

## Chapter One Adam (Genesis 1-3)

### Covenants

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**Adam***Couple*

**Reading for this chapter: Genesis 1:1-2:3; 3:1-19**

### I. Summary

**1** *Explain: To start each chapter, there is a summary that gives an overview of chapter. These will be helpful throughout the study to help review past material, understand that week's chapter and how it all connects to future chapters. Probably the best way to use the introduction is if each person read a paragraph. I will start and then let's go clockwise.*

#### **1** I. Summary

For many modern readers, the opening story of the Bible seems almost unbelievable. On Scripture's very first page, Genesis 1 presents an account of God creating the world in six days. While there are several ways to understand the first six days of creation, it is more important to not get caught up in how God created the world, but what this creation tells us about God, the world and mankind. (See Appendix for more of the Catholic Understanding of Creation.)

In the beginning God's creation is good. He brings order to the world and makes Adam and Eve in his own image and likeness. Here, God establishes His Covenant with man with this first couple.

While everything was so good in the beginning, the drama of the story emerges as a law is given to Adam and the serpent comes to tempt Adam and Eve. Genesis' depiction of Adam and Eve's failing into temptation reveals the nature of human beings and how we view God. Through this Original Sin, man's relationship to God is now broken and Genesis 3 will describe the effects of The Fall on Adam and Eve and the rest of humankind. Most importantly, God promises to bring about a solution to his sin and announces a future destruction of evil and the salvation of man. To dive deeper into this story, follow the discussion guide below.

**1**

**2** *Explain in your own words: Our modern age often uses the early chapters of Genesis to pit science versus religion.*

- *Either Genesis is taken literally and science and history are used to prove religion false or Genesis is simply a myth that has little to do with reality.*
- *And yet, the Catholic perspective of Genesis does not fit into either of these boxes. Rather, the Catholic interpretation on the whole sees that these opening chapters mix both figurative language with history (see for example CCC 390) and is open to several different interpretations of the account.*
- *Trying to discern which is history and which is figurative is not always easy. Therefore, while we do not want to simply dismiss these questions, it is more important to concentrate on the primary intention of the author: to reveal truths about God, the world and mankind. Let this be our primary concern (cf. CCC 282-284).*
- *For more on this topic, including the topic of evolution, please see the Appendix.*

**3** *Read: Let's look at what God is trying to tell us through this creation story. One thing that stands out is the distinct order in which everything is created.*

*Then, Ask: Could I please have two volunteers read the next two paragraphs?*

### II. Discussion Guide

#### **2** In the Beginning...

**3** The story of creation offers not simply a succession of six days, but the first three days are presented in striking parallel to the last three days. For example, in the first three days, God creates day and night (Day 1), sky and sea (Day 2), and land and vegetation (Day 3).

This corresponds exactly to what God creates in the next three days, when God will set up the rulers over day and night, over sky and sea, and over the land and vegetation. On Day 4, God creates the sun and moon, setting up the sun "to rule the day" and the moon "to rule the night" (corresponding to Day 1). On Day 5, God creates the birds and sea creatures, with the birds to fill the sky and the sea creatures to fill the waters in the sea (corresponding to Day 2). Finally, on Day 6, God creates the animals and man, who is given all the earth to rule and all vegetation to eat (corresponding to Day 3).

**2**

**4** Ask: What else do the creation stories tell us about God?

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### God's Gifts to Man

**5** Read Genesis 1:26-29

Answer:  
We can see His power to create everything out of nothing.

**6** In Genesis 1:26, God makes man in his image and likeness. What do you think this means?

**7** How does being in the image and likeness of God affect the way we view Him?

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### God's Gifts to Man

**5** Ask: Let's turn to Genesis chapter 1. Could someone please read verses 26-29?

**6** Ask: In Genesis 1:26, God makes man in his image and likeness. What do you think this means?

Answer: For the ancient Jews, being in the image of someone else would have denoted a father-son-like relationship. In fact, the next time this word is used in Genesis, it describes the relationship between Adam and his own son, Seth: Adam "became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth" (Genesis 5:3).

**7** Ask: How does being in the image and likeness of God affect the way we view Him?

Answer: We view God as a Father

Ask: How does this change the way we look at life in regards to suffering, setbacks or unexpected events?

Answer: If God is our Father than even though these things might happen, He is still trying to bring good out of them and that He continues to love us as sons and daughters through these times in our lives.

**8** Covenant:  
The first  
Covenant  
God makes  
with humanity  
is this: In

**8** **Covenant:** In Genesis 1:28, God blesses Adam and Eve. This blessing, along with Adam and Eve's status as children made in God's image, is a sign of the relationship and friendship between God and man. We will explore more about covenants in Chapter 2.

**9** Read Genesis 2:15-17

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**9** *Genesis 1:28, God blesses Adam and Eve. This blessing, along with Adam and Eve status as children made in God's image, is a sign of the relationship and friendship between God and man. We will explore more about covenants in Chapter 2.*

**9** Ask: Could someone please read Genesis 2:15-17?

## Slow Brew

### Theme: Why the tree?

Ask: In Genesis 2:15-17, God gives Adam a commandment. According to these verses, what is this law and why do you think God gives it?

Answer: The verse notes, "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." God as Father is seeking to protect his children. The law isn't meant to restrict us; it is meant for our good.

Ask: Why do you think God puts the tree in the Garden? If He created everything, why would He create something that could potentially harm humans?

Answer: While the tree can harm Adam and Eve, God wants to give people free will.

Ask: Why do you think will free is important? What would we be like without it?

Answer: Free will allows us to make our own decisions and not be simply subject to our instincts and emotions. Most importantly, our free will allows us to love, the highest of all decisions. Love is only possible when people have free choice. In giving Adam and Eve the freedom to choose, He allows love to be a possibility in our world because love is ultimately a choice and not simply emotion.

## The Fall

**10** Ask: Could someone please read Genesis 3:1-7?

**11** Ask: In Genesis 3:1, the devil enters the story. Reflecting on the devil's words to Eve in this verse, what do you think is the specific nature of his temptation? What is the devil trying to get Adam and Eve to do?

### The Fall

#### Read Genesis 3:1-7

**11** In Genesis 3:1, the devil enters the story. Reflecting on the devil's words to Eve in this verse, what do you think is the specific nature of his temptation? What is the devil trying to get Adam and Eve to do?

**12** What is unusual about Eve's response to the devil's temptation in Genesis 3:2-3?

**13** How is Eve's reaction to God's law much like our own today?

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Answer: The serpent wants Adam and Eve to question whether God's law is really trustworthy and to get them to doubt God's goodness. He wants them to think of God as an oppressive lawgiver whose rule limits their freedom.

**12** Ask: What is unusual about Eve's response to the devil's temptation in Genesis 3:2-3?

Answer: Eve does not quote God correctly. Also, Eve exaggerates God's commandment by saying that they should not even touch the fruit lest they die. God said just don't eat it.

**13** Ask: How is Eve's reaction to God's law much like our own today?

Answer: Law is seen as restricting and at times we can over exaggerate God's laws. We view God as a lawgiver not as a father who cares and loves us. For more on this, turn to the Appendix on how our modern culture views God's laws.

**14** Ask: In light of all you have read in Genesis 1-3, do you think the devil is lying in Genesis 3:4-5? Explain.

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Answer: In saying, "You will not die," the serpent is calling God a liar. Furthermore, the serpent ascribes motives to God's warning about the tree. According to the serpent, God is so afraid that Adam and Eve will become like Him that He gives this law in order to control them and keep them under His command. The serpent paints a picture of God which is in direct opposition to what Genesis 1-2 has told us about God being a loving Father whose law flows from His heart for our good. For more on this, turn to the Appendix for what Pope John Paul II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church say on this point.

## The Effects of Sin on Humankind

**15** Explain in your own words:

### 15 The Effects of Sin on Humankind

#### 16 Read Genesis 3:8-19

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- When Adam and Eve fall; their sin involves not simply disobeying God's command or breaking a rule. It's much deeper.
- It ultimately involves putting God's heart on trial and questioning His fatherly goodness. Because of this, the original relationship between God and humankind is broken. For them and for future generations including our own, it is not whether or not God exists; it is whether God can be trusted.
- See how in the next passage how despite knowing the God of mercy, Adam and Eve are ashamed and run away from God.

**16** Ask: Would someone like to read Genesis 3:8-19?

**17** Ask:  
What are  
some of the  
negative  
consequences

**17** Can you name some of the negative consequences of Adam and Eve's decision to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

**18** of Adam and Eve's decision to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil?  
**4**

Answers:

- i. Enmity between the serpent and the women (3:15)
- ii. Multiply pain in childbearing (3:16)
- iii. Husband will rule over the woman (3:16)
- iv. The ground is cursed and will bring forth thorns and thistles (3:17)
- v. Sweat and toil in raising and harvesting food (3:19)

*Explain: Overall, after the fall, the Original Sin disrupts four different types of relationship:*

- Man and God*
- Man and Man*
- Man and Self*
- Man and Nature*

**18** Say: Let's read Genesis 3:15 once more.

*Explain:*

- *These words represent the first time in the Bible when God's plan of salvation is prophetically foreshadowed.*
- *The imagery of the strife between the woman's offspring and the serpent's offspring depict a long battle between those that follow the serpent's ways and those descendants of the woman who will follow God's ways.*
- *In the end, however, the woman is depicted as having an offspring who will defeat the devil. In the end, all four relationships that were disrupted in the Fall will be restored in Jesus Christ.*

**19** Application to Jesus Christ

Both the curses and the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 shed light on the climax of Christ's mission in his passion and death. As the New Adam, Jesus enters the curses of Adam that have plagued the human family ever since the fall. Like Adam, Jesus, on the night before he died, enters a garden - the Garden of Gethsemane - where he is tested (Matthew 26:36-46). There, he takes on Adam's sweat as he experiences "sweat like drops of blood" falling from his face. On Good Friday, he symbolically takes on the curse of Adam's thorns as he is handed over to the Roman soldiers who place a crown of thorns on his head (Matthew 27:29). Finally, Jesus even takes on the curse of Adam's death as he goes to a tree - the wood of the cross - and dies on Calvary. And like Adam, Jesus is placed in the ground where he is buried in a tomb. And it is precisely from the darkness of that tomb that he rises from the dead victoriously on Easter Sunday.

**20** Reading for next time: Genesis 6:5-8; 9:1-17

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## Application to Jesus Christ

**19** Read: "Application to Jesus Christ" section together

**20** Reading for next time: Genesis 6:5-8; 9:1-17