natural limits inherent in creation *ex nihilo*, and as the abandonment of the human being's priestly vocation. The aim of the paper is not merely to provide a systematic presentation of Zizioulas's reflection on the human fall, but above all to identify those theological categories and hermeneutical principles that may prove illuminating for a contemporary interpretation of the doctrine of original sin. In this way, Zizioulas's eschatological interpretation of the fall may emerge as a significant contribution to current discussions of theological anthropology, the human relationship to the environment, and the meaning of human existence.

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