

God's Story, Our Story

An Introduction to Christianity

Lesson 5: God the Father



Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength! (Deut 6:4-5)

Ex 3:14-15
CCC 203, 206-07

CCC 208, 2013
Ex 3:5, Lev 11:45

CCC 214, Ex 34:6-7

CCC 218-221
Ps 119:160, Is 54:10,
Jer 31:3

CCC 238-239, 270
Ex 4:22, Dt 32:6, 2
Sam 7:14

CCC 1079, 279, 302,
1082
Mt 6:25-34

Jn 14 :9-10
Luke 15 :11-32

CCC 2782, 2786-93

CCC 2822-27

1. From the created world and natural reason we can know that God exists and that He is:
 - Self-existent, infinite and eternal
 - Simple (not made of parts) and spiritual
 - One; Immanent and transcendent
 - Intelligent; Good and loving; a *person*
 - All-knowing, all-powerful
2. Yet man is very limited in knowing God from natural reason alone. To really know God we need to listen to what he tells us through *revelation*.
3. God reveals his name ("I AM"), which expresses his essence and identity, and his everlasting faithfulness.
4. God is Holy. He also calls his people to be holy, and can forgive those who recognize that they are sinners.
5. God is merciful and gracious. He reveals his kindness, goodness, grace, and love to Israel. He is also trustworthy, constant, faithful and true.
6. God is truth and everlasting love. His love for Israel is compared to a father's love for his son. He calls us to share in his eternal communion of love.
7. God is Creator of the world but also a loving Father. He takes care of our needs; adopts us as his children, and shows his infinite mercy in forgiving sins.
8. The work of the Father is a blessing. By his providence, the Father provides for us and guides us toward perfection, especially if we seek first His kingdom. The divine blessing is fully revealed and received in the liturgy.
9. He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. The parable of the Prodigal Son reveals the Father's love and mercy.
10. Faith in God the Father means:
 - Coming to know God's greatness and majesty
 - Living in thanksgiving
 - Knowing the unity and dignity of all men
 - Making good use of created things
 - Trusting God in every circumstance
 - *God wants a relationship with us.*
 - We are his children and owe him obedience.

God's Providence and the Mystery of Evil

A Biblical Narrative

Ps 31:9-10
Gen 2:16-17, 3

Ps 85:4-7

Deut 11:26-28, 30:19

Ps 17:1-6
Job 1:6-9; 2:3-7

Est 3:8-9, 13
1 Macc. 1:10, 30-32,
54-63

Ps 59:1-5
Isa 41:10-11

Ps 10:1
Deut 8:2-3, Isa 48:10,
Prov 3:11-12

Ps 69:1-3, Ps 22:1-2

Isa 49:3-6

Isa 53:7-53:12

Ex. 12:3,5-7, 12-13
Jn 1:29

1 Pet 3:18
Heb 2:9-10

1 Pet 4:12-13
Phil 1:29
1 Pet 4:1, 5:10

Gal 2:20, Col 1:24
Rom 8:18-19
2 Cor 4:16-17

Rev 12:10-11

Rev 21:2-4

- Israel calls to God for help, weary of her afflictions.
 - Suffering is the result of original sin.
- Israel appeals to God's mercy, that He may restore her and not remain angry forever because of her sins.
 - God wants them to live. He has given them the Torah so that by avoiding sin and following His commandments they may prosper.
- Israel protests: She is innocent, but continues to be afflicted. Why?
 - God may allow Satan to afflict the righteous.
- God's people are often persecuted. Evil kingdoms often tried to destroy them:
 - Haman and Persia in the time of Esther;
 - Antiochus Epiphanes and the Greeks in the time of the Maccabees.
- Deliver me from my enemies, O my God!
 - God tells Israel not to fear. He promises that he will help her in times of trouble and that her enemies will perish.
- God promises, but still seems absent in times of trouble. Why does he not act?
 - God allows the suffering of his beloved to humble them, test their faithfulness, refine them like gold in the furnace. He disciplines them as a loving Father disciplines his beloved children.
- These words are hardly comforting. In desperation, Israel cries out to God: When will He finally save her? It seems like He is abandoning her. How long must she still endure her afflictions?
 - Israel is God's servant, called to bring his salvation to the world. God promises to use her sufferings for the good of all people.
 - Yet it seems like this servant is a distinct person from Israel.
- The suffering servant is innocent yet "stricken, and smitten by God." He is wounded for the transgressions of mankind so that they made be made whole.
- The suffering servant is called a "lamb led to the slaughter."
 - The suffering servant and Lamb without sin is Jesus, Messiah of Israel. He fulfilled Israel's mission by dying for the sins of mankind.
 - He took upon himself the curse of sin and transformed it into a blessing by his suffering and death.
 - He calls his people to follow him in this way of suffering that will perfect them into becoming "sons and daughters of God."
- We should not be surprised to experience suffering; we are called to suffer for his sake. Suffering will purge us from all sin, and after these temporary afflictions God will make us share in his eternal glory.
- Christ lives in us and continues his work of redemption in our lives. Our suffering also has a redemptive and salvific effect for others: as members of Christ's Body we participate in his work of redemption.
- At the end of times, the author of all evil is conquered by the blood of the Lamb and by the suffering of God's chosen ones who "loved not their lives even unto death."
- After this final victory, God will dwell forever with men, and death shall be no more.