

OCIA Syllabus

Class: God is a Covenantal God

Objective – *The class objective is to introduce the class to the various covenants of the Old Testament. Students should be able to walk away with an understanding of what the covenants are, why they are important in the context of Salvation History, and have a basic understanding of the book of Genesis and Exodus.*

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

1. Covenant – a solemn pact between two or more parties. In a scriptural context, the two parties are God and humanity. Unlike a contract, which can be broken by either party, a covenant is permanent and unbreakable.
2. Antediluvian Period – The historical period of time between the creation of Adam and Eve and the great flood. This time saw the development of two lineages from Adam, the Cainite lineage and the Sethite lineage.
3. Cainites – The descendants of Cain who succumbed to sin and wickedness. They can be referred to as “daughters of men” in Genesis.
4. Sethites – The descendants of Seth who stayed faithful to God. They are referred to as “sons of God” in Genesis and succumb to intermarrying and partaking in immoral activities with their Cainite counterparts.
5. Nephilim – Often interpreted as “large or giant men” but also interpreted as “fallen ones” or even “tyrant men.” Different biblical teachings highlight that whoever the Nephilim were, they were immoral and continued to corrupt the people of the time.
6. Noahide Covenant – The eternal promise made between God and Noah in which God promises never to destroy all life again as He did with the flood.
7. Abrahamic Covenant – God’s eternal promise made between God and Abraham. God’s promise is threefold to Abraham – first that he is promised a specific land for him and his descendants to flourish in, second is the promise that he will make Abraham and his descendants “a great nation” promising his descendants will be as innumerable as the stars, third God promises to bless Abraham and his offspring.
8. Mosaic Covenant – The eternal promise God makes with Moses. The promise consists of God delivering His chosen people from evil and continuing to provide them protection and provisions.
9. Davidic Covenant – God’s promise with David that the messiah “anointed one” will come from his lineage. Uniquely this covenant did not require anything in return from His people.
10. Covenantal Symbols – Physical signs of God’s promises made.

KEY TOPICS

1. Define what is a covenant.
2. Go over the brief period between Adam and Eve to the time of Noah – The antediluvian period.
3. Explore how the population at the time was derived from Cain or Seth creating a lineage of faithful people, immoral people, and the intermingling of them both.
4. Who is Noah?
5. Give information on what gave rise to God's decision to flood the world and why he spared Noah and his family – God was angry at the world and their inclination to sin, but Noah had remained faithful and walked with God.
6. What are the ramifications of God's covenant with Noah or what makes it unique – it is made with all creation "every living creature," God forbids murder and demands punishment for taking a life establishing a rule of justice and law, God renews his command to be fruitful and multiply, it is ultimately a sign of God's mercy and justice. How the rainbow is the sign of the covenant.
7. Brief overview of the time between Noah and Abraham, the Table of Nations and how Noah's descendants populated the regions of the world.
8. Who is Abraham?
9. What is the Abrahamic covenant, what are the ramifications of it, and why is it unique – promise land, promise of great nation and multitude of descendants, spiritual blessing – requires a mark (circumcision).
10. Brief overview of the time between Abraham and Moses – Abraham's children Ishmael and Isaac, Isaac's children Esau and Jacob, Jacob's 12 sons and their flight to Egypt.
11. Who is Moses?
12. What is God's covenant with Moses, what are the ramifications of it, and why is it unique – God's promise to deliver His chosen people from oppression and provide for them, in return His chosen people must remain faithful to Him and follow His commandments.
13. Who is David and what is God's covenant with Him?
14. Why is it important to know God's participation in Salvation History, and how does it prompt us to believe and know of His active role in our everyday lives?

PRAYER EXERCISE

A wonderful way to pray is by meditating on images. In particular tonight you may want to meditate on various classical images of the covenantal patriarchs. A few are attached below. IT is recommended to hand out copies or to display on a large screen the various images for individuals to meditate on. Then follow these steps to pray:

- **Step 1:** Relax and open your heart and mind to God. Ask God to speak clearly to you in a way that you can hear. Prepare to bring the whole of yourself – analytical, emotional, and intuitive – to the process. (Heb 4:1)
Ask God to open the eyes of your heart, enabling you to see what God wants you to see. (Eph 1:17-19).

Step 2: Gaze at the image. Let your eyes rest on the characters and objects. Note your feelings as you examine the whole and parts of the work. If the image is specifically related to a scripture, scene, or story from the Bible, go and read it.

Step 3: Read or listen to accounts of the events. They might be scripture, insights into the work, or guided meditation. Remain receptive and open to surprises the Lord may be personally revealing to you. Release pre-conceived notions. Keep an attitude of wonder in our Lord.

Step 4: Gaze at the work again. Imagine that you are in this scene. What do you see from your vantage point? What you hear? smell? sense? What is God asking you to personally experience with Him.

Step 5: Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. Bring all of what you've experienced before God. Does the image now evoke a value or different way of thinking or being? Does it open or deepen a desire in your heart? How do you feel God is calling you to respond? Gratitude? Supplication? Wonder? Lament? Confession? Forgiveness? Praise? How is the sacred present to you in this experience?

Step 6: How does this Visio Divina relate to your life now? How is Jesus trying to personally encounter you through your prayer today?

Step 7: What insight from this experience do you want to retain? How will you do that? Record your insights you want to remember and the actions God has invited you to take. Spend some time thanking God for speaking to you.



Figure 1 William van Herp's Abraham and the Three Angels (1613)



Figure 2 Johann König's *The Deluge*

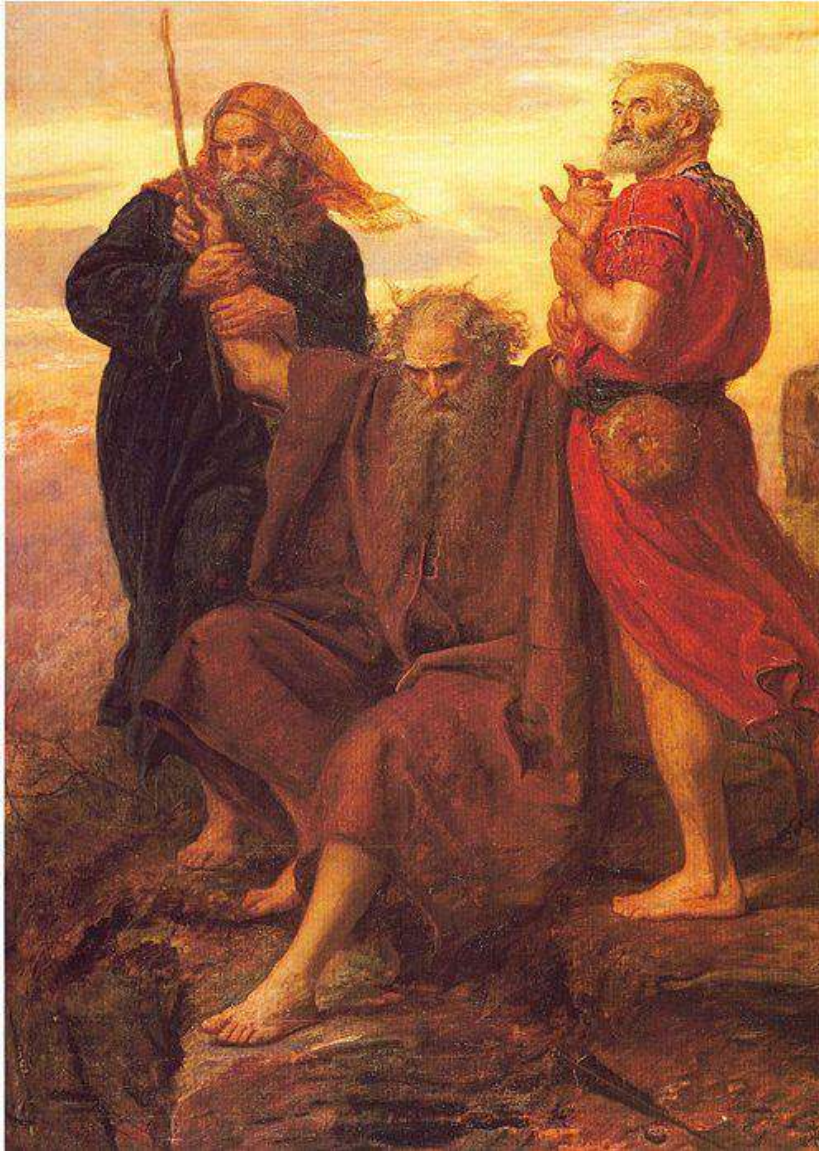


Figure 3 John Everett Millais's Victory O Lord! 1871

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How do you feel knowing God has had an active roll in Salvation History?
2. How do you understand and relate to God in light of his covenants?
3. What questions do you have about the presentation?
4. How has reading scripture been going for you? What emotions or thoughts do you have about reading scripture?
5. How has your journey of learning more about God been going? How has your relationship with God changed since beginning this program? Or generally overtime?

HELPFUL RESOURCES

1. [Catholic Answers brief overview of covenants.](#)
2. Dr. Scott Hahn's book *A Father Who Keeps His Promise*
3. Catholic Encyclopedia
4. [Encyclopedia Entry on Noah](#)
5. [Articles on Antediluvian](#)
6. [Article on the Arc being a precursor for the Church](#)
7. [Bible History on the Table of Nations](#)
8. [FOCUS Bible Study on Salvation History and Covenants](#)
9. Genesis and Exodus
10. [Saint Mary's Press Resource on Bible Covenants](#)
11. [Catholic Stuff you Should Know Podcast](#)