

The Story of the People of God

I. Creation

A. God Creates (can read creation account)

1. We acknowledge God as the creator of all things in heaven and earth.
 - a. God creates everything “good”
 - b. God creates so that His love can be shared
2. God creates man in His own image and likeness
 - a. does not mean that God has a body like ours
 - b. God has freedom which gives Him the capacity to love and choose
 - i. man’s freedom enables him to do the greatest possible good-love (because love cannot be forced)
 - ii. man’s freedom enables him to do great evil-violate God’s law
 - iii. Each human being is a new creation from the moment of conception forward.
 - a. when sperm hits egg a new human being is created and deserves to live
 - b. abortion destroys human life which has inherit dignity based upon our creation in God’s likeness
 - c. when the Son of God becomes man He sanctifies each stage of human life by developing, growing, and maturing as we do

B. Man Falls

1. God makes a covenant with Adam
 - a. Eat whatever you want except for the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil
 - b. God says that if we do eat from this, we will die
2. The Serpent (Satan)
 - a. Satan tempts Eve
 - b. says that we will not die
 - i. not a total lie, Eve does not immediately die
 - ii. rather we are separated from God which is a spiritual or everlasting death (hell)
 - iii. we will be like God knowing good and evil
3. Adam and Eve knew only good prior
4. By eating the apple we now know what evil is and have a desire to do it
 - a. Adam and Eve feel shame about their nudity and cover up
 - b. Instead of seeing their bodies as beautiful gifts of God, they feel ashamed of themselves-sin makes us feel wrong

C. Satan is not unintelligent in his deceptions

1. The devil does not tell outlandish lies but merely twists the truth
 - a. Example 1: Sex is beautiful and evokes love, but through pornography, contraception, prostitution, and various other vices he twists it into something that evokes lust, domination, and the debasing of humanity
 - b. Example 2: All human life is created by God and God alone has power over life and death. Through human cloning, euthanasia, abortion, infanticide, and others the devil twists the truth and makes us the sole proprietors of life and death
2. Satan is the accuser
 - a. The name “Satan” means roughly “accuser” because he accuses us of not being worthy
 - b. He tries to drive a wedge between God and man: makes us feel dirty and unloved by God or that we are merely all alone

D. Results of Original Sin

1. God is life
 - a. separation from God means separation from everlasting life
 - b. we lose our sense of what is correct
2. Our moral compass is off
 - a. disunity with God brings disunity with the proper way to live
 - b. our consciences can fall silent due to sin
3. Evil, pain, suffering, and death enter the world

E. God promises redemption

1. Even during our expulsion from Paradise, God promises victory over Satan (serpent)

2. "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head while you will strike at His heel."
 - a. This is the first promise of reunification with God
 - b. The "offspring" is Jesus and the "woman" is Mary
1. Jesus will stamp on the head of the serpent by destroying sin and death on the cross
2. The serpent can only strike the heel of Jesus because Jesus is God and therefore stronger or "above" the serpent, hence the heel

II. God reveals Himself

- A. Following the fall of man, we become estranged from God
- B. God prepares us for salvation through the use of covenants by which He reveals His will
 1. Noah
 2. Abram
 - a. God promises Abram that he will be the father of many nations via a son and land
 - b. God asks Abram to circumcise himself and leave his homeland
 - c. God fulfills His end of the bargain and gives Abram a son Isaac (Abram becomes Abraham)
 3. Isaac's second son Jacob will go on to have 12 sons that form the foundation of the Jewish people
 - a. from this point forward Jews (Israelites) will refer to themselves as member of one of the 12 Jewish tribes or to which son of Jacob they trace themselves to
 - b. these 12 sons will all eventually end up in Egypt where they are enslaved by Pharaoh
 4. Moses
 - a. God uses Moses to bring His people back to their land
 - b. God reveals His name to Moses, thus cementing His relationship with His people
 - c. The Passover of the Lord bring the Israelites out of Egypt
 - d. In the desert God gives them a law code that they are to live by (Ark of the Covenant)
 1. the Law reveals that God desires us to act in certain ways toward Him and each other
 2. the Law also prepares His people for the correct interpretation of the Law given by Jesus Christ
 - e. because the Israelites continually fall into idolatry and cry out against God in the desert, they are left wandering until God deems them ready to enter the promised land once again
 5. The Kingdom
 - a. God helps the Jews conquer their land back
 - b. The Jews quickly cry out that they need a king (a rejection of God's sovereign rule)
 - c. God allows them to have a king-Saul
 - d. God rejects Saul and gives them David (a shepherd boy from Bethlehem)
 - e. The kingdom of the Jews splits into two kingdoms Judah and Israel
 1. Israel (northern comprised of 10 tribes) is conquered (Assyrians) and wiped out of history-this is where the "Lost tribes of Israel" comes from
 2. Judah is conquered by the Babylonians and sent into exile. They are eventually allowed to return and rebuild their temple
 - f. Following their return to the promised land they are conquered by the Persians, Greeks, and Romans
 6. The prophets
 - a. throughout their history, the Jews have had a tendency to reject the ways of God and fall into various other practices
 - b. God sent them messengers to remind them of their obligations
 - c. many times these prophets were treated harshly
 - d. the prophets talked about a new covenant that God would make with His people and the one who would establish this covenant (the Messiah or Christ in Greek)
 6. Awaiting the Messiah
 - a. the Jews waited for this Messiah for hundreds of years
 - b. at the time of Jesus there were a number of ideas of what this Messiah would be
 1. General
 2. King
 3. Priest
 4. Rabbi

- c. the Jews failed to recognize that their problem was not the Romans, the temple, their rulers, or their adherence to the Law but sin
- d. The Messiah would establish a new covenant that would fulfill and thus complete all the old covenants and thereby usher in a new covenant

III. God Prepares His People for Salvation

- A. God sets His people apart
 - 1. Calls the Jews “My People.”
 - 2. Brings condemnation upon their captives, the Egyptians
 - 3. Leads their armies against the Hittites, Canaanites, Philistines, etc.
- B. Chooses a People to Be His Own
 - 1. Reveals His name to them
 - 2. Feeds them with bread from heaven
 - 3. Demands that they believe in only one God-that they be a people after His own heart
- C. Names Israel
 - 1. Calls them His bride
 - 2. Calls them His beloved
 - 3. Calls Himself their Father

IV. The Ten Commandments

- A. Only God can make absolutes
 - 1. Since God is the only absolute, only He can make absolute judgments on morality
 - a. Laws of men (civil law) are defined by the morality of the people that make them
 - 1. Drinking Age
 - 2. Laws concerning upkeep of lawns
 - b. Laws of men are only to be followed insofar as they do not violate God’s law
 - 2. Since only God is absolutely good, all morality must be based upon right and wrong according to Him
- B. Morality
 - 1. He gives the commandments to the Jews so that they may live correctly
 - a. places them in a correct relationship with Him
 - b. places them in a correct relationship with one another
 - 2. The First Three Commandments place us in a proper relationship with Him
 - a. Put nothing before God
 - b. Honor the name of God for it is holy
 - c. Remember to worship the Lord on the day prescribed
 - 1. Worship of God is mandated because it allows us to stay in a relationship with Him.
 - 2. If we fall away from worshipping Him, our lives are negatively impacted
 - 3. In order to live the best life possible and a life pleasing to God we must keep our tie with God tight
 - 3. The Following Seven Commandments outline our relationship with one another
 - a. Honoring our parents reminds us of the dignity that all people have even in old age. Also, it helps understand love because our parents first loved us
 - b. Condemning killing again shows us that life is a precious gift that is not to be taken lightly nor are we to deprive anyone else of this great gift of God
 - c. Adultery violates a covenant made between man and woman in marriage
 - 1. We must treat all covenants with respect because God has entered into a relationship based on the idea of covenants with all of us
 - 2. The union of man and woman in marriage is meant to be a reflection of the love between God and His people/Christ and the Church
 - d. Stealing takes something for ourselves which has not been granted by God-it shows a failure to trust in God and also deprives a gift of God from someone else
 - e. God is absolute truth and demands us to be people who believe and worship in truth. Lying strikes at the very heart of God-absolute truth.
 - f. Coveting our neighbor’s goods and/or wife illustrates that we are not happy with what God has given to us. At some level it is a rejection of God’s good gifts that we do possess.

VI. Wrapping up the Ten Commandments

A. Light for the path

1. Every human being is created by God, for God, to with Him forever
2. In order to accomplish this goal we must know how to attain this goal
 - a. example: business wants to grow. In order to be able to do so they must have a way of making this possible.
 - b. there may be many ideas of how to do this
 - c. God gives us the Commandments so that it is not man's opinion of what to do but we are hearing from God Himself how to reach the goal of heaven.

B. Commandments are real

1. The Commandments are laid out in very concrete terms.
2. This allows us to know for sure what is good and what is evil
3. At times man has the desire to turn from what is good
 - a. the word "commandment" gives the impression that it is binding
 - b. not to be trifled with

C. Prepare us for the fullness of God's revelation

1. In Christ God fully reveals Himself
2. Reveals the proper understanding of the Ten Commandments
 - a. meant to aid man toward salvation by uniting man's actions with what is good
 - b. does not forsake humanity
 1. Example of the Good Samaritan
 - a. The Priest and the Levite followed the letter of the Law (helping the beaten man would make them unclean).
 - b. The Samaritan violates the letter of the Law because the spirit of the Law was meant to aid man-so he did
 - c. The Law is given to us to make us more truly human not to deprive us of our humanity
 2. The Tax Collector
 - a. The Pharisee followed the Law but was self-righteous
 - b. The tax collector understood that he was a sinner and knew he was not worthy of God

VII. The New and Eternal Covenant

A. Jesus is faithful to every covenant and completes each of them (He does not sin)

B. Jesus relives all of Jewish history faithfully

- a. He is like Isaac-the only son of the father offered upon a wooden altar
- b. He teaches us the true meaning of the Law-Moses
- c. He spends 40 days in the desert as the Jews spent 40 years
- d. He is proclaimed king as Saul was
- e. He is David-the shepherd from Bethlehem destined to rule the Israelites
- f. there are too many to put on here

C. He establishes the new covenant in His own blood