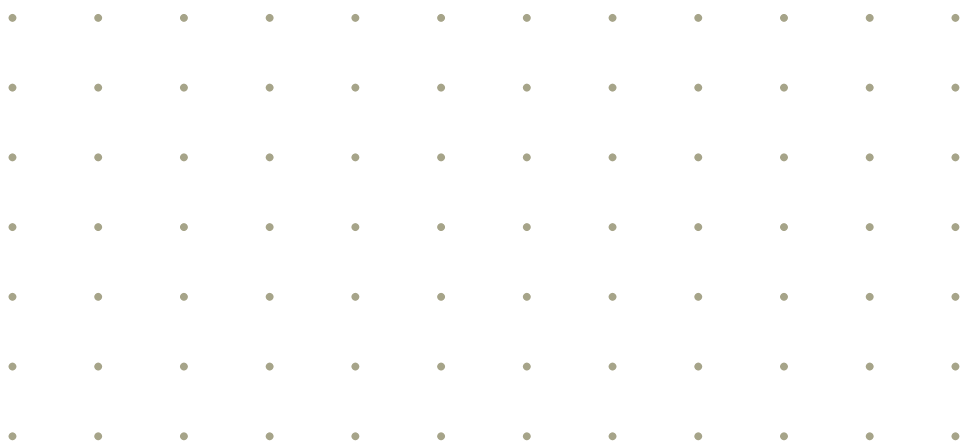




GENESIS

A 12-WEEK STUDY

Mitchell M. Kim



J. I. Packer

THEOLOGICAL EDITOR

Dane C. Ortlund

SERIES EDITOR

“This series is a tremendous resource for those wanting to study and teach the Bible with an understanding of how the gospel is woven throughout Scripture. Here are gospel-minded pastors and scholars doing gospel business from all the Scriptures. This is a biblical and theological feast preparing God’s people to apply the entire Bible to all of life with heart and mind wholly committed to Christ’s priorities.”

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Genesis
Isaiah
Mark
John
Romans
James

• • • • • •

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GENESIS

A 12-WEEK STUDY



Mitchell M. Kim

Knowing the Bible: Genesis, A 12-Week Study

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S E R I E S P R E F A C E

KNOWING THE BIBLE, as the series title indicates, was created to help readers know and understand the meaning, the message, and the God of the Bible. Each volume in the series consists of 12 units that progressively take the reader through a clear, concise study of that book of the Bible. In this way, any given volume can fruitfully be used in a 12-week format either in group study, such as in a church-based context, or in individual study. Of course, these 12 studies could be completed in fewer or more than 12 weeks, as convenient, depending on the context in which they are used.

Each study unit gives an overview of the text at hand before digging into it with a series of questions for reflection or discussion. The unit then concludes by highlighting the gospel of grace in each passage (“Gospel Glimpses”), identifying whole-Bible themes that occur in the passage (“Whole-Bible Connections”), and pinpointing Christian doctrines that are affirmed in the passage (“Theological Soundings”).

The final component to each unit is a section for reflecting on personal and practical implications from the passage at hand. The layout provides space for recording responses to the questions proposed, and we think readers need to do this to get the full benefit of the exercise. The series also includes definitions of key words. These definitions are indicated by a note number in the text and are found at the end of each chapter.

Lastly, to help understand the Bible in this deeper way, we urge readers to use the ESV Bible and the *ESV Study Bible*, which are available in various print and digital formats, including online editions at www.esvbible.org. The *Knowing the Bible* series is also available online. Additional 12-week studies covering each book of the Bible will be added as they become available.

May the Lord greatly bless your study as you seek to know him through knowing his Word.

J. I. Packer
Lane T. Dennis

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW



Getting Acquainted

In Genesis, God's purposes for the heavens and earth, distorted by sin spreading through all the earth, are focused in one man: Abraham. Through him and his family God would bring blessing to all nations.

Despite God's good purposes for creation, sin enters and fills the earth (the primeval history¹; chs. 1–11), and so God moves his plan forward to bless the nations through the offspring of Abraham (the patriarchal history²; chs. 12–50). Genesis is foundational to the whole Bible, and to every human life. Genesis tells us who God is, who we are, how things went wrong, and the plan that God has put in place to return the earth to the way it was meant to be.

Placing It in the Larger Story

Many readers miss the forest of God's larger purposes when immersed in the trees of each individual story. In creation, God creates humanity in his own image as his representatives to fill and rule the earth on his behalf (Gen. 1:26–28). Even after Adam and Eve sin and are punished, the promise is given that the offspring of the woman will defeat the serpent and restore the earth (Gen. 3:15). This promise is traced throughout the book in its genealogies,³ which provide the backbone of the entire book. Key divisions are traced by “These are the generations of,” tracing out the stories of key figures, starting with “the heavens and the earth” (2:4–4:26), and going on to Adam (5:1–6:8),

WEEK 1: OVERVIEW

Noah (6:9–9:29), the sons of Noah (10:1–11:19), Shem (11:10–26), Terah (11:27–25:11), Ishmael (25:12–18), Isaac (25:19–35:29), Esau (36:1–37:1), and Jacob (37:2–50:26). The line of God’s blessing is emphasized (e.g., Adam, Noah, Terah, Isaac, Jacob), while the stories of other lines receive less attention (e.g., Ishmael, Esau). The individual stories of Abraham, Jacob and Joseph are illustrations of how the promise of Genesis 3:15 begins to be fulfilled.

God desires to bless the nations through a future king. Adam is portrayed in the image of God, a phrase probably signifying a royal representative of God. Abraham would become a “great nation” (Gen. 12:2), and “kings shall come from you” (Gen. 17:6). God’s original command to “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:28) is fulfilled in microcosm⁴ as “Israel settled in the land of Egypt . . . and were fruitful and multiplied greatly” (Gen. 47:27; cf. 1:28).

Israel fails, however, in its calling to be a “kingdom of priests” (Ex. 19:6). This priesthood is ultimately fulfilled through the church in Jesus Christ as a “royal priesthood” of all nations (1 Pet. 2:9). Through this priesthood, God’s purposes for creation as detailed in Genesis 1–2 are finally accomplished, as is seen in Revelation 21–22.

Key Verse

“And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” (Gen. 1:28)

Date and Historical Background

With the other books of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), Genesis has been ascribed to Moses. Although Mosaic authorship has been questioned by some, numerous parallels with other ancient Near Eastern literature in the second millennium BC confirm the plausibility of the traditional view.

Outline

- I. Primeval History (1:1–11:26)
 - A. God’s creation and the ordering of heaven and earth (1:1–2:3)
 - B. Humanity and sin in the world (2:4–3:24)
 - C. The downward spiral of sin in the world (4:1–11:26)

- II. Patriarchal History (11:27–50:26)
 - A. Abraham and the covenant (11:27–16:16)
 - B. Abraham and obedience (17:1–22:24)
 - C. From Abraham to Isaac (23:1–26:33)
 - D. Jacob: consequences of deception (26:34—31:55)
 - E. Jacob: reconciliation with Esau (32:1–35:29)
 - F. Joseph: dreams and affliction (36:1–41:57)
 - G. Joseph: reconciliation with brothers (42:1–47:31)
 - H. Blessing of Jacob (48:1–50:26)

As You Get Started

Besides the individual stories in Genesis, how do you see the themes and trajectories laid out in this book developed in the rest of the Bible? In your view, how does Genesis play a foundational role for the entire Bible?

The entire book of Genesis is framed by genealogies. What important role might be played by these otherwise boring lists of names in tracing out the many promises that we find in this book?

What perplexes you about this book? What questions do you hope to see answered by this study of Genesis?

As You Finish This Unit . . .

Come before God with humility in prayer and ask for the Spirit who inspired Scripture to illuminate your mind to understand Genesis in all its riches. Ask him to strengthen and deepen your understanding of God's foundational purposes for creation and the glory of his purposes in redemption. Pray that God might soften your heart to hear the still small voice of God's Spirit. Take some time to go back over this study and reflect on what the Lord might be teaching you, especially noting areas and questions that you would like to explore further through this study.

Definitions

- ¹ **Primeval history** – The earliest history of the Bible from the creation of the world (Genesis 1) to the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11).
- ² **Patriarchal history** – A history of the patriarchs (fathers) of the Old Testament, primarily Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- ³ **Genealogy** – The study of the lineage of families; genealogies are particularly important in Genesis as it traces the preservation of the offspring of the woman who will ultimately defeat the offspring of the serpent.
- ⁴ **Macrocosm/microcosm** – Macrocosm is the big picture, while microcosm is a more specific picture that nevertheless represents the big picture. The macrocosm of Genesis 1–11 focuses on the whole earth, while the microcosm of Genesis 12–50 focuses on one family, the line of Abraham.



THE BOOK OF GENESIS is foundational to the whole Bible, and to every human life. Genesis tells us who God is, who we are, how things went wrong, and the plan that God has put in place to return the earth to the way it was meant to be.

This study guide helps us see how the storyline of Genesis foreshadows and connects to the good news about Jesus, and offers penetrating exegetical insights for those of us seeking to better understand God's plan to bring blessing to all nations.

ABOUT THE *KNOWING THE BIBLE* SERIES

Over the course of 12 weeks, each study in this series explores a book of the Bible and:

- Asks thoughtful questions to spur discussion
- Shows how each passage unveils the gospel
- Ties the text in with the whole story of Scripture
- Illuminates the doctrines taught in each passage
- Invites you to discover practical implications
- Helps you better understand and apply God's Word

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BIBLE STUDY