

Bible Study on the book of Genesis

Place: St. Barnabas Church, Long Beach

Teacher: Fr. Bernard Santiago (Associate Pastor)

Assisted by: Fr. Antony Gaspar (Pastor) and the Office Staff

Day and Time: Zoom Session (Wednesdays) from 7-8.30 pm
In person session (Thursdays) from 7-8.30 pm

Duration: 8 weeks.

Study materials: Every Tuesday each participant will receive an email with an attachment of the material for the Bible Study session and everyone is expected to print their own material beforehand and read through beforehand for better participation. Besides the class material, 7 chapters from the book of Genesis will be assigned for personal reading and quiz. There are 50 chapters altogether in the book of Genesis. All the chapters will be read and the important Patriarchs and themes will be treated in detail with biblical, historical and theological background to cull out the main teachings in the book of Genesis.

Purpose of the Study: The study will make an attempt to understand the political and cultural background of the ancient people in order to explain the various events of the people of Israel.

Participation Certificate: At the end of the course, the participants will be awarded with a certificate of participation and excellence. Hence, interest, passion, regularity and continuity are very expected of the participants. Anyone from any parish who desires to learn the Bible is welcome.

Clarification: The last fifteen minutes will be dedicated for clarification.

Lectio Divina: The bible study will conclude with the Lectio Divina of the following Sunday readings for a meaningful participation of the Sunday Mass.

Zoom application meeting ID: 99174147604 Password: 3955

The bible study email is **biblestudy@stbarnabaslb.org** Lesson materials and other informations related to the bible study will be sent through this email.

Opening Prayer before the Bible Study

Heavenly Father, We praise you and bless you for bringing us this evening to learn your words of everlasting life. Send forth your Spirit to enlighten our minds and dispose our hearts to accept your truth in the Holy Bible. May You fill us with more knowledge and love for You and your Son Jesus. Lord Jesus, You promised to send the Holy Spirit to teach us all things. As we read and study your word today, allow it truly to touch our hearts and to change our lives. O Holy Spirit, You sanctify the people of God through ministry and the Sacraments. For the exercise of the Christian apostolate, You give the faithful special gifts and charisms to build up the body of Christ in charity. Continue to teach us, anoint us and explain to us the divine mysteries in the word of God so that we may prayerfully learn and vibrantly live our christian life in our homes and communities. Our Father...

Closing Prayer after the Bible Study

Lord, Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. We thank you for the blessing of reading and learning your word together. We ask that these words of life, truth and hope would continue to impact us in the week ahead. May the things that you have revealed and thoughts that we have shared dwell in our hearts and stir us to action. As we come to an end of the bible study of the day, we thank you for speaking to us through your word. As we depart from this bible study group to our homes and communities, we call upon you to protect and guide us all in your wisdom and love. Blessed Mother, Seat of wisdom, you carried Jesus, the word incarnate in your womb, intercede for us to your Son that we may learn, live and love His life giving words. Hail Mary...

Introductory Lesson

Why study this book? Genesis is called the book of beginnings or book of origins. The Greek word genesis means "origins," "birth," or "beginnings." The ancient Hebrews called the book Bereshith, meaning "In the beginning," which are the first words of the text. This book sets forth the Creation of the earth and all life thereon, the Fall of Adam and Eve and the introduction of sin into this world, the origin of the house of Israel, and the establishment of covenants by a merciful Father in Heaven for the salvation of His children. As we study the book of Genesis, we will better understand His plans for us and the humanity.

Author: Moses is the author of Genesis. Moses was a prophet who was called by God to lead the children of Israel out of bondage from Egypt, through the wilderness, to the promised land of Canaan. Because the events in Genesis occurred before Moses's time, he did not learn about them firsthand. They were made known to him through revelation, and he may also have relied on historical sources available to him. Mosaic authorship of Genesis may be established on the basis of its unity with the other books of the Pentateuch.

When and where was it written? There are varying opinions on when Genesis and the other books of Moses were written, but some scholars date the writing to sometime between the 15th and 13th centuries B.C. We do not know exactly where Moses was when he wrote this book. It could have been written between the time Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and his death. This record would have given encouragement and perspective to the Israelites, who needed to develop faith in the Lord and understand the covenants He had made with their forefathers so they could fulfill their role as the Lord's chosen people.

What are some distinctive features of this book? Genesis is an introduction to the other books of Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), as well as to the entire Old Testament. Genesis recounts events that occurred during the dispensations of Adam, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. Thus, Genesis provides the Old Testament's only record of many important events, including the Creation, the Fall of Adam and Eve, the Flood, and the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant. However, Genesis does not focus on these periods equally: only 11 chapters of Genesis are dedicated to the time from the Creation of the earth to Abraham, while 39 chapters are dedicated to the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's 12 sons. This emphasis suggests that Moses desired to teach the children of Israel about the covenants the Lord made with their

forefathers, through which Israel would join Him in the work of blessing all the nations and families of the earth (Genesis 12:2–3). The accounts of the lives of these patriarchs and their wives also illustrate that although the Lord’s covenant people will be tested, the Lord will be with them as they remain faithful to Him.

Brief Summary: The Book of Genesis can be divided into two sections: Primitive History and Patriarchal History.

Primitive history records (1) Creation (chapters 1-2); (2) the Fall of man (chapters 3-5); (3) the Flood (chapters 6-9); and (4) the dispersion (chapters 10-11). **Patriarchal history** records the lives of four great men: (1) Abraham (Gen 12-25:8); (2) Isaac (Gen 21:1-35-29); (3) Jacob (Gen 25:21-50:14); and (4) Joseph (Gen 30:22-50:26).

Primitive history: God created a universe that was good and free from sin. God created humanity to have a personal relationship with Him. Adam and Eve sinned and thereby brought evil and death into the world. Evil increased steadily in the world until there was only one family in which God found anything good. God sent the Flood to wipe out evil, but delivered Noah and his family along with the animals in the Ark. After the Flood, humanity began again to multiply and spread throughout the world.

Patriarchal history: God chose Abraham, through whom He would create a chosen people and eventually the promised Messiah. The chosen line was passed on to Abraham’s son Isaac, and then to Isaac’s son Jacob. God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, and his twelve sons became the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. In His sovereignty, God had Jacob’s son Joseph sent to Egypt by the despicable actions of Joseph’s brothers. This act, intended for evil by the brothers, was intended for good by God and eventually resulted in Jacob and his family being saved from a devastating famine by Joseph, who had risen to great power in Egypt.

Outline

Genesis 1–4 Moses sets forth the Creation of the earth and all living things upon it. Adam and Eve partake of the forbidden fruit and are cast out of the Garden of Eden. They have children. Cain slays Abel.

Because of the wickedness of mankind, God promises to flood the earth. Noah obeys the commandment of God to build an ark, and his family is saved from the Flood. Noah and his family multiply and replenish the earth. The Lord confounds the languages of the people and scatters them throughout the earth after they build the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 12–23 The Lord promises that Abram will become a great nation and that his seed will bless the earth. Abram travels with his wife, Sarai, to Hebron and then to Egypt. The Lord covenants with Abram. He changes Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah and promises them a child. Abraham's nephew Lot is spared from the destruction of Sodom. Sarah bears Isaac in her old age. Abraham proves his faithfulness to the Lord by showing his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Genesis 24–26 The Lord guides Abraham's servant in choosing Rebekah as a wife for Isaac. Esau and Jacob are born. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob. The Lord renews the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac.

Genesis 27–36 Jacob receives the birthright blessing from his father. Esau hates Jacob and plans to slay him. The Lord promises Jacob the same blessings given to Abraham and Isaac. Jacob serves Laban and marries his daughters Leah and Rachel. The Lord appears to Jacob and changes his name to Israel. Jacob returns to Canaan and makes peace with Esau. He then travels to Beth-el, where the Lord appears to him and renews His covenant. Jacob has 12 sons and a daughter.

Genesis 37–50 Joseph is favored by Jacob. Joseph dreams that his parents and brothers will honor and submit to him. Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery, and he is taken to Egypt. Potiphar's wife tempts Joseph and falsely accuses him. Joseph is cast into prison. He interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker and then of Pharaoh. Pharaoh makes Joseph a ruler in Egypt, and Joseph prepares Egypt for a famine. When Joseph's brothers come to Egypt, he tests and forgives them. All of Jacob's family come to Egypt, and Jacob blesses his sons. Joseph prophesies and dies in Egypt.

Key Themes in the Book of Genesis: The book of Genesis sets the stage for the rest of Scripture. Without the foundation of Genesis, the remainder of the Bible would fail to make sense. The main theme in Genesis is beginnings. The book recounts the origins of the heavens and earth, of all created things, of the human family, of God's covenant relationship with humans, of sin, of redemption, of nations, languages, and God's chosen people Israel. Genesis teaches us about the problem of sin and God's plan of salvation. It reveals the character of God and his relentless pursuit to restore the broken fellowship between human beings and himself.

The stories in Genesis reveal the nature of God as Creator and Redeemer; the value of human life (created in God's image and for his purpose); the terrible consequences of disobedience and sin (separating man from God); and the wonderful promise of salvation and forgiveness through the coming Messiah.

Key Characters

- Adam and Eve, the first man and first woman, were created in the image of God. Through their transgression (the Fall of Man), sin entered the human race.
- Noah became the second father of the human race. By his time, widespread corruption on the earth caused God to send a great flood leaving only a remnant of life on earth. God's grace preserved the lives of Noah and his family. Then God made a covenant to never again destroy the earth by flood.
- Abraham and Sarah were chosen to be the father and mother of Israel, God's chosen people.
- Isaac and Rebekah fulfilled God's miraculous promise to Abraham to make his descendants into a great nation.
- Jacob's sons would grow up to lead the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Through Joseph, the Hebrew people became a nation and settled in the land of Egypt.

Key Verses:

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 2:18, 20-24: The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ...But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Genesis 12:2-3 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Biblical themes: Genesis sets forth several biblical themes that weave across the rest of the Bible:

- God's authority. God is the maker of all things, and He is sovereign over nature and humanity. We see His creative work in the first two chapters of Genesis, but

we also see His sovereignty in choosing Abraham, blessing the Hebrews, and protecting Egypt from famine.

- Man's rebellion. Adam and Eve disobeyed God in Eden, but that's only the beginning. Cain presents an unacceptable sacrifice, the world becomes violent in the days of Noah, people construct the tower of Babel, and so on and so forth.
- God's judgment. God evicts Adam and Eve, He sends a flood to destroy the earth, and He rains fire on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gn 19). God is holy, and sin must be punished.
- God's preservation of life. God promises a descendant to Eve (Gn 3:15), He saves Noah's family in an ark, He delivers Jacob from Esau's wrath, and He allows Egypt to survive a harsh famine through Joseph's wisdom.
- Blood sacrifice. God skins animals to cover Adam and Eve after they sin (Gn 3:21), and He provides a ram for Abraham to take Isaac's place (Gn 22). The blood sacrifice motif becomes far more prominent in the book of Leviticus.

The use of Genesis in the New Testament: "In the OT, New Testament is hidden and in the NT, Old Testament is evident" (St. Augustine). Genesis is important to the New Testament authors. Every New Testament author quotes or alludes to Genesis. The New Testament has a total of 60 allusions to Genesis 1–11 specifically, and when we widen the search to include all of Genesis, the number grows to 103. For such a tiny body of literature, the New Testament has a staggering amount of references back to Genesis

Jesus and the Gospels: Jesus' use of Genesis sets the tone for how it will be used in the rest of the New Testament. He uses it both to explain doctrine and to draw historical analogies.

In Jesus' day, there was a debate about whether divorce was allowed for any reason, or only for adultery. When asked to weigh in, Jesus essentially goes beyond the Law back to creation and quotes Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 to establish that God made man male and female and intended marriage to be between a man and a woman for life. This bond of loyalty transcends all other loyalties, even to one's parents, except loyalty to God. The Pharisees ask why Moses commanded that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce to send her away. Jesus retorts that Moses allowed (never commanded) divorce because of rebellion (hardness of heart). But divorce violates the will of God which is expressed in the created order itself, and that overrides even the Law.

This quote of Genesis reveals Jesus' thoughts on the timeline of creation, as well, because He said that it was this way "from the beginning of creation." Often Jesus compares the people in His own day to people from Genesis. Capernaum is worse than

Sodom, because Jesus said that the Sodomites would have repented if they'd seen the miracles performed in Capernaum (Matthew 11:23–24). Jesus' contrasted Abraham's eager expectation of His day with the rejection of the Pharisees who claimed to be his descendents (John 8:33–41)—as well as contrasting Abraham's coming into existence with His own eternal pre-existence (v. 58). And He predicted that the end days would be like the days of Noah and of Lot—destruction would come swiftly and without warning (Luke 17:26–29). In every case, there is no hint that Jesus is taking these events in less than a historical manner.

John's Gospel is the most "theological" in that he liberally inserts his own commentary about the meaning of the events he records. Instead of a birth narrative like Luke's and Matthew, he goes back to creation to begin his Gospel. "In 1:1–5, John traces his account of Jesus farther back than the beginning of the ministry, farther back than the virgin birth, farther back even than the creation. John's opening "in the beginning" is an unmistakable reference to the opening verse of Genesis

The earliest church's preaching: When the apostles and earliest Christians preached to a Jewish audience, they preached from the foundation of the Jewish Scriptures; Jewish history and the Abrahamic and Davidic promises are prominent (Acts 2:14–41; 7:2–14). But when they preached to Gentiles who did not have this background in the Jewish Scriptures, they went back to creation as a foundation for their preaching (Acts 14:15–17; 17:24–31). They take creation and the ancestry of all men from Adam to be historical (v. 26), and it is their basis for leading in to a proclamation of the Gospel.

Romans: Creation and the Fall are woven into the entire theology of Romans. God's power is revealed through creation, and men are condemned because they do not recognize this (Romans 1:19–20). Paul explains that Jesus was an atoning sacrifice for sin. But when Paul is explaining how the sacrifice of one man can make many righteous, he goes back to Genesis, and reasons that since death came through a man, Adam, it follows that the gift of righteousness should also come through one man, Christ (5:12–21).

1 and 2 Corinthians: Regarding the issue of head coverings in worship, Paul cites the created order—man was created first, and then woman—in defense of his ruling that men should pray and prophesy with their heads uncovered and women should pray and prophesy with their heads covered. Paul's most important use of Genesis is in 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul defends the physical resurrection of the dead. His argument, much like his argument in Romans 5:12–21, is that Adam and Christ constitute two heads of humanity. Death came because of Adam's sin, but the resurrection came

through Christ. Because believers are under Christ, believers will also rise. And because Christ rose as a man, we can be sure that our resurrection will be like His.

Hebrews: The author to the book of Hebrews insists that Jesus is the high priest of a new order, which was brought about by the new law. This is the order of Melchizedek—the author refers back to an obscure figure in Genesis (14:18–20), who is referred to once in Psalm 110:4, to justify Jesus’ office as high priest. Hebrews 11 lists Abel, Enoch, and Noah, from Genesis 1–11, as heroes of the faith without distinguishing them as less historical than the other members of the list.

Peter: Peter’s epistles also show a firm belief in a historical Genesis. In 1 Peter he affirms that eight people were saved in the ark, and in 2 Peter he says that sinning angels were sent to Tartarus in close connection with the Flood as a judgment for ungodliness on the earth and saving Noah and his family in the ark.

Jude: Jude is widely regarded as being very close to 2 Peter, and this one-chapter book has four references to Genesis. Like 2 Peter, he refers to the sinning angels, but this time it’s closely connected to the strange-flesh perversions of Sodom and Gomorrah. He also accepts Genesis 5 as a strict chronogenealogy without gaps, since Enoch is “seventh from Adam”.

What is JEDP? In brief, the JEDP theory states that the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, were not written entirely by Moses but also by different authors/compiler after Moses. The theory is based on the fact that different names for God are used in different portions of the Pentateuch, and there are detectable differences in linguistic style. The letters of the JEDP theory stand for the four supposed authors: the Jahwist/Yahwist who uses Jehovah for God’s name, the Elohist who uses Elohim for God’s name, the Deuteronomist (the author of Deuteronomy), and the priestly author of Leviticus. The JEDP theory goes on to state that the different portions of the Pentateuch were likely compiled in the 4th Century B.C., possibly by Ezra.

Difference between Elohim (God) and Yahweh (Lord)

Elohim is a Hebrew word that denotes “God” or “god.” It is one of the most common names for God in the Old Testament, starting in the very first verse: “In the beginning [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The name Elohim occurs over 2,500 times in the OT. The basic meaning behind the name Elohim is one of strength or power of effect. Elohim is the infinite, all-powerful

God who shows by His works that He is the creator, sustainer, and supreme judge of the world.

Sometimes the word Elohim is shortened to El and used as part of a longer name. El Shaddai, for example, means “God Almighty” (Genesis 49:24); El Elyon means “God Most High” (Deuteronomy 26:19); and El Roi means “God Who Sees” (Genesis 16:13). Personal names of people can include the name of God: Daniel (“El Is My Judge”), Nathanael (“Gift of El”), Samuel (“Heard by El”), Elijah (“El Is Yahweh”), and Ariel (“Lioness of El”) are examples. Place names, too, can contain the shortened form of Elohim: Bethel (“House of El”), Jezreel (“El Will Sow”), and, of course, Israel (“Prince of El”) are examples. When Jesus cried out from the cross, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (Mark 15:34), He addressed the Father with a form of Elohim, Eloi. Mark translates Jesus’ statement for us: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Yahweh: YHWH is as close to a personal name as God has revealed to us. The Divine Name was revealed to Moses and was unknown before his time: “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD [YHWH] I did not make myself fully known to them” (Exodus 6:3). The name YHWH seems to refer to God’s self-existence, being linked to “I AM THAT I AM” in Exodus 3:14. God told Moses that “this is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation” (Exodus 3:15; cf. Exodus 15:3). All other “names” for God, such as El Shaddai, are probably titles, rather than personal names, strictly speaking—although it is quite proper to address God by His titles.

The ancient Hebrew language that the Old Testament was written in did not have vowels in its alphabet. In written form, ancient Hebrew was a consonant-only language. In the original Hebrew, God’s name transliterates to YHWH (sometimes written in the older style as YHVH). This is known as the tetragrammaton (meaning “four letters”). Because of the lack of vowels, Bible scholars debate how the tetragrammaton YHWH was pronounced. Due to a fear of accidentally taking God’s name in vain (Leviticus 24:16), the Jews basically quit saying it out loud altogether. Instead, when reading Scripture aloud, the Jews substituted the tetragrammaton YHWH with the word Adonai (“Lord”).

So, what is God’s Name, and what does it mean? The name Yahweh refers to God’s self-existence. The name Yahweh comes from the Hebrew word for “I am.” When God met Moses at the burning bush and commanded him to go back to Egypt and lead the people out, Moses asked who he should say has sent him. “God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am.’ And he said, ‘Say this to the people of Israel: “I am has sent me to you.”’ God also said to Moses, ‘Say this to the people of Israel: “The LORD [YHWH], the God of

your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you." This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations'" (Exodus 3:14–15).

Second, the ancient Hebrew scribes considered God's name too sacred to write or pronounce. When vowels were later added to the text, the scribes took the vowels from the word *adonai*, which means "lord" or "master," and inserted them between the consonants. Instead of pronouncing *Yahweh*, they simply pronounced the word *Adonai*.

Yahweh is the name of Israel's God and the God who came to earth as Jesus Christ, *Yahweh* in the flesh. Matthew 1:21 says, "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." The name Jesus is from the Latin form of the Greek form of *Yeshua*, which literally means "*Yahweh* saves." So *Yahweh* will save His people from their sins, and simultaneously Jesus will save His people from their sins. This is just one of many instances where Jesus and *Yahweh* are equated.

In the Bible, a differentiation is made between 'God' and 'Lord', as Jesus is often referred to as 'Lord' but not 'God'. The term 'God' is reserved for his Almighty, Heavenly Father. The main difference between 'God' and 'Lord' is in terms of the diversity of meaning that is embodied by each word. 'God' means the Supreme Being, the Creator of the world. While the word 'Lord' can mean the Savior of the Universe, and the Almighty Creator, but it can also connote an honorary title. The word 'God' is used solely in the religious context, while the term 'Lord' can be used in the religious context as well as a secular, feudal context. The specific meaning of the term depends on the context of its usage.