



Week of April 10 Origins¹

Overview:

At some point in our lives, we must wonder: Why are we here? How did all of this come to be? What are the origins of our universe, our story, and our purpose? In the first eleven chapters of the Genesis, we see a cosmic story unfolding—an epic narrative—of God shaping a good and meaningful world, what went wrong, and how God is redeeming the mess, restoring us to something good. Over the next several weeks, we will explore new ways to study this narrative and learn how to apply those tools to all of Scripture.

Group Objectives:

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- Consider together how their view of God impacts the way they read the Bible.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We encounter the Father daily.* God the Father speaks to us through the Bible, and we commune with him through prayer.

Conversation Starters:

- Did you grow up around water? How did its presence or absence affect your life (if at all)?
- What is your favorite water sport? Are you a participant or spectator?

Read and Reflect: Bible Study Discussion

The flood is a story of justice and obedience. It is easy to see the destruction and question the goodness of God, but a close reading of Genesis 3-6 shows us the depravity of Noah's world. God did not act in anger or haste. He gave humanity time—many generations—to choose how they would live. By the time we encounter Noah, the world was a terrifying and dangerous place. God cared about humanity and his creation too much to leave us in such a state. While drastic action was required, in his mercy he provided a line of people, through Seth, which bring hope of salvation to a lost world.

We do not have many details about Noah. We know his fathers and grandfathers passed on a legacy of faithfulness. We know he found favor with God. He is called righteous and obedient. But when you read the account, note the few tasks God gives him. Noah is to build the ark, fill it with food, and wait. We do not know how long the ark was complete before the rain started to fall. In his own time, and in his own agency, God brings the animals, sends the rain, and closes the door. Noah obeyed before he understood, trusting God with the timing and the provision.

¹ This week's lesson was written by Rachel Vaughn; edited by Dawn Gentry.

- **Read Genesis 6:9-7:5**
 - What does God say will happen? Why? What would life look like in Noah's world? Why do we struggle with the idea of God destroying these people?
 - How is Noah described? How does Noah respond to God's instruction?
 - What do we know about Noah?
 - What details are left out?
- **Read Genesis 7:6-24**
 - In this passage, what tasks are Noah's responsibility? What does God do?
 - What does this tell you about what God expects from us?
 - What parallels in language can you find with Genesis 1? Why do you think this is?
 - How does this continuity affect your view of the passage, if at all?
- **Read Exodus 34:5-7**
 - In this passage, God declares his own name to Moses. How does God describe himself?
 - Where can you find each of these attributes of God in the story of Noah?
 - Is God consistent? Why do you think so (or why not)?
 - How can God be compassionate and gracious and still destroy the world with a flood?
 - In what ways could the flood have been a form of mercy for future humanity/creation?

Summarize and Respond:

- Describe God's justice. How is God's justice different from earthly justice?
 - Would we really want to serve a God who did not judge his people?
 - How can justice and grace coexist?
- How does your own experience with God's justice and grace affect your reading of stories like the flood? Which parts are hardest for you? Which ones do you focus on?
- How might a more complete picture of God enhance your relationship with God?
 - How might this help you respond in obedience when you are asked to do something you do not understand?

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.
- *Mighty God, help us to know you as you are, not as we want you to be. Open our hearts and minds to the truth of your character, your grace, and your compassion.*

For Further Study:

- The Character of God <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/character-of-god-exodus/>
 - There are six different videos examining various characteristics of God. View them all for a fuller understanding of the discussion around Exodus 34:5-7.
- "How do we make sense of the book of Genesis?" <https://bibleproject.com/blog/how-do-we-make-sense-of-the-book-of-genesis/>
- Some additional resources—including books, videos, and podcasts—can be found at cccomaha.org/origins. If you need any additional help, please reach out to a member of the Adult Ministries team.