

## Union United Methodist Church

Fall FOCUS Bible School, 2022

FOCUS: Followers Of Christ Understanding Scripture

Study: Book of Genesis

Week 1: September 28, 2022

### Introduction, Creation & The Fall, Original Sin

This Week's Study: **Genesis chapters 1 through 4**

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#### 1. Introduction: Study Approach, Method & Overview of Genesis

- Importance of the Old Testament

"The Old Testament (OT) is a gift to us. Many people today regard the New Testament (NT) as contradicting and surpassing the OT, yet the early church viewed the OT and NT as a unity."

Dr Stephen Chapman, Old Testament Professor, Duke Divinity School

Dr Chapman also points out that

- The OT was the Christian Bible prior to the composition and collection of the NT
- Jesus was a Jew

The OT and NT are "interpretive of each other" - Christopher Seitz

Paul wrote that:

- "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4 NRSV
- 15 how from childhood you [Timothy] have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.  
16 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:15, 16

John Wesley noted:

**“what is the rule whereby men [humans] are to judge of right and wrong?”**  
**“the Christian rule of right and wrong is the word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament; all that the Prophets and holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the holy Ghost; all that Scripture which was given by inspiration of God, and which is indeed profitable for doctrine, or teaching the whole will of God; for reproof of what is contrary thereto; for correction or error; and for instruction, or training us up, in righteousness.”<sup>1</sup>**

“It should be observed, that this [2 Timothy 3:16] is spoken primarily and directly of the Scriptures which Timothy had known from a child; which must have been those of the old Testament, for the New was not then wrote [written]”<sup>2</sup>

- **Study Approach**

Given the above context on the OT, we shall in this study follow what Dr. Chapman calls “bi-directional” reading of the OT.

In other words, while focusing on Genesis, we shall not ignore the NT. We shall correlate the Genesis narrative with the gospel of Christ as revealed to us in the NT.

- **Method**

This Bible School will follow a three-part sequence:

- **Weekly Short Lecture**  
This will be on Wednesday evenings and will give an overview of the theme for the chapters we are studying in the week following that meeting.
- **Personal Study**  
There will be an outline with a breakdown for day by day personal study at home of the chapters being covered that week
- **Fellowship Time & Group Discussion**  
We shall have small group discussions on the following Wednesday to share what we have each learned over the previous week.

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<sup>1</sup> Wesley, John. Sermon, “The Witness of our own spirit”

<sup>2</sup> Wesley, John. Sermon, “The Means of Grace”

- **Individual Study Guide**

In your daily study, you might find it helpful to

- **Invest about 30 minutes** into this each day, or longer if you're able to
- **Start with prayer**, asking for the Lord to illuminate the scripture more clearly to you at this time.
- **Read the text slowly a number of times**, if possible, from two or three versions
- **Reflection**: ask yourself the following questions, where possible
  - who is speaking
  - who is being spoken to or what is the content about
  - what does the text say about God, i.e., God's nature, God's views, etc.
  - what does it say to me about my life and circumstances or the world we live in, etc.
  - personal application: what is the Lord teaching me today from this text, and what am I going to do about it?
  - Any other questions that come to mind as you reflect on the scripture.

**Journal**: You may find it helpful to keep a study journal in which you write down what you receive through this process of prayer, reflection, meditation

- **Close with prayer**, a time of prayer inspired by what you have gleaned from the study.

Could be a prayer of thanksgiving, praise to God, repentance from something the Lord shows you is wrong, prayer for guidance, prayer of submission to God's will, or however else you are inspired to pray.

- **Recommended Study Bible**

Our focus in this study is to be taught and nurtured by the scriptures through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit . Thus, the intent is not to dive into

theological and/or scholarly debates or research although that might be referenced from time to time. We will not be delving into the arguments over the text, historicity, etc.

If you are interested in further scholarly input into your study, **The New Interpreter's Study Bible NRSV** by Abingdon Press is a good Bible to consider.

- **Overview of Genesis**

The table below gives a breakdown of the chapters of Genesis, with themes that we shall be exploring in this study. We shall cover one theme per week.

<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Theme</b>
1	4	Creation & The Fall, Original Sin
5	10	Adam through Noah: Judgement & New Covenant
11	14	Babel, A New Beginning in Abram
15	17	Abrahamic Covenants
18	20	Intercession & Judgement: Sodom & Gomorrah
21	25	Isaac - A Promise Fulfilled; Faithfulness Proven
26	30	Abrahamic Covenants: Second Generation - Jacob & Esau
31	36	Jacob's Family; Reconciliation with Esau
37	41	Abrahamic Covenants: Third Generation - Jacob's Children
42	47	Joseph & Migration to Egypt
48	50	Israel in Egypt, Death of Jacob

## 2. **Genesis 1 to 4 Overview**

- **Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:4 First Creation Narrative**

The focus of this first creation narrative is the creation of universe by God.

1:1-3 indicates that

- God created the heavens the earth
- The earth was at first a formless void
- The Spirit of God hovered over the deep
- God spoke (WORDS), and things came into being  
- light, night and day, the sky, dry land etc.

It seems clear that the creative agent included the Spirit of God that hovered. Cross-reference this passage with:

- **John 1:1-5** (NRSV text below)  
**1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.**
  
- **Proverbs 8:22-31** The Role of Wisdom in creation  
22 "The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; 23 I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. 24 When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water;  
  
27 I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, 28 when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, 29 when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. 30 Then I was constantly at his side

### **1:26-31 - Creation of Adam and Eve in God's Image**

- **1:27 So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them**

### **1:26, 28: Divine Authority/Dominion given to Humans**

- **1:26 Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth**

1:31 Everything God created was good and pleasing to God

- 1:31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2:2-3 Importance of Sabbath

- 2:2 And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.  
**3 So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.**

- **Genesis 2:4b - 25 - Second Creation Narrative - Adam & Eve**

- 2:4b - 13: How the Garden of Eden was developed by God
- 2:16-17 Divine commandment to Adam and Eve  
Instructions on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil  
16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."
  - Was this Adam & Eve's tithe, as some have said?
- 2:18-25 - Creation of Eve, First Marriage
- 2:24-25 - Nature of a marital relationship  
24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

- **Genesis 3: Temptation, Original Sin and Its Consequences**

- 3:1-6 The nature of temptation
- 3:6: The first sin - Original Sin
- 3:7-13 Consequences of Original Sin
  - Loss of protective covering & corruption
  - Loss of innocence
  - Blaming others & lack of personal responsibility
- 3:14-24 Judgement & the future

- **Genesis 4: The First Family; The First Murder: Cain & Abel**
  - 4:1-2 Comfort from new family after the fall
  - 4:2-5: Cain & Abel, sibling rivalry
  - 4:3-4 Importance of Quality of Offerings to God
  - 4:6-7: God's warning to Cain about sin
    - 6The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen?7If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."
  - 4:8 Cain's disobedience and sin
  - 4:9-10 Our responsibility for others:
    - 9Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"
  - 4:10-16 God's Justice & Judgement - Cain punished
  - 4:17-25 Growth of humanity through reproduction ...

### 3. Daily Study Schedule & Questions

- **Day 1: Genesis 1:1 to 2:4 First Creation Narrative**  
As you read and study the verses, here are some suggestions of themes to reflect on - see the cross-references in other scripture:
  - The role of the Spirit of God in creation
  - The Word
  - The importance of wisdom
  - The significance of God's image in each of us - as we are created in God's image
  - The significance of Sabbath. Do you practice the sabbath? Should you?
- **Day 2: Genesis 2:4b-17 The Garden of Eden and Adam's Creation**  
Suggested reflection themes:
  - How God caused a garden to grow - importance of seeds and harvest
  - Importance of God's commandments - e.g., that given to Adam & Eve

- **Day 3: Genesis 2:18-24 - The First Couple - Adam & Eve**

Suggested reflection themes:

- Importance and role of individuals in marital relationship
- The nature and importance of marriage
- **Homework:** Search the scriptures: what does the New Testament say about marriage and divorce? **Clue:** What did Jesus have to say about it?

- **Day 4: Genesis 3:1-24 - Temptation, Original Sin, & Punishment**

Suggested reflection themes:

- Temptation and how it works
- The impact of yielding to temptations
- Consequences of Sin
- God's justice and judgement
- **Homework:** What did God do about redeeming humans after the fall?  
**Clue:** what has the coming of Jesus, his suffering, death, and resurrection got to do with our redemption?

- **Day 5: Genesis 4:1-16 - Cain & Abel**

Suggested reflection themes:

- Our responsibility for others
- God's expectations of us in human relationships
- How God perceives injustices, and God's judgement on sin

- **Day 6: Genesis 4:17-26 - Increasing Population & Civilization**

Suggested reflection themes:

- How the population developed and grew
- How civilization developed from our first parents

#### 4. **Memory Verses: Genesis 1:1 & John 1:1**

"In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth"

Genesis 1:1 NRSV

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1 NRSV