

SESSION 1

Cut a Covenant

Creation, Adam, and the Sabbath Sign

TAKE-HOME SHEET

WHAT WE FOUND

We started with the distinction everything else will build on: a contract exchanges goods, but a covenant exchanges persons. A contract says "this is yours"; a covenant says "I am yours." Marriage, not commerce, is the model.

Genesis never uses the word covenant in the creation account, but we caught God saying it elsewhere. Exodus 31:16 to 17 calls the Sabbath "a perpetual covenant" rooted in the seven days, and Jeremiah 33 speaks of God's "covenant with the day and night." Creation is covenant shaped, and in Hebrew the words for "seven" (sheva) and "swear an oath" (shava) share the same letters, a wordplay Scripture itself exploits at Beersheba, the "well of the seven," the "well of the oath" (Genesis 21:22-31).

We also found that Eden is described like a sanctuary and Adam like a priest and son: "to till and to keep" (Genesis 2:15) is the Levites' job description (Numbers 3:7 to 8), and Luke's genealogy calls Adam "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). Read this way, as many Fathers and biblical scholars have read it, the world is a temple built so that a family could live in it with God, and the Sabbath is the standing appointment.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Irenaeus of Lyons *Against Heresies, Book 3, Chapter 11, Section 8*

Writing in the second century, St. Irenaeus taught that God gave a series of covenants to the human race, unfolding one plan of salvation in stages. The manuscript traditions differ on how he numbered them, but his core conviction is clear and became the Church's own (see CCC 56-64 and Eucharistic Prayer IV): history is not a scrap heap of divine experiments but one covenant story told in movements, like a symphony.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom *Homilies on Genesis*

Preaching through Genesis in Antioch, St. John Chrysostom marveled at God's condescension (*synkatabasis*), his stooping down to communicate with us in human ways. God blesses and hallows the seventh day, Chrysostom taught, not because God grows tired, but to teach us to consecrate time itself to him and to lift our eyes from labor to the Lord of labor.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Paul II *Catecheses on Human Love (Theology of the Body)*

Reflecting on Genesis 1 to 2, St. John Paul II taught that man images God not only as an individual but in the communion of persons, and that the union of Adam and Eve carries a spousal meaning stamped into the body itself. Building on his insight, this study will suggest that Scripture's first covenant scene is a wedding, and that its last scene is one too (see Revelation 19:7; 21:2).

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Guard one hour this Sunday as genuine covenant rest: no screens, no errands. Mass plus one unhurried thing that restores you (a walk, a meal with someone, silence).
- Once this week, before you fall asleep, pray one line: "Lord, you have sworn yourself to your creation; teach me to rest in your oath."
- Read Genesis 3 slowly before next session. Just read it; bring your questions.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"He is mindful of his covenant for ever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations."

Psalm 105:8 (RSV2CE)

MY GUESS | SEALED UNTIL LATER

This story starts with one couple in a garden. Here is your one question to carry through this whole study: where do you think God's covenant plan is ultimately headed, and how do you think he will get the whole world in on it? Write your honest guess below.

My guess:

Write it, fold this corner over, and do not change it. We will open our guesses together later in the study.

Before Next Session: Read Genesis 3 slowly, once. Notice who speaks, in what order, and what God says to the serpent.

Catechism References: CCC 54 to 55, 288, 346 to 348, 2569