

God

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Christ the King Parish

- I. Basic Structure of the key stories from Genesis: the book of beginnings
 - A. Man Sins
 - B. Consequences Follow
 - C. God has the last word
- II. Key Points to emphasize during stories
 - A. Dignity of Human Person
 1. Gen 1: 26-30
 2. CCC 1700-1709
 - B. God's Mercy and Love
 - C. Original Holiness – CCC 375
 - D. Original Justice – CCC 374-379
 - E. "Myth is a truth too big to be contained in facts." – John Paul II used the term "myth" when referring to the story of Adam and Eve
- III. Four stories from Genesis
 - A. Adam and Eve – Genesis 2 and 3
 1. Man sins
 - a. Serpent's temptation – what was it?
 - 1) "Did God really say that you can't eat of any tree of the garden?" – No, and Eve knew that: temptation is that God is withholding good things from you.
 - 2) "Your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods." – temptation to pride.
 - b. Man's sin – what was it?
 - 1) Doubting the fullness of God's love for man
 - 2) Pride at being like God – calling one's own shots; determining one's own destiny
 2. Consequences follow
 - c. Shame - middle east culture of time was shame/honor culture, so shame spoke deeply to the audience
 - d. Loss of Original Holiness
 - 1) God was still seeking man, but man hid himself – Gen 3: 8-9
 - 2) Man now ashamed before God – the symbolism of nakedness
 - 3) "The woman whom you put here with me..." – making it God's fault that Adam sinned
 - e. Loss of Original Justice
 - 1) "...she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it" – making it Eve's fault that Adam sinned; failing to be honest with self

- 2) “your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you...” – loss of coequal relationship to a relationship of dominance/submission
- 3) “ ... on your belly shall you crawl and dust shall you eat...” – loss of relationship with animals, representing the world given into our care
- 4) “in toil you shall eat its yield...thorns and thistles it shall bear for you...” – loss of harmony with all of creation
- 5) Parenthesis: man’s dominion over the world is to be in the image and likeness of God; abusing the world and abusing women is a result of sin, not part of God’s original plan

3. God has the last word

- a. Clothes Adam and Eve with skins: meets them in their shame and cares for them
- b. Adam names his wife Eve, “...she shall be the mother of all the living...”
- c. Banning from the Garden – imagine living forever with the mess they made
- d. Protoevangelium – Gen 3: 14-15

B. Cain and Able

1. Man sins

- a. Cain slays Able – murder
- b. Murder is one of pride: God accepts Able’s offering, but not Cain’s
- c. “Am I my brother’s keeper?” - Cain disavows responsibility for others, as selfishness and pride go hand in hand

2. Consequences follow

- a. Cain is sent to wander; he is told that ground will not bear produce for him anymore
- b. Cain cannot be allowed in “polite company” anymore, as he has severed the possibility of trust; he has become a threat to the stability of family/society

3. Got has the last word

- a. Cain tells God that the punishment is too great: everyone will try to kill him...and our sense of justice might well lead us to say: “Good! That’s how it ought to be!”
- b. God puts a mark on Cain to protect him: i.e., God’s mercy triumphs, even when we think it shouldn’t

C. Noah and the Ark

1. Man sins

- a. All mankind had become depraved; every desire was evil
- b. To the point that God “regretted making human beings on the earth” and “His heart was grieved.”

2. Consequences follow

- a. Flood destroys all life

- b. The chaos, that God had placed in order during the six days of creation, now returns: “the fountains of the deep were opened” and “the windows of heaven were opened,” so the waters return to cover the earth
- 3. God has the last word
 - a. Noah built an altar to the Lord and offered acceptable sacrifice – relationship with God remains paramount
 - b. God promises “Never again will I curse the ground because of human beings...” – makes a covenant with Noah and gives the sign of the rainbow in promise of that covenant
 - c. God saved a remnant of all creation: Noah and his family; pairs (seven if a “clean” animal) of animals
 - d. God repopulates the earth through that remnant: he doesn’t regret creation; he regrets what man chose to do with it

D. Tower of Babel

- 1. Man sins
 - a. Mankind misuses its apparent unity
 - b. Building a tower to “reach to heaven...to make a name for ourselves” – the sin of pride again
- 2. Consequences follow
 - a. God confounds human language so that humans have it more difficult to cooperate in acts of pride, in great evil
 - b. God scatters the people over the earth
 - c. God’s intervention stops the building of the tower
- 3. God has the last word
 - a. Not readily apparent in the Tower of Babel story, as it is Chapter 12
 - b. God makes a covenant with Abram to do the very thing that people had tried to do with the Tower: make his name great, and create a great people via his offspring

IV. Conclusion

- A. Key question is not “Was there really an Adam and Eve?” The question is “Are there really Adams and Eves?”
- B. Image and likeness of God remains, but sin had consequences: concupiscence
- C. Consequences aren’t simply God’s punishment, although God is a just God. Consequences are the natural outcome of man’s actions.
- D. If the four stories show the condition of Man, then God help us!...and that is the rest of the story: the story of the remnant of the faithful, of the Hebrew people, of Jesus Christ, of the Church