

BORN
FROM
ABOVE



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Cover: Jewish oil lamp, First century CE, Jerusalem.

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“There was one of the Pharisees called Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, who came to Jesus by night and said, ‘Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one could perform the signs that you do unless God were with him.’ Jesus answered: *‘In all truth I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’*”

“Nicodemus said, ‘How can anyone who is already old be born? Is it possible to go back into the womb again and be born?’ Jesus replied: *‘In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’*”

“‘How is that possible?’ asked Nicodemus. Jesus replied, *‘You are the Teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things! In all truth I tell you, we speak only about what we know and witness only to what we have seen and yet you people reject our evidence. If you do not believe me when I speak to you about earthly things, how will you believe me when I speak to you about heavenly things? No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man; as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only*

Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be judged; but whoever does not believe is judged already, because that person does not believe in the Name of God's only Son. And the judgement is this: though the light has come into the world people have preferred darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, to prevent his actions from being shown up; but whoever does the truth comes out into the light, so that what he is doing may plainly appear as done in God.'" (John 3:1-21)

James Driscoll of Catholic Answers gives us a brief biography of Nicodemus:

“Nicodemus, a prominent Jew of the time of Christ, mentioned only in the Fourth Gospel. The name is of Greek origin, but at that epoch such names were occasionally borrowed by the Jews, and according to Josephus (*Ant. of the Jews*, XIV, iii, 2) Nicodemus was the name of one of the ambassadors sent by Aristobulus to Pompey. A Hebrew form of the name (NQDYMVN, Naqdimon) is found in the Talmud. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and in his capacity of sanhedrist (*John*, vii, 50) was a leader of the Jews. Christ, in the interview when Nicodemus came to him by night, calls him a master in Israel. Judging from *John*, xix, 39, Nicodemus must have been a man of means, and it is probable that he wielded a certain influence in the Sanhedrin. Some writers conjecture from his question; “How can a man be born when he is old?”, that he was already advanced in years, but the words are too general to warrant such a conclusion. He appears in this interview as a learned and

intelligent believer, but timid and not easily initiated into the mysteries of the new faith. He next appears (John, vii, 50, 51) in the Sanhedrin offering a word in defense of the accused Galilean; and we may infer from this passage that he embraced the truth as soon as it was fully made known to him. He is mentioned finally in John, xix, 39, where he is shown cooperating with Joseph of Arimathea in the embalming and burial of Jesus. His name occurs later in some of the apocryphal writings, e.g. in the so-called “Acta Pilati”, a heterogeneous document which in the sixteenth century was published under the title “Evangelium Nicodemi” (Gospel of Nicodemus). The time of his death is unknown. The Roman Martyrology commemorates the finding of his relics, together with those of Sts. Stephen, Gamaliel, and Abibo, on August 3.” (Catholic Answers)

The “night” visit is interesting because of Nicodemus’ rank among the leaders of Israel. One may presume that he might not have wanted his colleagues to know of his visit to a man presumed to be an enemy of the Jews. Theissen and Mertz in their study of “The Historical Jesus,” say he was a scribe as well as a member of the Sanhedrin so he must have had a scholars thorough familiarity with the Jewish texts and the works of the prophets. It is possible he may have recognized the “messianic-references” conforming to the person of Jesus with whom he was speaking. It is also reasonable to assume, as an astute individual, he may have been looking for clarity about the ritual of “water and the spirit” since John the Baptist and Jesus had been baptizing many who believed in repentance before the coming of the “eschaton,” ie. the end-times or the great-tribulation which was expected. We may also assume that Nicodemus might have agreed to baptism around that time,

since his lawyer like defense of Jesus before his arrest tended to prove his affinity towards the connection of Jesus with the messianic texts he had learned.

“One of them, Nicodemus—the same man who had come to Jesus earlier—said to them, ‘But surely our Law does not allow us to pass judgement on anyone without first giving him a hearing and discovering what he is doing?’ To this they answered, ‘Are you a Galilean too? Go into the matter, and see for yourself: prophets do not arise in Galilee.’”

(John 7:49)

Little did they know he had gone into the matter quite thoroughly, first hand you might say. It seems he was a good man who was not about to condemn the good works Jesus was doing for the people. Proof of his sincerity was most evident as he helped Arimathea place Jesus’ body in the tomb after the crucifixion. It is obvious he was a convert to the promises of Christ.

Born of the Spirit

What does it mean to be “born of the Spirit?.... Peter gives us this answer in Acts 2:36:

Acts 2:36 “[t]he whole House of Israel can be certain that the Lord and Christ whom God has made is this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Acts 2:37 “Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘What are we to do, brothers?’ ³⁸ ‘You must repent,’ Peter answered, ‘and every one of you must

be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise that was made is for you and your children, and for all those who are far away, for all those whom the Lord our God is calling to himself.’ ⁴⁰ He spoke to them for a long time using many other arguments, and he urged them, ‘Save yourselves from this perverse generation.’ ⁴¹ They accepted what he said and were baptized. That very day about three thousand were added to their number.”

Acts 2:42 “These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.**Acts 2:43** And everyone was filled with awe; the apostles worked many signs and miracles.”

In 1958 Ray Charles wrote the wonderful negro spiritual style song “*Yes Indeed.*” We are not sure that anything gets to explain the workings of the Spirit as well as these lyrics other than the favorite prayer *Veni Sancti Spiritus* of St. John Paul II taught to him by his father when he was a boy in war torn Poland. His father told him to say it every day, and we are certain he complied. Anyway, here are Ray’s lyrics:

Yes indeed yes indeed I've got that feelin' in me yes indeed
 You will shout when it hits you yes indeed
 Yes you'll shout when it hits you yes indeed
 When that spirit moves you you will shout hallelujah
 When it hits you you'll holler yes indeed
 It comes out if it's in you yes indeed
 It makes you shout Jack it sends you yes indeed
 When that jive starts jumpin' you will shout let me in there
 When it hits you you'll holler yes indeed

Yes you'll shout when it hits you yes indeed...
It comes out if it's in you yes indeed...
Yes indeed yes indeed I've got that feeling in me yes indeed
When that spirit moves you you will shout hallelujah
When it hits you when it hits you
When it hits you yes indeed

What comes “out if it's in you?” By the sound of it, “it” must be something good, or maybe even goodness itself. We have always had the opinion, philosophically speaking, that human beings, after the evolutionary “brain to mind” transition, were and are a *Coincidence of Opposites*. In our opinion both good and evil are present in the same rational being. In that case it would certainly explain the use of “precious water” for spiritual cleansing of the existent evil in almost all ancient religious rituals. Wikipedia offers us examples: “Faiths that incorporate ritual washing (ablution) include Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Islam, the Bahá'í Faith, Shinto, Taoism, and the Rastafari movement. Immersion (or aspersion or affusion) of a person in water is a central sacrament of Christianity (where it is called baptism); it is also a part of the practice of other religions, including Judaism (mikvah) and Sikhism (Amrit Sanskar). In addition, a ritual bath in pure water is performed for the dead in many religions including Judaism and Islam. In Islam, the five daily prayers can be done in most cases (see Tayammum) after completing washing certain parts of the body using clean water (wudu). In Shinto, water is used in almost all rituals to cleanse a person or an area (e.g., in the ritual of misogi).”

In Genesis it appears that our “nature-mother” might have been prone to taste of God's forbidden fruit because it looked so good even before the “tempter” suggested she wouldn't die for

doing it regardless of the warning God gave her “husband” Adam. Believing the “serpent,” she and Adam both ate the “fruit.” Obviously this is the “original sin” which in later times could be ritually washed away by the Sacrament of “baptism.” Now of course one can take it *prima-facie* that it was the devil that made them do it,— or was it the latency of disobedience to goodness in the now-rational creature that caused the fall, perhaps the power of former instincts? If that were the case it would make the hypothesis of “special-creation” viable. The gift of *sapientia* (wisdom) was afforded humanity sometime in an evolutionary trajectory.

In Brief, the Catechism gives us its explanation of the “fall”:

413 "God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living. . . It was through the devil's envy that death entered the world" (Wis 1:13; 2:24).

414 Satan or the devil and the other demons are fallen angels who have freely refused to serve God and his plan. Their choice against God is definitive. They try to associate man in their revolt against God.

415 "Although set by God in a state of rectitude man, enticed by the evil one, abused his freedom at the very start of history. He lifted himself up against God, and sought to attain his goal apart from him" (GS 13 # 1).

416 By his sin Adam, as the first man, lost the original holiness and justice he had received from God, not only for himself but for all human beings.

417 Adam and Eve transmitted to their descendants human nature wounded by their own first sin and hence deprived of original holiness and justice; this deprivation is called "original sin".

418 As a result of original sin, human nature is weakened in its powers, subject to ignorance, suffering and the domination of death, and inclined to sin (this inclination is called "concupiscence").

419 "We therefore hold, with the Council of Trent, that original sin is transmitted with human nature, "by propagation, not by imitation" and that it is. . . 'proper to each'" (Paul VI, CPG # 16)

CPG Credo of the People of God, Pope Paul VI Motu Proprio 1968:

Original Offense

16. We believe that in Adam all have sinned, which means that the original offense committed by him caused human nature, common to all men, to fall to a state in which it bears the consequences of that offense, and which is not the state in which it was at first in our first parents—established as they were in holiness and justice, and in which man knew neither evil nor death. It is human nature so fallen, stripped of the grace that clothed it, injured in its own natural powers and subjected to the dominion of death, that is transmitted to all men, and it is in this sense that every man is born in sin. We therefore hold, with the Council of Trent, that original sin is transmitted with human nature, "not by imitation, but by propagation" and that it is thus "proper to everyone."

Reborn of the Holy Spirit

17. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, by the sacrifice of the cross redeemed us from original sin and all the personal sins committed by each one of us, so that, in accordance with

the word of the apostle, "where sin abounded, grace did more abound."

Baptism

18. We believe in one Baptism instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Baptism should be administered even to little children who have not yet been able to be guilty of any personal sin, in order that, though born deprived of supernatural grace, they may be reborn "of water and the Holy Spirit" to the divine life in Christ Jesus.

420 The victory that Christ won over sin has given us greater blessings than those which sin had taken from us: "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom 5:20)

421 Christians believe that "the world has been established and kept in being by the Creator's love; has fallen into slavery to sin but has been set free by Christ, crucified and risen to break the power of the evil one. . ." (GS 2 # 2).

John the baptizer prepared the way of the Lord, i.e., the arrival on the scene of God and the man Jesus of Nazareth; Son of God (two natures in one person) "conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary." With the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, humanity was "redeemed" from sin. The significance of baptism is "being born again" or being "born from above." This was the spiritual rebirth Nicodemus was trying to comprehend. Good News, life in the world to come was promised by the Redeemer.

Jesus, the Christ agreed to be baptized ,by John for the reason given in (Matthew 3:13):

“Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. John tried to dissuade him, with the words, ‘It is I who need baptism from you, and yet you come to me!’ But Jesus replied, ‘Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that uprightness demands.’ Then John gave in to him.” This act institutionalized baptism for all those who wished to repent, erase original sin and be re-born in the Spirit, as a believer according to scripture.

I suppose we could say that for the first-time understanding of the good that’s in you is the Spirit movin’ you to shout hallelujah yes indeed!— Inspiration generated by the perceived goodness in creation and in every human being is the joy one senses of the presence of God; his graciousness leading the way to faith, or the will to believe in him. “It comes out if it’s in you yes indeed!”

Monotheism at the Beginning

Recently we came across a book titled *In the Beginning God* by Winfried Corduan (PhD, Rice University) a Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Taylor University, Upland Indiana. He has led many undergraduate tours focusing on the lived religious traditions of various parts of the world. The sub title of this very readable book is: *A Fresh Look at the Case for Original Monotheism*. This is an anthropological subject which we have had an interest in for a long time. Years ago having completed the works of Mircea Eliade, there was a parallel path of interests for us in understanding the Roman Catholic tradition of Jesus and the Triune God, which we were taught; as well as the origins and meaning of religion per se. It is fairly common knowledge that ancient man well understood the

difference between the “sacred” and the “profane” beautifully explained by Professor Eliade in his book *The Quest*, from the University of Chicago Press, 1964.

In the more recent book by Professor Corduan, we were given the details of the life and work of Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt, a famous ethnologist and linguist who did extensive field work and produced 12 volumes on religion in primordial man. We could cherry pick Corduan’s book but it would be much too detailed to present it in this short essay. Professor Eliade did us a favor in *The Quest* of summarizing Fr. Schmidt’s work:

“Unfortunately, one of the most learned ethnologists of our time, **Wilhelm Schmidt, elaborated the hypothesis of the primitive belief in High Gods into a rigid theory of a primordial monotheism (Urmonotheismus).** I say unfortunately because Schmidt, though a very able scholar, was also a Catholic priest, and **the scientific world suspected him of apologetic intentions.** Furthermore, as we have already noted, Schmidt was a thorough rationalist, and attempted to prove that the idea of God had been grasped by primitive men strictly through casuistic thinking. As Schmidt was publishing the monumental volumes of his *Ursprung der Gottesidee* (The origin of the idea of God), however, the Western world witnessed the irruption of quite a number of irrationalistic philosophies and ideologies. Bergson’s élan vital, Freud’s discovery of the unconscious, Lévy-Bruhl’s investigations of what he called the prelogical, mystical mentality, R. Otto’s *Das Heilige* (The Holy), as well as the artistic revolutions of dadaism and surrealism, mark some of the important events in the history of modern irrationalism. Thus, very few ethnologists and historians of religions could accept **Schmidt’s**

rationalistic explanation of the discovery of the idea of God.”

Source: Eliade, Mircea.(1964) *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (Kindle Locations 789-798). University of Chicago Press.

In all of our reading we began to see primordial man (after the evolutionary brain to mind transition) recognizing a single unitary power, force or “spirit” external to himself as the cause of nature in motion;— the movements of the sun, the moon, the wind, the stars, the tides, etc., were all attributed to a High God or what the indigenous Americans called the Great Spirit. Spiritually, the so called Indians may have been quite a bit ahead of many of those who were determined to move them to “reservations” because of their savagery.

Chapter 7 of of Professor Corduan ’s detailed analysis of Paleolithic religion, specifically dealing with the monotheistic inferences of Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt and others, offers us an extended summary of Schmidt’s conclusions; or at least his rationale for arriving at those conclusions. What amazes us is without any accreditation we have held these same views for over thirty five years. With permission from the publishers, we will copy and cite a portion of Chapter 7 of Professor Corduan’s wonderful study relating to Rev. Schmidt (1868-1954)

Source: From: In the Beginning God

Summary

“We have reviewed the three representative cultures Schmidt used in his lectures on the supreme being in America. I chose to use them because on the whole readers of this book will be more likely to have some basic background about these groups than about the people, such as the pygmies of Africa, who, in Schmidt’s view are even closer to resembling what may have been humanity’s primordial religion. The point was to illustrate to what conclusions Schmidt’s methods led him. Still, we must not omit one other aspect of this original monotheism. Schmidt was convinced that the basic faith of the people in God the Creator also testifies to the fact that there was a revelation behind their conviction.”

Revelation

“I suspect that most people who adhere to a monotheistic religion also believe in a divine revelation. In fact, many of them may believe in the one and only God because that fact has been revealed in the Bible, the Qur’an, or other sources of revelation. Now we have seen that the Primitive people on their most basic level also believe in one god. Did they also receive divine revelation? Lang said no (Fritz Lang 1890-1976), but Schmidt said yes—a distinction well worth remembering in light of future criticisms.”

“Schmidt regarded all of Genesis to be historical and authoritative, though he was clearly not a “young-earth creationist.” Roman Catholic theologians at the time were dealing with different problems from their Protestant counterparts concerning biblical interpretation. Schmidt also

accepted his own adaptation of human evolution as presented by paleontology. He interpreted it in terms of a direct special creation by God of each new species of hominids at certain intervals, culminating in the divine creation of Homo sapiens. On that basis he could not accept that Neanderthal man would have been the ancestor of Homo sapiens, but Schmidt did consider him to be human (which I do not).”

“This halfway acceptance of evolution (though not evolutionism) needlessly left Schmidt with a number of issues he could not solve satisfactorily. For one, there was the question of which of the antecedents of Homo sapiens would have been the first to have had the conceptual capacity to receive a divine revelation, a question paleontology was attempting to solve by analysis of the cranial structures of prehistoric remains. Schmidt thought the bones discovered at Piltdown in England provided a puzzling but potentially helpful, solution. It did not work out that way.” (Piltdown Man was proven a fraud.)

“When it came right down to it, Genesis remained authoritative for Schmidt and took precedence over paleontological discoveries. Concerning biblical interpretation, he felt that the biggest question that needed to be addressed was whether Genesis 1 was a historical account or merely a personal confession of the writer to his faith in God as Creator. He cut through that issue quickly”:

“Presently it will appear that the second chapter of Genesis begins, and continues uninterruptedly thereafter, a historical presentation of the primitive period of mankind based on original sources. Would it not be strange, then, were the first

chapter alone to lack historical and documentary authority? Furthermore, the necessary connection between the first and the second narrative is so evident as to make [the position that considers Gen. 1 to be unhistorical] less tenable”.

“Of course, Schmidt did not appeal to revelation as a source of data for his scholarly work because doing so would have constituted circular reasoning since acceptance of the revelation of God presupposes the existence of God. The question was whether the first humans relied on their reason alone to infer that there was a God or there was a divine revelation as well. Schmidt concluded that the people must have received divine revelation in addition to whatever rational insights they would have been able to come up with concerning the need for a Creator.”

“Schmidt did not believe the exact mode of this early revelation was known, but speaking as a theologian, he thought its contents would include the following, based on the first three chapters of Genesis”:

“God is the almighty Lord and Creator of all things, and consequently of man’s singular origin. He is above all change and decay. His is the knowledge of good and evil; changeless and unshakable His holiness. He makes, judges, and avenges the laws of the moral order.”

“A man shall leave father and mother, and take to himself a wife for companion, one essentially like to himself and destined to the same spiritual fellowship.”

“By this marital union God chose to insure the propagation of the race; and through the first couple the race received from its

Maker the duty and right to fill and rule the earth with all thereon.”

“Schmidt goes on to stress that God is the human being’s supernatural end. In other words, being in fellowship with God is the highest good for a human being. However, Schmidt adds that after the fall” “now man must attain that end through God Himself, the Redeemer.”

When speaking as an ethnologist, the qualities stated above (e.g., monotheism, morality, and monogamy) are precisely what Schmidt found within the Primitive cultures. Now he did not close the door on humans being able to derive some of these ideas by means of their own intelligence and awareness of the world around them. Schmidt believed they were informed by general revelation, as it is described in the book of Romans, “His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world” (Rom 1:20 HCSB). However, Schmidt did not think one could do justice to the similarity and universality of the monotheism of the least developed people groups by positing nothing more than ancient people brooding over the mystery of Dasein (BEING). Please allow me to quote a somewhat lengthier passage than is customary. Schmidt does not lose his objectivity here, but he states his point with an almost poetic elegance. Like a good poem, the passage can only have its full impact when read in its entirety:

“Something of such intense force must have come upon these most ancient human beings in an encounter that became an all-encompassing destabilizing experience, penetrating their entire being to its innermost core, so that immediately, due to its

overpowering might, it gave rise to the unity and comprehensiveness that we observe in these, the oldest of religions.”

“This “something” could not have been merely a subjective process inside of the human being himself; for then it could not have held either the power or the complete blueprint of these, the oldest of religions. There would have been no way in which the clarity and solidity of their outlook of faith, as well as the cultural forms associated with it, could have been implemented. Neither could it have been a purely material thing or event, no matter how unusual it may have appeared. For then it would have become increasingly inexplicable how mere material stuff could act on the combined personhood of these ancient people with the power, firmness, and clarity that we admire in these, the oldest of religions.”

“No, it must have been a powerful, mighty person, who stepped toward them, and who was able to chain their intellects with illuminating truths, to bind their wills with high and noble precepts, and to win their hearts with enticing beauty and goodness. And again, this person could not have been an inner chimera or phantasm of mere human origin because such an entity could not even have come close to possessing sufficient actual power to cause the effects that we observe in these, the oldest of religions. Instead, it must have been a person who came to them as a genuine reality from somewhere outside of them, and it is precisely the power of this reality that convinced them and conquered them.”

Descriptions consistent with the supposition of a revelation are also unanimously supported by the people themselves. The

most common statement falls along the line that the great ancestor of the clan learned the truths about God from God and that he taught them as a continuing legacy to his descendants. There is a complete absence of any information that would point to humans as the originators of these beliefs. To quote Schmidt once more:

“The bottom line is that the reports we have from the adherents of the oldest religions themselves are not only merely disinclined towards the supposition that the religions were created by seeking and searching human beings; rather, worse yet, they do not even mention it with a single word. All their affirmative responses are directed to the side of divine revelation: It is God Himself Who taught humans what to believe about Him, how to venerate Him, and how they should obey the expression of His (holy) will.”

Let me stress this point again because it is so easily distorted: Schmidt does not base his ethnological conclusions on divine revelation. Instead, his ethnological conclusions entailed that the monotheism of the Primitive tribes must have been due, at least in part, to the fact that God revealed himself to them.

Corduan, Winfried. (2013) *In the Beginning God* (p. 224). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition. Retrieved from Amazon books

Conclusion

The question simply becomes: How was the uncreated, unseen ONE God (as a person) revealed, even in part, to a primitive but reasoning mind? To begin a short excursion into that understanding we should call on Wm. James' "The Will to Believe." This essay "is designed to be a defense of religious faith in the absence of conclusive logical argumentation or scientific evidence. It focuses on what he calls a "genuine option," which is a choice between two hypotheses, which the believer can regard as "living" (personally meaningful), "forced" (mutually exclusive), and "momentous" (involving potentially important consequences). Whether an option is "genuine" is thus relative to the perspective of a particular believer. James acknowledges that in our scientific age, there is something dubious about the [voluntaristic view](#) (Voluntarism is the theory that God or the ultimate nature of reality is to be conceived as some form of will (or conation). This theory is contrasted to *intellectualism*, which gives primacy to God's reason.) [that](#), in some circumstances, we can legitimately choose to believe in the absence of any objective justification. However, he claims we naturally do so all the time, our moral and political ideas being obvious examples. When you believe that your mother loves you or in the sincerity of your best friend, you have no conclusively objective evidence. In addition, you will never be able to secure such evidence. (no matter which way one chooses the "will" always always remains free) Yet it often seems unreasonable to refuse to commit to believing such matters; if we did so, the pragmatic consequences would be a more impoverished social life."

“Now let us apply this argument to religious belief. What does religion in general propose for our belief? The two-pronged answer is that ultimate reality is most valuable and that we are better off if we believe that. Committing to that two-pronged belief is meaningful, as is the refusal to do so. At any given moment, I must either make that two-pronged commitment or not; and how I experience this life, Whether one makes that commitment or not, pragmatic consequences can be (are) involved. Nor should we imagine that we could avoid having to make a choice, as the commitment not to commit is itself a commitment.” (this is also indicative of the choice between the inherent good and the evil, (the “coincidence of opposites,”) in rational human beings, even primordial ones.) (*Will*, pp. 1-4, 7-9, 11-14, 22-30; see also *Problems*, pp. 221-224).” (Stanford Encyclopedia modified)

We should be able to apply this commitment process to reasoning, primitive human beings.

One can only imagine the environment in which our early ancestors lived and survived “east of Eden.” It had to be brutal. They were both the hunter and the hunted. They were subjected to every capricious weather condition that happened on their way. The intense destabilizing forces that came upon these ancient humans Schmidt says: “penetrated their entire being to its innermost core, immediately, due to its overpowering might.” Slowly entering a world of human emotions rather than the instinct from which they had emerged, life was an existential struggle. From what they could see their only reward was being returned to the dust from whence they came.

In a Coincidence of Opposites, pride, covertness, anger, gluttony and lust; competed against the opposing powers of wisdom, peace, knowledge council, etc. in each and every individual. This “gave rise to the unity and comprehensiveness that we observe in the oldest of religions.”

In many ways “raw nature” hasn’t changed all that much as opposed to pragmatic “human-nature” where we are responsible for everything we put in motion. Who can we blame for our choice of evil over the good within us. Can we blame the Serpent as Eve did for lying to us about God? Equipped with reason and a free will we saw how we were made in God’s image. We were demigods, we eventually saw that we were creators too, only with a very small “C”.

In Creation itself we were able to see the ONE God and recognize we are encompassed by him and he is in us. This, in our opinion was the birth of Panentheism. We had the ability to transcend our pragmatic reality and within reason comprehend our spiritual reality in Him (The Great Spirit.) The ONE GOOD GOD, The Almighty Father. We would not know this in fact until the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ at the fullness of time. This is the “Good News” that persists today.

The Kingdom of GOD is explained,— put succinctly to Moses as I AM WHO I AM, and who said of Jesus several times in the gospels: “This is my Son, the Beloved, who enjoys my favor, listen to him!” (Matthew 17:2) If, that is, you accept the gospels.

The transfiguration of Jesus is a story told in the New Testament when Jesus is “transfigured” and becomes radiant in glory upon a high mountain top; Mount Tabor. All three Synoptic Gospels describe it, and the Second Epistle of Peter

also refers to it. It has also been hypothesized that the first chapter of the Gospel of John alludes to it as well. (Wikipedia)

We have been a great fan of Karl Rahner, one of the wonderful theologians of Vatican II, along with Joseph Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI. He was a big supporter of the ability of human transcendence and the vital importance of grace leading to faith in the Catholic Church. We quote Fr. Rahner here with regard to our understanding of the perception of the one GOD Our Father as we understand it:

“We think something is ‘perceived’ or contacted by our knowledge only when the whole grid of all its little interconnections can clearly be seen, and the thing itself can now be inserted into the larger grid of our needs and inquisitiveness. But this is just what God in his incomprehensible mystery is ‘not all about.’ What our experience of perceiving the incomprehensible constitutes is precisely not the pitiful leftovers of a perception that ‘sees through’ things but the ultimate and primordial essence of perception itself.” (Karl Rahner SJ)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells it like it is:

27 The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.

In the first grade we learned it all. In the Baltimore Catechism Lesson Second, page 6, question 15, asked:

Q. Where is God?

A. God is everywhere.