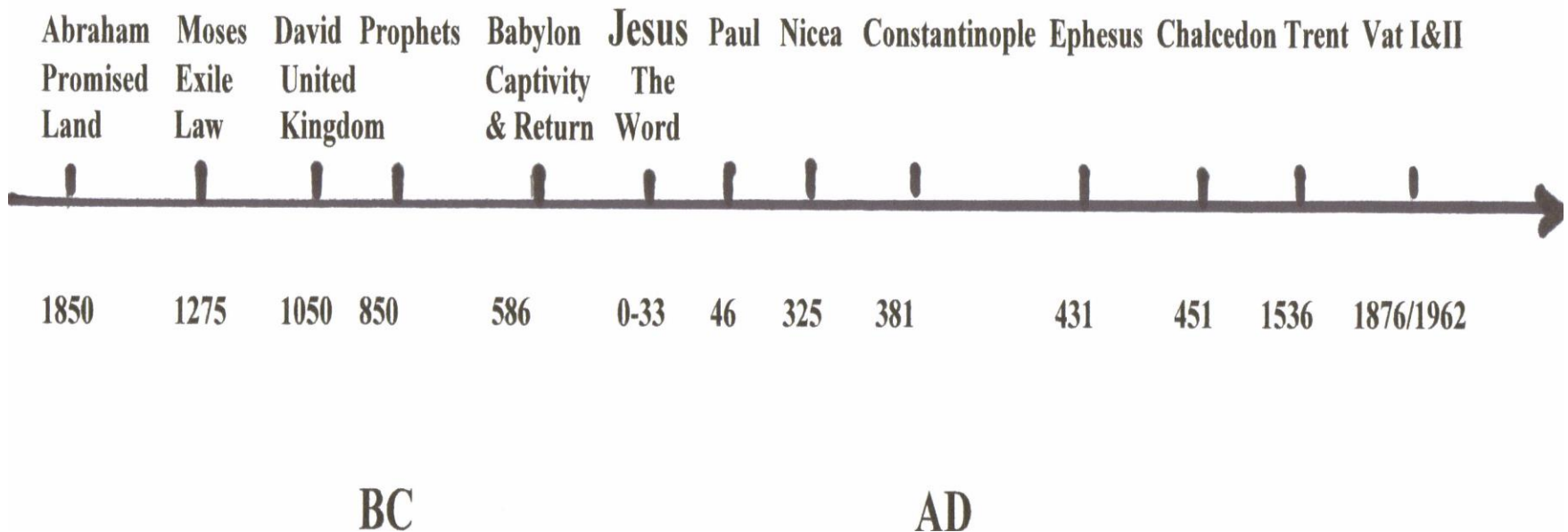


Spring Summer 2023
RCIA #2

God's Divine Plan

God's Divine Plan of Salvation History – (*Economea*)



Early Church History Leading To The Nicene Creed

- 1st - 3rd centuries – Roman Persecution – Christianity underground
- 313 A.D. Edict of Milan ending Christian persecutions
- 313 A.D. onward the rise of a multitude of questions about the Faith
- 4th and 5th centuries the need for Church councils

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
- Manacheism – 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*

Part I: The Creed

(Chapter 1)

The Purpose of Man's Existence

- Why Am I Here?
- What Must I Do?
- Who Will Tell Me?

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.**

How in antiquity did man understand God?

- What was among the most important things to primitive man?
 - **Fertility**
- What form of worship did primitive man employ
 - **Polytheism**
- How did primitive man attempt to satisfy his gods?
 - Through **animal** and sometimes human **sacrifices**

The gods of Egypt

- The Ancient Egyptians had around 8700 gods in total
 - Approximately 64 Egyptian gods played a vital role in Ancient Egyptian life
 - By the mid 400's there was record of over 2000 deities worshipped in Ancient Egypt
 - Almost every village in Egypt had it's own gods
 - Every time a new Pharaoh came into power the whole culture recognized his gods as the best so they were always changing

The God of Israel

- How did the form of worship change with the call of Abraham?
 - **Monotheism**
- How did the people of Israel come to know how to worship God?
 - **The Promises to Abraham**
 - Land
 - Descendants
 - Blessing and Redemption
 - **The Law given to Moses**
 - **The Covenants between the God of Israel and His people**

1st Century Worldview (Cont)

- Covenants
 - **Abraham** - Circumcision
 - **Moses** - The LAW
 - **David** - The Kingdom
 - **Jesus** – The Kingdom of God
 - One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

Covenantal Structure of Salvation History

1. THREE-FOLD PROMISE TO ABRAHAM:

ABRAHAM

Gen 12: 1-3

2. THREE-FOLD PROMISE UPGRADED TO COVENANTS:

1. Land Promise
Genesis 15

2. Kingdom Promise
Genesis 17

3. Promise of Worldwide Blessing
Genesis 22

3. THREE COVENANTS FULFILLED IN MOSES, DAVID & JESUS:

MOSES

Mosaic Covenant - Ex 24
Deuteronomic Covenant
(with Moses) - Deut 29

DAVID

Davidic Covenant
2 Sam 7

JESUS

New Covenant in
Jesus Christ
Mark 14

COVENANT SIGN AND MEDIATOR:

Adam
(Gen. 1-3)



Noah
(Gen. 9)



Abraham
(Gen. 15, 17, 22)



Moses
(Ex. 24 / Deut. 29)



David
(II Sam. 7)



Jesus
(Mk. 14)



FAMILY FORM:

One Holy
Couple

One Holy
Family

One Holy
Tribe

One Holy
Nation

One Holy
Kingdom

One Holy Catholic
and Apostolic Church

What was the Law?

- The first five books of the Bible (Torah, Pentateuch, the Law)
- It contained:
 - The 10 Commandments
 - 613 Commandments (Laws) in the Old Testament
 - 248 Positive Commandments
 - 365 Negative Commandments
 - 30 Dietary laws

The 10 Commandments

- I. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me**
- II. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain**
- III. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day**
- IV. Honor thy father and thy mother
- V. Thou shalt not kill
- VI. Thou shalt not commit adultery
- VII. Thou shalt not steal
- VIII. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor
- IX. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife
- X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods

The Purpose of Man's Existence

- What is the definition of a person?
 - A being with an intellect and will
- How many kinds of persons exist?
 - God (Trinity) – pure spirit except for the human Jesus
 - Angels – pure spirit
 - Humans – body and spirit

The Purpose of Man's Existence (Cont)

- **Why Am I Here?**

- **From God's point of view**

- To give glory to God and show His goodness
 - To reflect His gift to us of an immortal and spiritual soul
 - To accept His willingness to share His happiness with us

The Purpose of Man's Existence (Cont)

- **Why am I here?**

- **From our point of view**

- To accept His love even though it is not fully understandable in this life
 - To grow in happiness despite the fact that it cannot be fulfilled in this life
 - To achieve the ultimate end of man – the beatific vision (heaven)

The Purpose of Man's Existence (Cont)

- **What must I do to attain heaven?**

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind; and to love your neighbor as yourself
- Love is:
 - Based on knowledge
 - Decision of the will
 - Self-gift
 - Permanent
 - Open to life
- We are obliged to learn to love God
- We are called to do things for God
- We need to be open to His Supernatural gifts of grace

The Purpose of Man's Existence (Cont)

- **Who will tell me how to do this?**
 - Jesus who:
 - Calls us to know, love and serve God in this life
 - Was sent to show us the way:
 - Redemption
 - Establish the Church

The Purpose of Man's Existence (Cont)

- Left the Church under the Holy Spirit to give us the Divine Revelation (the Deposit of Faith)
 - Public Revelation – ended with death of last Apostle
 - Sacred Scriptures
 - Sacred Tradition
 - Private Revelation – we are not bound to accept
- We can also use the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as source for the Deposit of Faith

Transition

- For next week please read Chapter 2 **God and His Perfections**

Part I: The Creed (Chapter 2)

God and His Perfections

- Who Is God?

Questions

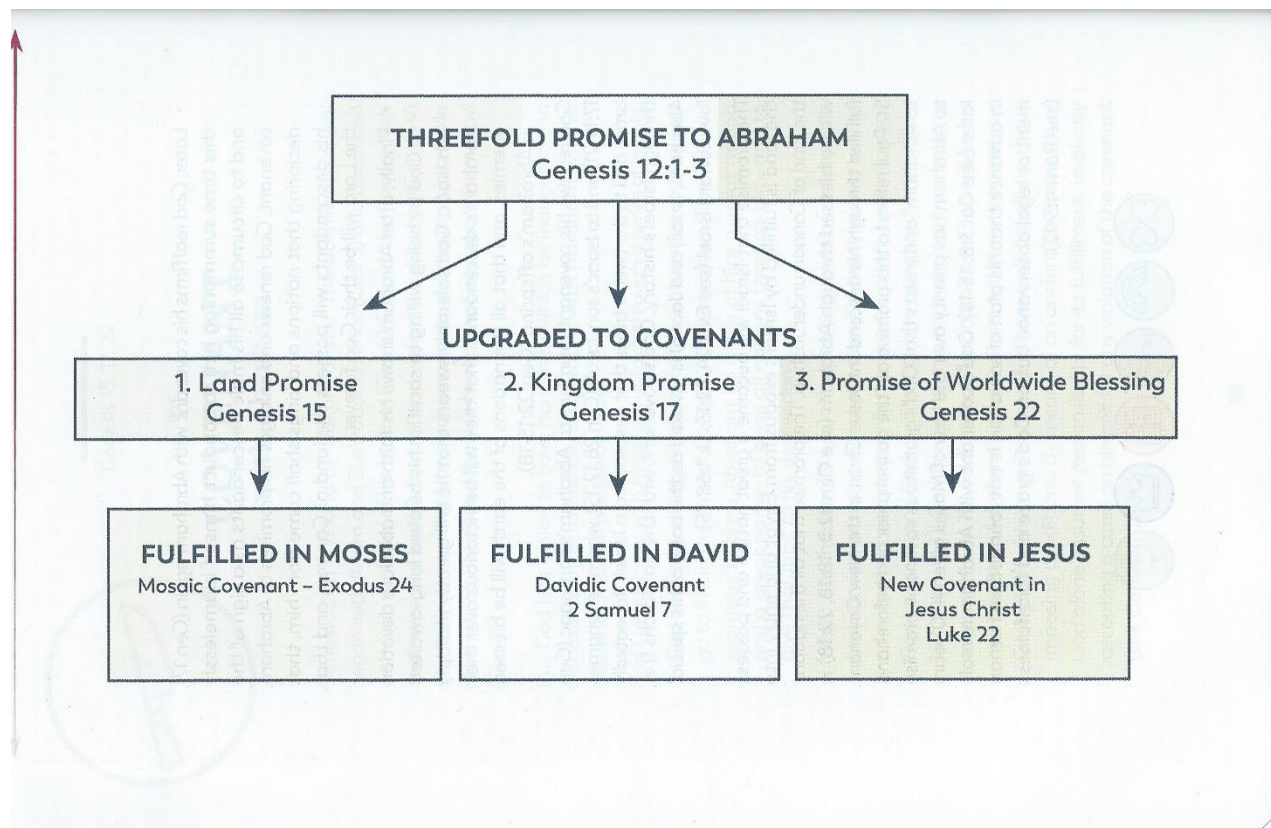
- Is there a God?
 - The fundamental option
 - No
 - Yes
- How would you describe God?
- Can I know God?
 - One way to know God is to look at His creation
 - Another way to know about God is to study His Word (the Revelation)
 - Sacred Scripture
 - Sacred Tradition
- Who can tell me about him?
 - Jesus and His Church

God and His Perfections (Cont)

- A brief overview of the God of the Old Testament

What a 1st Century Jew would know and believe

- Abraham and the Patriarchs – 2000 – 1700 B.C.
 - Circumcision
 - Three Promises
 - Land
 - Kingdom
 - Worldwide Blessing
- Moses the Law and the Exodus - 1700 – 1280 B.C.
 - Calling of Moses
 - **Yahweh - Name of God**
 - 10 Plagues



What a 1st Century Jew would know and believe (Cont)

- Exodus to Mt Sinai
 - Water from the Rock
 - **Manna**
 - Quail
- Catechesis given on Mt. Sinai
 - Creation
 - Adam and Eve
 - The Fall
 - Tower of Babel
 - Noah and the Flood

What a 1st Century Jew would know and believe (Cont)

- The Torah – (The Law)
 - **10 Commandments (613 rules)**
 - **Three annual feasts**
 - Passover
 - Pentecost
 - Booths
 - Two other feasts
 - Hanukkah
 - Yom Kippur

What a 1st Century Jew would know and believe (Cont)

- Six day work week - Sunday until sunset on Friday
- **Sabbath** – sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday
 - **Sacrifices**
 - **The Tabernacle**
- **Golden Calf Incident**
- Reconnoitering of Promised Land

What a 1st Century Jew would know and believe (Cont)

- Desert Wandering – 1280 – 1240 B.C.
- Conquest and Judges – 1240 – 1050 B.C.
- Royal Kingdom – 1050 – 930 B.C.
 - Saul/David/Solomon
 - **Psalms (150)**
- Divided Kingdom – 930 – 722 B.C.
 - 20 Kings of Israel
 - 20 Kings of Judah
 - **Prophets**
 - Assyrian assimilation – 722 B.C.
- Exile – 587 – 538 B.C.
 - Babylon captivity - 587
 - Nebuchadnezzar's dream - statue
 - Daniel's dream – 4 beasts
- Return – 538 – 167 B.C.

What a 1st Century Jew would know and believe (Cont)

- Dynasties
 - Babylonian - 586-338 B.C.
 - Medo-Persian – 338-322 B.C.
 - Greek – 322-63 B.C.
 - Maccabean Revolt – 167 – 0 B.C.
 - Roman – 63 B.C.-330 A.D.

What a 1st Century Jew would know and believe (Cont)

- Jewish Covenants with Yahweh
 - Adam – 7th day
 - Noah - rainbow
 - Abraham – circumcision
 - Moses – the Law
 - David - throne
- Final and New Covenant
 - Jesus - Eucharist

What was the 1st Century Jew waiting for?

- The arrival of the Messiah
- The return of the Ark of the Covenant
- The return of the Glory Cloud to the Temple?

God and His Perfections

- What is unique to the God of Israel
 - Monotheism – “one God” as affirmed by Jesus
 - He has reveals His name to Moses
 - The burning bush
 - YAHWEH – “I am who am” (**Ex 3:13-15**) a perpetual mystery beyond words
 - He who is - is truth and love and always faithful to His people
 - This leads us to turn to him as our first origin and ultimate goal

God and His Perfections

- **Who is God?**

- A being whom we can reason to by looking at His creation
 - St. Thomas Aquinas – 1225-1274 AD
 - 5 proofs for the existence of God
 - **Change or Motion** - Everything in the process of change is being changed by something else
 - **Cause and effect** – There must be an efficient cause to begin the process
 - **Necessary Being** – Since beings cannot exist alone there must be at least one necessary being
 - **Goodness, truth, nobility** – The degrees of these must come from one perfect likeness
 - **Goal directed (Final causality)** – Everything in nature is directed toward its goal

God and His Perfections (Cont)

- The *Catechism* (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

Transition

- For next week's discussion please read:
- **Chapter 3: The Unity and Trinity of God**
- **Chapter 4: Creation and the Angels**