

This week's reading:

January 15: Genesis 43 – 45

January 16: Genesis 46 – 48

January 17: Genesis 49 – 50

January 18: Matthew 1 – 4

January 19: Matthew 5 – 8

January 20: Matthew 9 – 12

January 21: Matthew 13 – 15

January 22: Matthew 16 – 19

Summary:

January 15: Genesis 43 – 45

Genesis 43 picks up with famine ongoing and trouble for Jacob & his children. The family consents to Joseph's demands and returns to set things right. **(Note:** Jacob really did refuse; they waited until out of food to discuss returning again w/Benjamin. Ultimately the faith of Jacob shines in his sending the brothers back to Egypt.)

Genesis 44 is the brother's final test in loyalty to family and they pass. **(Note:** While Joseph's testing may seem cruel, it is not; had the brothers not changed, Benjamin would be better off with Joseph. But since God was dealing with the brothers, the testing reveals the work of God over the past 2 decades.)

Genesis 45 concludes the brother's ordeal as Joseph is revealed to them and Jacob is sent for. **(Note:** Joseph credits God rather than blames his brothers for his being sent into Egypt twenty-two years ago. That is a life of trusting faith in God.)

January 16: Genesis 46 – 48

Genesis 46 recounts those who move from Canaan to Egypt, and God restating His promises to Jacob. **(Note:** This simple list shows the promise of God to Abraham being fulfilled. The family is growing (quickly) and on its way to becoming the nation of Exodus.)

Genesis 47 has Israel settling in Egypt and the provision for the people by Joseph.

(Note: The ability of Joseph is ultimately what enriches the Pharaoh.)

Genesis 48 is the blessing of Jacob to Joseph's children. **(Note:** Jacob's adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh is how you go from 12 children to 12 tribes. Joseph has no tribe (12 is now 11) and Levi gets no portion of Israel as they are servants of God (11 is now 10). It is the addition of Ephraim and Manasseh as tribes that makes 10 into 12 again.)

January 17: Genesis 49 – 50

Genesis 49 sets the stage for the coming books as Jacob pronounces God's future working over his sons. It is here we see the promise of kingship in Judah. After the pronouncement Jacob dies. **(Note:** Blessing and cursing are contained in this chapter as "accounts are settled" among the sons of Israel. Judah is now the tribe to whom ruler ship is given (this is seen in Israel's travels later on), and the promise of a King to rule the peoples is given.)

Genesis 50 shows us the funeral and mourning for Jacob and the true reconciliation of Joseph & his brothers. **(Note:** Joseph rightly credits God's control for his circumstances. The brothers did sin, but ultimately God's hand directs the action)

January 18: Matthew 1 – 4

Matthew 1 shows you a connection to the Old Testament with a selected genealogy of Jesus; before diving into a very quick description of the virgin Mary being “with child”.

(Note: The connections to the Old Testament are not just found in the genealogy, but are also in the fulfillment of the birth of Jesus as promised by prophecy.)

Matthew 2 has the Magi visiting; you also see the wickedness of Herod and the protection of Jesus by God. **(Note:** While the Magi probably weren’t at the manger and that’s okay. How did a poor family afford to flee to Egypt? Answer: valuable gifts given my others. Also see the connection of Jesus to the proto-type deliverer, Moses. Jesus is rescued by Egypt as the Savior (as opposed to Moses being savior) after a great evil has been afflicted upon Israel’s children.)

Matthew 3 begins the public ministry of Jesus starting with the ministry of John the Baptist. This crazy man is the forerunner who announces the Messiah as God had promised through the prophets. **(Note:** Again see Old Testament fulfillment, both in John, and in Jesus following what is needed to “fulfill righteousness.)

Matthew 4 begins Jesus’ ministry with overcoming temptation and remaining sinless in the face of great trial. Having proven His obedience and worthiness, Jesus begins preaching the message of salvation and training His followers. **(Note:** Jesus defends Himself against Satan with quotation & application of Old Testament Scripture.

Matthew is presenting Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises of God.)

January 19: Matthew 5 – 8

Matthew 5 is the beginning of the most famous sermon every preached and demonstrates what is required to be saved (perfection). Jesus outlines what the law requires while pointing out the falling short of every person who has ever lived. **(Note:** This section is the epitome of Old Testament fulfillment. Jesus uses the Old Testament standard, as well as expands the O.T. standard to point the self-deceived crowds away from self-righteousness and toward the grace of God. Jesus is undermining the false, man-made system of the day; and replacing it with the true, God-given salvation.)

Matthew 6 continues the call to holiness and instructs on proper prayer Jesus continues teaching His hearers to focus on God and not themselves. **(Note:** Again, note the emphasis on personal holiness and trusting in God. Jesus’ message continues to replace the false system of the Israelites; with the true faith in, and trust of God.)

Matthew 7 continues the teaching and moves Jesus’ call to holiness towards relationships with each other before bringing home the point that righteousness is found in God. **(Note:** I have always found it ironic that the only lesson most people glean from this chapter full of Jesus’ commands to make judgments; is to not judge. We must make judgments, of all things. But we must do so rightly; here Jesus is challenging our: sin, motivation, life path, foundations for living; and pushing for all of those things to be centered in Him.)

Matthew 8 is after the Sermon and shows the power of Jesus to heal and cast out demons; demonstrating His divine ability. **(Note:** See the comparison of those on opposite ends of the spectrum of the Sermon on the Mount. The right faith of the centurion and Peter’s mother-in-law; vs. the wrong faith of the unnamed crowds vs. even the growing faith of the disciples.)

January 20: Matthew 9 – 12

Matthew 9 shows more healing power and a declaration of who Jesus has come for

(those who know their sin). **(Note:** Jesus never takes the easy way out: instead of healing by itself-He forgives sin, instead of calling a fiscally sound Pharisee-Matthew a hated tax collector, instead of a simple answer-an explanation of His work.)

Matthew 10 names the 12 disciples (Apostles) and gives them their instruction for ministry and teaches about discipleship. **(Note:** This initial work by the Holy Spirit foreshadows the eventual work of the early church. Jesus' ministry will spread not during His physical time on earth, but during the work of the Holy Spirit in a hostile and dangerous world.)

Matthew 11 assures John the Baptist that Jesus is the Messiah and declares judgment upon the unrepentant. **(Note:** The proof that Jesus is who He claims is in the works He does. The power of God is on display as it was: at creation, in the Exodus, during the prophets, and now in Christ. Also, the judgment upon the unbelieving; Jesus' message is one of salvation for His people—if you are not His people, then judgment remains.)

Matthew 12 challenges the Pharisaical rules while pointing instead to the Godly standard. **(Note:** Jesus uses Old Testament examples to prove Himself. David was allowed because he was the anointed king of God. The priests were allowed because they needed to make atonement for the people. Jesus is allowed because the man-made rules are not of God; and as the King and Priest of the New Covenant, He must rule and make atonement for His people.)

January 21: Matthew 13 – 15

Matthew 13 has Jesus teaching in parables and explaining their meaning to the disciples; in an effort to explain the things to come. **(Note:** The parable shows the eternal character and nature of the Kingdom not always visible in a fallen world.)

Matthew 14 shows us the execution of John the Baptist and two of the most famous miracles; Jesus feeding the 5,000 and the walking on water. **(Note:** Jesus is demonstrating both His power & His care. The disciples are starting to see the works of Jesus in light of the salvation God has promised.)

Matthew 15 resumes the battle with the Pharisees as Jesus teaches rightly about God and people. We also have more healing and 4,000 being fed. **(Note:** The heart of the untrusting of Israel is being shown regularly, and is contrasted with the heart of the repentant; even when not from Israel. Abraham, was always to be a blessing to the nations; in Christ, that promise is fulfilled.)