

In the Beginning: Entering the Book of Genesis

October 4, 2008 - May 2, 2009

The book of Genesis is one of the most excited, if often misunderstood, books of the Bible.

Our series will focus on the section often known as the "primeval history": Genesis' opening chapters of creation. We'll look up close at these familiar, rich, powerful stories of God's intentions for the earth and all that is in it, and how people responded "before history." We'll engage the love of language revealed in these beautiful, detailed stories in which every word counts in revealing God's presence and will for God's creatures. We'll also listen expressly as followers of Jesus who know how the larger story ends: with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the true "human being" who reveals God to us in flesh and blood.

Come join us for an exciting journey into the Bible's first book!

October 4: Rediscovering How to Read Genesis

The Bible's opening book was not written to answer scientific questions or to convey "facts" about history, but to offer a subversive, counter-story to the Babylonian creation story, Enuma Elish. We'll start by examining our assumptions about Genesis and the book's original cultural context.

November 1: "And God said" (Genesis 1)

We'll look at the grand, poetic presentation of God's glorious creating of heaven and earth, and how it challenges "imperial creation stories," then and now.

December 6: "YHWH God formed the 'adam from the dust of the 'adamah" (Genesis 2)

The "Garden of Eden," so often misread as a children's story, offers a beautiful, poignant vision of God's initial design for the relationships among God, humans and the earth.

January 10: "Knowing Good and Evil" (Genesis 3-4)

Where *did* the talking snake come from, anyway? We'll explore what went wrong and led to humanity's expulsion from the Garden and into the harsh world of daily sweat and toil. Once out of the Garden, things seem to fall apart rapidly. With Cain and Abel, we see the Bible's portrayal of how the first murderer is also the first city builder, seeking a sanctuary apart from God's presence

February 2: "The Earth Was Corrupt in God's Sight": the Flood (Genesis 5-9)

God comes, shockingly, to "regret" having made human beings because they have filled the earth with violence and corruption. But all is not lost: one man finds favor in YHWH's sight and enables humanity to survive and begin again.

March 7: "Let Us Build Ourselves a City ...and Make a Name for Ourselves" (Genesis 10-11)

The Story of the Tower of Babel is at once a hilarious political satire on the pretensions of ancient Babylon and a sober warning for all time about the limits and follies of human building projects undertaken apart from God.

April 4: "Go!" And Abram went (Gen 12-22)

The transition into "history" begins with YHWH's mysterious call of a single Babylonian, Abram, to leave all that is familiar for the promise of abundant "blessing." We'll look closely at both the beginning and end of YHWH's relationship with Abra(ha)m and Sarai(h), as they struggle to obey this new Voice.

May 2: Giving Birth to Israel (Gen 25-50)

We will conclude with an overview of the trajectory of the remaining half of Genesis, as it continues across three generations, leaving YHWH's people in Egypt.

Registration Form for "Entering Genesis" Series

Name _____ email _____

Address _____ Phone (day/eve) _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

Please make checks payable to "Wes Howard-Brook" and mail to:
Wes Howard-Brook • 80 6th Avenue SE. • Issaquah, WA 98027.

What do I need to participate?

There is no expectation of experience studying Genesis! Wes' book will be referred to, but is not required. Please bring a Bible—whichever translation you prefer—an open mind and heart, something to share for lunch if you can, and you're all set!

Series Schedule

The series meets for eight, five hour sessions, each first Saturday of the month with potluck lunch.

In addition, participants will be provided with online resources and monthly email summaries of the sessions, to enable deeper study and reflection in the intervening weeks.

All sessions will be digitally recorded and posted on the Internet for those who must miss a session. However, recordings are not intended as a substitute for presence and participation!

The format of the series

The goal of this series is to experience the book of Genesis from a perspective which calls on both faith and intelligence. To do so, we will balance presentation, large group and small group discussion, and shared prayer to open our hearts and minds to the challenge and hope that awaits us in the book of Genesis.

Each session combines prayer, singing, presentation, individual silent reflection and small group sharing. It's amazing how quickly the time flies!

Fee and registration

The price for the eight month series (including online materials and email support) is: \$200 in advance (received by Sep 28) or \$220 at the door.

However, no one will be turned away for lack of money! If you cannot afford this fee, please come anyway and pay what you can, or pay in installments over the course of the series. To register, please fill out and mail the form on the other side of this brochure.

For more information, please
call 425-369-8735 or
e-mail, info@abideinme.net

About the Facilitators

Wes Howard-Brook has been teaching and writing on Scripture since 1988 and is author or co-author of five books on the Bible. His joy is breaking open God's Word with people so as to ignite a commitment to embody the Good News more fully in the church and in the world.

Sue Ferguson Johnson has been for many years a spiritual guide of both individuals and groups, retreat leader and psychologist. Her passion is providing opportunities to experience God more deeply in body, mind and spirit that we might live in God for the world.

Together, Sue and Wes have been called to a ministry that interweaves the mystical and the prophetic, the inner and outer journeys with God. Through word, silence, song and movement, they seek to be agents of God's passionate desire to transform individuals, communities and the world itself into the body of Christ.



"In the Beginning" Entering the Book of Genesis

First Saturdays,
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Oct 4, 2008 - May 2, 2009

facilitated by
Wes Howard-Brook and
Sue Ferguson Johnson

at
Abide In Me House
80 6th Avenue SE, Issaquah
(just off I-90 Exit 18)

