

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 1
Genesis 1-11

Key Concepts: There are two key concepts for this week. The first is that God creates a good world. This means that the physical world and everything in it is good and valued by God. It is not something from which we ought to be trying to escape. The second concept is that we human beings messed it up. The Adam and Eve story offers us the Biblical concept that sin not only infected humanity's relationship with God but it affected the very physical creation as well. We will witness this concept used throughout our Biblical journey.

Stories: The stories in order are the two creation stories, the fall, Cain and Able, a listing of the children of Cain, the Noah cycle, the generations of Noah, the Tower of Babel and finally the lineage of Noah to Abraham, who will become important in week 2. These stories, some told here very briefly, carry us through the opening two portions of our Five Part Story, God Loves the World and We Wandered Far From God.

Brief Summary of Stories: We begin our two year study of scripture, appropriately enough, with Genesis, which means beginnings. We open with the first eleven chapters which form the "pre-history" of the Bible. These opening stories are not intended to be scientific descriptions about the creation of the world, but are intended to help us understand more about God, ourselves and the world in which we live. Because of this, these stories are among the most important in all of the scripture. They set the table for everything that follows.

Critical to our understanding the rest of the Bible is for us to believe that the universe, though 13 billion years old, is not simply a cosmic accident but is somehow the result of the work of the creating God. In these chapters we will encounter two creation stories. The first is the day by day breakdown of God speaking the world into existence. The second concerns itself with the place and role of humanity in this creation. As you read I hope you will see the differences between in the two stories.

In these two stories we discover that God and human beings have a special relationship. We are made in God's image and because of that we are given certain tasks which we are to undertake...such as caring for the world. This is the basis for our understanding that God loves the world...meaning God loves everything and everyone in it.

These two stories are followed by stories which tell us why and how this good creation fell apart, or as the Five Part Story puts it, We Wandered Far From God. It begins with the acknowledgement that human beings were created with the freedom to make choices. Nowhere, in these opening chapters, is there any hint that the first couple was somehow forced to sin or that God set them up to fail. Instead we are told that creation is free to respond to God as it so chooses. Adam and Eve's choice to strive to be as wise as God, as shown by their eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, results in a chain reaction of tragedy upon tragedy. First they discover shame and fear. Next they are forced from Eden and have to make it in a now corrupted creation. Soon jealousy and murder arrives when Cain slays Able. Next humanity descends into chaos so precipitously that God sends a flood to destroy the world. Even though humanity is saved through Noah, sin still reigns and the people once again challenge God's rule by trying to storm heaven from the Tower of Babel. We are left at the end of this section with humanity wandering the earth unsure of their future.

1. Where do you see the effects of sin in the world?
2. Where do you see God's good creation?
3. Reflect on your freedom, or lack thereof, to make Godly choices.

4. Reflect on what you learned about God, humanity and the world in these passages.