

# Read the Bible in a Year

Week 3 - June 20, 2021

**Read on Your Own this Week:**

*Psalm 7-9*

Matthew 9-12

**Readings in Class:**

Genesis 36-50

Acts 1-3

## **A Brief Overview of Genesis 36-50**

This week the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob reaches its climax and conclusion in the book of Genesis and paves the way for the future as we will discover in the book of Exodus. We will see the life and story of this family that God chose will indeed be a blessing to the nations as Joseph saves the world. Joseph becomes a type of Christ as his story mirrors the story of our Lord in an intentional and dramatic fashion. Joseph goes from favored son, to suffering servant, to leader and savior of the world. Just like Jesus Christ.

**Tracing the Promise of Jesus:** The Old Testament is key to understanding the life and work of Jesus Christ. Eve had been promised a son who would fix and save the creation. With this hope in mind, Genesis focuses in on this point: will this promised son come to fruition? Adam passed the promise on to Seth, and Seth's line is recorded in Genesis 5 which leads to Noah.

In Noah's day the promised line is almost wiped out due to wickedness as Seth's line intermarries with Cain's line until only Noah is found righteous in God's sight. To preserve the promise and wipe out the wickedness, God cleanses the earth. Noah then passes on the promise to Shem which then is traced to Abraham in another genealogy.

The promise goes from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob and then to Judah who is the fourth oldest (Reuben, Levi, and Simeon committed shameful acts that disqualified them from the blessing of the Messiah). Jesus of course is a son of Judah. Hold on to tracing this line of the Messiah because as the story moves forward, we pause on the line of Judah as the whole nation of Israel is given the promise in the book of Exodus. Judah is picked up again with King David in 2 Samuel.

**Summary of 36-50:** Often this section is named "The Joseph Narrative" as these chapters focus in on the character of Joseph as it goes through his fall and rise as the blessing for the nations. In this beloved and well written narrative, we are told that Joseph is given a couple of dreams by God. These dreams tell Joseph that his whole family will bow down to him one day.

This causes hatred among his brothers, along with Joseph tattling on his brothers when they were not doing the job they were supposed to do.

Seizing upon an opportunity, Joseph's brothers throw him in a pit and sell him Ishmaelite traders (Ishmael being the other son of Abraham).

Joseph goes to Egypt, and Jacob mourns the loss of his favorite son from his favorite wife Rachel who is also dead. All Jacob has left is Benjamin from this line and he closely guards him. This becomes important toward the end of the Genesis.

We get a side story about Judah and Tamar in 38, which seems out of place at first, but is reminding us of the son who has the promised seed of the Messiah. Judah's sons Er and Onan are put to death by God because of wickedness and in rejecting to participate in God's salvation through bearing descendants that lead to Jesus. So God rejects them to carry on the line. Instead God carries the line to Jesus through a rather embarrassing and promiscuous encounter between Judah and his daughter in law.

In Egypt, God is with Joseph in all that he does. And so Joseph prospers. In comparison between Judah and Tamar, Joseph flees from the sexual temptation between Potiphar's wife and suffers for it as the woman scorned falsely rats out Joseph and he is put into prison.

In prison, Joseph correctly interprets the dream of two of Pharaoh's servants. The cup bearer goes free as predicted and though he promised to remember Joseph in prison, he forgets. 2 years go by and Pharaoh has a dream that no one but God through Joseph can interpret when the cup bearer remembers.

The dream spoke of 7 years of plenty and 7 years of famine that would undo and kill the whole world. For his interpretation, Joseph is made lord over all of Pharaoh's house and exalted as Pharaoh's right hand.

Through Joseph's work, there is food gathered during the years of plenty to survive the years of famine. Joseph has fulfilled the promise, so it seems, of the seed of Abraham blessing the world.

The famine flushes out Joseph's brothers, who twice during their visits bow down to Joseph just as Joseph's dreams stated they would. After a tense stand off, which leads of Judah acting like Christ who will die in Benjamin's stead—unlike what they did with Joseph— Joseph reveals himself to his changed brothers.

Jacob and Joseph are reunited as the family of Abraham moves to Egypt, setting the stage for Exodus. Jacob blesses his sons, (note Judah's blessing concerning Jesus!) The final question that we ask in Genesis is this: Is Joseph the Messiah that Genesis has been tracing? In a way, he prefigures Jesus. But Joseph's death at the end leaves us hanging as Joseph himself seems to say that there is more that God has yet to do. This leaves us waiting to read on as we wait to see how God will send this promised child of Adam, of Abraham and Judah...