

Creation Stories from Around the World

Throughout time, people have used creation stories in order to better understand themselves as well as to develop and grow as a society. These stories give us clues about what people believed about themselves and their relationship to the world around them. Creation stories vary throughout the world. Each of the stories are unique and incorporate different elements that relate to their specific religions and cultures. These differences include the name of the God or Gods that they believe in, what existed in the beginning before Earth was created, or how exactly the first human was created on Earth. Although no two creation stories are exactly the same, there are several similarities and common themes that can be connected between them. These common themes include the “Evil” being related to temptation, an all-powerful God, or the use of animals and other resources in creating the Earth. It is important to analyze these differences and common relationships among the creation stories in order to better understand these religions and cultures as well as how the stories affected humans as they developed throughout time.

From the stories provided, there are several overall and general similarities that are detectable from the world’s creation stories. For example, each “God-like” being in each of the stories is responsible for creating the Earth and seems to be all-powerful over his creations. It is obvious throughout the stories that the God that they believe in is able to control the Earth and human life in any way. Also, the stories state that the God(s) created other resources such as trees, rivers, animals, and light prior to humans inhabiting the Earth. Besides the obvious general connections between them, there are some common themes that can be found throughout the stories. For instance, temptation and betrayal is a common theme seen in the Christian, Efik, and

Fangs creation stories. In these stories, the humans in some way disobey a rule that God had set for them and are punished. This punishment is said to negatively affect the rest of the future human population for good. Specifically, in the creation story of the Efik, the God Abassi ordered that the humans eat with him every night. When they disobeyed, he sent death and discord to Earth in order to keep people in their place. Additionally, in the creation story of the Fangs, a creature named Fam grew arrogant and began to mistreat animals and stop worshipping the God Namaze. This resulted in thunder and lightning that destroyed everything that had been created by Namaze and he then started over. In addition to the theme of betrayal, the theme of rebirth and renewal is also found in the Fangs story as well as the Mayan creation story. Similarly, in the Mayan creation story, the Gods Tepeu and Gucumatz created wooden beings who caused trouble on Earth so they sent a great flood to wipe them out and start over. These themes do not vary much throughout the different religions and cultures which tell a lot about the human race and its development into a society.

On the other hand, there are several glaring exceptions and differences that are obvious throughout the stories as well. One of the major exceptions is the “God-like” figures in each of the stories. Although they are all-powerful, each God has a different name and some stories have more than one God. For example, in the Mayan creation story, they had two Gods named Tepeu and Gucumatz. Additionally, in the Scandinavian story, they worship Odin who is the oldest and most powerful among several other Gods. Another obvious difference between the stories is what exactly existed in the beginning before God created Earth and man. In the Christian story, “The Earth was formless and empty.” In the Hindu creation story, “there was no heaven, no Earth, and no space in between.” The Iroquois creation story says that there was, “an island,

floating in the sky, upon which sky people lived.” The last major exception throughout these stories is the way the first human or humans were created. For instance, in *The Raven's Tale* (the creation story of Haida), the first human was found hiding in a giant clamshell. In contrast, the creation story of the Aborigines says that the two first humans self-created out of nothing. These differences are important to recognize because no matter what existed in the beginning or how the first humans were created, all humans ended up in the same place on Earth.

The common themes and similarities found between the creation stories tell us a lot about how humans have sought to understand themselves and their world. For example, before humans walked on Earth, the Gods created things such as lakes, plants, and animals which are all things humans need to survive. This shows how it is believed that God created an Earth that was meant to be sustainable for human life. This often relates to the religious beliefs that humans were put on Earth to serve the God(s). These stories are important because they set the stage and help shape the different cultures and religions that the stories are associated with. The common theme of temptation shows that it is part of human nature to experience temptation and evil, but how you respond to it determines the outcome. This theme helps humans to understand they are given the freedom of choice, but with that freedom comes temptation. This theme also teaches humans that disobeying equals consequences. These stories highlight that humans were first made to be good and obey the Gods, however, temptation is evil and has the power to persuade your actions for the worse. Since each story is unique to the specific religion or culture that it relates to, the creation stories help shape that religion or culture and give meaning to a lot of the actions and rituals that these people take part in. Lastly, these stories captivate the beauty and hard work that was put into creating the Earth. The God(s) made the Earth to be beautiful and sustain human life

and it should be appreciated as humans live their lives on God's creation. This is shown in the way that the Earth is described while things such as trees, lakes, and animals were being created. For example, in the Christian story, God says, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures. Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas." It is evident that these things were created to be beautiful and appreciated by the way they are written in the stories. These similarities and common themes seen throughout the variety of creation stories are important to the human understanding of the world and themselves.

In conclusion, despite a few glaring exceptions, there are several overall and general similarities regarding the world's creation from the stories. These common themes and ideas can tell us about how people have sought to understand themselves and their relationship to the Earth that God had created for them. These stories about the beginning of time connect with the different religions and cultures that the stories are associated with. They help shape these religions and cultures in many different ways. It is important to connect the dots between these stories in order to better understand the human society as a whole and what these stories mean in the concept of religion and culture.