

Topic: Overview of Salvation History

IHM

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and
the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

“Bless us, O Lord, and these thy
gifts, which we are about to
receive. From thy bounty, through
Christ our Lord, Amen.”

Scripture as Salvation History

- The story of God's actions and the people's responses over many centuries is called *Salvation History*. (Often through covenants.)
 - Covenant=promise/solemn agreement.
 - OT=Patriarchs & Matriarchs, Moses & Exodus, Judges, Prophets, Kings, etc.
 - NT=Jesus Christ as the culmination and fullness of Divine Revelation (with Jesus, as God in the flesh, Divine Revelation is complete; but our understanding & application continues to grow).
 - Continues through the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and our daily lives.



GENESIS 1-11

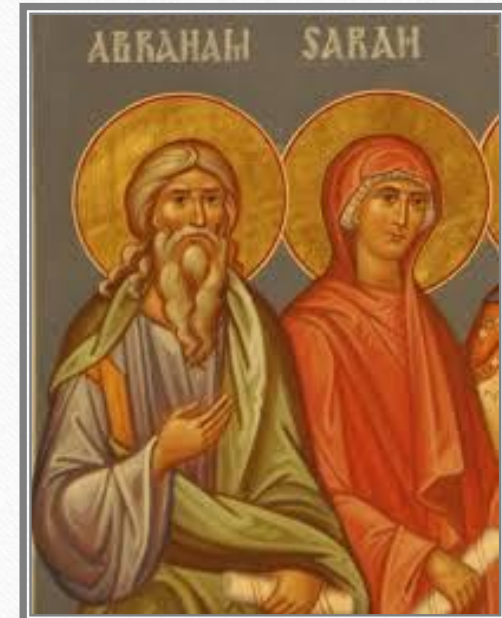
In the beginning...

“Pre-History:” Genesis 1-11

- Humankind existed for many years before the biblical period (1850BC-100AD) – this is called *prehistory* because no historical record exists.
- Genesis 1-11 is considered pre-history, or “religious myth.”
- It includes stories of our human origins, as well as the origin of sin.
- It also includes God’s first covenant to save humankind from destruction through Noah; the sign of which is the rainbow.

The Founders and the Promise (~1850 BC)

- **Abraham** – the history and religion of the Israelites (and all 3 monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) begins with him. God made a *covenant* with Abraham – to make Abraham’s descendants a blessing to the world and to give them the land of *Canaan*, later known as *Palestine*.
- This early period in the life of the Jewish people is called the time of the *Patriarchs and Matriarchs, or founding fathers and mothers of Judaism* (Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebekah, Jacob & Rachel & Leah).
- The **Promise**, as this is called, was that *Abraham’s people would reveal the one God to the world*. Christians believe that this Promise is fulfilled in the coming of Christ.





The Exodus and the Covenant (~1290 BC)

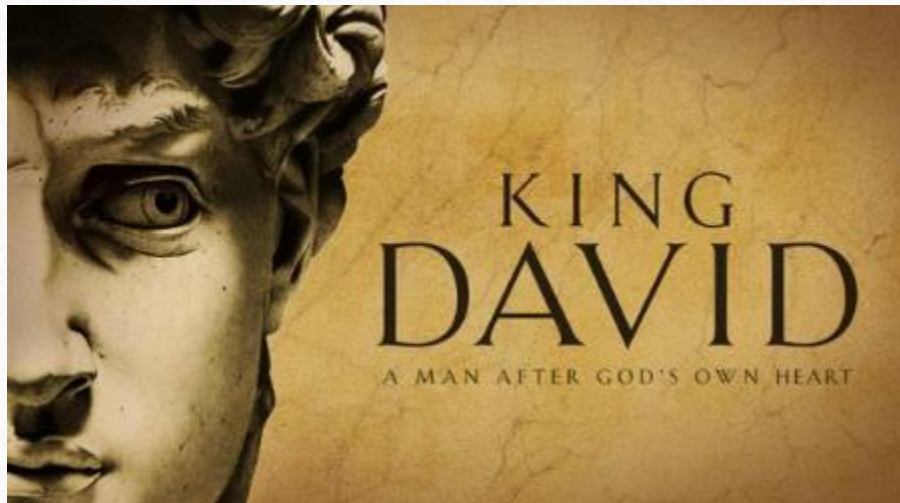
- Abraham's descendants are living in Egypt, having traveled from Canaan to flee from famine. They are made slaves of the Egyptians.
- **Moses** – the main character in Exodus. God revealed to Moses that one God was above all other gods – Yahweh – meaning “I am/I am Who Am/I am Who I Will Be/I am the one who is always present.” Under Moses, the Israelites escaped and were freed from slavery.
- *Through Moses' encounter with God on Mount Sinai, a Covenant, or promise, was made – the Israelites' were to keep the Ten Commandments. God's part was to make them “the people of God” and to be with them as long as they kept the covenant. And again, they were promised to be given the land of Canaan.*

Entering the Promised Land (~1250-1000 BC)

- *After wandering for forty years in the desert learning to trust in God, the Israelites, led by Joshua, enter Canaan.*
- They fought battles, led by Judges, against those living in the region.
 - They existed as a loose confederation of 12 tribes.



Nationhood and United Monarchy (~1000 BC)



- Israel became recognized as a nation. **Saul** was the first King of Israel, anointed by **Samuel**.
- **David** followed him as King, and became the ideal King of Israel, enlarging its borders, and prospering economically and militarily. **Jerusalem** became the capital city.
- It is with David that God made another covenant, promising to “make a house” of David’s line to rule over Israel, and that God would be with them. Christians will see Jesus as this promised *Messiah, or “anointed one,”* promised to David and God’s people.
- **Solomon**, David’s son, built the first *Temple in Jerusalem*, the principal place of worship for the nation (containing the **Ark of the Covenant**).

Kings and Prophets

- *After Solomon's death, the nation divided into the kingdoms of Israel in the north and Judah in the south (922 BC).*
- Prophets spoke out against injustice in the kingdoms (heavy taxes, forced labor, mistreatment of the poor, etc.) and against the infidelity to God (idol worship, etc.).
Prophets called the people back to the Covenant.
- Eventually the kingdoms were crushed and destroyed, by the Assyrians in the north (Israel in **721 BC**) and the Babylonians in the south (Judah in **587 BC**).



Babylonian Exile and the Dispersion (537 BC)



- After 50 years in exile in Babylon, the exiles were allowed to return home under their new Persian King, **Cyrus**. Judah, had become a district in the Persian Empire, and the returning exiles became known as **Jews**, from the word *Judah*.
- Under the leadership of **Ezra and Nehemiah**, they rebuilt the Temple, re-established the Law, and restored Jerusalem.
- *It was during the exile that Jewish leaders began collecting and refining their ancient writings – this became the core of their Scriptures, what we know as the Old Testament.*

Greek & Roman Oppression

- The **Greeks**, under **Alexander the Great**, defeated the Persians around **330 BC** and became overlords of the Jews.
- In **142 BC**, there was a Jewish revolt against the Greeks, led by the **Maccabees**, which resulted in Jewish independence for almost 80 years (*this is where the Old Testament ends*), until being reconquered by the **Romans** around **63 BC**.
- Although fairly tolerant, they punished Jews for revolts. *Jews began to look toward the coming of a messiah, one sent by God to save them. Some even expected this messiah to come from the family of David (Jesus).*





Jesus: Promised Messiah & Son of God

- Christians see Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah – the fulfillment of all God’s promises to Israel and the Savior of the world.
- ~3BC Jesus of Nazareth is born, by the age of 30 (~27AD) begins his public ministry and is crucified by age 33 (~30AD).
- His Death and Resurrection proved to his followers that He was the Son of God. He proclaims himself the Christ (or Messiah), hence his Jewish followers were later called “Christians.”
- *He sees himself not as a radical departure from Judaism, but as a fulfillment of the Law and Prophets.*
- He makes known through his preaching of the *Kingdom of God* that God’s promise and grace are for all people (**Gentiles**, or non-Jews as well), not just for the Jews. The New Testament is the story of Jesus and the growth of the early Church (or followers of Jesus).

Discussion Questions

- Please share:

- What struck you from today's Mass readings?
- From your readings, which people and events from the Bible could you most relate to, and why?
- How are the Bible's Wisdom and Prophetic traditions still relevant today?
- How do you see "Salvation History" continuing on in your life, including God's invitation to you through the RCIA process?
- What questions did this topic and readings raise in your heart or mind?

Closing Reflection:

God loves, calls, and uses flawed people!

NOAH was a drunk.

ABRAHAM was too old.

ISAAC was a daydreamer.

JACOB was a liar.

LEAH was ugly.

JOSEPH was abused.

MOSES had a stuttering problem.

GIDEON was afraid.

SAMSON was a womanizer.

REHAB was a prostitute.

JEREMIAH and TIMOTHY were too young.

DAVID had an affair and was a murderer.

ELIJAH was suicidal.

ISAIAH preached naked.

JONAH ran from God.

NAOMI was a widow.

JOB went bankrupt.

JOHN the Baptist ate bugs.

PETER denied Christ.

The Disciples fell asleep while praying.

MARTHA worried about everything.

The SAMARITAN WOMAN was divorced...more than once.

ZACCHEUS was too small.

PAUL was too religious.

TIMOTHY had an ulcer...AND

LAZARUS was dead! ☺

Loving God, come into the messiness of our lives, and help us to be messengers of your ceaseless love and hope for all people. Amen.