

Introducing the Bible
Worksheet for Week 2
Acts 1 and 2: Creation, and Fall

These worksheets will introduce you to the material we'll talk about in class each week and provide you with a structured set of daily Bible readings. If you have a study Bible, I'd suggest that you begin this week by reading the introduction to Genesis. Then read this worksheet and begin the daily Bible readings.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is a diverse collection of 39 books written over a period of more than 1000 years! Our Old Testament is the Jewish Bible and is the Bible that Jesus read. Very early in his public ministry, Jesus returned to his hometown, Nazareth, where he stood in the synagogue and read from the book (actually a scroll!) of Isaiah. (see Luke 4:16-30 for this story). It is easy for us to see the diversity in the Old Testament, so we'll spend the next few weeks seeing the unity in the Old Testament. The Bible makes sense!

The stories of Creation, Fall, Un-creation, Re-creation, and Covenant

The first chapters of Genesis are foundational to everything that comes after, thus we'll spend a good bit of time looking at these stories. As you read through these early chapters, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Genesis 1:1-2:3 tells the story of creation from God's perspective. The language is formal, stately – “God-like!” God creates everything and pronounces it good! In the Biblical world-view, God's creation is not inherently evil; rather, it is inherently good. The Bible tells the story of God's renewal and restoration of all creation.
2. In this first story, God creates humans and creates them uniquely, in God's own image. We could spend weeks discussing what this might mean, but it is profoundly important. Additionally, God gives humans responsibility for the management/stewardship/trusteeship of God's creation.
3. Genesis 2:4b begins the story of creation told from the perspective of the humans. Notice how the language becomes earthy and messy. The focus is on Adam and Eve, not so much on God. It is here that we are told the story of how the humans turned from God, failing to do the one thing that God asked of them – not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We ought to see a lot of ourselves in this story. How many of us could resist the temptation to do the one thing we're asked not to do? No sooner do Adam & Eve bite the “apple,” then they look around for someone to blame! Why does Eve first eat from the forbidden fruit? Because the serpent tells her that she will be “like God.” As the Apostle Paul put it when writing 25 years after Jesus' resurrection, “they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator” (Romans: 1:25).
4. In chapter 3, we move to the stark depiction of Adam & Eve's rebellion – their sin. They've thrown themselves and all creation out of whack. This is a cosmic dislocation and the Bible will often use striking images to describe it. Humans will now die, childbirth will be difficult, work will be burdensome, and murder will follow. The humans are exiled into a life separated from God and his goodness.

In the story of Noah we see much the same pattern as in the stories of creation. First, using the flood, God basically “uncreates.” He then creates anew, beginning with Noah, his family, and the creatures they saved from the flood. God told Adam to “be fruitful and multiply” and he now tells the same to Noah. God made a covenant with Adam, which Adam broke, and now enters into a more explicit covenant with Noah. Chapter 11 tells us how the humans weren't able to keep this covenant either. Instead, they built a tower to the heavens so that they might make a name for themselves. How human! The result is that God scatters the humans; in effect, sending them into exile yet again. Late in chapter 11, we are introduced to Abram, one person, chosen by God, with whom God will enter into yet another covenant, so that all the nations of the earth may be blessed and all creation renewed – but that is the story of Act 3.

Bible Readings for Week 2

Before reading each passage, take a few minutes to get a sense of the context. Your study bible should help. Jot down a few questions that come to mind from your reading of the passage. What do you find most surprising in these readings?

<p>Day 1 Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 The story of creation told from God’s perspective</p>	<p>Day 2 Genesis 2:4b – 2:24 The story of creation told from the perspective of humankind.</p>
<p>Day 3 Genesis 3 Humankind rebels against God!</p>	<p>Day 4 Genesis 6:5 – 7:24 God “uncreates”</p>
<p>Day 5 Genesis 8:13 – 9:17 God’s new creation and his covenant with Noah</p>	<p>Weekly Prayer Concerns</p>