

Salvation History

FOCUS

Vision for Life

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Adam (Genesis 1-3) 1

Chapter 2: Noah (Genesis 4-9) 5

Chapter 3: Abraham I (Genesis 10-15) 9

Chapter 4: Abraham II (Genesis 16-22) 15

Chapter 5: Jacob and Joseph (Genesis 23-50) 21

Chapter 6: Exodus I (Exodus 1-23) 25

Chapter 7: Exodus II (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) 31

Chapter 8: Joshua-David (Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel) 35

Chapter 9: David-Daniel (2 Samuel, 1 Kings and Daniel) 41

Chapter 10: Jesus (The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles) 47

Appendix 53

Welcome

Salvation history is God's saving love throughout history to bring about the salvation of His people that culminates in the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Many times when we study the Bible, we read just bits and pieces of Scripture. The study you are about to participate in will take a look at Scripture from a broader view. Specifically, we will study the six different covenants that form the major moments of salvation history. By hitting the main threads of the storyline, we will be able to see not only how each of the individual pieces fit together, but also how the whole picture came to be.

God begins his covenant with Adam and Eve and then will slowly enlarge it from this one couple to larger proportions. See the table below:

<i>Covenants</i>					
Adam	Noah	Abram	Moses	David	Jesus
<i>Couple</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>Tribe</i>	<i>Nation</i>	<i>Kingdom</i>	<i>Church</i>

For this study, you will need this book, a Bible (your group-leader can recommend a translation if you don't have one), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), and a notebook and a pen. Throughout the study, there will be questions that will help you understand the passages that you are reading, questions that will show how the passages apply to Jesus Christ and questions that will show how the passage can apply to your life. While understanding Scripture is a wonderful thing, we want you to be able to live out the story in your own life as well. This small group setting is an excellent way to do this as you can share your own life and hear from others.

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

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.

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.

II. Discussion Guide

In the Beginning...

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).

What else do the creation stories tell us about God?

God’s Gifts to Man

Read Genesis 1:26-29

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

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

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.

Read Genesis 2:15-17

The Fall

Read Genesis 3:1-7

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?

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

How is Eve’s reaction to God’s law much like our own today?

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

The Effects of Sin on Humankind

Read Genesis 3:8-19

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?

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 (Mt. 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 (Mt. 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.

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

Chapter Two Noah (Genesis 4-9)

Covenants

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Adam Noah
<i>Couple</i> <i>Family</i>

I. Summary

In the previous chapter, we saw how after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God told of His future triumph over the devil and His plan to restore the broken human family. Eventually, the woman would have a descendent who would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). However, the battle between good and evil is not one that will be resolved overnight.

In the first generation after Adam and Eve, we see the tragic consequences of original sin as Cain murders his brother Abel (Genesis 4:1-16). After Cain is killed, Adam and Eve bear a new son, Seth. These two lines of genealogies are compared in Scripture to show how sin ripples through generations.

In contrast to the beginning of creation where "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen. 1:31), the story of Noah begins with how "God saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt" (Genesis 6:12). God's creation is blemished and he chooses Noah to survive the oncoming flood.

When the flood arrives it not only brings punishment upon the earth, but also bringing about new life, a new hope and a new creation. Noah is portrayed as a new Adam, the new head of the human family.

But just as the beginning of the human family was marred by Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, so too the beginning of this new human family is tainted by Noah's sin in the vineyard.