

# 17-18 Bible Study #19

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# The Nicene Creed

- The first section of the Nicene Creed deals with God the Father:

**I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty**  
maker of heaven and earth  
of all things visible and invisible.

# God and His Perfections (Cont)

- The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** (CCC 214-221) says that God, “**He Who Is,**” is:
  - Truth
  - Love
- What are some of the attributes of God, and how do we come to understand these attributes?
  - We determine what He would **Not** be like

# God and His Perfections (Cont)

- God's Divine Attributes include:
  - **Oneness** – He exists and there is only one God
  - **Truth** – His words cannot deceive or be deceived
  - **Life** – He is alive, a pure being, a living God
  - **Omnipotence** – He is almighty (in creed)
  - **Eternal** – Divine being without beginning or end

# God and His Perfections (Cont)

- **Immensity** – He is beyond all special dimensions
- **Incomprehensibility** – His presence cannot be limited
- **Infinity** – He is without limitations of any kind
- **Simplicity** – He has no parts or components
- **Immutability** – He cannot change

# Hierarchy of Beings

- **Divine Life** – God in the Trinity – pure uncreated spirit with infinite intelligence and will
- **Angelic Life** – Pure created spirits with intellect and will
- **Human Life** – A spiritual soul w/ intellect and will
- **Animal Life** – Existence, growth, and feelings
- **Plant Life** – Existence and growth
- **No Life** – Existence

# Creation and Angels

- What did God create before man?
  - The Angels
    - Messengers
    - Persons of pure spirit with intellects and wills
    - Possess great power
    - Capable of loving God
  - The word angel or angels appears 332 times in Holy Scriptures

# Creation and Angels (Cont)

- Nine choirs of Angels
  - Seraphim
  - Cherubim
  - Thrones
  - Dominations
  - Virtues
  - Powers
  - Principalities
  - Archangels
  - Angels



# Creation and the Devil

- Lucifer, the Seraphim, leader of the fallen angels
  - Was a light bearer –a *Seraphim*
  - Angels due to superior intellect were given one choice
  - Cast to the earth by St. Michael (Revelations)
  - Became an enemy of mankind and ruler over hell
  - Names for the devil:
    - The devil, the tempter, the adversary, a snake

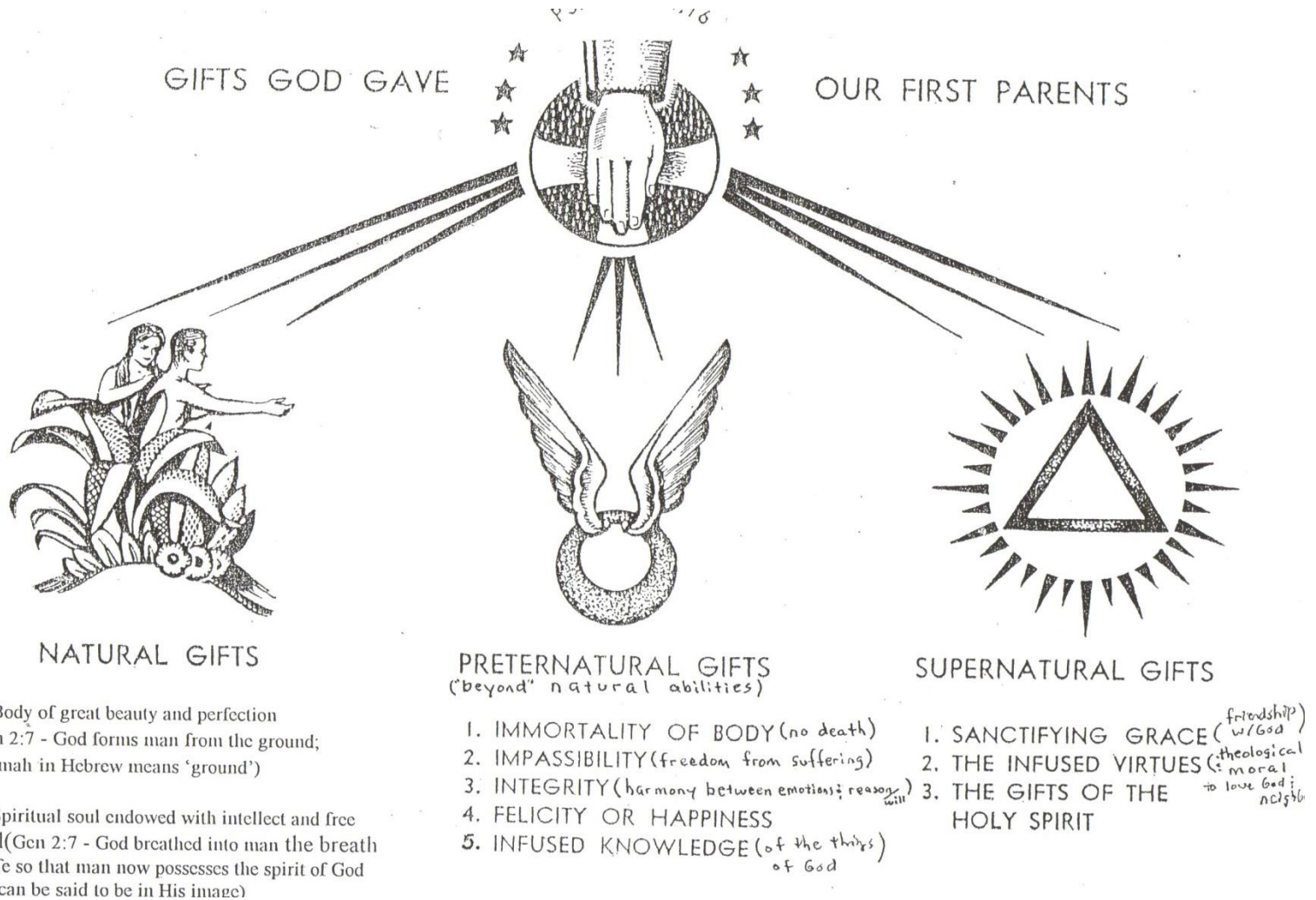
# Creation and the Devil (Cont)

- Is the devil real?
  - Yes and he is 100% evil and filled with hatred; a liar
  - He can tempt us to sin but can never cause us to sin
  - Temptations are from the devil, and the world
  - We can overcome temptation via grace especially from Confession and Eucharist
- People can become possessed by the Devil
  - The Church counters with exorcisms

# The Creation and Fall of Man (Cont)

- How did God make us?
  - We all descended from one human pair (Adam and Eve)
  - They enjoyed the “**preternatural gifts**”
    - **Integrity** – harmony between the spirit and the flesh
    - **Bodily Immortality** – never intended to die
    - **Infused knowledge** – knowledge beyond what can be learned via the senses

# God's Gifts to Mankind



# The Nicene Creed

## *Jesus Christ*

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
consubstantial with the Father; through  
him all things were made.

# Introduction and Overview (Cont)

- **Early Heresies**

- Judaizers – said had to be a Jew to be a Christian
- Gnostics – secret knowledge
- Dualism – two gods: one good, one bad
- Montanism – end of the world was imminent
- Manicheism – two equal gods run everything
- Arianism – Jesus was not divine
- Nestorianism – Mary was not the mother of God
- Apollinarianism – Jesus had an incomplete human nature

# Introduction and Overview (Cont)

- **Early Councils**

- **Jerusalem** – 50 A.D. - *Gentiles can become Christians without becoming Jews – rejected Judaizers*
- **Nicaea** – 325 A.D. - *Christ is the same as God – rejected Arianism*
- **Constantinople** – 381 A.D. – *HS is the same as God and Jesus – rejected revised Arianism*
- **Ephesus** – 431 A.D. – *Blessed Mother was the Mother of God – rejected Nestorianism*
- **Chalcedon** – 451 A.D. – *Christ possessed two natures: human and divine – rejected Apollinarianism*

# The Nicene Creed

## *Jesus Christ (Cont)*

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was **incarnate** of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he **suffered death** and was buried, and **rose again** on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.



# The Nicene Creed

## *Jesus Christ (Cont)*

He **ascended** into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory **to judge** the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. \*

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- **Genesis 3:8-14**

- Next, **God came on the scene**
- *St Ephron* said it was like a doctor rushing to the sickbed of a patient, or like a father rushing to an injured child
- God was **not coming to judge** but to help, fix, mend
- Unfortunately, there was a problem – Adam and Eve were hiding from Him
- When God asks where Adam was, there was no response

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- The real question God was asking was why were they hiding ?
- This is like a father interrogating his child who had just broken the cookie jar
- Adam responded that they were naked and afraid
- Obviously, the relationship between man and God had been ruptured
- In the next step of the interrogation, God asked Adam how he knew that he was naked?
- Then He asked if had he eaten the fruit which He had told him not to eat? (cookie jar continued)

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- The problem here is that, like children, Adam and Eve were not repentant and began to make excuses for their behavior
- The key to the story is that they admitted what they had done but were not at all sorry for doing it
- The “Fathers of the Church” noted this, and cried out to them poetically (*St Ephron*)
- When God asked Adam for an explanation, he blamed the woman

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- God then turned to the woman and asked her what had happened and she blamed the serpent
- There was no reason to ask the serpent what he did as the woman had just explained it
- At this point **all three were cursed**
- This passage was set up as a *chiasm*
- At the center of the *chiasm* was what God said to the serpent \*

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- **Genesis 3:15-19**

- The “Fathers of the Church” saw this passage as the *Proto-Evangelium* – the first Good News
- If someone wants to kill a snake they usually attempt to step on its head
- Usually all that a snake can do to man is bite him on his heel (foot) which is usually not a mortal wound
- Again the “Fathers of the Church” saw this text as a pre-figuration, a type, or a foreshadowing of the prophecy that someday the destruction of the serpent will be by the power of the seed of the woman

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- That seed was understood to be “Jesus Christ”
- Notice that the one bruising the serpent's head is masculine
- Due to a possible scribal error in an old Latin manuscript (*ipse/ipsa male/female*) this was transcribed as feminine
- This has led to many of the statues of the Blessed Mother to show her with her foot on the serpent

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- The woman's curse was that there would be an increase in pain of her childbearing
- The man's curse was that his tilling and keeping the garden would become a burden and not be as fruitful as it should have been
- Basically the nature of their work changed and became a burden \*



# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- **Genesis 3:20**

- It is at this point that Adam named the woman
- He called the woman Eve (*Chavvah* – Hebrew for “life”)
- So right off of the bat we can see that the relationship between the man and the woman had been changed by the curses
- This is why we heard in the curse that Adam would have dominion over Eve
- According to *St Ephron*, Adam had dominion over her because the punishment fit the crime
  - She ate the fruit first so that she would have power and primacy over him \*

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- **Genesis 3:21**

- As said before, the fig leaves were not going to work
- Before the interview by God was over, most likely there would have been nothing left
- God mercifully and lovingly clothed them with animal skins
- *St. Paul* said in **Romans 5**, “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us”
- The mercy and love of our heavenly father was like the father in the broken cookie jar story

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- Even though Adam and Eve were unrepentant, God reached out and bandaged their wounds
- We do not know where the skins came from but Jewish tradition says that they were the first sacrifice of animals
- The “Fathers of the Church” saw the skins as something created by God
- Whatever the case, it was a sign of God’s great love  
\*

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- **Genesis 3:22-24**

- God sent Adam and Eve out of the Garden out of fear that they would eat of the “tree of life”
- He made sure that they could not return to the Garden by posting two (very powerful) *Cherubim*
- God was afraid that if they ate from the “tree of life” without repenting, they would live forever physically while being spiritually dead to God (eternal damnation)
- Our faith teaches that those who are friends of God and are reunited with Him spiritually will be raised from the dead and live with Him for all eternity in eternal bliss (the beatific vision)

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- This was an example of God caring for his children
- He would not allow them to get hurt any more than they already had been
- This hurt was temporary, but if they had eaten from the “tree of life”, it would have been permanent
- So he removed them from the Garden until they could be brought to repentance

# Genesis 3 (Cont)

- Once mankind has repented and returned to a right relationship with God spiritually, then they can be brought physically into eternal life
- This is the “Good News”
- We will now take up **Genesis 4**