

# Weekly Study Guide

The week of January 4, 2015

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## Daily Readings

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Monday	Genesis 1:1-13	Tuesday	Genesis 1:14-31	Wednesday	Genesis 2:1-3
Thursday	Genesis 2:4-25	Friday	Luke 24:13-27	Saturday	John 20:30-31

*My notes on this week's readings...*

## Next Week in Worship

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**Next week's message:** *Is there only one true religion?*

**Next week's readings:** John 14:1-7, James 1:27

Don't all religions teach basically the same thing? If we worship God and love our neighbors, does it really matter if we use different words? As our world becomes more connected and more integrated, we are all face to face with greater diversity than ever before. Join us next week to learn about the truth of Jesus in a pluralistic world.

first lutheran church

4000 linden street • white bear lake, mn • 55110 • 651.429.5349 • flcwb.org

# Group Discussion

Connect	<p>What's the most amazing or beautiful thing you've ever seen in nature?</p>
Learn	<p>Read Psalm 19:1-6. This is a song of praise, declaring that the creation (especially "the heavens") declares the majesty of God. But it has also sometimes been misread in troubling ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you think is the main idea of this passage?</li><li>• Verses 4-6 say ("literally") that the sun moves from one end of the heavens to the other. This reflects the ancient understanding that the sun moved around the earth, even though we now know that this is not true. Does this ancient understanding of astronomy change the main idea of the passage?</li><li>• Does it bother you that the Bible communicates in ancient terms? Why or why not?</li></ul> <p>Read Psalm 26:1-3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the main idea being expressed here? What is the author of this passage trying to say?</li><li>• Most English translations of v. 2 end with a phrase like "examine my heart and my mind." The Hebrew word translated here as "heart" is literally the word for "kidneys," and the Hebrew word that is translated as "mind" is also the word for heart. Ancient people thought that human emotions and thoughts were processed by the organs in the abdomen (such as the heart, liver, kidneys, and intestines). Does their ancient understanding of human anatomy change the point the author is making?</li><li>• Does it make the Bible's message untrue for it to be communicated in terms that ancient people understood?</li></ul> <p>Read Genesis 1:1-2:3 out loud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you notice about this passage? Make a list of your main observations.</li><li>• What do you think are the main themes of this passage?</li><li>• What does this passage say about the relationships between God and humanity, between humanity and the natural world, and between the genders?</li><li>• Would it diminish the truth of these messages and themes to think that they were communicated in the terms of their native culture thousands of years ago?</li></ul>
Apply	<p>Did anything stand out to you as particularly important in your list of main themes from Genesis 1? What might God want to say to you about that and how will you respond?</p>
Pray	<p>Many people have misunderstood the relationship between science and the Bible and have walked away from faith in God entirely. Pray together for God's hope and truth to reach the "hearts and minds" of those who are skeptical.</p>