



## *Making Senses Out of Scripture*

By Mark Shea  
*Basilica Press, 1999*

We have assigned *Making Senses* as an introduction to Theology I, which is primarily a Scripture study. The book has two parts: the first, a general overview of the Bible with Christ as the “fulfillment of the Scriptures,” not a replacement of them, and the second half, an explanation of the four senses of Scripture (literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical).

The following is a set of review questions to help students get main ideas of the book, only through the first section. Students are required to read the whole book, but the final section on the senses of Scripture will be reassigned in the first weeks of school.

Students are to prepare responses to these questions, and be ready to hand them in for credit on the first day of class. (There will be no quiz on the overall book.)

### **Introduction - pp 17-29**

- a. How does Shea use the Buick bumper story to transition from one phase to another in the retelling of his journey as a Christian?
- b. What is his reason for being led to the Magisterium? *What is the Magisterium?*
- c. p. 26: What purposes does the quote from G.K. Chesterton serve?
- d. What is the three-legged stool of the Church?
- e. p. 28: Give an example of figurative language (similes and/or metaphors) in this section.

### **Section 1 - pp 33-45**

- f. As a writer, how does he use the game of *Myst*? (See question e.) To what does he compare the game?
- g. How can we find evidence for God in the natural world?
- h. How can we find evidence for God in the human person?



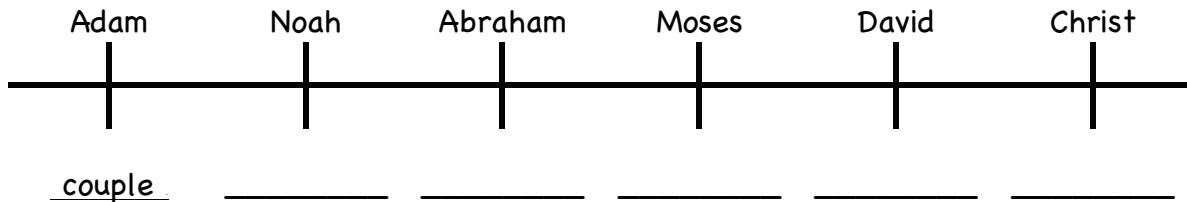
- i. p. 45: How does God talk with us? (Quote Shea in your answer, so that it is tied directly to this section.)

### **Section 2 – pp 46-70**

- j. p. 47-48: Revelation “unfolds” over time; why would that be the case? (As opposed all at one time, or not at all...)
- k. How does Shea encourage us to drop the “science lens” when ‘viewing’ (or reading) the creation story? As modern readers, from where does that science lens come?
- l. p. 55: With what is the creation story concerned? Why does Shea tell us that?
- m. p. 59-60: How is the full story of Creation repeated later in Genesis (in the form of Cain/Abel, Lamech, the Flood, the Tower of Babel)?
- n. How does the covenant with Noah “up the ante”?\* (\*The expression “up the ante” comes from card games, where the ante is the minimum bet. When a player ups the ante, it makes the game ‘more serious,’ as players must risk more (and this can gain more). As another way to understand this, when someone says that something is “penny ante,” he is saying it is petty, trivial, or small-time.)

### **Section 3 – pp 71-97**

- o. Draw a continuum of the six covenants and what human organization they represent.



- p. Why does God need to work through Abraham, one man and his tribe, and not through a “universal” prophecy for all? (p. 72-73)
- q. What is the tripartite (three-part) covenant with Abraham?
- r. Who is Melchizedek, and why is he significant?



- s. Compare\* Moses and Abraham. (\* *This word means compare similarities and differences.*)
- t. What is the tripartite covenant with Moses?
- u. Why did the Jews desire a King? How did they get more than what they wanted?
- v. p. 92: Why was David “not enough”?
- w. p. 95: After David and the kingdom of Israel, what three things remained “unresolved”?

**Section 4 – pp. 98-123**

- x. While Israel was preserving “revelation,” what were the Gentiles (non-Jews around the world, especially Greeks and Romans) doing? Why were they doing this?
- y. p. 102: What is the law “written on the heart”?
- z. How were Gentile civilizations preparing or readying for Christ, unknowingly?
- aa. Choose one of the alternate explanations for Christ that exists. Explain both what a non-believer might say, and how Shea refutes this.

**Section 5 – pp. 124 – 157**

- bb. Shea explains that Christ did not come into this world to teach a new ethic primarily (the ten commandments are not a radical departure from Christ’s instructions for us) or to work miracles. His mission was to die and rise from the dead “for the life of the world.” How do the Gospels (and their focus) confirm this?
- cc. Take each of the five covenants (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David) and create t-charts to explain how Christ translates, amplifies, or otherwise fulfills the previous covenant. (Each t-chart will have three to six items.)

Adam	Christ
* brings sin into the world	* takes away the sins of the world
* the first Adam	* the “Last Adam”
(list more)	(list more)



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Noah	Christ
*	*
*	*
*	*

Abraham	Christ
*	*
*	*
*	*

Moses	Christ
*	*
*	*
*	*

David	Christ
*	*
*	*
*	*

**Part II – Senses of Scripture**

Students are to read this, and be prepared to be assigned to read this section again, under the direction of Deacon Gorman.

If a passage is unclear, write your question in the margin of the book and ask the questions when the school year arrives.

*Good luck!*