

Sunday Message Notes – Better Bible Reading in 2026

Genesis Part 7 - Joseph: Theological Framing For The Exodus

Genesis Recap

I. Gen. 1-11 The Primeval History / Shared Cosmology or Polemics

A. ANE comparanda (World Behind Text)

- a. Mosaic Creation stories / Babylonian Enuma Elish
- b. Noahic Flood / Epic of Gilgamesh
- c. Tower of Babel / Mesopotamian Ziggurat

B. Creation

1. Two creation narratives, ch.1 (P-Priestly), ch.2-3 (J-Yahwist).
 - a. What is at stake when you lean toward one story over another?
 - b. (P) disparages science – anachronism (e.g., vegetation before Sun).
 - c. (J) subjugates women – created from man / subject to the man / causes fall.

C. Sin.

1. What is first sin?
 - a. Accessing or “eating” of knowledge? (the word sin not used here).
 - b. Or fratricide? (Cain murders Abel – “sin” (ḥaṭṭā’t)
 - c. Sin is crouching at the door / Cain must rule over it (sin not yet seen as “innate”)
 - d. Are we innately sinful?
 - e. Does God regret making humans and drown them all?

II. Gen. 12-50 The Ancestral History

A. Bloodline of Abraham

1. Is there a bloodline esteemed by God?
 - a. Ishmael is circumcised (sign of covenant) by Abraham, yet not an heir.

B. Justice, Oppression and Violence.

1. God hears, sees and vindicates the oppressed?
 - a. Justice as:
 - Reversal of fortunes with Hagar, Leah, Joseph.
 - Resistance to firstborn son birthright culture.
 - Redressing favoritism that breeds family violence.
 - Emancipating God from the image of a blood thirsty deity.

III. Historical Account or Violence Narrative?

A. Is Genesis a science book?

1. Does it offer exact cosmology / cosmogony?

B. Is Genesis a History book?

1. Is it a precise record of human history?
2. Or is it a repeating narrative exposing a culture that fosters brotherly/family violence?

Let’s Go Down “The Bible Says” Rabbit Hole together:

-“The Bible says.”

-But really, Genesis says.

-Actually, Moses said.

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- Well, I mean a scribe recounting oral tradition passed down, said.
- Better, a scribal community said.
- Precisely, disparate scribal communities (Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomistic, or Priestly), said.
- But, which translation says?
- KJV says Hagar was a maid/handmaid/servant.
- NRSVUE says Hagar is a slave.
- Which Bible?
- Protestant Bible (66 books)? Catholic Bible (73 books)? Ethiopian Bible (81 books)?
- Which books should be included? Which Gospels?
- What about a closed canon?
- And, what do we do if we discover new books – like the Dead Sea Scrolls?
- Which manuscripts were used to craft a particular Bible?
- Codex Sinaiticus? Codex Vaticanus? Textus Receptus?
- Well, the Septuagint is accurate (Greek translation of the O.T.).
- But, the O.T. was written in Hebrew.
- Greek is the most accurate language for exegeting the Gospels.
- But, Jesus spoke Aramaic? So what do we lose taking Aramaic words and translating them into
- Greek? The Vulgate (Latin)? The Septuagint? From Greek to Latin German to English?
- I love that we get gender inclusive language from the NIV. But, does this language whitewash the level of patriarchal misogyny prevalent among biblical scribes?
- Is this inclusion or an erasure?

Subject: Better Bible Reading, Genesis Part 7: “Joseph: Theological Framing For The Exodus”

I. The Ancestral History and Exodus in one chapter: Acts 7.

(NRSVue) Acts 7:1-4 Then the high priest asked him, “Are these things so?”² And Stephen replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,³ and said to him, ‘Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.’⁴ Then he left the country of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran.

-Abraham’s history, Ur / Chaldean.

(NRSVue) Acts 7:6-8⁶ And God spoke in these terms, that his descendants would be resident aliens in a country belonging to others, who would enslave them and mistreat them during four hundred years.⁷ ‘But I will judge the people whom they serve,’ said God, ‘and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.’⁸ Then he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac did likewise to Jacob and Jacob to the twelve patriarchs.

-Slavery in Egypt / Plagues

(NRSVue) Acts 7:9-16⁹ “The patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him¹⁰ and rescued him from all his afflictions and enabled him to win favor and to show wisdom when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over all his

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household. ¹¹ Now there came a famine throughout Egypt and Canaan and great suffering, and our ancestors could find no food. ¹² But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors there on their first visit. ¹³ On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. ¹⁴ Then Joseph sent and invited his father Jacob and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five in all; ¹⁵ so Jacob went down to Egypt. He himself died there as well as our ancestors, ¹⁶ and their bodies^[c] were brought back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

-Joseph's in Egypt and a famine catalyzes his brothers and father to move there.

(NRSVue) Acts 7:17-22 ¹⁷ "But as the time drew near for the fulfillment of the promise that God had made to Abraham, our people in Egypt increased and multiplied ¹⁸ until another king who had not known Joseph ruled over Egypt. ¹⁹ He dealt craftily with our people and forced our ancestors to abandon their infants so that they would die. ²⁰ At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful before God. For three months he was brought up in his father's house, ²¹ and when he was abandoned, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. ²² So Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his words and deeds.

-Hebrews multiplied in Egypt.

-A new King does not know Joseph and handles the Hebrews harshly.

-Moses is born, abandoned, and raised by Pharaoh's daughter.

(NRSVue) Acts 7:23-24, 29b "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his kinfolk, the Israelites. ²⁴ When he saw one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian
29b ...Moses fled and became a resident alien in the land of Midian. There he became the father of two sons.

-The conscience of Moses awakens.

-Kills an Egyptian, flees to Midian.

-Has children (notice Zipporah is not named. Why? She is not a Hebrew).

(NRSVue) Acts 7:30-34 ³⁰ "Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. ³¹ When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he approached to look, there came the voice of the Lord: ³² 'I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look. ³³ Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Come now, I will send you to Egypt.'

-Covenant bloodline reappears (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob).

-God sees the oppression.

-Moses is now going back to Egypt, not as Pharaoh's kin, but as a Hebrew deliverer.

(NRSVue) Acts 7:35-38 ³⁵ "It was this Moses whom they rejected when they said, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' and whom God now sent as both ruler and liberator through the angel who appeared to

