

RS Revision

Topic 2: Human Responses to God

The Creation

The Fall of Mankind

Cain & Abel

The Near Sacrifice of Isaac / Abraham

David & Bathsheba

Nathan's Parable

Form 7 Summer Term

Form 8 Autumn Term

The Creation

There are 2 versions of how the world was created - one told in Genesis 1 and the other, in Genesis 2

Genesis 1

Day 1: Day and night

Day 2: Sea and sky

Day 3: Land, plants and trees

Day 4: Sun and moon

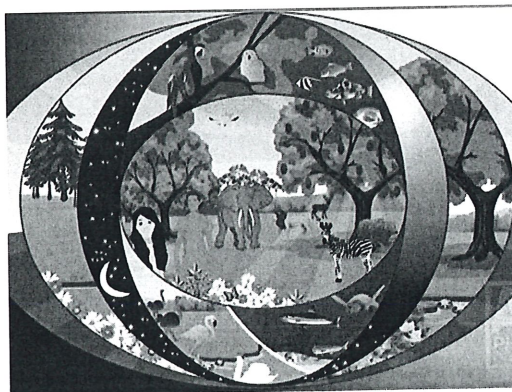
Day 5: Fish and birds

Day 6: Animals and humans

Day 7: God rested

Analysis:

- God is creator and creates by commanding
- Humans have control over creation because they are made in His image
- They share in His power
- Humans are STEWARDS and maintain the God-giving order of the world
- Everything has a place
- Creation is perfect in its original state, as reflected by its Creator
- Day of Rest is called the Sabbath and observed as one of the Ten Commandments.



Genesis 2

- Set in the garden of Eden
- God told man to work with the soil in the garden and look after the garden
- This man was Adam
- God told Adam he could eat from all the other trees in the garden but not from the tree that makes you know right from wrong
- This is because God said he would die if he did
- God decided to make a partner so Adam would not be lonely
- So God made the animals, and Adam named them
- Adam would still be lonely so when Adam was sleeping, God took one of Adam's ribs
- From this, God made a woman "meaning taken out from man"
- God said that a man leaves his father and mother and joins his wife. The two people become one person

THEMES

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Pleased: | God was pleased that everything was right and could sustain life; each aspect depended on each other. |
| Beautiful: | The universe is beautiful and this is supported by modern science. |
| God's Image: | Humans are intelligent and can carry on God's work. |
| Procreation: | This is important in order to populate the earth. |
| Stewardship: | Looking after the world for God by taking care of the environment and wildlife, like God Himself. It shows that humans have a close relationship with animals. |
| Powerful: | The Creation stories show God's power. |
| Obedience: | God expects humans to obey him as He created them. |
| Listening & Loving: | He gave Adam a companion when he asked for it. This shows compassion and understanding. |
| Companionship: | It is clear that humans need each other. This links to procreation and marriage/the need to unite together. |
| Inventive: | Adam named the wildlife. This indicates intelligence and responsibility from God. |
| Sense of Purpose: | Adam was told to work the land and take care of it. Humans were not to waste their time but do something positive and productive. |
| Without Sin: | Humans did not originally have sin, but were pure as it says they were "naked without shame". |

HOW DO THE 2 STORIES COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER?

- the idea of God creating a beautiful garden (Eden) in which humans can live and which everything is provided
- The idea of humans naming everything (in some Eastern cultures, to name something gives someone authority over it)
- The idea of limits within life - God planting the Tree of Knowledge and Tree of Life and telling humans not to eat certain things
- The idea that humans need company - for friendship and procreation

THINGS TO NOTE:

HUMANS:

- The writer of the first Creation story is called P
- Verse 26 tells us that humans were created in God's likeness

GOD:

- God's authority lies in the BELIEF that he designed and created the world
- God was therefore responsible for it and humans answer to Him

REST:

- Day 7 is the Sabbath (used by the Jews)
- God had worked hard and he could now rest, knowing that what he had created was perfect

SCIENCE v RELIGION

Science uses 2 theories:

- 1) the Big Bang Theory (since 1920)
- 2) Theory of Evolution (Charles Darwin)

HAS SCIENCE DISPROVED GOD?

Galileo causes trouble:

- Galileo found that the earth orbited the sun
- Bible leaders cross because the Bible says the Sun went round the earth (earth being centre of the universe)

God of the Gaps:

- People thought that natural disasters and things like the seasons were down to God
- Now we know about the earth's rotation and the water cycle
- It's thought that one day science will explain everything but until that day, the theory of God can fill in the gaps of our understanding

Extreme Christian View:

- Some Christians believe the Bible is true in **EVERY** detail
- They believe everything was created by God in six days, each lasting 24 hours
- They say that science is not as accurate as thought as it contains serious errors

Moderate Christian View:

- Believe we should not read the Bible as scientific fact
- They say that the 7 days were not 24 hours each, but represent stages in the world's development
- The Bible tells us that God **DID** create the world and science tells us **HOW**
- Therefore, religion and science **complement** each other
- There is no evidence in nature that he does not exist

Humanist View:

- The world described by science is correct
- There is no God
- This is because science works with what can be **measured and observed**.

The Fall

This story is all about:

- TEMPTATION
- EVIL AND SUFFERING

What is the relevance of this story today?

- All religions try to answer the problem of evil and suffering
- Many attribute it to "sin"
- The clash between good and evil is worldwide
- Whether the story is taken literally or symbolically, it demonstrates the consequences of what someone did
- The theme of SALVATION that runs throughout the Bible, begins here and ends with the CRUCIFIXION and RESURRECTION of Jesus

YOU WILL NEED TO READ THE FULL STORY FROM GENESIS 3

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

- "Eden" means delight
- The Greek word for garden translates to "paradise"
- Genesis locates the Garden of Eden between the River Tigris and Euphrates (now called Iraq and Iran)
- A harmonious picture is painted - with God and people living and working together

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

- Many theories as to what the tree represents
- Importance of it lies in the fact it was forbidden
- It offered an alternative to the obedience to God - i.e. gave people the opportunity to become "self-made" by having extracted knowledge, values and satisfaction themselves
- Some scholars say "knowledge" would be better translated as 'experience'

THE SERPENT

- Symbolic for the devil
- It deceives Eve into thinking it is in her best interest to eat the fruit - i.e. it TEMPTS her (like the devil tempts Jesus later in the Bible)
- Serpent can also represent the bad side of our character

THE ACT

- Eve made her own decision to eat the fruit - no-one forced her
- She could have said no, but her lack of will power meant life was never the same again
- Worse was to come when she tempted Adam to eat the fruit too
- Likewise, Adam had no will power to refuse her

THE RESULTS

- In the OT, nakedness symbolises SHAME, hence why Adam and Eve were so determined to cover themselves up
- They had been sold evil under the disguise of something wise and sophisticated
- In reality, it was just greed
- This greed led to the spoiling of the world
- They were too ashamed and embarrassed to face God - THIS IS THE MAIN CONSEQUENCE
- Sin cuts people off from God - notice how the main theme of the Bible is how God tries to reverse this situation

IN SUMMARY:

- 1) The serpent's punishment was HUMILIATION - to be trampled on
- 2) The woman's punishment was to know / experience SUFFERING i.e. childbirth and to never feel EQUAL with men
- 3) The man's punishment was to SWEAT and to find surviving HARD WORK

The Fall of Mankind Themes

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| Punishment: | The human relationships changed, both with God and nature. Men and women would no longer be equal. In nature, life would be a struggle. In the case of the serpent, humans would always be fighting evil in their conscience. |
| Pain: | This would now be a daily battle. |
| Temptation: | Humans are easily led astray (this is something that Jesus later fights when spending 40 days in the Wilderness) |
| Shift the Blame: | Humans will often avoid taking responsibility for their actions and will look to blame others first. |
| Shame: | This ties in with embarrassment and something that humans now feel as a result. |
| Greedy/Ambitious: | A quality of human nature is that they are not satisfied with what they have, but constantly on the lookout for more. It is a negative quality. |
| Holy: | The story teaches that God is holy and cannot allow sin near Him. |
| Judge: | He will judge the actions of humans and deliver consequences / punishments as necessary. |
| Merciful: | He made clothes for them, showing that he cared for them, despite their actions. |
| Power: | Shows that whatever God wants, happens - even immediate exile. |
| Atonement: | Humans had to learn to reconcile with God before they could approach Him again (feel sorry for their sins). |
| Disobedience: | By taking the apple, they did not trust that God was looking after them. They wanted their own set of values and to survive without Him. |

Cain and Abel

The Story (taken from Genesis 4)

- Eve became pregnant and had a son
- She remarked: "By the Lord's help I have acquired a son" - she named him Cain
- She later gave birth to another son, called Abel
- Cain became a farmer and Abel became a shepherd
- One day Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the Lord
- Abel then brought a lamb, born to one of his best sheep, and killed it, giving the best part as an offering
- The Lord accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's one
- This made Cain furious and he scowled in anger
- The Lord asked him: "Why are you angry? Why do you have that scowl on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling but because you have done evil, sin is crouching at your door. It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it"
- Cain then asked his brother to accompany him to the fields to check on the harvest
- Cain then killed Abel
- The Lord asked Cain where his brother was, and Cain replied that he did not know and why should he look after his brother
- The Lord said: "Why have you done this terrible thing? Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground like a voice calling for revenge. You are placed under a curse and can no longer farm the soil..... If you try to grow crops, the soil will not produce anything; you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth"
- Cain said how the punishment was too hard to bear and that anyone who finds him will kill him"
- The Lord answered "No, if anyone kills you, 7 lives will be taken in revenge"
- A mark was put on Cain so people knew not to kill him
- Cain went away from the Lord's presence and lived in a land called "Wandering", east of Eden

Although this seems unfair, other Bible stories show that God looks at the heart - someone's motive and character

This verse (5&6) shows that Cain is an angry man with a violent temper

Cain saying that he should not look after his brother is symbolic language in that God knew and cared that an innocent person had suffered at the hands of someone violent. Blood was the symbol of life

God tells him here that anger is at the root of his problems and that sin, was waiting to take over him (like a time bomb waiting to go off)

WHY DID CAIN KILL ABEL?

- Cain saw Abel as his annoying little brother who got the easier job of looking after the sheep (traditionally, this became the role of the youngest in a family)
- Cain became JEALOUS of Abel as he felt Abel was preferred by God - i.e. was the "favourite"
- Sadly, he ignored God and as a result, murdered Abel in cold blood

A FOCUS ON GOD'S JUDGEMENT OF CAIN

- Looking at Old Testament law, one would expect God to have killed Cain for what he did - but note, God didn't
- Instead God REHABILITATED him by sending him away from his family and farm
- Cain would have been TERRIFIED so God showed COMPASSION by putting a protective mark on him
- As a result, Cain had a SECOND CHANCE (a bit like Adam and Eve had a second chance)

Cain and Abel Themes

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| Omniscience: | God knows what is in people's hearts; he knew Cain was angry and jealous. |
| Justice: | God cares about justice because he "heard Abel's blood crying out from the ground" and acted. |
| Punish: | God will punish those who do wrong. In this case, Cain was punished by being banished from the farm. |
| Merciful: | God showed mercy to Cain despite his evil act - he was given a second chance and protected with His mark. |
| Jealousy: | Cain was jealous of the good relationship between God and Abel. |
| Anger: | Cain was angry that God accepted Abel's sacrifice but not his. |
| Rejection: | Cain's sacrifice was rejected because he had sinned - he was told that if he did right, his offering would be accepted. But he didn't. |
| Bad Attitude: | Cain refused to change his attitude or to control his anger - sin was crouching at his door. Instead he looked for opportunity to get revenge. |
| Acceptance: | It is unknown whether the quality of Cain's offering was inferior. However, it is clear that humans want to be close to God. |
| Weakness: | Human nature is weak - Cain gave in easily to his feelings of hurt and anger by killing Abel. |
| Sin: | Sin is part of human nature. Anger is sinful as it gets in the way of a right relationship with God. |

ALSO CALLED ABRAHAM.

The Near Sacrifice of ISAAC

The Story (taken from Genesis 22)

This really is the ultimate test

Mountain tops were supposed to be nearer God

The angel may have been an external voice, or one that was just in his head

Abraham learnt that sacrifice was all about FAITH and OBEDIENCE than the actual sacrificing of children

The point of asking this is to see whether Abraham's oath of allegiance to God really meant something

Abraham had shown so much faith in God's promise in giving up his heir that as a reward, he would be becoming the father of a huge nation

- Some time later God tested Abraham
- He said: "Take your son, your only son, whom you love so much and go to the land of Moriah. There on a mountain that I will show you, offer him as a sacrifice to me"
- The following morning Abraham travelled with Isaac and 2 servants to Moriah
- After 3 days travelling, Abraham saw Moriah
- He told his servants to stay with the donkey while he and Isaac went to the mountain to worship
- Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice and Abraham carried a knife and live coals to start a fire
- Isaac noticed that although there were equipment for a sacrificial offering, there was no lamb - so he asked his father where it was
- Abraham replied: "God himself will provide one"
- When they had arrived at the place where God had told them to go, Abraham built an altar and tied up his son and placed on top of the wood
- Abraham raised the knife to kill him but at that moment an angel of the Lord called to him from heaven
- "Don't hurt the boy or do anything to him. Now I know that you honour and obey God, because you have not kept back your only son from me"
- Abraham saw a ram caught in a bush by its horns
- He collected it and offered it as a burnt offering instead of his son
- Abraham named the place "The Lord Provides" because his son was replaced with a ram
- A second time, an angel from heaven called to Abraham
- "I make a vow by my own name - the Lord is speaking - that I will richly bless you I promise that I will give you as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand in the seashore. Your descendants will conquer their enemies. All the nations will ask me to bless them as I have blessed your descendants because you obeyed my command"

A NOTE ON SACRIFICES:

- Offering sacrifices to God formed a central part of Old Testament life
- It's worth noting though that the sacrificial system developed after Abraham's death
- However, even during Abraham's life, the majority of the Jewish nation used it to understand their relationship with God
- Basically, it's how most people in the early world showed RESPECT to their gods
- The killing of the best cattle thanked God for providing food and pasture
- Animal blood was sacred as it represented its LIFE
- Many were supposed to give the best of their crops

A NOTE ON ATONEMENT

- The Israelites believed God took a deeper interest in them than merely providing good living conditions
- They believed God cared how they behaved
- The Israelites soon realised they needed a way of saying sorry when they did something wrong
- Over time, new rituals emerged - special sacrifices were offered as a way of saying sorry
- This was called ATONEMENT
- This is the way most Christians explain why Jesus died and to understand Jesus' death as a sacrifice for sin

A NOTE ON ABRAHAM'S FAITH

- Remember, God had made a COVENANT (promise) with Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation - the people of Canaan (now Israel)
- Part of the covenant was to have all males CIRCUMCISED as a sign they worshipped God
- Although Abraham made all the preparations for the sacrifice of his son, he knew his God was different from other gods
- God had promised him descendents but his only son was born in Abraham's wife's old age
- It would also be faith that would deliver this promise

Abraham Themes

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| Faith: | Having faith means keeping the covenant and being obedient to God. It means trusting God too. Abraham trusted that God would fulfil his promise of making him the father of a great nation. |
| Reward: | Faith brings reward. God rewarded Abraham's faith by enabling him to begin the Jewish faith. |
| Obedience: | Abraham obeyed God's command and was prepared to sacrifice his only son that he had longed for. He would have gone through with it had the angel not stopped him. |
| Covenant: | Agreement between God and His people. God promised to love and protect His people if they obeyed, no matter how difficult. Abraham is an example of this. |
| Test / Trust: | God can be trusted to keep his covenant. Despite the test he was given, Abraham also trusted that God would keep his promises. |
| Sacrifices: | Making sacrifices is hard. But, they can bring great rewards. Sacrifice is not as important as the motive behind it though - Abraham's actions were motivated by God and the desire to please and serve him. |
| Long Term Plans: | It shows that God had a plan for His people - that they would become great. |

David and Bathsheba

THEME:

- This story highlights what happens when a king forgets his role and *puts himself first*
- David thought that being king meant he could have / do **ANYTHING** that ordinary
- People couldn't do - in this case, take **ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE**

The Story (taken from 2 Samuel 11)

David staying behind is odd - the role of a king is to be a **MILITARY LEADER** and protect its people from enemies

Getting another man's wife pregnant is bad enough but how David tried to deal with it / hide it was even worse

Note that David normally cared greatly for his soldiers

- Story is set a spring time, when usually Kings go off to war
- Instead, David sent Joab and the Israeli army out to defeat the Ammonites and city of Rabbah, but David stayed in Jerusalem
- One sunny afternoon, David went up on to his palace roof where he saw a beautiful lady having a bath
- He sent a messenger to find out who she was, and learnt that she was Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam
- David was a bit of a lady's man and although she was already married (to Uriah the Hittite), he slept with her
- Bathsheba became pregnant and sent a message to David to tell him he was the father of her unborn child
- David requested for Uriah to return from war under the pretence of asking for a an update on how the fighting was going
- David sent Uriah home to rest
- However, Uriah did not return home but instead slept at the palace
- When David asked why, Uriah explained that how could he go and have a restful night with his wife when his comrades were out fighting
- David said that Uriah could stay the rest of the day and return to the war the following day
- That evening, David tried his hardest to get Uriah drunk
- Even then, Uriah did nto go home to his wife, but slept under a blanket
- As his plan did not work (to get Uriah to sleep with his wife) David told Joab to put Uriah in the front line
- David put Uriah in an area where he knew the enemy were strong
- His plan worked - Uriah was killed in the war

Uriah has essentially been sent on a suicide mission

David has become irrational (he even wanted Joab to pull the rest of the soldiers out so Uriah had no back-up.

David didn't bank on Uriah taking life as a soldier so seriously - not having an easy life when his fellow comrades were out fighting

If Uriah was drunk and went home, David thought Uriah might sleep with his wife and can claim the child as his

A perfectly good soldier killed because David wanted to avoid the consequences of his actions

Uriah is revealed to be a courageous and conscientious soldier - an innocent victim

David married Bathsheba. Bathsheba lost the baby shortly after its birth. However she went on to have more children - one of whom was Solomon



David and Bathsheba Themes

LAZINESS:

David had stayed in Jerusalem during the war. It was expected that a king would be fighting in the war too – demonstrating his bravery and leadership.

BREAKING COMMANDMENTS:

This is a story of classic crime and punishment. There are numerous commandments that David broke – adultery, murder, lying and stealing just to name a few.

JEWISH RELIGION:

The story references scriptures and the Jewish faith. Bathsheba had just finished her “monthly purification” ritual. This shows a loyalty to the faith and the dilemma that Bathsheba ultimately faces – be loyal to God or to the King?

CUNNING:

David was sly and manipulative in trying to make sure it would seem the child belonged to Uriah and not him (people would have seen him with Bathsheba and could have twigged).

WEAKNESS:

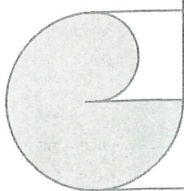
David was also very weak. He had a weakness for women, for remembering his role as a King and a habitual liar.

LOYALTY:

There is no doubt that Uriah was the epitome of loyal. He refused to go home to his wife, even when he had not seen her for months, instead opting to stay with his troops.

This is the quality that David should have shown, given he was a king and leader, but he did not.

POWER:



David exerted his power and authority to get Bathsheba. He knew that she could not refuse his requests, given his status of King. He exploited this to get what he wanted.

Nathan's Parable: The Story

- God sent Nathan to David to tell him a parable
- In the parable, there was a rich man & poor man
- Rich man = lots of sheep & cattle
- Poor man = one lamb that he treated like his daughter
- One day, the rich man had a visitor so rather than kill one of his own sheep, took the poor man's only lamb and killed it for the feast.
- When David heard the parable, he was very angry and said the rich man should die
- Nathan replied "You are that man!"
- Nathan told him that as a king, he should not have killed Uriah and slept with Bathsheba
- Nathan said that God would now punish him - he would see his wives taken by his friends
- David admitted that he had sinned
- Nathan said that God would now forgive him; he would not die but instead his son would die



Nathan's Parable Themes

BEING A PROPHET:

Nathan was not only a prophet but acted as the king's trusted advisor and conscience.

PROTECTION:

Nathan protected David right up until David's death. He plotted with Bathsheba to make Solomon king.

GROSS INJUSTICE:

Nathan's parable was not intended as a direct parallel to David's situation but more of an example of gross injustice.

CONSCIENCE:

Nathan cleverly used the poor man's action in the parable to show how insensitive and crude the rich man was by comparison. Nathan therefore got the reaction he wanted from David by tapping into his conscience.

ADMIRATION:

David did not blame Nathan for his bold criticism but admired Nathan's skill and honesty.

PUNISHMENT:

Nathan pointed out that David's reaction to a lesser crime had implications for him; if the rich man deserve the death penalty for stealing, what should happen to David. It is only because David repented that he received a lesser punishment (not the death penalty but his wives being taken away and the death of his son).

MERCIFUL:

Nathan teaches that God is merciful. God does not desire the death of a sinner but rather than he/she should change his or her way of life.