



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



2084 Wilson Pike · Franklin, TN 37067 · 615.794.2665
Pastor Dennis Meaker: 615.794.2665 · djmeaker@gmail.com

July 20, 2016

Understanding the Old Testament Biblical Pre-history: Creation through the Story of the Tower of Babel

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...” Genesis 1:1

The very first sentence in Genesis provides a foundation for all that follows. Before everything else, there was God. The bible is the story of God and God’s relationship with humankind. Yes, there is a basis for preaching conservation theology and the importance of the whole of creation, but this text is not meant as a science text to tell us about far off galaxies or even to explain the science behind the beginnings of life on earth. It is not a treatise on the need for conservation or living in harmony with nature. It is, first and foremost, the story of God and God’s efforts to guide humanity, often against humanity’s will.

There are two creation **stories**, one in Genesis 1-2:4a and the other in Genesis 2:4b-25. The first account is a grand poem that emphasizes how God brought order out of Chaos. The second is more like a folk tale explaining God’s relationship to humankind and humankind’s place in the created order.

Very early, sin comes into the picture. Sin, as explained in the story of Adam, Eve and the Serpent, is a broken relationship with God. Genesis 3. This theme underlies much of the rest of scripture. God desires that we live in relationship to God and humankind acts in ways that creates barriers to that relationship. We are called to love God, our neighbor and ourselves. Rather than thinking of sin as a list of deeds or behaviors, think of sin as those things we do that interfere with our relationship with God, including those things that hurt us and other people. Sin becomes more manifest with the murder of Able by Cain.

As Genesis progresses, the world is portrayed as descending into sin and chaos. Murder as retribution is rampant. Genesis 4:23-24. It comes to a point that there is only one person on the face of the earth who is not evil and that is Noah. The story of Noah and the Ark is almost identical to an earlier story that is part of the legend of Gilgamesh originating in ancient Mesopotamia. The primary difference between the two stories is the motive for God taking action to destroy the earth. In the Gilgamesh legend, the Gods destroy the earth as a capricious act. One person is saved, along with those he takes into the ark because one of the Gods warns him of the coming flood. In Genesis, God destroys the world because it is hopelessly mired in evil. Theologically, it is a very difficult story and I will not try to defend it. However, it is just a story. Searches for Noah’s Ark are pointless. Building replicas of Noah’s Ark is also a pointless activity having nothing to do with being a faithful Christian.

At the close of the Noah story God starts over again with creation, commanding Noah and all the creatures that Noah's saves to be fruitful and multiply. God also covenants with all creation that never again will God destroy the world with a flood.

Humankind is still not working out as God desires. Through their hubris, humankind attempts to build a tower to heaven itself. God confuses their language so they cannot understand one another. This provides an earlier culture with an explanation of why people speak different languages though all descended from Noah.

With the first eleven chapters of Genesis concluded, the stage is set for the beginning of the story that will dominate the rest of the Old Testament. God seeks a special relationship with a defined group of people who, God believes, can be led to demonstrate to all the rest of humankind how God wishes us to live. God calls a man named Abram.

Preacher, What Does the Bible Say about ...?

From the time I came to Trinity I have stated on numerous occasions that I am willing to consider a sermon, or sermon series, on any subject that is of concern. I want to reaffirm that offer since it's been a while since I have stated it. If there is a subject upon which you would like me to preach I will consider it. If I do not think it appropriate for a sermon I will explain why. It might also be appropriate to address some issues as part of a Newsletter article or series or as part of the Sunday School curriculum. But, if at all possible, I will seek to speak to these issues that are of interest on Sunday morning. One purpose of worship is to contemplate our relationship with God and if something is bothering you it is likely bothering others as well.

New Disciple Bible Study

Disciple Bible Study is a powerful experience that can open the bible up for the participants. I would be willing to begin a new class this September if at least seven people desired to undertake the 34 week study. I could do this study on Monday or Tuesday nights between 7 and 9. If participants would prefer to meet on a week day that could also be arranged. In years past I have also taught Disciple Bible Study between 7 and 9 AM Sunday mornings. If you are interested please contact me at the Church. If you desire additional information for yourself or to give to a friend I have some explanatory booklets available.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Morning Bible Study Group has voted to take a break for the summer. We will begin again on August 25th at 10:00 AM. At that time we will start a study of Philippians.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons are part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

Elva Beard	Rachel Newman	Sam Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Leslie Eastwood	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson

The members of the prayer ministry of Trinity United Methodist church covenant with one another to pray daily for:

- Those concerns on the prayer list of the Church and for healing of body and spirit for all persons listed;
- For each ministry of the church that each ministry would work to bring the Gospel to those within our community and most especially to bring the Gospel to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- For all the members of the Trinity UMC community that they be led and enabled to live as the Body of Christ;
- For our local community and all its needs, especially for those who are struggling with the burden of poverty;
- For our nation and our world that God help lead the people of the world to live in peace with God's Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part of this ministry (or if you have already spoken to me about it and were inadvertently left off the list) please let me know and I will see that you are added.

Up-Coming Sermons

July 24th: Sermon: Are You Now, or Have You Ever Been, A Christian? There is an old saying that goes, "Be careful what you wish for, you may get it." The saying is sometimes modified to say, "Be careful what you pray for, you may get it." The Lord's Prayer calls for a new world order.

July 31st: Hymn Sing: We will celebrate our faith with music.

July 24

Julia Moore, **Liturgist**

Hal and Rachel Newman, **Greeters**

Larry Eastwood and Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

July 31

Ken Strait, **Liturgist**

Tommy and Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Mike and Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

Parents Night Out: The dates for the next event is Friday, July 29. Please make your friends and neighbors aware of this opportunity for children ages 4-12. Please pray for the children and the volunteers who will be participating.

VBS

Vacation Bible School has begun. **VBS will continue through Thursday, July 21.** The time is 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. The children who are attending as well as the adult volunteers are having a grand time. The details of this event will be provided verbally on Sunday!

Hosts and Hostesses for First Sunday Lunch: Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Please add your name to host this occasion for the coming months.

The Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School Class is both learning and enjoying a series of videos, narrated by Ray Vanderlann. The videos as well as the narration take place in ancient lands described in the Old Testament. We enjoy discussion about what we are learning and the application of the lessons to our lives. We enjoy fellowship beginning at 9:45 with our study beginning at 10:00. All are welcome to join us as we pursue Biblical truths and the application for our lives.

Birthdays in July

Leslie Eastwood, Jeff Otto, Linda Robinson, Renita Hartsock

Happy Birthday to each of you!