

STUDY QUESTIONS

“God meant it for good”

INTRODUCTION & STUDY 1

Reading: Genesis 37:1-11

1. How does the story of Joseph fit in with God’s plan of salvation; ultimately fulfilled in the coming of Jesus?
2. What are we to make of Joseph? How does this passage suggest that he is different to his brothers?
3. What role does the father Jacob have in this early tension in the family?
4. Whilst the name of God is not mentioned at all in chapter 37; in what ways do we see Him at work in this passage?
5. The brothers despise Joseph as a result of his dreams. How are we to understand the significance of those dreams?
6. What can we learn from this passage about the way God works?



Introducing Joseph

Home Fellowship Group Bible Study Questions

Tuesday 4th/Wednesday 5th October 2016

Introduction

'Heilsgeschichte' is a German word used among theologians to describe the Old Testament. It means 'Salvation History'.

What we have before us are not 39 books recording random historical events, individuals or nations. They reveal the unfolding of God's redemptive plan worked out through His chosen people Israel. A story that points forward to the coming of the Saviour Jesus; the promised Messiah.

These people are the descendants of Abraham; to whom God had made a covenant back in Genesis 12. It was to be through this one nation, that all nations would be blessed in the fulfilment of salvation's plan; Jesus.

God had promised Abraham and his descendants a land of their own. In Genesis 37 that is where we find them. However, by the end our story the possession of that promise seems further away than ever. Through a series of dramatic events this special people find themselves in Egypt; with all that will mean in the years to come.

Integral to the 'big story' of the Old Testament is the story of Joseph; Abraham's great-grandson. In this study series from Genesis 37-50 we will examine his life; from a 17-year-old teenager through to his death 93 years later. It's a life that will lead the king of Egypt to ask the question: "*Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?*" (41:38).

It may come as a surprise that in the opening chapter God is not mentioned at all. But that doesn't mean He's not there; directing all things for His greater purpose. That He certainly is, becomes increasingly evident as the story proceeds. This is an account of God's providence. It also sets us up for the great story of God's redemption of His chosen people from slavery in Egypt. It will certainly tell us how they end up there in the first place.

This story has been described as a 'soap opera'. We might certainly say that to someone coming to it for the first time; it's a tale that will keep you on the edge of your seat.

Joseph becomes the instrument through which God protects His covenant nation and His Messianic purposes. God's plans never fail; even when circumstances might suggest otherwise. As one writer puts it: "*Joseph's confidence was not in his ability to understand his circumstances; his confidence was in the God of all circumstances*" (H J Berry).

May that increasingly be our testimony as we go on this adventure with Joseph in the coming months.

Suggested further study:

Books:

'Joseph: Encountering the man who saved his people' by Roger Ellsworth (Day One Publications)

'Joseph: The Hidden hand of God' by Liam Goligher (Christian Focus)

'The Book of Origins' by Philip Eveson (Welwyn Commentaries)

Online:

Matthew Henry

www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete

John Calvin

www.studylight.org/commentaries/cal.html

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#### Venues:

Tuesday 9.00am Ladies Group in the Fuller Room

Tuesday 7.45pm 11 Chestnut Drive

Wednesday 7.30pm 30 Ten Bell Lane

Wednesday 7.45pm 'Pemberton' Fordham Road