

# Making Sense of the Bible

by Adam Hamilton

Lenten Bible Study

## The Bible and Science

Week #4: Chapters 19, 20, & 21

Sunday, March 14, 2021 at 6:30pm

1. Welcome/Introductions
  - a. Is it ok to record this class?
  - b. List of those willing to read aloud?
  
2. Opening Prayer

O God, we come together to wrestle with portions of your story – which is our story, too. We ask for your sustaining presence so that we stay the course, knowing your blessing awaits all those who encounter the Scripture together. **Amen.**

Leader Guide pg 64
  
3. Creation Stories

Genesis 1:1-5; 1:26-2:3;  
Genesis 2:4b-9; 2:18-25  
John 1:1-14

  - a. Do any of these accounts sound like a science lesson? Why or why not?
  - b. What kind of book is the Bible?
  - c. “For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom” (1 Cor 1:22), seems to be a criticism by Paul. If the primary purpose of scripture is not to give us signs/miracles or give us knowledge, what is the Bible to be for us?
  - d. Why should we study scripture?
  - e. Is it important to study scripture with others, or is it something that we can just do on our own?
  - b. Hamilton observes that Genesis 1 is a creed.  
What do you think of his observation?  
What would you say is the purpose or lesson of the second account (Genesis 2)?  
What is the purpose of the third account (John 1)?
  
4. The Fall of Creation - Genesis 3:1-7
  - a. Hamilton says this biblical story is our story. In what way would you say that is true?
  - b. What observations can you make about the nature, reliability, and credibility of truth found in scripture?
  - c. What is the difference of “Truth” (capital “T”) and “truth” (lower case “t”)?
  - d. A foundational book for our modern understanding of the scientific method was written by Sir Francis Bacon in 1621. Prior to that there were various philosophers and scientific endeavors by individuals. How does it shape your view that the Bible was written before an age when an understanding of scientific method was common?
  
5. Adam & Eve
  - a. Hamilton posits that Adam and Eve represent a tipping point in human development when *homo sapiens* began to think at a higher level and started reasoning, creating, and loving, possibly tied to the advent of complex language. How does this hypothesis strike you?
  - b. Arguably humans are the only animal that appear to have an inherent ability to lie. Although, Bonobo Monkeys (which are actually chimpanzees) when taught sign language, can also be taught to lie, which they often find to be quite amusing. How is your understanding of the Fall of Creation affected by this?
  - c. Along with the ability to reason came the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, as well as the ability to choose. How might this ability be related to “the Fall”?
  
6. Dinosaurs on the Ark?

Genesis 6:5-6 & 7:11-23

  - a. What conclusions can we draw about the story of Noah?
  - b. Why does Hamilton answer the question of whether this account is true by stating, “Sort of”? (pg 203)
  
7. The Flood
  - a. Hamilton refers to President Eisenhower’s 1953 speech in regard to the Cold War (pgs 204-205).  
How do you respond to Eisenhower’s words?  
How do you respond to Hamilton’s assertion that with increased complexity in language comes more complex and sophisticated weaponry - since humanity has reached the apex of technological development, the cost in human life to war and violence has been enormous?
  - b. The context of the following is in reference to the times of trials in the wilderness following “The Exodus”.  
11 These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. 13 No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. (1 Cor 10:11-13b)  
Hamilton asserts “Paul’s words substantiate the idea that the point of Noah’s story was not to teach history, or geology, but to teach us about God and God’s will for our lives.... The stories in the first eleven chapters of Genesis ... are told less to inform us of ancient history than to teach us about the human condition and about God who created us. As we read them, we are meant to worry less about whether they really happened in exactly the way they are described, and more about the truths God intends us to see in them.” Your thoughts on that statement?

8. Hope

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

  - a. Can we find God’s hope in scripture if our Bibles remain unused in a drawer or on a book case?
  - b. Are we more likely to find hope in scripture if we read it on our own, or if we read it with others?
  - c. How important is it in your faith life to have others encouraging you to read scripture? Are you more willing/able/motivated to live out that spiritual discipline on your own or with others?
  - d. If we do not look to hope in scriptures, will others believe us when we tell them that they should look to the Bible to find hope?
  
9. Wrapping Up
  - a. In exploring these stories from Genesis,
    - I was struck by...
    - I still have some confusion or questions about...
    - I want to think further about...
  
10. Additional Announcements/Comments/etc

Next Week: Chapters 22-26

We will focus on two troubling questions: (1) why is God portrayed as being violent in some Bible passages; and (2) why is there suffering in the world? In addition, we will consider some questions about the reliability of the Gospel accounts and veracity of some words attributed to Jesus.
  
11. Closing Prayer

Creator God, we are in awe of this earth and intrigued by how it might have come into being. Even as we have explored the truths revealed by science, we give thanks for the truths given to us in Scripture about ourselves and about the abundant life you intend for us and all creation. Give us new insights and stir us in new directions. In the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**