

**GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

**Read the Bible in a Year Challenge**  
Week 1

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<b>Monday</b>	Genesis 1-3	Psalm 1	Matthew 1
<b>Tuesday</b>	Genesis 4-6	Psalm 2	Matthew 2
<b>Wednesday</b>	Genesis 7-9	Psalm 3	Matthew 3
<b>Thursday</b>	Genesis 10-12	Psalm 4	Matthew 4
<b>Friday</b>	Genesis 13-15	Psalm 5	Matthew 5
<b>Saturday</b>	Genesis 16-18	Psalm 6	Matthew 6

**Sunday:** *Enjoy the lessons from Scripture as they are read aloud in Sunday worship. The Bible study summary for each Sunday of the year is found as a separate document on the parish website, under “Adult Education, Bible Study”.*

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**The Genesis readings:**

1. The title for this first book of the Bible comes from the Greek word for generation (found at Gen. 5.1). This reference is to the book’s account of the origin of the chosen people of God.
  - a. In Hebrew, the book is known as *bĕrĕ’ šît* (be-ráy sheet) from the opening word, “[in the] beginning”.
  - b. The book is the first of five which comprise the Pentateuch (“five books”), also known as the “Five Books of Moses” and *Torah* (the Law).
    - i. Authorship has been traditionally credited to Moses.
  - c. Under the Documentary Hypothesis (also called JEDP Theory) four authorship/redaction strands are identified by scholars.
    - i. This is scholarly *theory*, not proven fact.
  - d. The four traditions identified are:
    - i. The *Jahwist* (J is the German Y), from the proper Name of the LORD. Ninth century, B.C., writing in the southern kingdom (Judah).
      1. God is referred to by His proper Name.
      2. J uses anthropomorphic terminology with reference to God (*e.g.*, God walks and talks in the Garden of Eden).
      3. J emphasizes storytelling.
      4. The J source is the earliest and most comprehensive source in the Law.
    - ii. The *Elohists*, from the Hebrew word for God (*elohim*) used in this tradition. The word has a plural form but takes a usage in the singular by context and verb form.
      1. Written in the northern kingdom, Israel, after the fall of Solomon’s kingdom (eighth century, B.C.) to respond to the need for an official account of Jewish origins.
        - a. E is a less vivid storyteller; fewer anthropomorphisms.
    - iii. The *Deuteronomistic Historian*, from textual evidence of a thorough editing and reordering of the first five books undertaken in the seventh century B.C.
      1. Reflects northern and southern traditions, but written, probably, in the south (Judah) after flight from the north.

2. Limited vocabulary, very repetitious.
- iv. The *Priestly* source, from evidence of a concern with cult practices.
  1. Probably reflecting the sixth century B.C. need of a community in exile (in Babylon), and thus stressing obedience to the Law.
  2. P is not a good storyteller.
  3. God is in heaven, not involved intimately in human affairs.
2. The readings in Genesis for week one include:
  - a. Preamble: The creation of the world: 1.1-2.3
  - b. The creation of man and woman, their offspring, and the spread of humankind: 2.4-4.26
  - c. The generations of humankind before the flood: 5.1-6.8
  - d. The flood, and renewed blessings: 6.9-9.29
  - e. The world is populated, and humankind becomes proud: 10.1-11.9
  - f. The genealogy of humankind, and of the ancestors of Israel: 11.10 to the readings for the end of this week (which include the first part of the story of Abraham and Sarah).
3. Notable stories in these readings include those of:
  - a. The Garden of Eden and the Fall
  - b. The murder of Abel by Cain
  - c. Noah, the ark and the flood
  - d. The Tower of Babel
  - e. The call of Abram/Abraham.
4. Themes encountered in these readings (which will recur throughout the Pentateuch) include:
  - a. *Creation establishes a good world*: The world is created by God, intended for harmony. God looks upon creation and finds it “very good” (Gen. 1.31). Thus, no matter the evil and failure that follow in world history, we are to recall that goodness will prevail.
  - b. *God has blessed human life*: An important corollary of a good world is divine blessing upon it. Twice we are told that God blessed the human race (Gen. 1.28; 9.1). Later, the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 12.2) is highlighted, as are those of Sarah and Isaac (Gen. 17.16).
  - c. *Humanity has a tendency to sin, but God delivers from all evil*: If humanity tends toward rebellion, God is focused on forgiveness and mercy. God spares Adam and Eve, Cain and Noah, and others in order to give the human race a new start each time after it sins.
5. Much of Genesis takes the literary form of myth.
  - a. *This does not mean it is untrue!* “Myth” as a form refers to a story told to describe and explain origin.
    - i. For example, the origin of the world is described (as a divine act). The origin of diverse human languages is described (as resulting from human pride).
  - b. Origin includes *vocation* and *election*. Thus, when Abram is called he is informed by the LORD that by him “... all the families of the earth shall bless themselves” (Gen. 12.3).

**The psalms:** *The psalm numbering and versification system used throughout these study summaries is that found in The Book of Common Prayer (1979).*

1. The Psalter of 150 psalms is composed of five “books” (the first ends with Ps. 41), with each book ending with an appended doxology which is not part of the psalm to which it is attached (*see, e.g., Ps. 41.13*).

- a. In Hebrew the Psalter is referred to as *tēhillīm* (tay-hee-leem), which means “hymns”.
2. The entire Psalter is completed in Pss. 146-150, as an extended doxology, with each psalm there beginning with *hallēlū yāh* (“hallelujah,” or “praise the LORD”).
    - a. Some psalms have headings. *E.g.*, Ps. 3 is superscribed “A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.”
      - i. Headings can be technical (musical terms and instructions for performance), personal names with which the psalm is associated, or historical. The example given for Ps. 3 combines the latter two heading types.
    - b. Psalms can take different forms:
      - i. Hymns of praise.
      - ii. Laments, which are comprised of: (a) the invocation of God’s Name; (b) a description of present need; (c) a prayer for help and deliverance; (d) reasons for God to help; (e) a vow to offer praise and sacrifice; and (f) grateful praise.
        1. Laments may be individual or communal.
      - iii. “Royal” psalms: In these the king is the speaker or the focus of attention.
      - iv. “Wisdom” psalms: These include instruction on the right/holy way of living.
        1. The Psalter as a whole is generally classified as Wisdom Literature.
      - v. Liturgical psalms: Those used in public prayer, such as entrance to the Temple.
      - vi. Historical psalms: Psalms which recite God’s saving action.
3. Psalms encountered this week include:
    - a. Ps. 1: A wisdom psalm, in which the life of righteousness is described and contrasted to that of the wicked.
      - i. The righteous who live in harmony with Scripture will be saved by God from the judgment which will befall the ungodly.
    - b. Ps. 2: A royal psalm which recites the folly of attempting to throw off God’s authority.
      - i. It is wise to submit to the authority of the Messiah. The psalm relates to true monarchy as a “type” of the Messiah.
        1. In typology, a type is a foreshadowing found in the Old Testament for what is fulfilled in the New Testament.
    - c. Ps. 3: A royal psalm, appointed in the monastic office for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.
      - i. Believers may have confidence in God’s plan for them.
    - d. Ps 4: A royal psalm, appointed for feasts of martyrs and confessors. The righteous can rejoice in God’s protecting grace.
    - e. Ps. 5: A royal psalm. Because God hates wickedness, the righteous may pray with confidence for protection from deceitful and malicious attacks.
    - f. Ps. 6 is the first of seven psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143) considered to be penitential. It is appointed for use in the monastic office of the dead.
      - i. When God chastens His people with the rod of their adversaries, the penitent may pray for relief, because God is faithful in His love.

### **The Gospel readings:**

1. *Christian authorship and sources:*
  - a. The Gospels have from the beginning been identified with their eponymous authors.
    - i. Mark is considered to be the Gospel first written (perhaps as early as *A.D.* 60; 68–73 likely).

1. In Church Tradition Mark is thought to have relied upon the personal recollections of Peter.
  - ii. Matthew relies upon Mark and upon another source or sources.
    1. Matthew is later (*ca.* 85) and thus reflects knowledge of the destruction of Jerusalem in *A.D.* 70.
    2. “Matthew” is identified by most modern scholars with a “Matthean community” which was particularly active after Christians were expelled from the synagogue (*ca.* 85) after the Council of Jamnia.
    3. Matthew’s additional source(s) may include an oral tradition in the Matthean community and/or a separate tradition (almost certainly oral) which scholars refer to as “Q” (from *quelle*, the German word for “source”).
  - iii. Luke is roughly contemporaneous with Matthew (*ca.* 85).
    1. Luke refers to his reliance on sources (Luke 1.1-3). He certainly relies on Mark and Q, but may have a separate oral source.
    2. Luke is also the author of Acts. Luke and Acts are volumes 1 and 2 of one work (Acts 1.1).
  - iv. John is unrelated to the other Gospels, dating anywhere from *A.D.* 80 to 110 (likely *ca.* 95).
    1. Many scholars point to authorship in a “Johannine community,” with redaction taking place in the first decade of the second century.
    2. “John” is also considered to be the author of the Johannine epistles,
      - a. Church Tradition teaches that John also wrote Revelation. However, many scholars believe a separate author was involved.
2. Overarching themes in Matthew include the identification of Jesus as the Christ, and the near approach of the kingdom of God which Jesus proclaims. These foci should not be separated.
  3. The first six chapters of Matthew include the account of the birth and beginnings of Jesus, which include:
    - a. The Genealogy of Jesus (1.1-17) and His birth (1.18-25).
    - b. The visit of the Wise Men (2.1-12), the flight into Egypt (2.13-15), the slaughter of the innocents (2.16-18), and the return from Egypt (2.19-23).
    - c. The preaching of John the Baptist (3.1-12), the baptism of Jesus (3.13-17) and His temptation (4.1-11).
    - d. The beginnings of Jesus’ ministry (4.12-17) and His calling of the disciples (4.18-22).
    - e. The Sermon on the Mount (4.23-7.29).
  4. Four women are referred to in the genealogy of Jesus. In each case their inclusion speaks to the fact that God’s purpose will be fulfilled regardless of who He uses, and including His direct intervention in Creation:
    - a. Tamar: from Genesis 38, a woman who acts as a prostitute and seduces her father in law.
    - b. Ruth: a foreigner who seduces an Israelite (described in the book named for her).
    - c. Bathsheba: described as “the wife of Uriah” (from 2 Samuel), who commits adultery with David.
    - d. Mary: who conceives by the Holy Spirit.
  5. The Sermon on the Mount begins with Jesus teaching and “preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Mtt. 4.23). Famously, the sermon includes the Beatitudes, the instruction that disciples are to be

salt and light, Jesus' self-identification as fulfilling the Law (5.17), and teachings on a new ethical perspective in response to the advent of the kingdom.

- a. The sermon continues (in this week's readings) with instruction on works of piety.