

ST BARNABAS
HATTERSLEY 

beginnings

Series Bible Studies

Beginnings

Bible Study Series

Genesis is a book of beginnings. The beginning of the story of God. It contains poetry such as the beautiful and true Hebrew prose of chapters 1-3. It is also a history book, plotting the start of humanities journey with God. It is a book that provides a foundation of our faith; “in the beginning God.” God is there at the start, outside of time and space, and with a Word, he creates...

It is also a book that tells us God’s intentions. He has always longed to bless humanity, yet we try to help ourselves. Instead of being blessed by God to fill the world with blessing, we see it filled with violence and pride. Yet amongst all this, it is a story of the beginning of hope. A hope for all humankind. A hope that will bless the whole world.

As you study the beginnings of the story of God, our prayer is that God will begin his story in your heart. That you might inhabit it and enjoy living in the new reality that God has created for you to thrive in.

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CREATION

Study 1: Creation

“At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

Robert Jastrow - God and the Astronomers

As we approach this opening book of the bible, take a moment to think about the bold claim the opening words make, “In the beginning God.” The mystery of creation, the universe, life, both yours, mine, and the person sitting next to you, in fact, all that surrounds you, solved in four words. Before the beginning was God, and he spoke it out, and by his word it was created. Science tells us the universe is still expanding from that genesis moment in history. Such is the power of God’s word, it is still creating now!

Key questions to hold in your mind and heart as you study:

Do you believe God is the Creator and Sustainer of everything?
What are God’s intentions in creating humanity and the world?

Read Genesis 1:1-31 & 2:1-3 & 2:8-9&15-16

Initial thoughts

When studying the bible, it's great to ask after your first reading, "what jumped out at me, what did it notice, what had I not realised before?"

Note them here:

Observation Questions - (getting to know the text)

What are the repeated phrases in the Creation poem?

In verse 2 - what is the 'earth' described as?

What does God do with this disorder and chaos?

God's blessing is like his 'thumbs up' to something. He sees it is good. What does God bless in these opening chapters of the bible?

What changes with this blessing from God when he comes to humans? (31)

What is the command of God for humans? (28-31)

In Genesis 2 What trees has God planted in the garden he creates for humanity?

Interpretation Questions - (what does the text mean?)

What does God's blessing over creation tell us about what he thinks about it?

How is God defining what is good for humanity helpful?

What does it mean that humans are created in God's "image and likeness?" (27)

In Genesis 2, what has God given humans?

Made in God's image and likeness

Reflections of God's character out into the world

Representatives of God's rule over the earth

Harness all creations potential and care for it, helping it to flourish.

Being blessed to be a blessing

Dr Tim Mackie - Bible Project

What does this tell us about his intentions for humanity?

Why does God give humanity a choice in the garden? What does this tell us about him?

What would it mean for humanity to turn away from the blessing that God is offering them in these opening chapters?

Application - (What is God saying to me, and how does it work itself out in my life?)

Do you believe that God is the Creator and Sustainer of everything? How might this impact your life choices?

In the opening verses of the bible, God is speaking order into chaos. Is there chaos in your life? What would like God to speak his order into today?

Are you letting God define good and evil in your life, what might this mean for you?

God has created humanity and blessed them to be a blessing to the world. How can you be a blessing to someone this week?

How can we as a church be a blessing to our community?



Study 2: Fall

“One of the greatest sorrows which came to human beings when Adam and Eve left the garden was the loss of memory, memory of all God’s children are meant to be.”

Madeline L’Engle - Walking on Water

Key questions to hold in your mind and heart as you study:

What was God’s intended purpose for humanity/me?
How does Genesis 3 effect my life now?

Read Genesis 3

Initial thoughts

When studying the bible, it’s great to ask after your first reading, “what jumped out at me, what did it notice, what had I not realised before?”

Note them here:

Observation Questions - (getting to know the text)

Who are the characters in this story?

What does the snake say to the humans?

Is it the same thing God says to the humans in Chapter 2?

What do Adam and Eve do after talking with the snake?

What is the result of them eating the fruit from the tree?

What does God say will one day happen to the snake? (V15)

Interpretation Questions - (what does the text mean?)

What do you think the snake wants for the humans? (V1-4)

Why do you think the snake's lie (v4) is so appealing to the humans?

If humans are made in God's image and likeness, what is sad about believing the snake's lie?

What do you think Adam and Eve felt after eating the fruit?

Why do you think they all blame each other for the wrong doing?

Why are there consequences for their actions? (V14-19) Couldn't God just let them off? (V21-23 may help)

Is sin a problem? Why, why not?

V15 speaks of a wounded victor, someone who will crush the snake but be killed at the same time? What do you make of this? Is there any hope for humanity in this passage?

Do Adam and Eve's choices still effect us today? Yes, what can be done about it? No, why not?

Application - (What is God saying to me, and how does it work itself out in my life?)

A great question to ask ourselves, is 'what has God really said about me?' The snake distorted God's word. Revisit some of the promises of God, and the things he says about you. Do they match up with what you believe about yourself?

Do you feel like you want to run and hide from God? Why do you think that is? Is there stuff to tell God about so he can free you from it and show you his love?

Sin is a big problem in that it separates us from God. How can you find ways this week to rejoice in the truth that Jesus has taken away all your sin, so that you can walk freely with God?

"We are more sinful than we could ever dare imagine and more loved than we could ever dare dream. "

Tim Keller

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PROMISE



Study 3: Promise

“Faith...involves trusting in the future promises of God and waiting for their fulfilment.”

R.C. Sproul

What did we miss? (Genesis 4-11)

We left the story of beginnings, with Adam and Eve, expelled from the garden. They'd been blessed to be a blessing, living in God's good garden. However they'd listen to the whispers of evil and chosen to walk away from God's definition of good and evil and instead define it for themselves. This meant living in a world separated from God and all his good blessings. Still, God wanted to bless the whole world, through this family. However this family didn't grow and bless each other and the world, they instead, tried to be gods, building great monuments to themselves, killing each other, and doing all kinds of evil things. So, the first murder, a flood, and a collapsed tower later, God now chooses a new family out of all the families of the world, why? So that he can bless everyone through them. He will get his way, and he will bless the world.

Key questions to hold in your mind and heart as you study:

How have God's promises remained true throughout the bible?

How are those promises true for me today?

Read Genesis 12:1-8 & 15:1-21

Name change alert!

Abram in these passage is the Abraham of later passages. God changes his name!

Observation Questions - (getting to know the text)

In Genesis 12 what is God's first command to Abram?

What promises does He make Abram in this chapter?

How does Abram respond to the God's command?

In verse 7 who does God promise Abram to give the land to?

In Genesis 15 who does God reveal himself as in verse 1?

What does Abram say in response to God?

How does God make a Covenant with Abram?

What is Abram's part in the covenant promise?

What is representing God in the making of the covenant? (V17)

Covenant - An agreement between two parties bound in law

In ancient times covenants were bloody affairs. An animal was slaughtered, and then walked between, as a sign of what would happen to the person should they break their side of the agreement In other words, the punishment was death.

Interpretation Questions - (what does the text mean?)

Why do you think God chose Abram?

How do you think Abram felt leaving his land and family to travel to the unknown?

How does God work in our helplessness and vulnerability?

Why do you think it was important for Abram to break with his families past and go where God was calling him?

How does this calling compare to Jesus calling the disciples in Mark 1:1 7-18?

Read Genesis 12: 2-3, how has God kept his promises to Abram?

Have all the peoples of the world been blessed through Abram's family?

In Genesis 15, why do you think Abram might be having a hard time believing in what God has promised him? (Romans 4:19 might help here)

Do you think it's hard to trust in the promises of God?

How do God's promises bless our lives now?

Why does only God 'pass between the pieces' (v17), to make a covenant? What does this mean for Abram and humanity? How did God keep this promise?

Why is God so keen to bless and prosper Abram?

Application - (What is God saying to me, and how does it work itself out in my life?)

Is God calling you to break with your past and follow him into the unknown? What might that look like for you?

How has God blessed your life through Abram? Make a list this week of all the blessings in your life.

What promise from God are you going to hold onto? Learn it off by heart this week.

How is God with you in your current weakness and vulnerability?

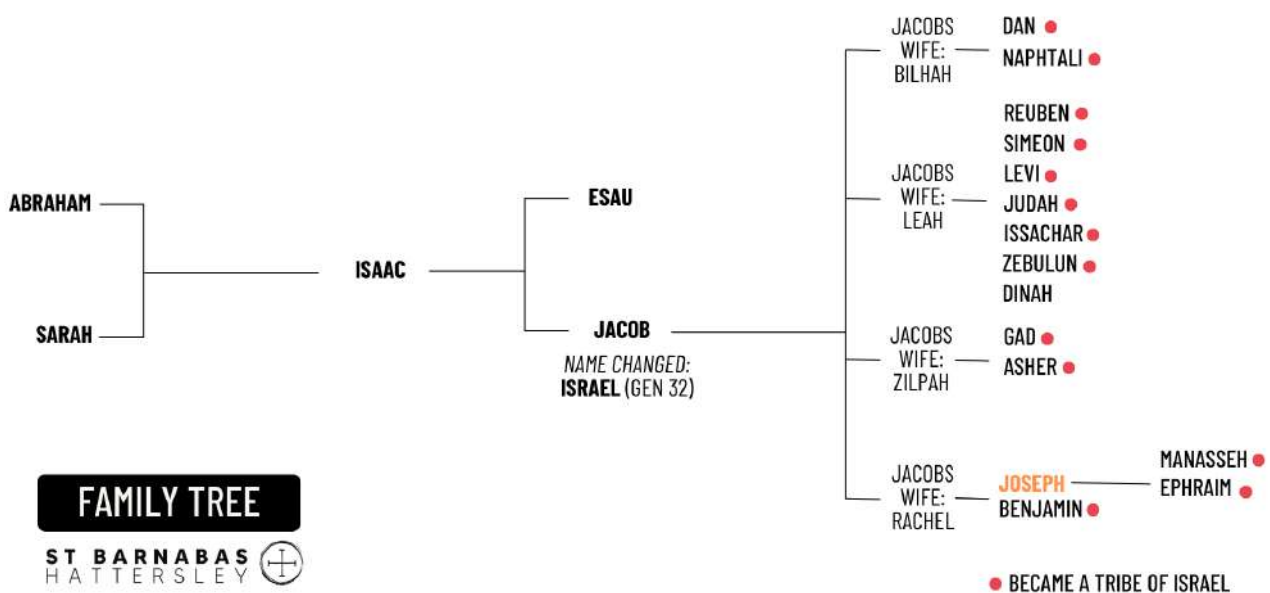
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PLAN

Study 4: Plan

What did we miss?

As God chooses Abram, and changes his name to Abraham, the rest of the book zooms in to follow his family line. They're not a brilliant bunch, but God is faithful to them and keeps his promise (covenant) with Abraham. Take a look below and follow the family tree from Abraham to Joseph.



Read Genesis 50:20

Observation Questions - (getting to know the text)

Who is speaking, and who are they speaking to?

Interpretation Questions - (what does the text mean?)

What does Joseph's statement tell us about his journey with God?

What does it tell us about God?

What does it tell us about how God uses our circumstances?

What does it tell us about human suffering?

Application - (What is God saying to me, and how does it work itself out in my life?)

What are you walking through right now? How does this verse speak into that?

How do you feel about trusting God with the dark and difficult parts of your story?

Do you trust that God knows what he is doing in your life?

Concluding thoughts on Genesis

What we've learned in our 'Beginnings' bible study, is that God is the Creator of all things. He has made everything and he has made us. We are first and foremost his. Adam and Eve were created and chosen to bring God's blessing to the whole world. They instead chose curse and rebelled against God. Humanity from then onward only brought more curse in the form of stealing, murder, pride and death. So God chose Abram (Abraham). Through him God was going to bless the whole world, he was going to get his way. Abraham and his line, weren't great, but God kept his promise (covenant) with Abraham. Abraham's line eventually gets to Joseph and we learn through him, that God's blessing for the nations will not be stopped, however bad things get. The scene is set for God to bless the world through Abraham's line, now a people, the Hebrews, who are living in Egypt.

Helpful Resources



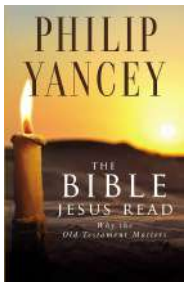
The Bible Project is both online and on app. It is a fantastic resource full of videos, blogs and lectures to help you understand God's story, and how it all points to Jesus. Below are links to videos which will help you in this series.

BibleProject

Old Testament Overview: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/old-testament-tanak/>

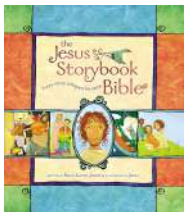
Genesis 1-11 Overview: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-1-11/>

Genesis 12-50 Overview: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-12-50/>



The Bible Jesus Read is written by Phillip Yancey. It's a great book for those who feel a little scared or overwhelmed about reading the Old Testament. Yancey writes in an exciting and accessible way and the book really helps you to begin to see the Old Testament scriptures as Jesus did.

You can buy a copy here: <https://www.eden.co.uk/christian-books/understanding-the-faith/general-theological-issues/the-bible-jesus-read/>



The Jesus Storybook Bible by Sally Lloyd-Jones is the perfect book to help children access and enjoy the whole story of the bible. It's perfect for family devotions at bedtime and shows how every story of the bible points to Jesus.

[Available at Amazon and Eden Books.](#)