



# HOME GROUPS

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**Series:** Origins - Week 1 - June 5, 2022

**Scripture:** Genesis 1-2:2 NIV11

*Community is shaped by the conversations we share. These questions are just one tool you might use to help host meaningful engagement with the themes emerging from this week's teaching.*

Make sure to check the "Journal and Talk" section at the end. You may find that it is the only thing you'll do with your group today.

**Message Summary:** Jeremy takes us through the creation stories at the beginning of Genesis, looking at the question that sits behind the story and how to best interpret them.

**Connect:** When do you remember first thinking about God? Where did your faith journey begin?

## The Two Tales

There are two tellings of the creation story at the beginning of Genesis in chapters 1 and 2. When the oral traditions of the Hebrew people were gathered up and written down, the sages realized how distinct, and yet important these two tellings were. So they preserved both. Ancient peoples knew that stories could illuminate the world, but they also knew that stories point us toward truth.

- What has your experience with the creation stories been? What kinds of teaching have you been given about these stories, and how have you felt while interacting with them in your own life?

## Who Wrote What

We trust that God speaks to us through the Bible, but, at the same time, we actually obscure the meaning of biblical texts when we don't acknowledge the voices that wrote and preserved these words for us. The writers of Genesis had no conception of the universe as we know it in mind when they wrote. This means we tend to bring different

questions to the creation stories than the ancient voices that passed those stories down to us.

We tend to ask *how* it all works, which these stories are ill-suited to answer. But ancient people were interested in asking *why*; Why are we here? Who did all of this? What does it all mean for us? And for these types of questions, stories are profoundly helpful because they orient rather than dictate. When we read the creation stories with these questions in mind, we orient ourselves towards understanding their meaning as the ancients understood.

- When you read the creation story, what does it tell you about who we are and why we are here? What meaning do you find in this story with these ‘why’ questions in mind?

### **In the Beginning**

For the ancient people who first told these stories, the most incredible thing God could do was not necessarily to create, but to mold the chaos of the world around them into something better. They held to the idea that perhaps God is most creative not simply when starting from scratch, but in the repair, healing and calming of the chaos around them. The ancient question was not ‘how did the universe come to be?’, but “how do we survive the chaos of this world?”

This way of thinking begs the question: what if a God that shapes and molds my circumstance into something better is more powerful than a God who changes everything in an instant? That might radically change my commitment to slow, incremental growth in the areas where I need transformation, and be a more honest, healthier approach to change.

- If the creation story tells us that God molds the chaos of the world around us into something better, how might that change the way you see transformation and change in your own life?

### **Out of the Chaos**

The image of Spirit in the creation story is not a battle between God and chaos, but instead the merging of divine calm with the world, or a brooding mother hovering calmly above the chaos. When that gentle Spirit meets the waters, we see three things: a forming, and a filling, and a resting. This is not an ancient attempt to communicate the science of creation; this story is designed to subvert the narrative of violent domination and bring hope to a frightened world.

We can then ask ourselves when we encounter this story whether we will give in to the idea that life is an endless fight against the forces of chaos, or whether we will settle into the trust that life itself is the product of a generous God that meets us with gentle welcome and profound strength. Will we despair at the challenges we inevitably face, or will we enter the divine pattern of cultivating a better world?

- What do you do when you’re overwhelmed with the chaos of the world? What is your instinctual response?
- What do you believe sits at the foundation of your story? Where might you envision the gentle, calming Spirit hovering in your world/life?
- How might you change the way you respond to the chaos of the world, knowing the strength of God’s presence is with you, working towards repairing and restoring the world?

## **BENEDICTION:**

*God,  
We know that all good stories find their origins in you.  
Help us listen for your heart and care and concern and  
investment in this world,  
All the ways that you have been ready to steward the human  
story from the very beginning.  
May we see ourselves in these earliest accounts,  
And may they turn us back toward our world, our earth, our  
neighbour and our cosmos with love.  
Amen.*

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## **Journal and Talk**

A new section this year that works well if you meet online.  
Maybe this will be the only exercise you do with your group.  
Keep your meeting time to an hour to avoid Zoom fatigue.  
Do a quick check-in/connect - 2 min per person.  
Invite your group to journal for 10-15 minutes in response to  
the prompts. Use the rest of your time listening to and  
interacting with each other's responses, as much as people  
are comfortable sharing.  
Encourage your group to see this time as a way to tell and  
invite others into each other's stories. Protect this time from  
becoming a "let's fix you" space; it's all about active and  
gentle listening.

*Journaling prompts:*

- What do you do when you're overwhelmed with the chaos of the world? What is your instinctual response?

- What do you believe sits at the foundation of your story? Where might you envision the gentle, calming Spirit hovering in your world/life?
- How might you change the way you respond to the chaos of the world, knowing the strength of God's presence is with you, working towards repairing and restoring the world?