

EARLY WORLD: PART 1B: THE FALL

Before completing this lesson:

*Read Genesis 3.

*Optional but rich in content: CCC 285-384

Key point:

“The account of the Fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man. Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents” (CCC 390).

Gen 3:1

Who is the serpent, according to Revelation 12:1-18? _____

Note: The red dragon “represents Satan, the murderous arch enemy of God (John 8:44). His horns are symbols of his strength (Daniel 7:7) and his diadems (crowns) are symbols of his ruling power over the fallen world (John 12:31). He is doomed to burn forever in the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). The draconic serpent was a symbol of evil in the ancient near East.”¹

What are the serpent’s characteristics, according to this verse and Revelation 12:10; John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14. _____

Lack of Trust in God’s Goodness

Gen 3:1

How does the serpent seed doubt in the woman? _____

“Satan doesn’t directly lie, but uses the truth in a deceptive way. Satan emphasizes the negative in God’s prohibition. Satan then twists the word ‘die’ to refer to physical death when God meant spiritual death.”²

What might have happened if Eve had simply turned her back at this point and simply said “No”? See 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Peter 5:8-11 _____

In her Diary, St Faustina Kowalska records Jesus’ words: “My child, all your sins have not wounded My Heart as painfully as your present lack of trust does—that after so many efforts of My love and mercy, you should still doubt My goodness...If My death has not convinced you of my love, what will? Remember My Passion, and if you do not believe My words, at least believe

¹ *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Letters of St John and the Revelation of St John*. Commentary by Scott Hahn. © 2009 by Ignatius Press, San Francisco, pp 51.

² Hahn, Scott. *Salvation History*. © 2002 by Saint Joseph Communications, West Covina, CA, pp 14.

My wounds...Because you are weak, I take you in My arms and carry you to the home of my Father.”³

What makes you hesitate to trust God in your present difficult circumstance? _____

How have you grown in trusting God’s goodness in recent years? CCC 397 _____

Life application: But “*how do you LIVE trust? What’s its concrete expression in your daily living?*” The way you live trust is by praise and thanksgiving, to praise and thank God in all things. That’s what the Lord told St Faustina. And remember how Mother Teresa of Calcutta had often written about the importance of accepting everything with a smile, with praise and thanksgiving. This is the Little Way of surrender, acceptance, and childlike trust taught by St Therese of Lisieux, who wrote in her autobiography: ‘Jesus does not demand great actions from us but simply surrender and gratitude.’”⁴

3:4

How does the serpent directly contradict God? _____

Compare God’s command in 2:16-17 with what Eve and the serpent say in 3:1-5. How do they differ? _____

What perceived benefits did Satan offer Eve for disobedience? _____

3:6

Was Adam with Eve at this time of temptation? Did he protest or enter the conversation? How did he neglect stewardship of tending the garden (Gen 2:15), his God-given task? _____

We must not let Satan interrupt our relationship with God!

Freedom/ Free Will

What were the first recorded words of God to Adam in the Second Creation Story, in Gen 2:16: “You are _____.” What does this tell you about man? _____

This highlights a grand theme that will run through all of Scripture: Man has the freedom to choose good or evil. There are “two fundamental truths: that God is love and that we are free. Love is all that God is. He’s not loving to some and not to others. No act of ours can possibly make him stop loving us. However, we are free. Hence, we can say yes or we can say no to his love. If we turn toward it, we open like a sunflower; if we turn away from it, we get burned.

The very resistance to love causes pain. Think of a spelunker trapped in a cave for many weeks. When he emerges into the light of the sun, he experiences it as a torture. The same sun

³ *Diary of St Faustina Maria Kowalska*, (379), (580), 1486).

⁴ Gaitley, Fr Michael. *Consoling the Heart of Jesus*. © 2010 by Marian Press, Stockbridge, MA, pp 95-99.

that delights someone who is accustomed to it tortures someone who has been turned from it.”⁵

Why, then, we might ask, did “God put all this beauty and freedom at risk by giving humans a commandment that he knew they might break? Recall God’s intention from the beginning. God created the man and woman with a capacity to be united with him in love forever. Yet there is no such thing as love without freedom. By giving them the commandment (Gen 2:16), God invited them to respond to him in trust, obedience, and love—to let him be their God. He placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil right in the middle of the garden, where they would constantly be faced with The Choice.”⁶

And so, “endowed with mind and will, **we human beings can respond to the divine love or we can reject it.** We can bask in its light or we can turn from it. The choice is ours.”⁷ **All of the remainder of Scripture will look at those who accept versus those who reject God.**

3:7

Although Adam and Eve do not physically die instantaneously, what sort of spiritual death is immediate? _____

Note: Fig leaves are itchy and note their position! Things are going from bad to worst!

What were the **results of the Fall** (Gen 3:7-13)? _____

Summary:

1. “Immediate consequences: ruptured relationships (CCC 400)
2. Intellect darkened; will weakened
3. Result: concupiscence (CCC 405).”⁸ Concupiscence is our inclination to sin.

Gen 3:8-13:

The first results of sin are that we hide from God and blame others. This is an important phenomena that we will see in future Scripture stories- and in our personal lives today.

How do you deal with shame and try to justify your sin (dismiss it, compare yourself to others, call it by another name, etc)? _____

How are you hiding from God right now? What particular sin is keeping you apart?

⁵ Barron, Bishop Robert. *Daily Gospel Reflections from Word on Fire*. Accessed on-line August 23, 2020 at wof@wordonfire.org.

⁶ Healy, Mary. *Men & Women Are From Eden: A Study Guide to Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body*. ©2003 by Mother of God Community Gaithersburg, MD, pp 25.

⁷ Barron, Bishop Robert. *Centered: The Spirituality of Word on Fire*. © 2020 by Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, Park Ridge, IL, pp 89.

⁸ Cavins, Jeff. *The Bible Timeline: The Story of Salvation: Workbook*. © 2019 by Ascension Press, West Chester, PA, pp 20.

On what date/time will you go to Confession to deal with this sin? _____

Imagine Jesus saying to you: “All I want is for you to be my friend. All I want is for you not to be afraid of me and to come to me. That’s all.”⁹

Looking ahead: The future books of the Bible will show the process of hiding “from” God to being “hidden in Christ,” a favorite phrase of St Paul.

3:9

If God were to ask you today, “Where are you?”—how would you reply? _____

3:10

Adam admits to being afraid.

In next week’s lesson we shall pause to examine fear, shame, blame, spiritual warfare, and generational healing. So stay tuned for further unpacking of Gen 3:10-13, 16-19.

3:15- AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT VERSE!!

What promise and hope is found in 3:15? _____

This verse is called the **Protoevangelium**—the first Gospel. Within it is found the hope that God will rescue us from the bondage of sin and death.

Life Application: Can you fix you?

The rest of the Story of Salvation is going to revolve around how to restore our relationship with God. On every page we will see the effects of sin but also the saving hand of God.

“In truly holy people, knowledge of sin is not denigrating but liberating because it enables them to break through the subtle illusions and self-deceptions that finally stand in the way of joy. And the most dangerous of these lies that we tell to ourselves is that everything is just fine: ‘I’m ok. You’re ok.’ Christianity is a salvation religion, and thus its basic assumption is that there is something wrong with us, indeed something so wrong that we could never in principle fix it ourselves.

We are members of the dysfunctional family of humanity, and egotism, fear, violence, and pride have crept into our institutions and into our blood and bones. Therefore, any attempt to lift ourselves out of the problem is illusory and dangerous. We are saved from the dysfunction of sin only by Jesus.”¹⁰

What do you the following verses all emphasize? Luke 19:10; Acts 2:21; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22; 2 Timothy 1:9 _____

⁹ Gaitley, Fr Michael. *Consoling the Heart of Jesus*. © 2010 by Marian Press, Stockbridge, MA, pp 165.

¹⁰ Barron, Bishop Barron. *Centered: The Spirituality of Word on Fire*. © 2020 by Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, Park Ridge, IL, pp 89, 93.

Why does Mary, the mother of God, matter, according to this verse? _____

Why does the Church refer to Mary as the New Eve? (and Jesus as the New Adam?) _____

3:16

How would you reply to one who asks with indignation: "Why should I be punished for what Adam and Eve did so long ago?" _____

"We're all born into a flesh that's affected by the original sin of Adam and Eve. God created Adam and Eve good, in his own image and likeness. And, out of love, he gave them certain gifts that they had no right to expect, being human as they were. They got integrity, which means that their emotions (and even their passions) were controlled by their intellect—they didn't have any psychological problems, no compulsions, no shame, and no guilt. They also had an intimate union with God, who lived with them visibly and on terms of friendship. And God gave them the promise of immortality, so that they could enjoy this way of life forever. But to get this, they had to obey one simple little commandment. They did not obey.

So now we're all born in original sin: not that we're punished for what Adam and Eve did, because God is not cruel, but just that we're born without those supernatural gifts that we'd otherwise have had. And this original sin also opened the gates for all subsequent sins, all of the times when people choose their own wills as opposed to God's (Romans 5:12-14). These are called actual sins, and they cut a person off from God. And you can't save yourself on your own, so, as you remove yourself from God step by step, things get worse and worse for you."¹¹

Marital Relationships

3:20

Given that Adam named the animals (2:19-20) as a sign of authority and dominion, what is implied when he gives his wife a name? _____

The fallout from the Fall is a rupture in human relationships, particularly that of man and wife. The relationship between the two has become warped. Instead of their sexual complementarity leading to a life-giving union, it now can tend toward tension and conflict. An adversarial stance develops between the two, which frequently plays out as domination on the part of the man and manipulation on the part of the woman. Man and woman cannot be human without each other, yet each is tempted to selfishly strive for self-promotion and self-protection, to the detriment of the other."¹² How do you see this played out in your marriage? _____

How is Christian marriage to operate according to Ephesians 5:21-33, with particular emphasis on Ephesians 5:21? How is mutual submission to one another a facet of self-sacrificial, marital love? _____

¹¹ Johnson, Kevin. *Why Do Catholics Do That?* © 1994 by Ballantine Books, NY, NY, pp 44-45.

¹² Healy, Mary. *Men and Women Are From Eden.* © 2003 by Mother of God Community, Gaithersburg, MD, pp 28.

3:21

How does God act as a providing Father in 3:21? _____

How is Gen 3:24, with the stationing of the cherubim, an example of His love? What would happen if we ate of the tree of life and lived eternally in our present sinful condition? _____

Thanks be to God we will not suffer forever!

3:24

What does God do next? _____

Note: Exile will be a recurrent theme in the rest of Scripture.

Final note of hope:

Catholics hold to belief in the inherent goodness of man (vs the Protestant position of the total depravity of man). "Original sin changed man's state; it didn't change his nature. People are made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26), and created good. People can act badly, but people are by nature good."¹³

Our conscience makes us "tragically aware of not being who we're meant to be, which is terrible. Yet it's not despairingly terrible. For there is the merciful gaze of Jesus on each of us. So the person feels in the midst of the terrible drama of having to choose either to be the person he presently is or the person he's called to become, either the person of mediocrity or the awe-inspiring person he was destined to be from before the foundation of the world (see Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4)."¹⁴

Where are you in this drama at the moment? Who is our hope/ Romans 7:18-25? _____

In our on-going study, we shall repeatedly see Christ as the fulfillment of all Scriptural promises and the heart and soul of God's plan of goodness.

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¹³ Johnson, Kevin. *Why Do Catholics Do That?* © 1994 by Ballantine Books, NY, NY, pp 45.

¹⁴ Gaitley, Fr Michael. *Consoling the Heart of Jesus*. © 2010 by Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, Stockbridge, MA, pp 151.