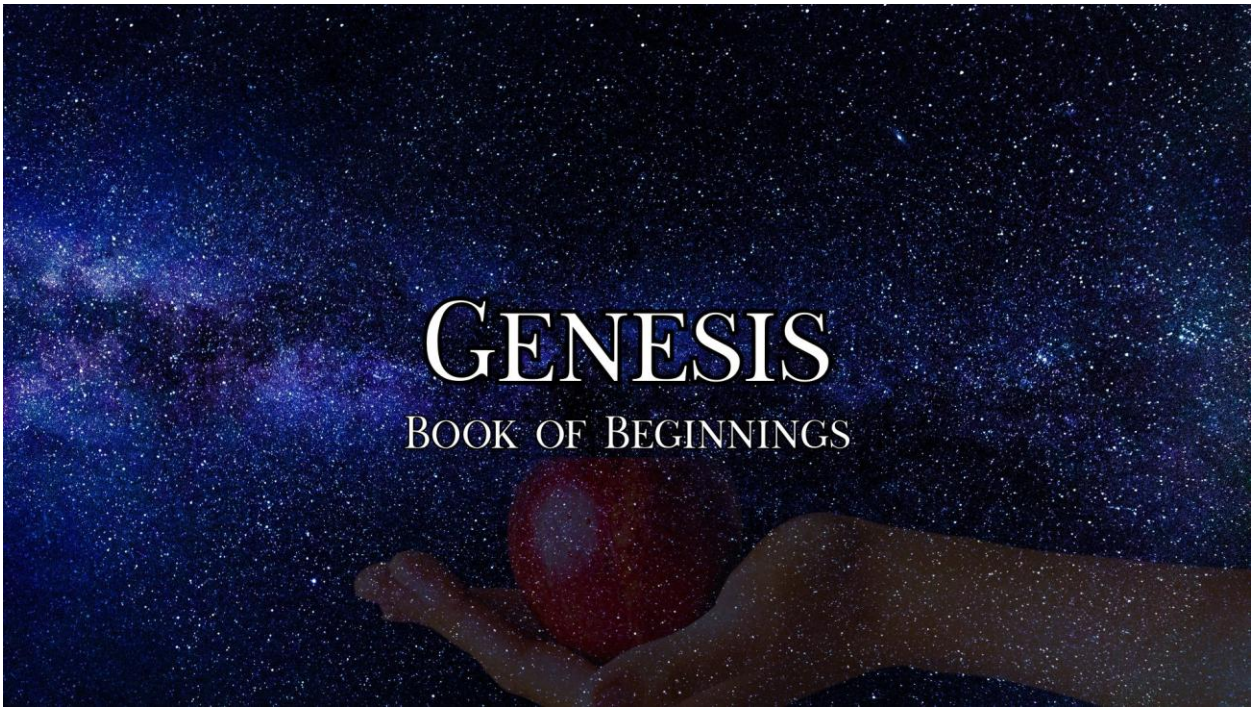
Small Group Guide: New Beginnings

Based on Genesis 8



Overview

This session explores the account of Noah and the ark coming to rest after the flood, examining how this narrative points forward to Christ's resurrection, the gospel, and the new life available to all who trust in God. Just as Noah stepped into a new world after judgment receded, we are invited into a new beginning through Jesus Christ, the last Adam.

Key Takeaways

1. New beginnings require both preparation and patience. Noah tested the waters with birds and gathered information, but he did not move until God spoke. Action and waiting on God are not opposites. Wisdom knows the difference between the two.

2. The flood narrative is a portrait of the gospel. The ark coming to rest on the 17th day of the seventh month likely corresponds to the same calendar date as the resurrection of Christ. Noah as a "new Adam" foreshadows Jesus as the last Adam, who offers access to a new heaven and new earth through his resurrection.

3. God never leaves humanity without guidance. From Adam to Noah to Abraham to Moses to Christ, God consistently makes himself known to his people. The problem has never been God's silence. It has always been humanity's tendency toward sin and self-rule.

4. The gospel begins with bad news. We are saved from something real. Adam's failure introduced sin into humanity, and we all carry that natural inclination toward self and away from God. Understanding the bad news makes the good news genuinely good.

5. A full surrender is the right response to salvation. Noah's burnt offering, in which the entire sacrifice was consumed, pictures the complete devotion God desires from us. As Paul writes in Romans 12, we are called to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holding nothing back.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. The sermon opened with this question: have you ever caught a glimpse of the heavenly or the divine and felt something inside of you ache for it? Describe a moment like that in your own life.
2. What is a significant new beginning you have experienced, and what did that transition teach you about yourself or about God?

Digging In

3. The sermon describes how George Whitefield's willingness to step outside of religious tradition and preach in the streets cracked open the floodgates of spiritual hunger in colonial America. What do you think causes spiritual hunger to go dormant in individuals or in a church? What tends to reawaken it?
4. Noah waited on God before exiting the ark even after he had gathered enough information to know it was probably safe to leave. Why do you think it is so difficult to wait on God when we already have some information in hand? What does waiting on God require of us practically?
5. The sermon draws a connection between Noah as a "new Adam" and Jesus as the "last Adam." What does it mean to you that God consistently raises up a faithful person or remnant even when the rest of humanity has turned away? How does that pattern encourage you in your own circumstances?

6. The ark coming to rest on the same calendar date as the resurrection of Christ is a striking detail embedded in the text. How does discovering that kind of layered meaning in Scripture affect your confidence in the Bible and in God's intentionality throughout history?
7. The sermon makes the point that the gospel includes bad news. In your experience, do you think the church tends to skip over the bad news too quickly? What is lost when we do that?
8. Noah's burnt offering represented giving the whole thing to God, holding nothing back. What area of your life do you find hardest to place fully on the altar? What makes that particular area so difficult to surrender?

Personal Reflection

9. The pastor described the moment he prayed with his youth pastor for the first time and felt the weight of shame, guilt, and anger lift from him. If you have experienced a moment like that, how often do you return to it in your memory? How does remembering it shape the way you live now?
10. The sermon closed with this statement: "If you seek, you will find, but you'll only find it in Jesus." Is there something you have been seeking in places other than Christ? What would it look like to redirect that search?

Practical Applications

This week, try one or more of the following:

- **Practice waiting.** Identify one decision or situation where you have been moving ahead of God. Set aside time this week to be still, pray specifically about it, and ask God to speak before you act.
- **Examine your offering.** Take an honest inventory of what you are holding back from God, whether time, finances, a relationship, a habit, or an ambition. Write it down. Bring it before God in prayer and ask for the grace to release it fully.
- **Return to your beginning.** If you have experienced salvation, write down or share with someone the moment you first believed. Reflect on what that moment felt like and let gratitude for it renew your commitment to follow Christ.

- **Seek if you have not yet found.** If you have never made a decision to trust Christ, this week consider what is holding you back. Talk with your group leader or a trusted believer about what the next step might look like for you.
- **Study the connections.** Read Genesis 8, Exodus 12, and Romans 5:12-21 side by side this week. Note the connections between Noah, the Passover, and Christ. Let the layered nature of Scripture deepen your awe of God's design.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together around these themes:

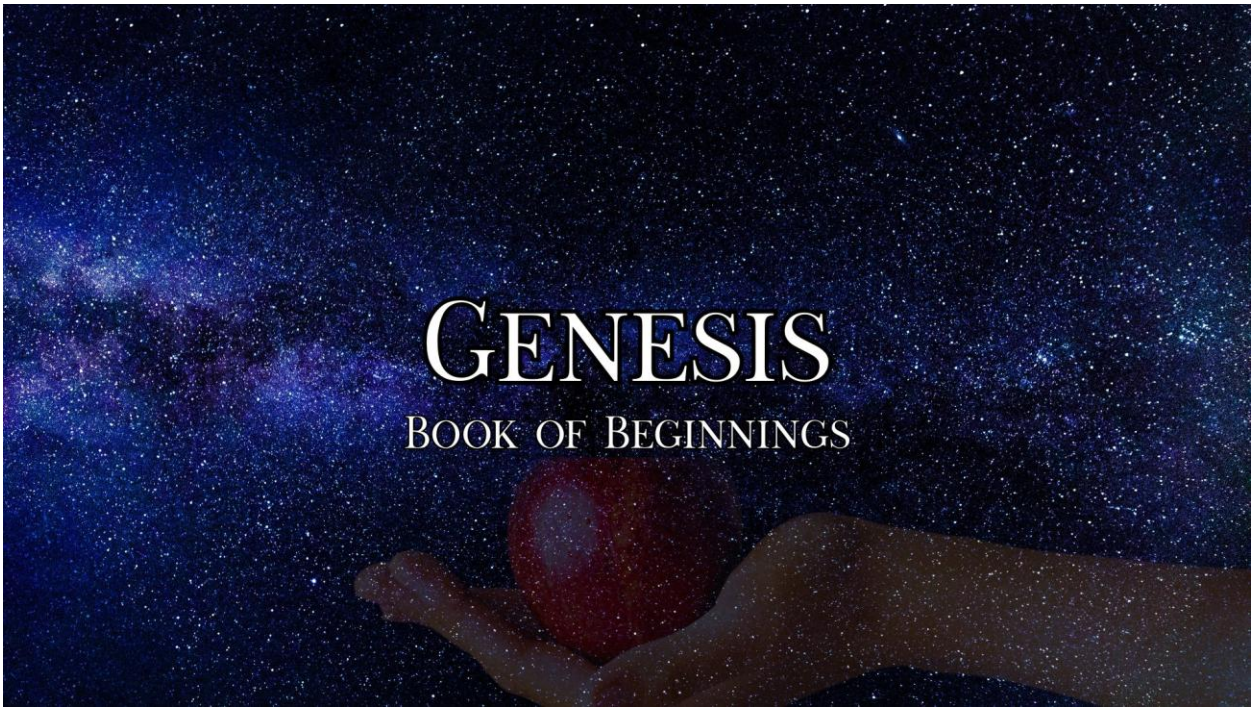
- Gratitude for God's faithfulness to never leave humanity without guidance or hope
- Surrender of the areas in each person's life that have not yet been fully placed before God
- Renewed hunger for the things of God, the kind that causes the soul to ache for what it was made for
- Those in the group or in your lives who have not yet encountered the freedom that comes through Christ

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"He was humble enough to wait on God." -- From the sermon

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Themes from Genesis 8: New Beginnings, Rest, and the Faithfulness of God



Day 1: God Remembers You Reading: Genesis 8:1-5

Devotional: In the middle of the flood, God had not forgotten Noah. The text tells us plainly that God remembered him. This is not a statement of forgetfulness corrected, but a declaration of intentional focus. When the judgment had run its course, God's attention turned directly to the one he had preserved. Whatever season of turbulence you are walking through right now, God has not lost sight of you. His wind moves over the chaos of your life the same way it moved over the floodwaters. He is actively working to bring things to rest. Rest in that truth today.

Day 2: Waiting on God to Speak Reading: Genesis 8:6-19

Devotional: Noah knew the ground was drying. He tested the conditions with ravens and doves. He had every practical reason to step off the ark on his own terms. Yet he waited until God spoke before he moved. There is a profound wisdom in this kind of patience. We live in a culture that rewards speed and punishes stillness. But Noah understood that even the right move made at the wrong time is the wrong move. Are there areas of your life where

you have gathered enough information to act, but have not yet paused to ask God whether it is time? Wait for the voice.

Day 3: The Burnt Offering and the Surrendered Life Reading: Romans 12:1-2

Devotional: Noah's first act on new ground was not to build a house or plant a field. He built an altar and gave everything. The burnt offering held nothing back. Paul echoes this posture in Romans 12, urging believers to present themselves as living sacrifices, wholly given over to God. The Christian life is not a negotiation where we offer God a portion and keep the rest for ourselves. It is a full surrender. The good news is that what we give up is far less than what we receive. Full surrender opens the door to the transformation that only God can work in a yielded life.

Day 4: The Last Adam and the Gift of New Life Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Devotional: Paul draws a direct line between Adam and Jesus, calling Christ the last Adam. Where the first Adam brought death through disobedience, the last Adam brings life through perfect obedience and resurrection. Noah foreshadowed this pattern, becoming a new beginning for humanity after judgment. But Noah was not the final answer. His descendants would fall into sin again. Jesus alone is the last Adam because his resurrection is permanent and his gift of new life is eternal. You do not need another new beginning built on your own effort. You need the one new beginning that only the last Adam can give you.

Day 5: The Ache for the Eternal Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:11

Devotional: Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us that God has placed eternity in the human heart. There is a longing built into every person that the things of this world cannot satisfy. You have felt it. It surfaces in moments of unexpected beauty, in the silence after a hard season ends, in the quiet awareness that something more exists beyond what you can see. That ache is not a malfunction. It is a compass. It is pointing you toward the God who placed it there and toward the new heaven and new earth that Christ has made accessible through his resurrection. Do not suppress the longing. Follow it to Jesus.