

Jesus Christ – The Promise Fulfilled

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“But when the fullness of time has come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as children of God”

Gal 4: 4-5 (NABRE)

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

Jn. 3:16

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father...and from His fullness we have all received grace upon grace”

Jn. 1: 14, 16

God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation—he has sent his own “beloved Son.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, (para. 422)

INTRODUCTION

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race.”¹

God creates all things through His Divine Word, the second person of the Trinity. Adam and Eve were created in God’s image² and after their fall from Grace, God’s plan of redemption and salvation began which gave mankind the hope of reconciliation with God.³

From the creation of Adam, God has cared for mankind. He invited Adam and Eve to a personal relationship with Him. Although they disobeyed God and lost divine friendship, God continued to invite them into the communion, peace and happiness for which they were originally created.⁴

In God’s own time and in historical stages, He unfolded His plan of redemption and salvation to humanity. He prepared humanity to welcome by stages the supernatural Revelation that is to culminate in the person and mission of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.⁵

Salvation history unfolded gradually over thousands of years as God’s love, forgiveness and mercy was revealed in successive stages. The plan of salvation began with the creation of the world and unfolded through key events - God’s everlasting covenant with Noah after the flood,⁶ His covenant with Abraham,⁷ the giving of the Law to Moses and the Exodus of the chosen people of Israel, and the subsequent sending of prophets and kings. Each stage of salvation history prepared humanity for the perfect fulfillment of God’s saving plan in the person and mission of his Son, Jesus Christ.

Through the Patriarchs, and after them through Moses and the prophets, God taught his chosen people to acknowledge Himself as the one living and true God, provident father and just judge, and encouraged them to wait for the Savior promised by Him, and in this manner prepared the way for the Gospel down through the centuries.⁸

FULFILLING THE PROMISE

1. God’s covenant with Abraham was comprised of three promises;

¹ Jn. 1:1-4 (NABRE)

² Gen. 1:27

³ Gen. Chap. 3

⁴ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 54-55).

⁵ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 53).

⁶ Gen. 9:16

⁷ Gen. 12:1-3

⁸ Dei Verbum

- I am going to give you land
- I will make you a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great
- Through you all the families of the earth will be blessed

The first promise was fulfilled in the central event of the Exodus when Moses led the Hebrews out of bondage in Egypt and established them as His chosen people. At Mount Sinai, God establishes a covenant with Moses and gives Israel the divine law of the Ten Commandments. The commandments are an expression of being in a covenant relationship with God.⁹

2. The second promise was fulfilled through David when the Kingdom of Israel was firmly established. God shepherded the nation of Israel and invited them to recognize Him and serve Him as the one living and true God (monotheism). The history of salvation recorded in the Old Testament traces the journey of the Israelites as they accept or reject God in fidelity or infidelity to the covenant.¹⁰
3. God sent the prophets to the people of Israel and their message prepares Israel for the future hope of salvation. The prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, among others, proclaim a radical message of salvation from sin and from their infidelities. The promise of salvation will include all nations.¹¹
4. Then, after speaking in many and varied ways through the prophets, *"now at last in these days God has spoken to us in His Son."*¹² *"For He sent His Son, the eternal Word, who enlightens all men, so that He might dwell among men and tell them of the innermost being of God."*¹³ Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, was sent as "a man to men." He "speaks the words of God,"¹⁴ and completes the work of salvation which His Father gave Him to do.¹⁵

FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE

5. Salvation history reaches its perfect fulfillment in the life and mission of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God made man. What was spoken in promise to the prophets in successive stages, God has now spoken all at once by giving us His Son who inaugurates the New Covenant.¹⁶
6. Jesus Christ showed that He is the Son of God through His words and deeds, His

⁹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 62-63).

¹⁰ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 62).

¹¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 64).

¹² Heb. 1:1-2

¹³ Jn. 1:1-18

¹⁴ Jn. 3:34

¹⁵ Jn. 5:36; Jn. 17:4; Dei Verbum

¹⁶ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 65).

signs and wonders, but especially through His death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth.¹⁷

7. God's divine invitation of salvation extended to the human race from the beginning of the world continues to the end of time in spite of humanity's acceptance or rejection of His divine offer of love.

THE INCARNATION

8. The union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ is the Incarnation (the "enfleshment") - God becoming human - "*And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*"¹⁸ In the Incarnation, God the Father reveals the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹
9. The importance that God placed on man's redemption and salvation was emphasized by God Himself being the Father of Jesus. "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.*"²⁰
10. God chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the vessel that gave birth to Jesus. The importance of the birth of Christ was underscored by God sending the angel Gabriel to announce His birth. Central to Christian faith is belief in the mystery of the "Incarnation" by which the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish the salvation of mankind.²¹
11. The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus is part God and part man. Nor is he a mixture of the divine and the human. Jesus became truly man while remaining truly God: He is true God and true man. The Incarnation is the mystery of the union between the divine and human natures in the one person of Christ, the "Word made flesh."²²
12. As the Word of God made visible in human form, Jesus Christ fully reveals God's love and saving plan for humanity. In Christ each of us discovers our full Christian dignity as creatures made in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the "Word made flesh." In the life, death and resurrection of Christ we understand the deepest meaning and purpose of our existence as children of God.
13. The names given to Jesus tell us about his mission and his work for our salvation: "Jesus" means "God saves;"²³ the word "Christ" means "Messiah" or the One

¹⁷ Dei Verbum

¹⁸ Jn. 1:14

¹⁹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 461-463).

²⁰ Luke 1:35

²¹ Luke 1:30-31

²² Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 464).; John 1:14

²³ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 430-435).

Anointed and chosen by God;²⁴ the title “Son of God” reflects his divine origin and identity; and the name “Lord” indicates his divine power over the world.²⁵

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

14. The chief mysteries of Christ’s life are his birth, the “Paschal Mystery” of his sufferings and death on the Cross, and his victory over sin and death in the resurrection.²⁶
15. God accomplished the redemption of mankind principally through the work of Jesus Christ, our Lord – “by the Paschal Mystery of His Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension, whereby ‘dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life.’ For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth ‘the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.’ For this reason, the Church celebrates in the liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.”²⁷
16. Christ stands at the heart of this gathering of men into the “family of God.” By His word, through signs that manifest the reign of God, and by sending out His disciples, Jesus calls all people to come together around him. But above all in the great Paschal Mystery—his death on the cross and his Resurrection—He would accomplish the coming of His kingdom. “*And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*”²⁸ Into this union with Christ all men are called.²⁹
17. The lamb sacrificed at the first Passover was an unblemished lamb. The Jews, the people chosen by God to reveal Himself to all nations, marked their doorposts with the blood of the unblemished lamb. Centuries later, God accomplished the redemption of all mankind by the sacrifice of an unblemished lamb, His Son Jesus Christ.
18. The suffering of Jesus was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah; “Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured. We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed.”³⁰
19. The offence against God made by Adam through disobedience was an offense against an infinite God, therefore an infinite offense. Adam represented all of mankind.

²⁴ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 436-440).

²⁵ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 446-451).

²⁶ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 512-658).

²⁷ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 1067).

²⁸ Jn. 12:32

²⁹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 542).

³⁰ Is. 53:4-5

Such an offense could only be atoned for by someone of equal stature to God. Jesus, who was both God and man, was chosen by God to represent mankind, so He was able to atone for the sins of mankind by His suffering, death and resurrection.

HUMAN DIGNITY

20. Jesus became truly man while remaining truly God,³¹ and man was made in God's image. It is in Christ, "*the image of the invisible God,*" that man has been created "*in the image and likeness*" of the Creator.³² Therefore mankind's actions should reflect the dignity of our human nature as exemplified by Jesus the Christ, our Redeemer, our Savior.
21. Let us therefore refrain from all things that debase our nature, damage our relationship with God or fracture our social values. Let us not become desensitized to; murder, abortion, euthanasia, suicide, drugs, scandal, certain forms of genetic research, etc.
22. We should take comfort in the knowledge that "it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise (that) are counted as descendants."³³ Let us, as descendants of the promise, be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and live with dignity the values that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, taught us even if it those values go against the social trends of the day.

³¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 464).

³² Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 1701).

³³ Rom. 9:8