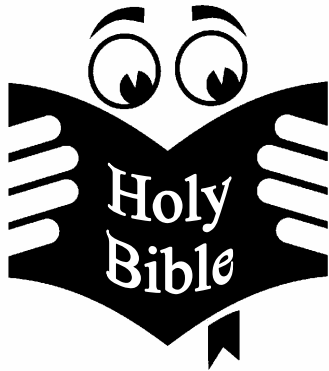


Bible Tidbits - June 2006: Some FAQ's



A selection of facts and information to help you discover more of the riches about Sacred Scripture.

Each month we'll offer you several new tidbits in print and on-line:

- *In print on a Bulletin Flyer*
- *On the web on OLV's Home Page (ourladyofvictorytallmadge.parishesonline.com). The Tidbits are below the Question of the Week!*

Is it true that Noah built an ark and got one or two of every species of animal on board to survive a flood that washed out all of humankind?

There may very well have been a flood and an ark. In the ancient world, the world's boundaries were limited by their incomplete knowledge of geography. Therefore, there well may have been a flood that wiped out their "world" as known by a particular culture. Such tragedies were always seen as punishment from God. There may well have been a just man named Noah who did survive with his family and farm animals. What we do know is the *sacred truth* that humankind will drown in sinfulness, and the only thing that will keep us afloat is to live a just and good life.

Is there really a Garden of Eden?

The Book of Genesis tells us that the Garden of Eden exists where four rivers meet: the Pishon, the Gehon, the Tigris and the Euphrates. If you look on any map, you will see that these four rivers do not meet. So is the Bible lying to us? No. These four rivers do meet.... in the land of myth. The biblical author is alerting us to the fact that the following story is sacred—prepare to enter into sacred space and confront an essential truth of life.

Is it true God created the world in seven days? And what about the creation story in the second chapter of Genesis. How can it be true as well?

Yes, both stories of creation in Genesis are "*true*" stories. Although the "facts" conflict, they both teach us sacred and essential truths: creation comes from God and creation is good and blessed; man and woman were created in the image of God; humankind is responsible for caring for creation, and the idea of resting one day a week is divine. As far as the facts concerning how the world was created, we don't know because we weren't there. As one bumper sticker said, "The Big Bang Theory: God said "BANG!" and it happened!"

Was it on the mount or on the plain?

Matthew's Gospel tells us that Jesus gave his famous address, many of us know as the Beatitudes, on the mountain--mount—while Luke's Gospel tells us that it was delivered on level ground—the plain. So which story is *true*? They both are. The authors were not concerned about where Jesus stood, but instead with the truth of his teaching. Matthew's audience was largely Jewish, and since it would take a lot of convincing to believe that Jesus was a greater prophet than Moses, why not have Jesus deliver his new "commandments" from on top a mountain (as Moses received his). The fact of where Jesus stood is unimportant. His message is the truth we are to be hearing.