

WHAT CATHOLICS MUST BELIEVE ABOUT CREATION

Magisterium of the Catholic Church has defined what Catholics must believe about the history of creation:

1. The creation by God of all things at the beginning of time
2. The special creation by God of man
3. Formation of woman from man
4. Unity of the human race
5. The original happiness of our first parents in a state of justice
6. The divine command laid upon man by God to prove obedience
7. Transgression of that command at the instigation of the devil in the form of a serpent
8. The fall of our original parents from their primitive state of innocence.
9. The promise of a future redeemer

Humanae Generis, Pope Pius XII; Dr. S. Hahn: *Genesis 1-22: The Covenant as a Family Affair*; Pope Pius X: *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, Sept. 8, 1907

The Catholic Church rejects the theory that the first chapters of Genesis are pure myth. See Catechism citations: # 216; #293-301; #337-354; #759-760.

CREATION THEORIES

There are several different theories of Creation that 21st century Christian scholars embrace:

-Literal interpretation: That the earth was created in 6 days.

-Day / Age Theory: Each of the six days represents a geological age covering millions of years. (Unfortunately for this theory, geologists have been unable to find a match between the geologic evidence and the creations of each of the 6-day periods).

-The Gap Theory: Allows a form of evolution by accepting a gap between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. Proponents of this theory suggest that perhaps Satan's fall from heaven to earth produced such chaos on earth that God destroyed creation and started over.

-Symbolist Interpretation: Each day is a symbol of some spiritual reality. Some ancient Christian and Jewish scholars saw the 6 days of creation as symbols of the different periods of Salvation history.

-Mythical View: All of the creation account is myth and none of it is history. The Biblical account was completely invented by the Hebrew people to explain their world and their early history much like the Egyptian mythological account of creation. **The Catholic Church does not accept this view.**

See the Catechism of the Catholic Church # 198, 279-327.

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Handout Lesson #2: CREATION THEORIES

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HOLY MOUNTAINS OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE

1. The Garden of Eden	Genesis 2:10; Ezekiel 28:12-14
2. Noah's Ark rests on Mt. Ararat after the Great Flood	Genesis 8:4
3. Mt. Moriah: The site of the substitutionary atonement of the ram in place of the sacrifice of Abraham's son Isaac; the site of Solomon's Temple; Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified was a lower elevation of Mt. Moriah	Genesis 22:2-14 2 Chronicles 3:1 Matthew 27:32-36; Mark 15:21-27; Luke 23:26-34; John 19:17-24
4. Sinai Covenant on Mt. Sinai/Horeb	Exodus 19:12
5. Elijah's defeat of the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel [carmel is a Hebrew word for "garden"]	1 Kings 18
6. Jesus and the giving of the New Covenant law on the Mt. of Beatitudes	Matthew 5
7. Jesus' official appointment of Peter as Vicar of the Church on the mountain at Caesarea Philippi	Matthew 16:13-19; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21;
8. Jesus prevailed over temptation on a mountain	Matthew 4:8-11; Luke 4:1-13
9. The Mt. of Transfiguration when Jesus appeared in His glory	Matthew 17 [Peter refers to this place as "the holy mountain" in 2 Peter 1:16-18]
10. Jesus is arrested in a garden on the Mt. of Olives; Jesus ascends to the Father from the Mt. of Olives	Matthew 26:47ff; Mark 14:43ff; Luke 22:47ff; John 18:3ff; Acts 1:1-19

GENESIS SUMMARY

BIBLICAL PERIODS	CREATION	PATRIARCHS			
FOCUS	FOUR EVENTS	FOUR PEOPLE			
THE COVENANTS	Adam-----Noachide----- Abrahamic Covenant----- Covenant				
SCRIPTURE	1:1-----3:1-----6:1-----10:1-----12:1-----25:19-----27:19-----37:1---50:26				
DIVISIONS	Creation	Fall	Flood	Nations	Abraham Isaac Jacob Joseph
TOPIC	EARLY HUMAN RACE			HEBREW RACE	
	HISTORICAL ACCOUNT			BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS	
LOCATION	FERTILE CRESCENT [Mesopotamia] Eden-Haran (Syria)-Iraq			HARAN-CANAAN [Syria-Palestine] CANAAN -EGYPT	
TIME	c. 2000 year period			281 years 81 years	

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1. **Creation:** God is the sovereign creator of matter and energy, space and time; He is the Great Elohim. Human beings are the pinnacle of His creation. Elohim creates a Covenant with Adam and Eve and they become the children of Yahweh Elohim. The Covenant sign is the Tree of Life.
2. **Fall:** Though originally good, this creation became subjected to corruption through the sin of Adam. In spite of the devastating curse of the Fall, God promises hope of redemption through the “seed of the woman,” Mary, the mother of the New Covenant children of God, the only woman other than Eve to bear the title “Woman” (Jn 2:4; 19:26). The sacrifice of animals is set in place as a temporary measure to prevent the permanent “spiritual” death of mankind.
3. **Flood:** As humanity multiplies, sin also multiplies until God is compelled to destroy the human race with the exception of Noah and his family. After the Flood, God makes a covenant with Noah and all creation. The Covenant sign is the rainbow. The Covenant continues with Noah’s righteous son Shem. The Flood is the prophetic promise of our new life in Christ and the forgiveness of original sin through our Baptism into the Family of God.
4. **Nations:** Though we are all children of Adam through Noah, God fragments the single culture and language of the post-flood world and scatters the peoples over the face of the earth. All the nations of the earth are descendants of the 3 sons of Noah.
5. **Abrahamic Covenant:** God initiated His covenant with Abram when he was living in Ur of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia (Gen 15:7). God promised a 3-fold blessing of land, descendants, and a world-wide blessing if Abram would have faith and be obedient to God. Abram’s faith and obedience resulted in the ratification of a 3-fold covenant and his name is changed to Abraham. This covenant is renewed with Abraham’s descendants Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and Joseph. The covenant sign is the rite of circumcision.

YAHWEH'S EIGHT COVENANTS

“But Yahweh’s faithful love for those who fear him is from eternity and for ever; and his saving justice to their children’s children; as long as they keep his covenant, and carefully obey his precepts.” Palms 103:17-18

COVENANT	SIGN	SCRIPTURE
1. Adam -fertility -dominion over the earth	Tree of Life	Genesis 1:28-30; Genesis 2:15-17; Hosea 6:7 can be translated <i>they have broken their covenant like Adam</i>
2. Noah and the earth -The earth will never be destroyed by flood waters again (water will become a sign of salvation)	Rainbow	Genesis 6:18; 9:9-17; Sirach 44:17-18.
3. Abraham = 3-fold, (continues with Isaac, Jacob & descendants) -land, nation (descendants) & world wide blessing	Circumcision On the 8 th day	Genesis 12:3; 15:1-18; 17: 1-27; 18:18 & 22:13-18; 26:3-5; 28:10-14; Exodus 2:24; Psalm 105:8-11; Sirach 44:19-20
4. Moses & Israel -Sinai Covenant establishing divine liturgy & covenant sacraments	Ark of the Covenant Tabernacle 10 Commandments	Exodus 19-24; 34:10, 27, 28; Deuteronomy 5:2-3; 29:12.
5. Aaron & Sons -perpetual ministerial priesthood of the Levites	Salt	Exodus 40:15; Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19; Sirach 45:7; Jeremiah 33:21.
6. Phinehas -perpetual priesthood in Covenant of Peace (prefigures Christ)	Seamless robe & miter	Numbers 25:11-15; Sirach 45:24.
7. David & descendants -dynasty and throne forever secure	Throne/ Temple	2 Samuel 7:11-17; 23:5; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Sirach 45:25.
8. Jesus (<i>Yah-shua = Yahweh saves or I save</i>) also written Yehosua = Joshua. He is the fulfillment of all the covenantal promises	The Cross, the true “Tree of Life”	Isaiah 55:3; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 12:24.
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* There are more Scripture passages referring to Yahweh’s 8 Covenants than those listed in the chart. Some additional Scripture references for the various covenants are listed below:

-Adam: Most English Bible translations include in their footnotes that Hosea 6:7 can be translated “They have broken the covenant like Adam...” The word “adam” can mean the first man “Adam”, or “man”, or even “ground” or “earth”]. The Jewish Tanach translates Hoses 6:6-7: *For I desire kindness, not sacrifice; and knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings. But they, like*

Adam, transgressed the covenant; there they betrayed Me. In Genesis 6:18: the Hebrew word “quwm” can also be translated “restore”, “continue”, or “maintain” which is why most scholars assume the first covenant was established with Adam and then continued with Noah. If there was no covenant there would be no covenant obligations or violations of the covenant.

-Noah: Genesis 6:18; 9:9, 11, 12 (twice), 13, 15, 16, 17; Sirach 44:17-18; Isaiah 24:5

-Abraham (and descendants): Genesis 15:18; 17:2, 4, 7 (twice), 9, 10 (twice); 17:11, 13 (twice), 14, 19 (twice), 22:13-18; 28:13-14; 31:44; Exodus 2:24; 6:2-5; Leviticus 26: 42-45; 2 Kings 13:23; 17:15, 35, 38; 18:12; 23:2, 3 (three times), 21; 1 Chronicles 16:15-17; Sirach 44:19-23; Psalm 105:9; Acts 3:25; 7:8

-Mosaic Covenant with Israel: Exodus 19:5; 24:7, 8; 31:16; 34:10, 27, 28; Leviticus 24:8-9; 26:9, 15, 25, 42 (3 times), 44, 45; Deuteronomy 4:13, 23, 31; 5:2-3; 7:9,12; 8:18; 9:9, 11, 15; 17:2; 29:1, 9, 12 (twice), 14, 21, 25 (twice); 31:16, 20; 33:9; Joshua 7:11, 15; 23:16; Judges 2:1, 20; 1 Kings 8:9, 21, 23; 19:10-11; 2 Chronicles 6:11, 14; 34:30, 31 (twice), 32; Psalm 105:8-11; 106:45; Isaiah 42:6; 54:10

-Aaron and sons: Exodus 40:15; Leviticus 2:13; 18:19; Numbers 18:19; Nehemiah 13:25; Sirach 45:7, 15; Jeremiah 33:21; Malachi 2:4-9

-Phinehas: Numbers 25:11-13; Sirach 45:24; Psalm 106:30-31 (an example of righteousness for the ages)

-David: 2 Samuel 7:11-17; 23:5; 23:5 Sirach 45:25; 47:11; 2 Chronicles 7:18; 13:5; 21:7; Psalm 89:3, 28, 34, 132: 1-18; Jeremiah 33:21; Acts 2:30.

-Jesus: Isaiah 59:20-21 [Romans 11:26-27]; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6-14; Galatians 4:24; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6-13; 9:15-20; 10:14-29 (quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34); 12:24; 13:20.

Covenants involve oath-swearing: Genesis 21:23-24 (Abimelech and Abraham); 22:16; Exodus 17:16; Deut. 6:13; 7:7-11; 13:18-19 (17-18); 29:11-14 (12-15); Joshua 2:17 (Rahab’s covenant with Israelite soldiers); 1 Sam 20:17 (covenant between Jonathan and David); 24:21-22 (David and Saul); 2 Sam. 3:9; 2 Chronicles 15:12-15; Nehemiah 10:30 (29); Psalm 89:3; 105:8-9; 110:4; Sir. 44:21 (22); Luke 1:73; Acts 2:30; Hebrews 6:13; Latin word *sacramentum* = oath

Conditional covenants: (“if” cause) Blessings for obedience; curses for disobedience

Adamic: Blessings = Gen. 1:28-30; conditions: Gen. 2:15-17; curse: Gen. 3:15-19

Abrahamic: conditional for Abraham’s descendants: Gen 17:19-22 (only through Isaac)

Davidic: conditional for descendants = 1 Kings 2:3-4; 1 Kings 2:4; 11:11-13

Sinai: Deut. 13:18-19; Covenant treaty = book of Deut.; Blessings Deut. 28:1-14; curses 28:25-

69. New covenant: (Covenant treaty: Book of Revelation); Blessings = Matt. 5:1-12 & curses

Matt. 23:13-30; 25:31-46. Conditional covenant with baptized believers.

Non-conditional covenants: Noachide: Sir 44:17-18 ; Abrahamic: Gen 12:1-3 ; Aaronic: Sir 44:7 (8), 15 (19); Phinehas’ covenant of peace: Num 25:13; Sir 45:24; Davidic: 2 Sam. 7:14; 1Ch 17:14; 2 Ch 3:1; Sir. 45:25 (by linear descent); 47:11 (13); New Covenant: Hebrews 7:21-28 (God’s covenant with Christ is non-conditional and eternal)

**CREATION IN 2 SETS OF 3
DAYS EACH:**

CREATES REHLMS	FILLS WITH RULERS
TIME [light from darkness]	SUN, MOON, STARS, PLANETS
SPACE [heaven and the seas]	FISH, BIRDS
LAND/ LIFE [dry land and vegetation]	BEASTS AND MAN

The Themes of Genesis

- Graphic depiction of sins prohibited in the 10 Commandments
- the family tree of Jesus, the Messiah
- The failure of the ‘firstborn’ son.