

The Book: The Grand Story of God Introduction and Genesis

Open with Prayer

Ask:

Why are you taking this class?

Purpose of the class

Purpose: people have heard the stories of the Bible, but many do not know how they all tie together. Many people want to read the Bible, start at the beginning and usually don't get past Leviticus.

Why do we read the Bible?

We say it is living because God speaks through it. It was written by humans but inspired by God. It tells us who is, what God has done, and what God will do.

The purpose of this class is to see the grand story of the Bible by going through each book of the Bible (one book per week) and answer: **PPT**

- What story does this book tell?
- Why is it here?
- How does it fit into the rest of the Bible?
- What truths can we learn from this Book?
- How does this book speak to us today?
- How can this book form my faith?
- Chose a favorite scripture passage from the book

How to Read the Bible PPT

As we look at the books of the Bible, pay attention on how to read them. Genesis is a story or narrative; the Psalms are poetry. You read poetry different than a novel.

Some books are the Law. Leviticus is a book of the Law. In one part it says do not wear mixed clothing – in other words, do not mix linen with cotton, or wool with cotton. How do we read that for today? What we do is ask what it meant for the people of its day. What did it mean for the people it was written? Why did they not mix fabrics? What was God trying to say? What is God saying to us today?

How do you read prophetic material? The major prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. Then there are minor prophets – 12 of them at the end of the Bible. What are they there for?

Look for repeated words or themes. Genesis will introduce us to one of those themes: covenant. Covenant runs throughout the Bible and into the New Testament. Even Jesus used covenant in the communion in the Words of Institution.

Another important word in the Bible: Temple. It was introduced next week in Exodus. In its early beginnings, it is called Tabernacle. Temple shows up in the NT. The church is called a Holy Temple.

Other themes that repeat over and over again: love, justice, law, land.

What is fascinating: the Bible was written over 1500 years by over 40 authors on three continents. Yet, these themes run throughout the Bible.

PPT Show and explain digital map.

Why are we studying the Bible in such a way?

God has a story. God has a plan. The Bible tells us who God is, what God has done, and what God will do. As we read how God has worked with humans, calling them over and over again into relationship, we can say God does that today. With us.

We try and understand the Bible because God speaks to us through it. So as we read, we ask: what truths do I learn about God? About me? About the world?

Any questions?

Let's begin at the beginning: Genesis PPT

Why two creation stories?

Think of the Gospels. There are 4 different ones. Why?

- Different authors and different audiences
 - Ex: Matthew – written to Jews, so he quotes OT a lot.
 - Luke was a doctor, so he was more earthy, more details on people's conditions and healing.
- The first three Gospels from an earthly viewpoint. John from a heavenly viewpoint. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Creation – two creations from two different viewpoints. Chapter one is poetry (PPT). It is a heavenly view of creation.

Chapter two is a more earthly, or human view of creation. More details about the earth, such as 4 rivers that are named. More detail about the separate creation of male and female. Compare 1:27 with 2:7, 18, 20b-23.

Nothing about the tree of knowledge of good and evil in chapter 1. It is introduced in chapter 2: 15-17, which hints what is to come in chapter 3.

Chapter 1 reveals the heavenly God creating the vast universe. Chapter 2 more relational. God walks with the humans in the garden.

Many people struggle with 2 different accounts. "Each story presents revealed truth, truth not about science, but about God and ourselves." What is affirmed is the uniqueness of humanity and our special relationship to God.

Relationships is stressed. Three relationships: God and humans and the land/animals.

All of this as the world should be. Everything changes in chapter 3. It starts with the harmonious relationship between God and humans and land. It ends with Adam and Eve cast out of the garden due to sin. The harmony is broken. The world is not as it should be until the last 2 chapters of the book of Revelation. Between the trees is the rest of the Bible: God keeps calling humans into relationship with God.

The world becomes so corrupt, relationships are broken (think of Cain killing his brother Abel) that God decides to start over again with the story of Noah and the flood. And here is where the theme of covenant begins. (Genesis 9)

PPT What does covenant mean?

PPT Covenant with Noah

The flood has happened. The water has receded. Noah and his family and the animals can leave the ark. Read 9:7-13.

This is the first time covenant shows up. Several things to notice:

- it is one sided. It is initiated by God. God does all the talking.
- Notice it is not just with Noah and his family, but what else? Every living creature on earth. With God's creation. We tend to not see this, but from the very beginning there is a relationship between God and humans and the land.

Example: As we study the Bible, you will notice when the people walk with God, the land prospers. When the people walk away from God, the land does not bear food or is in distress.

We see our earth in distress. If there is a relationship between God and humans and earth, [does this tell us anything?](#)

PPT Covenant with Abraham

God had made a covenant with all people and land, but sin enters in again. Now, God chooses one family - Abraham: Genesis 12:1-3 Why?

- Abraham will be a blessing to Israel, and Israel will be a blessing to the rest of the world.
- he was chosen because of his faith (15:6)
- Later in NT, Abraham is chosen because of his faith (Hebrews 11)

[What do you think it means to be a blessing to the rest of the world?](#)

- To demonstrate God's character to the world
 - The promise keeping God
 - The kind, compassion, slow to anger, loving God

Turn to chapter 15. Read verses 1 – 5 (the promise of many descendents – which comes with the whole story of the promise of a child to Abraham and Sarah in their old age)

PPT Verse 18 – the promise of land (the map on PPT is how Jews see the promised land; most Christian maps show Israel area). Reiterated in chapter 17, which includes circumcision as a sign of the covenant.

The rest of Genesis is the story of Abraham and his family, and shows where the lineage runs through:

PPT The covenant runs through Abraham’s family – Isaac – Jacob – Judah

Notes:

- Isaac has twins Jacob and Esau. Covenant goes through Jacob.
- Jacob has 12 sons. Covenant goes through Judah.

Genesis is filled with their stories and their struggles with each other and with God. Jacob literally wrestles with God and obtains a new limp and a new name – Israel (which means “struggles with God.”)

And covenant is repeated over and over. Turn to Genesis 26:1-5 – promise reiterated to Isaac.

PPT The last quarter of Genesis is the story about one of Judah’s sons: Joseph. It is 12 chapters, which indicates the importance of his story by the sheer length of it.

Review the Story ending with Judah’s family (12 sons) moving to Egypt. That gets us to the story of Exodus, the next book in the Bible.

What is clear, especially in the story of Joseph is the providence of God. Joseph’s life is tough as a slave in Egypt. He spends much time in prison. But his life is preserved, God works in his life to make him powerful so that the promise of God in the covenant will continue.

Read Genesis 45:4 – 8a

This is one of my favorite passages in Genesis. As you read the Bible, look for favorite passages in each book. We can bring them to class and give to one another.

Application

PPT Does God still make covenant with us today?

Has God ever made a covenant with you?

- me: weight room – God saying, “Are you willing to remain the way you are for me?”

Did you make a covenant with God?

How have you seen the providence of God in your life?

Homework: read Exodus