LIFE GROUP STUDY 2019

EX NIHILO
(Genesis 1-2)

TWO TREES
(Genesis 3)

NOAH & HIS VINEYARD
(Genesis 9)

MAN OF FAITH
(Genesis 22)

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

The book of Genesis is the first book of the biblical narrative and the first book of the Pentateuch (Genesus, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers) and thus its composition is attributed to Moses. Though the authorship and date of composition are debated, the audience is the Jewish people. The multiple literary genres of Genesis makes this book a masterpiece of ancient literature. Genesis 1 is constructed as a Hebrew poem of creation, while chapters 2-9 morph into a narrative genre with interspersed poems throughout.

The purpose of the book is to clearly highlight the origin of God's connection with his people. Genesis 1-11 gives a large scale overview of the beginnings of the world and mankind including creation, rebellion, the existence of sin, the flood and the Tower of Babel. Genesis 12-50 hones in on the family of blessing, who are revealed to be the ones through whom God intends to bless the entire world.

Why should we care?

For us as Christians, this book is central in forming our worldview. We have a Creator God who breathed all things into being, and a God who mercifully and justly deals with the constant rebellion of humanity. The story surrounding Abraham, Isaac and Jacob reveals the origin story of our eventual inheritance as children of God through Christ. We can get caught up in using Genesis as a tool to explain *how* the universe came into being – and it may tell us some of the *how*, but undoubtedly the main focus and intended purpose of this book is to reveal the *why* and the *Whom.*

Following on from our series in Colossians last year, a great set of worldview questions to continue to ask as you journey through this series *Beginnings* is:

1. Who are we?
2. Where are we?
3. What's wrong?
4. What's the remedy?
5. What time is it?

Ex Nihilo – *Genesis 1-2*

Intro: The biblical account of Creation. These chapters make unique assertions regarding the time, author, and method of creation. These assertions set biblical Christianity apart from other world views and philosophical systems. Into a dark, empty, and chaotic void the voice of God speaks and brings light, fullness, order, and life. A perfect and wondrous setting is put into place for the image bearers of God to work, dwell, and reflect the glory of God. (Taken from R.C Sproul, *From Dust to Glory*).

READ Genesis 1

1. Every worldview seeks to answer this fundamental question: Why is there something rather than nothing? Many philosphers and physisists seek to answer these questions including Lawrence Krauss in his book *A Universe From Nothing.* What is the answer that Genesis 1:1 gives to this basic question? Is this answer too simple?

2. Based on the creation narrative in Genesis 1, is God independent of or dependent upon the universe? Did He have a beginning? Do the answers to these questions mean that He is fully sovereign or only partially sovereign over what transpires in creation?

3. From what materials does God create the heavens and the earth? What is the Latin term for "out of nothing"?

4. Many ancient mythologies depict a war of the gods against the forces of nature that brings about the existence of all that now exists. Must God battle independent natural forces or other gods to create His world in Genesis 1? What does He actually do in verses 3, 6–7, 9, 11, 14–15, 20–21, and 24 to bring creation into existence?

5. What does the literary design of Genesis chapter 1 (see below) tell us about God's intention in creating all things? E.g. Is this a literary structure of chaos or order?

(taken from The Bible project)

6. What implications does Genesis 1:27 have for the uniqueness and quality of all humans today? Do we live as if this verse is true in our thoughts and actions towards others and our self?

7. When you read the account of humanity's creation in Genesis 1:27-2:24, what was Adam and Eve's primary function within the Garden of Eden? What does this tell us about our stewardship of the world now?

Two Trees – *Genesis 3*

- We live in crazy times (but actually, every age in history is crazy!). Take a moment to share some of the crazy things going on in our world right now, e.g. weather, war, disease, human behaviours.

- Aside from Christianity, what are some ways (i.e. philosophies/religions/beliefs) people explain why the world is the way it is? How effective are these explanations?

Going Deeper:

1. **Read Genesis 3:1-5.** The serpent (representing evil/Satan) is described as "crafty". He tempts the woman by misrepresenting God's word, depersonalising God and then directly opposing Him. Identity where in these verses each of these three activities are seen (and also where they are believed by the woman).

2. [Optional: Read Matthew 4:1-11 and identity similarities in how Jesus was tempted by Satan.]

3. Think of current issues in our world, in the church and in your own life. Where else do you see evidence of God's word being misrepresented, God's character being depersonalised, and people opposing God's word and claiming to know better?

4. **Read Genesis 3:6-8.** What did the woman hope to gain from eating the fruit and what actually happened?

5. The reality is God wanted the man and woman to have insight and wisdom, and to be able to discern between good and evil, but he wanted them to learn those things from Him and with Him, not apart from Him. Why did God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden in the first place? Why did he give humans the ability to eat from it, even against His will?

6. Look at how simply the sinful act is described in verse 7. Often our sinful acts can happen just like that – in moments when we choose to put our own wisdom and judgement above God's and decide for ourselves what is right. In what ways might you (or are you) doing this in your own life, rather than submitting to God's word?

7. **Read Genesis 3:9-13.** What evidence do you find in these verses that the man and woman's disobedience has dramatically broken the "goodness" of God's creation? What do you imagine God is feeling in this moment?

8. **Read Genesis 3:14-19.** In what ways do these verses speak of a continual battle for control and supremacy, as a consequence of sin? What is God's purpose in the particular punishments he gives to the serpent, woman and man?

9. **Read Genesis 3:20-24.** What evidence do you find in these verses of God's continued grace (undeserved favour) towards humanity, even despite their sin? Specifically, explain how God removing access to the tree of life is both an act of judgement and an act of grace.

10. [Optional: Read Revelation 22:1-5 and talk about the hope we can find in this passage. Also, notice how God ultimately gives his people (i.e. to reign for eternity) what Adam and Eve, and many after them, tried to grasp apart from God!]

Bringing It Home:

• How does Genesis 1-3 provide a coherent worldview that helps us understand the world, human behaviour and God? Why is the biblical worldview superior to other worldviews you mentioned in the Warm Up?

• Are you guilty of the sin of Adam and Eve? Do you make yourself god, preferring your own wisdom and judgement, rather than trusting in God and learning from Him? If so, you need to confess that to God and turn from your ways, trusting in the work of Jesus on the Cross to forgive you, wash you clean and make you new.

• Is there anyone in your life who isn't taking their sin seriously, or who is living in brokenness without knowing why, or is believing false things about God, the world or themselves? Ask God to give you the courage to talk to them, in love, about it.