

# GENESIS: NEW BEGINNINGS

Genesis is a book about new beginnings. It opens with the creation of the world, humanity, language, and culture and moves on to consider the complex history of the founding chosen family. Our workshop will be devoted both to the envisioning of new beginnings in Genesis and to the reception of these foundational texts in modern literature and thought. Among the questions to be addressed: What makes the envisioning of new beginnings necessary? To what extent are these new beginnings presented as new failures? To what extent is the envisioning of new beginnings in modern contexts bound up with an attempt to imagine different futures? How are new futures envisioned via models from the (ancient) past? What happens to Genesis within the context of contemporary critiques of stories of origin? Can we distinguish between perspectives on “origin” which are divine and mythical, and “beginning” which is a product of human endeavors? As societies and institutions emerge from the Covid pandemic, does Genesis offer us useful blueprints or cautionary tales (or both) on how to re-start?

**NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

The Franke Institute for the Humanities

9:45AM

**Na'ama Rokem**

*Greetings*

10:00-11:00AM

**Amir Eshel**

*“With Open Eyes”:*

*The Original Sin and the Birth of Freedom*

11:00AM-12:00PM

**Robert Alter**

*How a Bible Translation*

*Might be a New Beginning*

**12:00-1:30PM - LUNCH**

1:30-2:30PM

**Vivian Liska**

*Destroying, Subverting, Preserving:  
Franz Kafka's Tower of Babel*

2:30-3:30PM

**Ilana Pardes**

*Cultural Beginnings: Joseph's Tale and  
Freud's Moses and Monotheism*

**3:30-4:00PM - COFFEE BREAK**

4:00-5:00PM

**Leora Batnitzky**

*“Nothing New Under the Sun”:*

*Kohelet's Challenge to Genesis 1-4*