



Week of April 24 Origins¹

Overview:

At some point in our lives, we may 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 few weeks, we will continue 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.
- For each person to consider how the opportunity for “recreation” is offered to each of us through our life in Jesus.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

We are empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit within us enables us to live life beyond belief – a life filled with joy, purpose, and power. We live in a supernatural reality that includes yet transcends the physical universe.

Conversation Starters:

- Have you ever experienced a natural disaster like a flood before? Tell us about it.
- Do you consider yourself a patient or inpatient person? Why?

Read and Reflect: Bible Study Discussion

The narrative of the flood is an account of judgement on the wicked people of the earth. But in Genesis 8:1, “God remembered Noah, and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark...” Now the story turns to one of redemption. “To remember” in the Bible is not just to bring something to mind, but to express concern for and to act with love and care for them.²

The story of the flood moves from de-creating the earth as it once again becomes watery chaos. Then, God recreates the earth with people and animals multiplying, and plant life springing forth. We can see parallels between the original creation story and Genesis 8, which describes a new beginning after the flood.³ But in contrast to Adam and Eve’s choices in the garden, Noah obeyed, waited on, and trusted the LORD.

¹ This week’s lesson was written by Jackie O’Dell; edited by Dawn Gentry.

² Notes from the NIV Study Bible, 1988.

³ For instance, compare 8:2 with 1:7; 8:5 with 1:9; 8:7 with 1:20; and 8:17 with 1:25.

Read Genesis 8

- What hardships or difficulties do you think Noah and his family may have faced during the flood?
- What action did God take after he “remembered” Noah (verses 1-3)?
- *In vs 6 – 12, Noah tests the state of the earth by sending out birds. (The use of birds to scout for land is a common maritime practice, and other ANE flood epics describe similar events.)*⁴
 - What do you notice about the raven and the doves? Why might either bird seem significant?⁵
- What did Noah do when he and his family finally left the ark? What was God’s response promise to Noah?

Read Romans 12:1-2

- How is the sacrifice in these verses different from the sacrifice of Noah?
- What does it mean to “conform to this world?” What are some ways we can avoid this?
- What sacrifice might you offer to God today in response to God’s work in your life?

Summarize and Respond:

- Can you think of a time you waited on the Lord to act? How did you respond in the waiting?
- What are you currently waiting on God to do? How does the story of Noah encourage or challenge you in the waiting?
- What one truth from the story of God and Noah do you want to remember and apply to your life today?

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.
- Pray for God to strengthen us, and to help us to abide in him during seasons of waiting.
- Pray for God to open our hearts in worship, for God’s love and faithfulness to us.

For Further Study:

- Read A.B. Simpson, *The Power of the Holy Spirit or Power from on High*.
- Listen to a podcast on the Spirit in the Flood at <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/gods-spirit-flood-narrative/>

⁴ John Walton, et al. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, Old Testament*. (IVP: 2000), 38. See also *The Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV*. (Harper One: 1989), study notes on page 16.

⁵ As a carrion [meat eater], the raven was distracted from his mission to find land. The dove is not a carrion, so he sought dry land for seeds/fruit. The olive tree does not grow at high elevations, so he had to go to a lower elevation to find a live branch, meaning the water had significantly receded. There may also be symbolism of the dove with the Holy Spirit (i.e., the baptism of Jesus.)