



## Week of April 17 Origins<sup>1</sup>

### **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 are all for JESUS.* Jesus saves us from our past, remakes us to be like him, heals our broken places, and is coming back as our king.

### **Conversation Starters:**

- Do you or your family have experience farming or gardening? Tell us about it.
- What is your most memorable Easter celebration and why?

### **Read and Reflect: Bible Study Discussion**

*Many sections of the Bible have layers of meaning connected to the original Garden narrative from Genesis 1-2. Just as God created a beautiful garden for humans to reign over and care for, God is creating a "garden city" where we will live and reign forever. Just as humans received the breath of life in a garden, Jesus breathes the promise of eternal life into us via his resurrection from a garden tomb. Gardens are used as spiritual analogies throughout scripture.*

*But gardens are not just related to a new life in Christ at the time of decision. Our ongoing spiritual development can be seen as a process over time, like the life cycle of a plant. Newly planted seeds depend on the quality of the soil and plenty of sunshine and rain. Newly planted believers benefit from a healthy environment, the community of others, and regular "watering" with God's word. Long time believers can and should grow to a point of reproduction, where we help "make" (plant) other*

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<sup>1</sup> This week's lesson was written by Dawn Gentry.

disciples. In the case of both disciples, and seeds, we cannot force growth – the Holy Spirit does that! But we can put ourselves in environments where growth is more likely to take place.<sup>2</sup>

- **Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-49**
  - What did you notice about this text? What stood out to you or surprised you?
  - To grow, a seed has to die (v36). How might you relate this to your own spiritual growth?
  - What significance might there be to the varieties of “kinds of flesh”? If that is true on earth, might we assume it will be true in heaven? Why or why not?
  - Re-read vs 42-44. What aspect of your “resurrected body” are you most looking forward to?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58**
  - Resurrection is about more than just our bodies – it relates to our hope of eternal life with Jesus. Why is this important to you? Who are you most looking forward to seeing in heaven?
  - The reality of the resurrection should also remind us of those who don’t know Jesus. Who do you know who doesn’t yet have this hope of eternal life? How can we pray for you and your conversations with them?

### **Summarize and Respond:**

- Re-read verse 58. Compare and contrast the phrase “stand firm” with the phrase “give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord.”
  - How is God calling you to “stand firm” in your life today?
  - Where is God urging you to “give yourselves fully” to God’s mission
    - What action steps will you take this week?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.
- In groups of 2 or 3, pray for the courage to take that action step described above.
- *Creator God, thank you for placing us in a community that wants to help us grow. Help us create environments that lead to healthy discipleship. Give us wisdom when weeds need to be pulled and fertilizer needs to be added. Thank you for the promise of resurrection and eternal life. Help us to stand firm and give ourselves fully to your kingdom mission. Amen.*

### **For Further Study:**

- The Resurrection of Jesus (a bible study with video) <https://bibleproject.com/bible-studies/church-at-home/easter-sunday/>
- Podcast on Water Imagery (from original chaos to rivers in the garden to the flood and beyond) - <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/design-patterns-bible-part-3-crossing-chaotic-waters/>
- Some additional resources—including books, videos, and podcasts—can be found at [cccomaha.org/origins](http://cccomaha.org/origins). If you need any additional help, please reach out to a member of the Adult Ministries team.

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<sup>2</sup> Other passages that come to mind include the Parable of the Sower (Matt 13), the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mark 4), Jesus’ teaching about abiding on the vine (John 15), and Paul’s reminder “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (1 Cor 3:6)