The Four Sin Stories of Genesis

Sin, Original Sin
The Spread of the Corruption of Sin
And Our Salvation
Overview

• In This PowerPoint we will look at:
  – Each of the four sin stories in Genesis 3-11
  – How each story shows the spread of sin
  – The Catholic Teaching on Original Sin and the Promise of Redemption
  – What all this says about our Salvation
The First Sin Story

• Genesis 3:1-24

• The Snake tempts Adam and Eve to eat the fruit
  – It is both what can kill you & a symbol of transformation
  – You will not die
  – When you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods
The First Sin Story

• Some Points to Notice
  • *You* is plural in Hebrew, Adam is there and silent
    – Irenaeus said that Eve is the hero because she stood up to the snake
    – Adam (her helpmate) did nothing
• The temptation is to be god without God
  – We want to determine what is good and evil
  – We want to become god by our own efforts
The First Sin Story

• The effects
  – They still recognize God but now fear God
  – The world is still shaped by God and humans (2:5)
  – We get a distorted image of God and think that God punishes (Rm. 6:23) but sin punishes God heals
The First Sin Story

• Sin corrupts, limits and distorts our relationship with ourselves (blame others), each other (see that we’re naked), the world (grow thorns), and God (fear)

• God promises a savior, to crush the head of the snake
Key Terms that come from this Story

• Actual Sin--A sin that we actually do
  – Adam and Eve commit an actual sin
    • Actual sin can be mortal or venial (1 Jn. 5:16)
      – Moral sin kills our relationship with God
      – Venial sin are the sins that don’t kill but wound our relationship with God

• Original Sin--The Condition of our human nature and experience passed on to each of us
  – We live in a world where something is wrong and needs to be put right
    • Our human nature is weakened
    • Original Sin is at the root of every actual sin--we want to be god but without God

• Protoevangelium--The first gospel
  – God’s response to our sin is to offer us salvation
  – God’s response is not to punish us for sin but forgive the sin and heal its effects (Rom. 6:23)
The Second Sin Story

- Genesis 4:1-16
- Cain and Able both offer sacrifice but Cain is rejected and Able is accepted
  - How does he know?
- Cain kills Able and claims he is not his brothers keeper
- He is forced to wander, unprotected by the law
The Second Sin Story

- Sin spreads to now think that violence brings peace
- Cain is rejected and then kills his brother
- The distorted view of God (God is vengeful and kills) leads to a distorted relationship with each other (our brother)
The Spread of the Corruption

• The second story shows how the effects of sin are spreading
  – Now we see our brother or neighbor as a threat to what we want in life
  – Violence is seen as the way to deal with the threat
  – God still seeks us out
    • In our conscience as warning about sin
    • As protector when we do sin
      – As Jesus will say, “God sends his rain on the just and the unjust” (Matt 5:45)
The Third Sin Story

• Genesis 6:5-9:17
• Every ancient culture has a story of a great flood that only a few are saved
• There are many similarities, but the differences are what interest us here
The Third Sin Story

- God sounds like a Babylonian god who regrets making humans.
- God wants to flood the earth, let the water wipe out the evil.
- The difference is this story is 6:11 “full of lawlessness”.
- The law is not rules but the teachings the Torah.
- The world is Torahless and thus can’t walk with God.
- Noah is righteous, he walks with God, a remnant of the human race.
The Third Sin Story

- In the very middle of the story, 8:1, “God remembered Noah”
- The recreation of the world begins
- Noah offers sacrifice to God
The Third Sin Story

• The story ends with a bow being placed in the sky (9:13)
• We think rainbow, but the bow is a weapon
• God will not fight to destroy evil
• God will work to forgive evil and fulfill human life
• Jesus says the same in the parable of the weeds and wheat (Mt 13:24-30; 36-43)
The Spread of the Corruption

• The third story shows how the effects of sin are spreading
  – We are “Lawless” or “Torahless”; we do not know how to walk with God
  – We become comfortable with our daily life and forget how to live within the Mystery of God in whom we live and move and have our being.

• For as it was in the days of Noah . . . In [those] days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away (Matt 24:37-39).
The Fourth Sin Story

• Genesis 11:1-9
• In the ancient world the gods ruled the earth from the sky
• The tower represents human beings attempt to replace God with our ingenuity and technology
The Fourth Sin Story

- People end up confused and unable to understand each other
  - Misunderstanding the role of human beings in creation
- They “babble” at each other
- Pentecost will reverse this
The Spread of the Corruption

• The fourth story shows how the effects of sin are spreading
  – Having forgotten how to walk with God we now think that society sets the rules for what is good and what is evil
  – What human beings could not accomplish by themselves, we think can be accomplished by working together and using our skill and technology
    • The confusion is caused not by our languages but by not knowing our place within the universe or our relationship to God
Original Sin

• The stories show how sin builds on sin and leads to a corruption of:
  – How we see God
    • We distort the reality of God and think that God is like us
  – How we see Ourselves
    • We think we make the rules and are the top dog
    • We are afraid of other people hurting us
  – How we see Creation
    • Creation is corrupted by our attempt to control rather than care and cultivate

Notice this modern corruption of the death of our Lord. Jesus died to save us from sin, not so we could sin!
Original Sin

- CCC #398-399
- In sin man preferred himself to God
- We want to “be like God,” but “without God”
- We become afraid of the God of whom we have created a distorted image (rooted in our distortion of our nature by sin)

Original Sin is a condition of human nature that weakens our nature and leads to us sinning as an abuse of freedom and a refusal to love. Repentance is the first step of our transformation in Christ.
Original Sin & Protoevangelium

- God promised (and delivered) a savior who would destroy evil and return us to holiness and justice
- This promise is fulfilled not by power but by mercy and God himself entering into our death for love of us
What this says about Salvation

• The God who created us is the God who saves us (Protoevangelium)
• Without sin God would be the one to teach us what is Good and what is Evil so we could live
• We want to be god without God and make the rules of what is good and what is evil because we think we know how to live
• Salvation includes both learning and living by being disciples (learning from Christ what is good and what is evil and how to live the Life of God)
  – Jesus does not destroy sin and death by violence to those who commit evil but by forgiveness and by entering into death so that we could live
    • Death is no longer the ultimate separation from Christ but even in death Christ is there!
• This means that sin does not change God’s plan
• God still leads us to know good and evil and shares his life with us so we can be like God (Theosis)
  – God still leads us by
    • Our desire for truth (our minds)
    • Our desire for good (our will/decisions)
    • Our desire for beauty (our affections and emotions)