Mid-Week Methodism
Fall 2025
Interpreting Scripture

The Bible & Bread
Week 1

Genesis 32:24-32

24 Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. 25 When the
man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and
Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, "Let me go,
for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless
me." 27 So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 28 Then the
man[b] said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel,[c] for you have striven
with God and with humans[d] and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked him, "Please
tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he
blessed him. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel,[e] saying, "For I have seen God face
to face, yet my life is preserved." 31 The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel,
limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the thigh
muscle that is on the hip socket, because he struck Jacob on the hip socket at the
thigh muscle.

b.32.28 Heb *he*
c.32.28 That is, *the one who strives with God* or *God strives*
d.32.28 Or *with divine and human beings*
e.32.30 That is, *the face of God*

How to Read the Bible by Miranda Threlfall-Holmes

Reading the Bible is bread from heaven. **Scripture** feeds the soul, it is the fruit of collective **experience**, it is food for **thought (reason)**, it provides ingredients for ecclesia's **tradition**.

Aspects of the modern secular worldview, such as humanism, are deeply rooted in Christian understanding even as they may reject it. Reading the Bible protects us from its misuse. **Religion, like politics, is clearly not immune to manipulation in the service of powerful interests.**

Reading the Bible and knowing the stories it contains helps us understand and appreciate the **nuances of political and ethical debate. It helps us to be more alert to when people are using biblical references either ignorantly or dishonestly to manipulate public feeling.**

Writers of Biblical texts **span space and time**. The books were not authored simultaneously. When later books were written, the writer(s) already knew about earlier parts and often referred to them, both implicitly and explicitly. The ways in which later books of the Bible quote, redefine, and use parts of what was already considered scripture; demonstrates for us a **range of approaches that the Bible itself considers legitimate and spiritually useful.**

Read the Bible **generatively**: **experience** is an authoritative teacher. Mistakes and discoveries enrich us. We learn **language by immersion**.

Reading the Bible **with members of your faith community** is an immersive learning experience that continues to create us throughout our lives.

Experimenting with reading the Bible is the best way we know as humans to find our way around it and to inhabit it as our native language and culture.

As we read together, **every voice is welcome to contribute and is equal in esteem.** Our faith is not something we primarily learn about; it is something that we primarily experience.

Reading is active and helps to co-create a new reality out of what **each party brings to our shared reading**.

Be conscious of who you are and what you bring to your reading. Your act of reading is important and valid. **God made you, loves you, and wants a relationship with you.** Each person's relationship with God is inevitably different with each person. **Your authenticity with God does not change God, but it does mean that the relationship you have with God will be different from others.**

Along with **experience, tradition** (teachings of the Church) and **reason** (what we can work out by rational thought processes from observing the world) are **sources of authority for biblical interpretation and used as companions in conjunction with the primary authority: the text itself.**

The Bible does not give a simple answer to why there is suffering in this world. Instead, it tells stories, and invites us to argue with them, to argue even with God, and to find meaning in the very experience of that argument. But in this genuine grappling with God, don't expect to have your worldview, lifestyle, or opinions unchanged as a result.

… 31 The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip.

The Bible for Normal People (Pete Enns & Jared Byas | Episode 42: How the Bible Is Curated *with* Barbara Brown Taylor

https://thebiblefornormalpeople.com/how-the-bible-is-curated-with-barbara-brown-taylor/

The Pentateuch & The Classic Formulation of Documentary Hypothesis Genesis 1 – 3
Week 2
Bible and Bread

PowerPoint by Dan Clanton, Doane University, Crete NE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZp9BOGDh64

Genesis 1:1-27 NRSVUE

Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath

1 When God began to create[a] the heavens and the earth, **2** the earth
was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep,
while a wind from God[b] swept over the face of the waters. **3** Then
God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **4** And God saw
that the light was good, and God separated the light from the
darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called
Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.
6 And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and
let it separate the waters from the waters." **7** So God made the dome
and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters
that were above the dome. And it was so. **8** God called the dome
Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.
9 And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together
into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. **10** God
called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered
together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. **11** Then God
said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed and
fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it."
And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding
seed of every kind and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the
seed in it. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening
and there was morning, the third day.
14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to
separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for
seasons and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the dome
of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. **16** God made
the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser
light to rule the night—and the stars. **17** God set them in the dome
of the sky to give light upon the earth, **18** to rule over the day and
over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And
God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was
morning, the fourth day.

Genesis 1:1-27 CEV

World's creation in seven days

1 When God began to create[a] the heavens and the earth— **2** the earth was
without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept
over the waters— **3** God said, "Let there be light." And so light
appeared. **4** God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from
the darkness. **5** God named the light Day and the darkness Night.
There was evening and there was morning: the first day.
6 God said, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters to separate the
waters from each other." **7** God made the dome and separated the waters
under the dome from the waters above the dome. And it happened in that
way. **8** God named the dome Sky.
There was evening and there was morning: the second day.
9 God said, "Let the waters under the sky come together into one place so
that the dry land can appear." And that's what happened. **10** God named the
dry land Earth, and he named the gathered waters Seas. God saw how good
it was. **11** God said, "Let the earth grow plant life: plants yielding seeds and
fruit trees bearing fruit with seeds inside it, each according to its kind
throughout the earth." And that's what happened. **12** The earth produced
plant life: plants yielding seeds, each according to its kind, and trees
bearing fruit with seeds inside it, each according to its kind. God saw how
good it was.
13 There was evening and there was morning: the third day.
14 God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day
from the night. They will mark events, sacred seasons, days, and
years. **15** They will be lights in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth."
And that's what happened. **16** God made the stars and two great lights: the
larger light to rule over the day and the smaller light to rule over the
night. **17** God put them in the dome of the sky to shine on the earth, **18** to
rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the
darkness. God saw how good it was.
19 There was evening and there was morning: the fourth day.

20 And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living
creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the
sky.” 21 So God created the great sea monsters and every living
creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm
and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was
good. 22 God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill
the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” 23 And
there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.
24 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every
kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of
every kind.” And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals of the earth
of every kind and the cattle of every kind and everything that creeps
upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.
26 Then God said, “Let us make humans[c] in our image, according to
our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea
and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild
animals of the earth[d] and over every creeping thing that creeps
upon the earth.”
27 So God created humans[e] in his image,
in the image of God he created them;[f]
male and female he created them.

Footnotes

a.1.1 Or *In the beginning God created*
1.1.2 Or *while the spirit of God* or *while a mighty wind*
2.1.26 Heb *adam*
3.1.26 Syr: Heb *and over all the earth*
4.1.27 Heb *adam*
5.1.27 Heb *him*

20 God said, “Let the waters swarm with living things, and let birds fly
above the earth up in the dome of the sky.” 21 God created the great sea
animals and all the tiny living things that swarm in the waters, each
according to its kind, and all the winged birds, each according to its kind.
God saw how good it was. 22 Then God blessed them: “Be fertile and
multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the
earth.”
23 There was evening and there was morning: the fifth day.
24 God said, “Let the earth produce every kind of living thing: livestock,
crawling things, and wildlife.” And that’s what happened. 25 God made
every kind of wildlife, every kind of livestock, and every kind of creature
that crawls on the ground. God saw how good it was. 26 Then God said,
“Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take
charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the
earth, and all the crawling things on earth.”
27 God created humanity in God’s own image,
in the divine image God created them,[b]

male and female God created them.

Footnotes

a. Genesis 1:1 Or *In the beginning, God created*
b. Genesis 1:27 Heb has singular *him,* referring to *humanity.*

Genesis 2: 4-25 NRSVUE

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Another Account of the Creation

In the day that the LORD[b] God made the earth and the heavens, 5 when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no vegetation of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground, 6 but a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole face of the ground— 7 then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground[c] and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. 8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
10 A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. 11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, 12 and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. 13 The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.
15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Genesis 2: 4-25 CEV

4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

World's creation in the garden

On the day the LORD God made earth and sky— 5 before any wild plants appeared on the earth, and before any field crops grew, because the LORD God hadn't yet sent rain on the earth and there was still no human being[c] to farm the fertile land, 6 though a stream rose from the earth and watered all of the fertile land— 7 the LORD God formed the human[d] from the topsoil of the fertile land[e] and blew life's breath into his nostrils. The human came to life. 8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east and put there the human he had formed. 9 In the fertile land, the LORD God grew every beautiful tree with edible fruit, and also he grew the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
10 A river flows from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides into four headwaters. 11 The name of the first river is the Pishon. It flows around the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 That land's gold is pure, and the land also has sweet-smelling resins and gemstones. [f] 13 The name of the second river is the Gihon. It flows around the entire land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is the Tigris, flowing east of Assyria; and the name of the fourth river is the Euphrates.
15 The LORD God took the human and settled him in the garden of Eden to farm it and to take care of it. 16 The LORD God commanded the human, "Eat your fill from all of the garden's trees; 17 but don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because on the day you eat from it, you will die!"

18 Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should
be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” 19 So out of
the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and
every bird of the air and brought them to the man to see what
he would call them, and whatever the man called every living
creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all cattle
and to the birds of the air and to every animal of the field, but
for the man[d] there was not found a helper as his partner. 21 So
the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he
slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with
flesh. 22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man
he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the
man said,
“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.”
24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to
his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife
were both naked and were not ashamed.

Footnotes

a.2.2 Sam Gk Syr: MT *seventh*
b.2.4 Heb *YHWH*, as in other places where “LORD” is spelled with capital letters (see also Ex 3.14–15 with notes)
c.2.7 In Heb the word for *ground* resembles the word for *man*d.
d.2.20 Or *for Adam*

18 Then the LORD God said, “It’s not good that the human is alone. I will
make him a helper that is perfect for him.” 19 So the LORD God formed
from the fertile land all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky and
brought them to the human to see what he would name them. The
human gave each living being its name. 20 The human named all the
livestock, all the birds in the sky, and all the wild animals. But a helper
perfect for him was nowhere to be found.
21 So the LORD God put the human into a deep and heavy sleep, and
took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh over it. 22 With the rib taken
from the human, the LORD God fashioned a woman and brought her to
the human being. 23 The human[g] said,
“This one finally is bone from my bones
and flesh from my flesh.
She will be called a woman[h]
because from a man[i] she was taken.”
24 This is the reason that a man leaves his father and mother and
embraces his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 The two of them were
naked, the man and his wife, but they weren’t embarrassed.

Footnotes

a.Genesis 2:2 LXX, Sam, Syr; MT *seventh*
b.Genesis 2:3 Or *from all his work, which God created to do*
c.Genesis 2:5 Or *man* (Heb *adam*)
d.Genesis 2:7 Heb *adam*
e.Genesis 2:7 Heb *adamah*
f.Genesis 2:12 Heb uncertain
g.Genesis 2:23 Or *man* (Heb *adam*)
h.Genesis 2:23 Or *wife* (Heb *ishshah*)
i.Genesis 2:23 Or *husband* (Heb *ish*)