



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of Genesis

Days 1-19 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day	Passage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Day 1	Genesis 1-3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 2	Genesis 4-6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 3	Genesis 7-9	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 4	Genesis 10-12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 5	Genesis 13-16	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 6	Genesis 17-19	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 7	Genesis 20-22	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 8	Genesis 23,24	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 9	Genesis 25,26	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 10	Genesis 27,28	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 11	Genesis 29,30	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 12	Genesis 31,32	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 13	Genesis 33-35	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 14	Genesis 36,37	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 15	Genesis 38-40	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 16	Genesis 41,42	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 17	Genesis 43,44	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 18	Genesis 45-47	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 19	Genesis 48-50	<input type="checkbox"/>

Welcome to the Book of Genesis!

The Book of Genesis is the first book in our Bibles for very good reasons. In it we find the record of the beginning of all things through Creation and the early history of mankind. The bulk of the book is dedicated to the origins of the Jewish people through Abraham and his descendants.

Too many today try to reinterpret the early chapters of Genesis as anything but history. However, the record is clearly historical, and the rest of Scripture treats it as such. God really did create the world and everything in it in six days and rested on the seventh. Adam and Eve were created beings that fell in sin. God wiped out human civilization through a global flood and began it anew with Noah and his family.

A few quick facts about Genesis:

- It was written by Moses, maybe around the time he led Israel out of Egypt 1451 B.C.
- It covers events from Creation (4004 B.C.) to the death of Joseph (1635 B.C.)
- The key verses are the call of Abram in 12:1-3
- A simple outline:
 - Creation and Foundation of Human World - Chapters 1-11
 - Creation of Nation of Israel - Chapters 12-50
- Key events:
 - Creation - Chapters 1-2
 - Fall of Man - 2:8-3:24
 - The Flood - 6:1-9:29
 - Call of Abraham - 12:1-3

Genesis 1 Notes

This chapter records the creation of the world by God. James Ussher, a 17th century scholar, famously calculated that Creation began on October 22, 4004 B.C., at 6:00 p.m. His guess is as good as anyone's, I suppose.

DAY ONE - vs. 1-5 - God creates the Heavens (space) and Earth, light and darkness, day and night.

vs. 5 - While we begin our days at 12:00 midnight, the ancient Jews began their days at sundown because of how these verses read “evening and morning”

vs. 5 - Some have tried to reinterpret the word “day” here to mean something more than a 24-hour period in order to make the Bible fit better with modern scientific theory. They often point to II Peter 3:8 where it says, “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”, but that has nothing to do with the day here. Strangely, I have never heard anyone try to apply that to any other portion of Scripture, like saying Jesus was in the grave for 3,000 years and not three days. These are literal days, lasting 24 hours, with a morning and an evening.

DAY TWO - vs. 6-8 - God divides the waters upon Earth into a lower layer and a higher layer. Creation scientists have a few theories about this.

DAY THREE - vs. 9-13 - God divides the dry land from the seas and creates vegetation.

DAY FOUR - vs. 14-19 - God creates the sun, moon, and stars. This order seems strange at first. How could we just now have the sun when there had been light and day/night cycles since Day One? But we must remember that God Himself is a light (Revelation 22:5).

DAY FIVE - vs. 20-23 - God creates sea animals and birds.

DAY SIX - vs. 24-31 - God creates land animals and man.

vs. 26 - Note that God speaks to Himself. The Hebrew word for God in this chapter is Elohim, which interestingly is plural through used as if it is singular. This is early evidence for the Triune Godhead of the Trinity.

The creation of man is repeated in greater detail in chapter 2.

Genesis 2 Notes

This chapter continues the events from Chapter 1.

DAY SEVEN - vs. 1-3 - God rests

vs. 3 - God's rest on the seventh day is the basis for the Jewish observation of the weekly Sabbath on Saturday (Exodus 20:8-11). Christians are no longer bound to this command but practically speaking it is good to have a time of weekly rest.

vs. 4 - Here begins a review of the Creation week with greater details given, especially regarding the creation of man.

vs. 5-6 - I think the pre-Flood earth was like a giant greenhouse or terrarium with perfect conditions for plant and animal life. Moisture was abundant and rain was unnecessary. The first recorded rain is the Flood in Genesis 7.

vs. 7 - God simply spoke all of Creation into existence except for man. He formed Adam from the dirt and breathed life into him. We have an eternal soul that no other creature has.

vs. 8-14 - The world and geography of Eden and the four great rivers that flowed from it were destroyed in the Flood. Some of these names were reused by ancient peoples but may or may not be the same.

vs. 15 - Man was created with a purpose and a task, to keep the Garden of Eden. Work is not part of sin's curse.

vs. 17 - The one great command given to test man's morality is the forbidden fruit. There is no indication that it was an apple as it is commonly portrayed in art.

vs. 18 - Man is the only creature that God did not create male and female at the same time. This is important in the headship of Adam over the human race (Romans 5:12, etc)

vs. 19-20 - Adam was not a simple brute, but a very intelligent being.

vs. 23-24 - Family is God's first institution for mankind.

vs. 25 - Nakedness is an absence of shame. There was no need for shelter or clothes because of the perfect environment.

Genesis 3 Notes

This chapter covers the Fall of Man and the Curse pronounced by God because of Man's sin.

vs. 1 – Satan is using the serpent as his mouthpiece. We see a similar demonic possession of animals in Matthew 8:28-34.

Satan was originally an angel who was lifted up in pride against God and in vain attempted to usurp God's glory. We find allusions to this in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:12-14

vs. 3 – Eve adds not touching the forbidden fruit in 2:17.

vs. 4-5 – Every lie has an element of truth to it. Yes, things would change if Eve disobeyed God, but Satan cleverly spins the consequences.

vs. 6 – Jewish tradition says that Adam was nearby and witnessed the conversation between the serpent and Eve. 1 Timothy 2:14 states that Eve was deceived but Adam consciously chose to take the fruit.

vs. 7 – Innocence is lost and Adam and Eve attempt to hide their shame.

vs. 9 – God knew exactly where Adam was and what had happened. Adam's guilt is proven by his response to God.

vs. 11,13 – Human nature has not changed as we still tend to blame others for our faults.

vs. 14 – Evidently the serpent was originally a much different creature. God humbles their form so that they no crawl on their belly.

vs. 15 – THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT VERSES IN SCRIPTURE! It is the prophecy and promise of redemption from sin. The seed of the woman is a peculiar phrase (it is typically seed of man) foreshadows the virgin birth of Christ. The bruised head of the serpent is a fatal blow, showing Christ's ultimate victory. The bruised heel is not a fatal blow, for though Christ did die He rose again and lives still.

vs. 17-19 – Work is not part of the Curse. The Curse makes work harder.

vs. 20 – Adam means "red" like the earth he was formed from. Eve means "life giver", which appears to be a response to the promise of redemption through the woman's seed in vs. 15.

vs. 21 – The first blood sacrifice takes place here, as animals are slain and their hides are given as clothes to cover the shame of Adam and Eve.

vs. 22-24 – Note here the separation caused by sin. Sinful man can no longer fellowship with the holy God as he had before.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 1

The opening chapters of Genesis are a terrible tragedy. We begin with life and perfection and end with death and separation. But God is every merciful and immediately provides the hope of redemption in Christ (3:15). No matter how dark things may seem, God always gives hope.

If you are interested in learning more about Creation Science, I highly recommend the information put out from Answers in Genesis and the Institute for Creation Research.

In my opinion the single best book on Genesis is The Genesis Record by Henry Morris

Hymn for Day 1

“This Is My Father’s World” was written in 1901 by Maltbie D. Babcock. It is a wonderful celebration of our great Creator and how His Creation brings Him glory (Psalm 19:1)

*This is my Father’s world,
and to my list’ning ears
all nature sings, and 'round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is my Father’s world;
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas;
His hand the wonders wrought.*

*This is my Father’s world;
the birds their carols raise;
the morning light, the lily white
declare their Maker’s praise.
This is my Father’s world,
He shines in all that’s fair;
in the rustling grass I hear Him pass;
He speaks to me ev’rywhere.*

*This is my Father's world;
O, let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world;
the battle is not done;
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
and earth and heaven be one.*

Chapter 4

This chapter is the story of the children of Adam and Eve.

vs. 1 – Cain means “possession”

vs. 2 – Abel means “breath”

vs. 3 – There is admittedly much we do not know about this time, but it appears certain that there was a set time that God expected men to offer sacrifice to Him. Based on what follows I think we can safely assume that the type of sacrifice God expected had also been given to man. Cain chose to offer a sacrifice according to his own will and not God’s.

vs. 3 – “Cain’s offering and worship was that of the natural, self-righteous man, who needs no blood, but trusts in his character and good works. Cain did not believe in what Jehovah Elohim had declared concerning sin, the penalty of sin; and he did not believe in the prediction of Genesis 3:15. God had cursed the ground, but Cain brought of the fruit of the ground. Today the masses of professing Christians ‘go in the way of Cain’ (Jude 1:10-11).” – A.C. Gaebelein

vs. 4 – The important difference between the sacrifices is that Abel’s was a blood sacrifice (Hebrews 9:22) which correctly foreshadowed Christ’s sacrifice.

vs. 7 – God confronts Cain and gives him a chance to repent.

vs. 8 – Cain was unwilling to offer a blood sacrifice to God but was willing to shed blood

vs. 15 – We do not know what this “mark” was but is singled out Cain from all other humans who knew of his sin and understood to not slay him.

vs. 15 – “God set a sign for Cain to give him assurance that he would at least be free from individual or human vengeance. As yet there was no organization of civic society. After a while we will come to that and show that at least after Noah left the ark God provided capital punishment. Society might punish a murderer but no individual could do it.” – B.H. Carroll

vs. 17 – Who was Cain’s wife? The simplest and most logical answer is that she was also his sister. Genetically this would not cause problems so close to the original DNA of Adam and Eve.

vs. 19 – Lamech is the first polygamist.

vs. 21 - The first mention of music or instruments in the Bible.

vs. 22 – These early generations were not brute savages as we see them performing advanced metallurgy.

vs. 23-24 – Lost in Lamech's confession to murder is that this is the first poem/song in Scripture. It follows the classic Hebrew pairing of two phrases:

Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice;
ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:
for I have slain a man to my wounding,
and a young man to my hurt.
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

vs. 25 – Cain's disobedience poisoned his descendants against God so God raised up another son of Adam to lead a faithful line.

vs. 25 – Seth means “compensation, substitute”

vs. 26 – “then began men to call upon the name of the LORD” - “The phrase almost certainly signifies the beginning of regular public worship of the Lord, probably replacing the previous practice of individually meeting with Him as Cain and Abel did.” – Henry Morris

Genesis 5

This chapter is the first genealogical section in the Bible, covering from Adam to Noah.

Some take exception to the extremely long lives of the people before the Flood. The simplest answer is that the world before the Flood was better suited for life in general.

vs. 22-24 – The most interesting individual in this lineage is undoubtably Enoch. His testimony is that his faith so pleased God that He took him (Hebrews 11:5). This indicates that he did not die as typical man, but was “raptured” to Heaven. The ancient Jews regarded him highly. A prophecy by him is quoted in Jude 1:14 which must have been passed down through the generations. There is a “Book of Enoch” but is not authentic and dates to a century or two before Christ. If written today it would be called fan fiction. It does contain the quote found in Jude which is likely because it included at least some authentic traditions.

vs. 27 – There are three important things to note about Methuselah. First, his life is the longest record in Scripture at 969 years. Second, his name literally means “man of the spear”. This strange name is interpreted by some to mean something like “when he dies, it shall be sent”. Third, he died in the same year that the Flood came. It was 1656 years after Creation in 2348 B.C. His long life was both a sign of impending judgment but also of God’s longsuffering mercy (I Peter 3:20, II Peter 3:9)

vs. 29 – Noah means “rest, comfort”

Chapter 6

This chapter describes the wickedness of the pre-Flood world, God's coming judgment, and the hope of deliverance.

vs. 2 – There is much debate about the identity of the “sons of God”. Some believe these are fallen angels. I personally believe that these are men from the faithful line of Seth that intermarried with the unfaithful line of Cain. My primary issue with them being fallen angels is that it violates the principle of reproduction in chapter 1 that everything is after its own kind.

vs. 3 – The 120 years is not a new limit on the length of human life but a deadline for man to repent.

vs. 5-6 – Sin had utterly corrupted the human race so thoroughly that without Divine intervention the hope for redemption may be lost and forgotten.

vs. 15 – A cubit is about 18 inches. The Ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet tall.

vs. 16 – The exact design is impossible to determine from these basic descriptions. The story is more important than the details.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 2

We underestimate the power of sin and the depravity of human nature. Within ten generations the world was lost and only Noah and his family found deliverance.

The deliverance of Noah through the Flood is a wonderful picture of our salvation. His faith (Hebrews 11:7) brought God's grace (Genesis 6:8).

Hymn for Day 2

"Why Are Not Sinners Consumed?" was written by Baptist pastor John Needham and first published in 1768. It is practically forgotten today. It examines the ages-old question of why God withholds Divine judgment, which according to Romans 2:4 is to express mercy by giving man space to repent.

*Why are not sinners, Lord, consumed
By Thy avenging rod?
'Tis Lord, because Thou art the good,
And the long suffering God.*

*Tho' men provoke Thee to Thy face,
And Thy rich grace despise,
Yet still Thy bounty feeds Thy foes,
Thy thunder sleeping lies.*

*On swiftest wing Thy mercy flies,
Thy wrath advances slow;
Long dost Thou whet Thy glittering sword
Before it gives the blow.*

*Long didst Thou bear a guilty world
With rapine filled and blood;
Thy patience wished to have restrained
The wide destroying flood.*

*Could even Sodom the impure
Have named ten righteous men,
Thy flaming sword in sulfur dipped
Would have been sheathed again.*

*How often did Thy anger burn
Against Thy chosen seed?
But still Thy heart within Thee turned
For them Thy bowels plead.*

*How shall I give My Ephraim up?
My wrath on Israel vent?
How shall I Admah's plagues inflict?
I pity and repent.*

*So great are Thy compassions, Lord,
Our songs they far exceed;
O may such goodness melt our hearts
And to repentance lead!*

Chapter 7

This chapter is the record of the preparation for and arrival of the Flood.

vs. 2-3 – Often overlooked is the detail that seven of the “clean” animals were taken aboard the Ark, not two like other animals. This would allow animals for sacrifice and food. The distinction between clean and unclean is clearly known before it is articulated more fully in Leviticus 11.

vs. 11 – Most events in Scripture are not given exact dates. The fact that the onset of the Flood is given one proves that it was an historical event and of immense importance. Assuming the Hebrew calendar is being used here this would around the end of October.

vs. 19-20 – It is popular to doubt that Flood was indeed a global, catastrophic event. Some have speculated it refers to a local flood, but every evidence of Scripture says otherwise. The entirety of the globe was submerged in water.

vs. 24 – The Hebrew calendar has 360 days and is based on 30 day-lunar months. 150 days here equals 5 months.

Genesis 8

This chapter covers the time during the Flood and the disembarking from the Ark.

vs. 4 – [Warning: this is going to get technical] The Ark came to rest on the 17th day of the 7th month, 5 five months or 150 days from the beginning of the flood. This date coincides with some other important days in Bible history. The next is the crossing of the Red Sea. The date is not given, but if you read Numbers 33:1-8 and count the encampments after leaving on the 15th (Passover) you come to the 17th when the Red Sea was crossed. It also appears to coincide with Israel's entering the Promised Land and the ceasing of the daily provision of manna in Joshua 5:10-12 if you do similar calculations as before. It is the same day that the Temple returned to use after being cleansed under Hezekiah in II Chronicles 29:17-21. It also appears to be the date that Esther brought about Haman's downfall (compare Esther 3:12, 4:16, 5:1, 7:2). The most important date it can coincide with though, is in the New Testament. If Christ was crucified on the same day as the Passover lambs (14th Nisan) and was in the tomb for three days and three nights (Matthew 12:39-40), that means He arose at the close of the 17th. If there is a theme for this day it is a day of deliverance from judgment to entrance into blessing.

vs. 4 – The Ark comes to rest on a mountain in Ararat, the modern borderland between Turkey, Iran, and Armenia. There have been many purported findings of the remains of the Ark but no concrete evidence has yet to emerge.

vs. 5 – The eater abates very slowly. Though the Ark is resting on a mountain it is 2 ½ months later that other mountain tops can be seen.

vs. 7 – A raven will feast on carrion, which likely floated on the waters. It would leave and return to the Ark for shelter.

vs. 8 – A dove would not find food or a perch until plants began to grow.

vs. 11 – The second dove returns with proof that plants were beginning to grow again.

vs. 12 – The third dove no returning was sign that the earth was ready for animal life to return.

vs. 14 – They were on the Ark for 371 days total.

vs. 20-21 – This burnt offering of was a “sweet savour” likely similar to the one described in Leviticus 1. It is not an offering for sin but out of thanksgiving for deliverance through the Flood.

vs. 21-22 – God promises that no judgment like on the scale of the Curse or Flood will come “while the earth remaineth”. The next cataclysmic judgment will end this world in fire (II Peter 3:10, Revelation 21:1)

Chapter 9

This chapter is the record of Noah's family restarting civilization.

vs. 1-3 – Similar to God's directions to Adam after Creation in 1:28-30

vs. 4 – The same prohibition against eating blood is in Leviticus 17:11

vs. 5-6 – This is the establishment of human government. Responsibility is placed on man to see that justice is performed.

vs. 13 – God gives man a sign to know that He would never destroy the world by water again. The sign is God figuratively placing His bow (weapon) down as witness between heaven and earth. This is of course the rainbow, which the makeup of the atmosphere before the Flood did not create as it does now.

vs. 18 – A few decades have passed here. Noah's sons had no children before the flood, but now Ham's sons Canaan appears to be a mature man.

vs. 20-21 – “We see the great man that was perfect in his generation, just and walked with God, this new head of the race that had such faith, a preacher of righteousness, as he falls into sin, the sin of drunkenness. This teaches that no man, however exalted in character or position, is absolutely safe from a fall. I don't mean that a Christian may fall away and be forever lost, but I do say that the most exalted Christian in the world must exercise watchfulness and prudence, or he will bring shame upon the name of religion.” – B.H. Carroll

vs. 22 – There are a few opinions as to what the nature of Ham's sin against his father entailed. I like the most simple solution, that he took satisfaction in his father's shame. He expressed no grace toward Noah but went and told his brothers about what he saw. Likely he was bitter and rebellious against his father's authority.

vs. 25-26 – Noah prophesies about the descendants of his three sons. It is covered in greater detail in the next chapter, but here are the basics: Ham's descendants, especially through Canaan, would be subordinate to their cousins; Shem's descendants would have a close relationship to God; Japheth's descendants would be numerous and prosper, and also have ties to Shem's descendants.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 3

While we covered some of humanity's darkest times in these early chapters of Genesis, it is not without glimmers of hope shining through the darkness. Noah and his family were carried through the floods of God's wrath, yet were safely protected. It is a picture of our salvation in that Christ endured the fulness of God's wrath against sin, but because we are united in Him we pass through to life anew.

Another aspect that is one of my dad's favorite things he has recently learned, is the idea that Noah's shame was covered. It is a beautiful picture of atonement, which steps in to cover the shame of our sin and clothe us in Christ's righteousness.

I also want to remind you again that if you are interested in learning more about Creation or the Flood, I highly recommend the resources from Answers in Genesis and the Institute for Creation Research. We do not have an unreasonable or blind faith. There is much evidence to confirms the truth of the Biblical record.

Hymn for Day 3

“O Cease My Wandering Soul” was written by William Augustus Muhlenberg and originally published in 1826. It is largely forgotten but draws a wonderful picture of Christ as our refuge as the Ark was a refuge for Noah.

*O cease, my wand'ring soul,
On restless wing to roam;
All this wide world, to either pole,
Hath not for thee a home.*

*Behold the ark of God!
Behold the open door!
O haste to gain that dear abode,
And rove, my soul, no more.*

*There safe thou shalt abide,
There sweet shall be thy rest;
And ev'ry longing satisfied,
With full salvation blest.*

*Ah, yes! I all forsake,
My all to Thee resign;
Gracious Redeemer take, O take
And seal me ever Thine.*

Chapter 10

This chapter contain the “Table of Nations” that explains how Noah’s descendants spread and founded the various nations of the world. A summary of the seventy nations, which includes possible identification for the peoples mentioned, is included after we examine the chapter.

vs. 1 – It is interesting to note that Noah’s sons did not have children until after the Flood.

vs. 2 – The descendants of Japheth largely settle to the north and east. Most European peoples descend from these.

vs. 8-12 – Nimrod is a fascinating figure. While the many families were spreading out and settling new territories he unites many of them under his rule. His is the first empire. His descendants are not listed but the cities he ruled are. His name may mean “rebellion” which shows us the motivation for his actions. He was defying God.

vs. 15-19 – We will encounter many of these Canaanite tribes as God begins to settle His chosen people in the Promised Land.

vs. 20 – The descendants of Ham were largely in Africa, Canaan, and Southern Arabia, but spread also toward Greece and Babylon.

vs. 21 – Eber is highlighted. His name is the root of the word “Hebrew”.

vs. 25 – Peleg means “divided”. There are two theories about what inspired his name. The first is the division of nations after the Tower of Babel (chapter 11), as discussed here: <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-history/in-the-days-of-peleg/>. The other is that there was major geologic event, as discussed very technically here:

<https://www.icr.org/i/pdf/technical/Rightly-Dividing-the-Word-about-Peleg.pdf>

vs. 31 – The descendants of Shem largely stayed in the Middle East.

Table of Nations Summary

- Japtheth
 - Gomer - Cimmerians/Crimea
 - Ashkenaz - Germans/Germany
 - Riphath - Paphlaogians/Asia Minor
 - Togarmah - Armenia
 - Magog - Georgia
 - Madai - Medes - Persia
 - Javan - Ionians/Greece
 - Elishah - Hellenes/Greece
 - Tarshish - Spain?
 - Kittim - Cyprus
 - Dodanim - Greece
 - Tubal - Russia
 - Meshech - Moskovi/Russia
 - Tiras - Thracians
- Ham
 - Cush - Kushites/Ethiopia
 - Seba - Sabaeans/Arabia?
 - Havilah - Arabia
 - Sabtah - Arabia
 - Raamah - Arabia
 - Sheba - Sabaeans/Arabia?
 - Dedan - Arabia
 - Sabtechah - Arabia
 - Nimrod - Mesopotamia
 - Mizraim - Egypt
 - Ludim
 - Anamim
 - Lehabim - Lybia?
 - Naphtuhim
 - Pathrusim - Upper Egypt
 - Casluhim/Philistim - Philistines
 - Capthorim - Crete
 - Phut - Lybia?
 - Canaan - Canaanites

- Sidon - Phoenicia
- Heth - Hittites/Asia Minor
- Jebusites - Caananites
- Amorites - Caananites
- Gergesites - Caananites
- Hivites - Caananites
- Arkites - Caananites
- Sinite - Caananites or China?
- Arvadite - Caananites
- Zemarite - Caananites
- Hamathite - Caananites
- Shem
 - Elam - Elamites/Iran
 - Asshur - Assyria
 - Arphaxad - Assyria?
 - Salah - ?
 - Eber - Hebrews
 - Peleg - ?
 - Joktan - ?
 - Almodad - ?
 - Shelpeh - ?
 - Hazarmaveth - ?
 - Jerah - ?
 - Hadoram - ?
 - Uzal - ?
 - Diklah - ?
 - Obal - ?
 - Abimael - ?
 - Sheba - Sabaeans/Arabia?
 - Ophir - ?
 - Havilah - ?
 - Jobab - ?
 - Ludim - Lydia
 - Aram - Aramaeans/Syria
 - Uz - Arabia?
 - Hul - ?
 - Gether - ?
 - Mash - ?

Genesis 11

This chapter tells of the events at the Tower of Babel before resuming genealogical records.

vs. 2 – Shinar is believed to be in the region near Babylon.

vs. 3-4 – God is never mentioned in their plans. This is all out rebellion against God.

vs. 7 – It appears God is talking to Himself (Trinity) just He did in 1:26

vs. 9 – Babel means “confusion”. It is interesting to note the history of this place and its ties to confusion and rebellion. We see it in the historic Babylonian empire that conquered Judah and that Daniel served under. We see it in the future Babylon whose fall is marked in Revelation 18.

vs. 10-26 – This genealogy connects Shem to Abram. It covers about 352 years in ten generations. The decline in life spans is glaring and also makes for some interesting chronological possibilities. Noah died 2 years before Abram was born, but Abram only outlived Shem by 25 years. Abram could have met Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Reu, or Serug, but not his grandfather Nahor.

vs. 27 – Note that Lot is Abram’s nephew.

vs. 28 – Ur of the Chaldees is believed to have been near the Euphrates River southeast of Babylon.

vs. 31 – Terah led Abram and Lot out of Ur with intent to go to Canaan. They travel about 600 miles northwest along the Euphrates River before settling in Haran.

vs. 32 – Terah means “delay, loiter” and is often accused of causing Abram to delay in obeying God’s call to go to Canaan. However it appears that they were only there a short time, likely stopping because of Terah’s failing health and not a lack of faith to move forward.

Chapter 12

This chapter records Abram's entrance into Canaan and his brief sojourn in Egypt.

vs. 1-3 – This is one of the most important passages in Scripture. It is the basis for God's covenant with Abram that leads to the Jewish nation and the Messiah. It is likely that this call had already been placed on him before he left Ur with Terah, but Terah being the senior family member took the lead.

vs. 4 – Abram is 75 years old and will live another 100 years.

vs. 4 – Abram is not completely obedient to the commands of vs. 1 as he took Lot with him who was from his kindred and from his father's house.

vs. 6 – Shechem is located in central Canaan.

vs. 7 – God reiterates His promise from vs. 1-3 by confirming that this land would be given to his descendants.

vs. 7, 8 – Note that Abram is careful to worship and thank God by building altars and offering sacrifices.

vs. 10 – Abram was commanded to go to Canaan, not Egypt. This comes from a wavering in his faith, not trusting God to provide in the famine. There will be consequences to this action.

vs. 11 – Sarai is 65 years old.

vs. 11-12 – One sin leads to another. His lack of faith now leads him to lying.

vs. 14-15 – “Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.” (Sir Walter Scott, *Marmion*). The Egyptians believed Abram's lie and have now taken Sarai to become a wife of Pharaoh.

vs. 16 – Abram is given great gifts by Pharaoh to purchase Sarai as a bride and cement good relations.

vs. 17 – God intervenes to pull Abram and Sarai out of their predicament. This was not done just for Abram and Sarai's benefit, but to protect the coming Jewish nation and Messiah.

vs. 19-20 – Pharaoh had better sense about where Abram needed to be than Abram did!

Devotional Thoughts for Day 4

I want to emphasize the shift in narrative we have witnessed in our reading today. We spent time in chapters 10 and 11 seeing the expansion of human civilization after the Flood. Chapter 12, though, focuses on one individual, Abram. It is remarkable to see the hand of God in history bring this about.

Hymn for Day 4

As you can imagine after reading these chapters, there are not many hymns based on them. I have chosen one titled “We Walk By Faith” by Isaac Watts that challenges us to walk by faith just as Abraham did.

*'Tis by the faith of joys to come,
We walk through deserts dark as night;
Till we arrive at heav'n our home,
Faith is our guide, and faith our light.*

*The want of sight she well supplies;
She makes the pearly gates appear;
Far into distant worlds she pries,
And brings eternal glories near.*

*Cheerful we tread the desert through,
While faith inspires a heav'nly ray;
Though lions roar, and tempests blow,
And rocks and dangers fill the way.*

*So Abrah'm, by divine command,
Left his own house to walk with God;
His faith beheld the promos'd land,
And fir'd his zeal along the road.*

Chapter 13

This chapter tells of the fateful separation of Abram and Lot.

vs. 3 – This is where he camped in 12:8

vs. 4 – Abram is likely thanking God for delivering him for the troubles in Egypt for direction in the days ahead. Note that Lot is not mentioned.

vs. 6 – Wealth at this time was largely measured in the number of livestock you owned. The number of animals owned by Abram and Lot was too great for the pastures available to them.

vs. 7 – The note about the presence of the Canaanites and Perizzites tells that Abram and Lot did not have full control of the pastures they were fighting over. Also any sign of weakness or disagreement between them could have been exploited by these.

vs. 11 – The area that Lot chose was on the north side of the Dead Sea in the fertile Jordan River Valley. Sodom and Gomorrah were on the south side. Lot does not seem to have intended to end up there, but was too comfortable getting closer to them.

vs. 14-17 – God again reaffirms His covenant promises of 12:1-3.

Genesis 14

This chapter tells of Abraham's rescue of Lot and his paying tithes to Melchizedek.

vs. 1-9 – This is backstory to what is about to occur. A coalition of armies from the east (probably the areas of Babylon, Asshur, and Elam) had invaded and defeated the local kings in the area south of the Dead Sea. The local kings were subjugated for twelve years and then rebelled. The kings of the east returned and wreaked havoc across the region, dominating all that opposed them. Now the armies of nine kingdoms were set to battle on the south side of the Dead Sea in the Vale of Siddim.

vs. 10 – The site of the battle was full of pits full of hot bitumen/asphalt. This dangerous terrain worked against the local kings who were soundly defeated.

vs. 12 – Lot had moved into Sodom by this time (8 years later according to Reese's Chronological Bible) and was taken captive amidst the spoils taken by the eastern kings.

vs. 14 – Abram leads a force numbering only 318 men of his house against the undoubtably thousands of soldiers under the eastern kings. The enemy had by now moved to Dan on the far north end of Canaan.

vs. 15 – Abram divides his already miniscule forces for a sneak attack at night that routs the enemy and harasses them as they retreat over fifty miles northward.

vs. 15 - There is a really neat little Hebraism here. Hobah is described in Hebrew as being to the "left" of Damascus. In our modern times we usually thing of north as being "up", but in ancient Israel, east was "up". If you are headed east, north is to the left. Therefore, Hobah would be north of Damascus, which is exactly where it is!

vs. 17 – As Abram travel south, he is met at the valley of Shaveh (near modern Jerusalem) the local kings that had just been defeated at the Valley of Siddim.

vs. 18-20 – Melchizedek is both the king of Salem (Jerusalem) and a priest of the true God. He is mentioned again in a Messianic prophecy in Psalm 110:4, which is further discussed in Hebrews chapters 5-7. Some have speculated that he is Shem or even a preincarnate Christ. However, the prophecy says Christ was a priest like Melchisedek; that is, a priest outside of the tribe of Levi whose authority was based on his family tree.

vs. 20 – The first mention of tithing (giving 10% to God)

vs. 23-24 – Abram refused to have any dealings with the king of Sodom. Unlike his nephew Lot, he knew not to have ties with the wicked people there.

Chapter 15

This chapter records the sealing of the covenant agreement between God and Abram. This is one of the most amazing chapters in Scripture if you will take time to understand what is transpiring.

vs. 4 – God will still provide the promised heir in His own time.

vs. 6 – A great verse testifying that Abram, like us, was saved by grace through faith.

vs. 8 – Abram is asking God for a sign to seal the promises that He had made him.

vs. 9-10 – The contract being made here is what may be called a blood covenant. The sacrifice of animals was used to signify that if any party in the agreement should fail to hold up their end of the bargain their lives were forfeit. It is as solemn an oath as can be made. Usually the two parties in the agreement would walk between parts of the divided sacrifice as a sign of their commitment.

vs. 11-12 – God delays His appearance. Abram does all he can to protect the sacrifice but succumbs to sleep.

vs. 13-17 – God adds this prophecy to the terms already promised to Abram. Abram's descendants (Israel) would be dominated and enslaved by the Egyptians. This would last four hundred years until God would deliver them with spoils from the victory. The time of deliverance would come in the fourth generation (Levi>Kohath>Amram>Moses). Part of this timing had to do with the judgment of the Amorites. Abraham himself would have a good, long life.

vs. 17 – Again, traditionally the two parties in the covenant walked between the divided portions of the sacrifice to seal their commitments. However, God does not allow Abram to take part in this. The furnace and lamp represented God making the commitment with Himself. The fulfillment of these promises had nothing to do with Abram's abilities or strength. Since God cannot fail it is as sure a promise as there can be.

vs. 18 – These borders for the Promised Land are far greater than what Israel traditionally controlled. The southern border is the “river of Egypt”. Some think is the Nile River but I think is a river border, likely the Wadi el-Arish near the present day Egypt/Israel border. The northern borders is the Euphrates River. This was not accomplished by Abram or even Joshua. David and Solomon controlled a lot of this territory, but some of it was through client kings. The full realization of this promise is likely in the Millennial Kingdom.

vs. 18-21 – These are the Canaanite tribes whose territory would one day belong to Israel.

Chapter 16

This chapter records Abram's second lapse of faith.

vs. 1 – Where did Sarai get an Egyptian handmaid? Probably from their visit there in chapter 12.

vs. 2 – Sarai is appealing to a tradition common in the ancient world, where a barren wife provided a surrogate to raise up heirs. Frankly, this is an attempt to accomplish God's will through human machinations.

vs. 4 – The culture of the ancient world often looked down on barren women. Hagar has in a sense surpassed her former master by having a child.

vs. 5 – Sarai is basically blaming Abram for what has happened and expecting him to fix it, and if he does not, that the Lord should intervene.

vs. 6-7 – Hagar runs away and heads back toward Egypt.

vs. 7 – This is the first mention of a remarkable figure, “the angel of the Lord”. Angels are literally messengers from God who perform their duties faithfully. They do not accept worship and they do not speak with authority. “The angel of the Lord” however, does accept worship and does speak with authority. I believe this figure to be the Preincarnate Christ.

vs. 9-11 – There are here three statements made by the “angel of the Lord”. It is a common occurrence in the Bible to see things appear in groups of three when God is involved. It is a gentle reminder of the Trinity.

vs. 10 – Note that the “angel of the Lord” speaks with authority here, saying “I will...”

vs. 11 – Ishmael means “who God hears”.

vs. 13 – Note that it says the LORD (Hebrew – Jehovah), not an angel, spoke with her and that God, not an angel, saw her.

vs. 14 – Beerlahairoi means “the well of him that liveth and seeth me”

vs. 15 – Abram is 86 years old at the birth of Ishmael.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 5

We see here some the highs (the rescue of Lot, the tithing to Melchizedek, the covenant with God) and the lows (having a child with Hagar) in the life of Abram. Abram was a great man, but a man nonetheless. It was not his personal righteousness that God honored, but his faith in God. Like Abram, our faith may sometimes fail, but the promises of God never will!

Note also the compassion shown by God toward Hagar. Even though she is far from being a hero in Scripture, God still takes time to personally seek her out. While we do not know how this affected her personal faith, there may just be echoes here of the woman at the well in John 4. Christ Himself sought out these weary and outcast women. Oh, the wondrous love of our Savior that seeks those the world casts away!

Hymn for Day 5

There are few hymns that refer directly to these chapters, though there are themes found here woven in hundreds and thousands of songs. Our Hymn for Day , “Melchizedek a Type of Christ”, was written by Issac Watts. It takes up the theme of Christ foreshadowed in Melchizedek, with greater emphasis on the actions of Melchizedek in Genesis 14.

*King of Salem, bless my soul,
Make a wounded sinner whole
King of righteousness and peace,
Let not thy sweet visits cease!*

*Come! refresh this soul of mine
With thy sacred bread and wine!
All thy love to me unfold,
Half of which can not be told.*

*Hail, Melchizedek divine!
Great high priest, thou shalt be mine;
All my pow'rs before thee fall,
Take not tithe, but take them all!*

Chapter 17

In this chapter we see God begin to move in fulfilling His promises of an heir to Abram and establishing him as the father of many nations.

vs. 1 – Thirteen years have passed since the birth of Ishmael.

vs. 5 – God changes his name from Abram, meaning “high or exalted father”, to Abraham, meaning “father of a multitude”.

vs. 6 – This is the first promise or prophecy that there will be kings in Israel, which will be fulfilled 800 years later with the anointing of Saul.

vs. 7 – The covenant with Abraham is “everlasting”. God is not finished with His chosen people of Israel.

vs. 9-14 – The physical sign of the covenant is circumcision. Just in case someone does not understand what that entails, I will quote the definition of the verb from Websters 1828 Dictionary: “To cut off the prepuce or foreskin of males; a ceremony or rite in the Jewish and Mohammedan religions.”

vs. 15 – God changes her name from Sarai, meaning “my princess”, to Sarah, meaning “princess”. John Gill says of this new name “because she was princess over all the princes and people that should come of her, as well as be the mother and princess of all female believers, who are called her daughters, I Peter 3:6.”

vs. 16 – It is through Sarah’s son that the true fulfillment of the covenant will come.

vs. 17 – Even with the longer lifespans of the time, 100 and 90 were far too advanced in age to expect a child.

vs. 19 – Isaac means “laughter”.

vs. 20 – God will still bless Ishmael and he will be the father of many peoples.

vs. 21 – God starts the countdown that Isaac will be born in a year’s time.

vs. 23-27 – Abraham’s faith sprung to action and he obeyed the command of God to circumcise his household as sign of their faith in God’s promises.

Genesis 18

This chapter contains further confirmation of God's covenant with Abraham and foretells the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

vs. 1 – This is a separate occasion after the events of the previous chapter, likely three months later.

vs. 2 – Note that the Lord appears to Abraham, as stately clearly in vs. 1. But it is three men that appear to him. It is tempting to say that is an appearance of the Trinity again, but as we read further it seems clear that this is the Preincarnate Christ and two angels.

vs. 3-8 – Great emphasis is placed on hospitality in the world of the Bible. Here is a great example for the command in Hebrews 13:2 – “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

vs. 6 – The unit of measure here is called a seah, which is roughly 9 quarts in dry measure. Three of these would end up being around 20 pounds of flour.

vs. 7 – I remind you that there was no good way to preserve meat in those days. Killing a clad mean that you intended to eat it all. The amount of meat and bread is quite a feast, through which Abraham is honoring his guests.

vs. 10 – The time had come for the fulfillment of the promise and in nine months Sarah would have a son.

vs. 12 – Sarah overhears and laughs within herself at the ridiculousness of the promise.

vs. 13 – Christ knew what Sarah said internally and did not speak aloud. This is evidence of His omniscience.

vs. 15 – So many times our initial reaction to God's promises is disbelief. I am thankful that He is gracious enough to give us time to faith to set in.

vs. 17-21 – The true mission that Abraham's visitors were engaged in was the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah.

vs. 23-44 – Abraham bargains with God concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Doubtless Abraham's intentions are to save Lot from being caught up in the destruction. God promises to not destroy the cities if 50 righteous people were in them. This is lowered to 45, then to 40, then to 30, then to 20, and finally to 10. Abraham ceases his bargaining at 10, likely assuming that Lot and his family would account for that many.

Chapter 19

This chapter tells of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the awful fate of Lot.

vs. 1 – The two angels that accompanied Christ in the previous chapter arrive alone at Sodom.

vs. 1 – The gate of a city was a place where business was transacted and governmental affairs were settled. The later Greeks and Romans did such that things in the marketplace or forum, but for the world of the Old Testament it was the gate into the city. That Lot was there says that not only did he swell there but that he was integrated into the affairs of the city.

vs. 1-3 – We may note that Lot's treatment of the angels largely mirrors that of Abraham's in the previous chapter. He is well aware of who they are.

vs. 4-5 – Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly wicked places filled with utterly wicked people. Their names have become synonymous with the vilest of sins. The chief illustration of their depravity here is the attempt to seize and rape the visitors in Lot's house. Some today have tried to downplay their sexual sins, sometimes appealing to Ezekiel 16:49-50 to say their chief crime was being inhospitable and uncourteous. In truth, these places were so wicked and perverse that they could have been doomed for any number of sins. The fact that homosexuality is highlighted shows how far down the moral decline of Romans 1:18-32 that they had fallen. See also <https://answersingenesis.org/contradictions-in-the-bible/what-was-primary-sin-sodom-gomorrah/>

vs. 8 – Lot's desperation to save his visitors leads him to an awful choice to offer his daughters to satiate the wicked desires of the people.

vs. 9 – The mob would not be stopped and turned in violence on Lot.

vs. 10-11 – The intervention of the angels saves Lot and his family for this night.

vs. 14 – Lot's daughters and sons-in-law would not heed the warning of their father. At this point they were too entangled in the immorality of the place.

vs. 15-16 – Abraham had asked God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if only 10 righteous were found. Only 4 are brought out of the city before judgment fell, and even these were poisoned by their stay there. Lot was the closest thing to a righteous man there, and he had to practically be dragged out of the city.

vs. 17-22 – Lot bargains with the angels to not have to completely flee from his new home. He desires to remain in the village of Zoar and not the mountain in the wilderness he was told to go to. He is still trying to hold onto righteousness and worldliness at the same time.

vs. 24 – It is interesting to note that there are two Lords here. Another hint at the Trinity.

vs. 24-25 – There is likely a mix of natural and supernatural forces at play in the destruction of Sodom and its neighbors. There are many deposits in the region of highly combustible materials such as oil, natural gas, sulphur, and asphalt. Some have suggested that God used meteors and earthquakes. None of this is to downplay the supernatural character of the events, which were timed so as to allow Lot to leave the area. God often uses natural means in a supernatural fashion to accomplish His will.

vs. 26 – Lot’s wife looked back desiring her old life in Sodom. God either turned her into a salt pillar or debris from the destruction covered her in salt. There are many salt structures like this in the area, and some have been identified over the years as the one that was Lot’s wife.

vs. 30 – After seeing the fury of God’s judgment, Lot changes his mind about staying in Zoar and hides in a mountain cave.

vs. 31-36 – Even after losing his wife, his prestige, and his wealth, Lot had still not hit rock bottom. His devious daughters had not doubt been influenced by the morals of Sodom. Their sick plan was to preserve their father’s legacy, and their own wellbeing, by bearing children through incest. Lot was not a willing participant but was tricked into it through drunkenness.

vs. 37 – Moab means “of my father”. The Moabites are most famous for being the people of Ruth and dwelt on the east of the Dead Sea.

vs. 38 – Benammi means “son of my people”. The Ammonites dwelt north of Moab and were a constant pain to Israel.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 6

The contrast between Abraham and Lot is glaring. Lot chose a direction in chapter 13 that led to his destruction and shame. Abraham, however, was blessed by God and would soon have the promised heir in Isaac. For us, Lot is a warning and Abraham is a model.

Hymn for Day 6

Our Hymn for Day is a practically forgotten text by Baptist pastor John Needham (?-1786). It can be titled either “When Sodom’s Rich But Guilty Plains” from its first line or “Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth” from its third. It is a wonderful recital of the destruction of Sodom and God’s righteous justice in it.

*When Sodom’s rich but guilty plains
To wrath divine were doomed,
Abr’am the patriarch interposed
And thus his plea assumed.*

*“Shall good and bad together fall
And undistinguished lie?
Far be this ever from the God
That rules above the sky.*

*“Shall not the judge of all the earth
Whom righteous acts delight;
Shall not the spring whence justice flows
Do ever what is right?”*

*Thus did the holy patriarch plead
When zeal, with pity warm;
And saw with joy just Lot preserved
From the sulfurous storm.*

*Let God in wrath destroy a land,
Or drown in floods a world;
Guilty they were and did deserve
In ruin to be hurled.*

*What tho' the faint sometimes may smart
Beneath a heavier rod?
He that inflicts the blow is still
A just and righteous God.*

*The ways of Heaven, dark as they seem,
Are not without their light;
The last, that brightest day of truth
Will show that all is right.*

Chapter 20

In this chapter we witness Abraham repeating a mistake he made over twenty years before. Though the fulfillment of God's promises was drawing near with the coming of the promised heir, the faith of Abraham and Sarah could still falter.

vs. 1 – Gerar is about 40 miles southwest of Hebron.

vs. 2 - This is the same mistake made in Egypt in chapter 12. The reason Abraham does this is found in vs. 11. It is believed by most that Sarah, though approaching 90, had been rejuvenated to a younger state to bear Isaac (she is likely already pregnant at this point). Abimelech's motive for taking Sarah could have been lustful or an attempt to ally himself to the wealthy Abraham.

vs. 2 – Abimelech means either “my father the king” or “father of the king”. This appears to be a title rather than a personal name. He is an early Philistine ruler. The Philistines at this time were a tribe descended from Ham. Some time after this, there will be an influx of descendants of Japheth moving south from the area around Greece. History calls these migrants the “Sea Peoples”. Some of these will settle near the Philistines and they will intermix. These later Philistines are the ones that the judges and kings of Israel will battle against.

vs. 6 – God again divinely intervenes before harm can come from Abraham and Sarah's mistake.

vs. 7 – Abraham is called a prophet here. This would further motivate Abimelech to make things right so as not to upset someone so close to God. It also may have been of some comfort to Abimelech because as a prophet Abraham could know that no harm had come to Sarah.

vs. 7 – There is some sort of disease or affliction that came upon Abimelech's household. There is not enough detail to understand precisely what this is, but we do know that when it is lifted in vs. 17-18 that babies begin to be conceived again.

vs. 12 – Half-truths are still lies.

vs. 14 – Although Abraham was ultimately in the wrong and responsible for what had transpired, Abimelech pays restitution to him. This is likely done most to appease God than Abraham, though now that Abimelech knew how close God held Abraham he would certainly want to be in Abraham's good graces.

vs. 16 – Precious metals were valued by weight in these days before standardized coinage. The most common weight, which is used here, is the shekel. A shekel is roughly 4/10 of an ounce. At today's silver price (a very high \$80/ounce!), this would be \$32,000.

vs. 17-18 – See note on vs. 7.

Genesis 21

This chapter tells of the birth of Isaac, the dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael, and a treaty made with Abimelech.

vs. 2 – Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah 90 years old.

vs. 3 – Isaac means “laughter”. He was named as God commanded in 17:19.

vs. 6 – Sarah laughed in disbelief at God’s promise when she heard she would bear a son in 18:12-15. Now all would that hear would laugh in amazement at what God had done.

vs. 7 – Not only was Sarah rejuvenated in her old age to bear a son but also to nurse him.

vs. 8 – It was not uncommon for children in ancient times were often nursed until they were two or three, sometimes older. Some rabbis believed he could have been ten or twelve, which seems unlikely. The great feast held by Abraham likely marked that his heir was no longer an infant.

vs. 9 – Ishmael is in his late teens. We do not know how he mocked Isaac but surely it was in a manner that placed himself as superior to him.

vs. 11-13 – It must be noted that Abraham loved Ishmael. While not the promised heir, Abraham still wanted to see the best for his firstborn son. God reassures Abraham that He will bless Ishmael but the time had come for them to depart.

vs. 14 – Abraham provides Hagar and Ishmael with enough provisions to make it to the nearest settlement. The expulsion by necessity had to be immediate and complete. Abraham was a wealthy man, but in these days much of the wealth was in livestock and not readily available. While not recorded it must be that Abraham further supported Ishmael, otherwise Ishmael could not have prospered as he did.

vs. 14 – Hagar became lost in the uninhabited wilderness, not making it to whatever destination they had planned for.

vs. 15-16 – With their provisions spent, it seemed certain they would die in the wilderness. She found a shady place that would give her son some comfort. She moved further away (according to John Gill, a bowshot is half a mile) and gave in to her despair.

vs. 17-18 – God responds to an unrecorded prayer by Ishmael. We have an appearance again of the angel of the Lord, who promises to Ishmael will live and found a great nation.

vs. 19 – So often our faith gives out just short of the victory we seek.

vs. 21 – Paran is further south in the Sinai peninsula.

vs. 22-23 – The same Abimelech that we met in chapter 20 now seeks for a peace treaty with Abraham. Abraham has been dwelling in in Abimelech's territory and only growing more wealthy and powerful.

vs. 25-26 – The one sticking point in the treaty was a well that Abraham had dug which Abimelech's men had taken. Abimelech was unaware of this and readily agreed to return it to Abraham.

vs. 27 – For the right of dwelling peacefully in Abimelech's territory Abraham gives him this livestock.

vs. 28-30 – The seven ewe lambs were made a separate transaction through which Abimelech certified Abraham's right to the disputed well.

vs. 31 –The name of this place is Beersheba, which means either “well of the seven” or “well of the oath”. Sheba means literally “seven” but also signifies completeness, fullness, or sealed oath. Beersheba is an important landmark in the Promised Land, marking the its southern border. This is reflected in a common phrase in Scripture, “from Dan to Beersheba”. Dan was the far north and Beersheba the far south.

vs. 33 – By planting a grove of trees by the well Abraham is further civilizing this largely uninhabited area.

Chapter 22

This chapter records the Abraham's obedience to God's command to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.

vs. 1 – We do not know the strength of something until it is tested. Abraham's faith is put to the test here.

vs. 2 – We do not know exactly how old Abraham and Isaac were at this point, but most authorities agree that Isaac is in his twenties or thirties. Reese's Chronological Bible suggest Abraham is 133 and Isaac in 33 assuming Isaac is the same age as Christ when He was crucified.

vs. 2 – Moriah means "chosen by the Jehovah". Conservative Bible scholars generally agree that the place is Mount Moriah, upon which Solomon would build the Temple over 800 years later.

vs. 2 – Matthew Poole describes what is mean by offering Isaac as a burnt offering: ".. by the law of the burnt-offering then known to Abraham, afterwards published to all Israel, his throat was to be cut, his body dissected into quarters, his bowels taken out, as if he had been some notorious traitor, and vile malefactor and miscreant, and afterwards he was to be burnt to ashes, that if possible there might be nothing left of him..." Henry Morris writes: "Now, of course, God did not really intend that Abraham should slay Isaac. As a matter of fact, God's words were simply to 'offer' Isaac for an offering; nothing was said about slaying him, though this is naturally the connotation that Abraham would have to place on the words." The test is whether Abraham loved and trusted God more than Isaac.

vs. 8 – I love that phrase, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." God did exactly that for Abraham and did so for us in sending Christ.

vs. 9 – Isaac could have easily overpowered his aged father but submitted to his father's command. Christ also submitted Himself to the death of the cross.

vs. 11-12 – God intervenes at the last moment as it was proven that Abraham's faith was so great that he would offer his only heir. This implies that Abraham trusted that God would have given him another son to fulfill the promises of God's covenant.

vs. 12 – It is another appearance of the "angel of the Lord" speaking as God.

vs. 13 – God provided a substitute for the sacrifice. Christ is our substitute, enduring the wrath of God on the cross in our stead.

vs. 14 – Jehovah-jireh means "Jehovah will see it".

vs. 15 – It is the “angel of the Lord” again who speaks as God.

vs. 16-18 – God again reaffirms that He will honor the covenant made to Abraham.

vs. 20-24 – These closing verses set the stage for Isaac to take a wife from Abraham’s brother Nahor’s family. The important names to note are Nahor’s youngest son Bethuel, who was father to Rebekah. Because Isaac was born so late in Abraham’s life, he is closer in age to Nahor’s grandchildren.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 7

In these chapters we have seen Abraham's faith lapse, rewarded, and tested. We will go through similar times in our lives when the strength of our own faith will be tested. Just because it may be too weak in one test does not mean that it cannot be strengthened to meet the trials ahead of us.

Hymn for Day 7

Our hymn today, "The Lord Will Provide" was written by John Newton in February, 1775. It was included in his landmark Olney Hymn published in 1779, which was the first hymnal to include "Amazing Grace". The song takes up the theme of the Lord's provision from Genesis 22:8 and explores it through eight stanzas.

*Tho' troubles assail, and dangers affright,
Tho' friends should all fail, and foes all unite;
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide,
The promise assures us, The Lord will provide.*

*The birds without barn and storehouse are fed;
From them let us learn to trust for our bread:
His saints what is fitting shall ne'er be deny'd,
So long as it's written, The Lord will provide.*

*We may, like the ships, by tempests be tost
On perilous deeps, but need not be lost:
Tho' Satan enrages the wind and the tide,
Yet scripture engages, The Lord will provide.*

*His call we'll obey, like Abra'm of old;
We know not the way, but faith makes us bold;
For tho' we are strangers, we have a good guide,
And trust in all dangers, The Lord will provide.*

*When Satan appears to stop up our path,
And fills us with fears, we triumph by faith:
He cannot take from us (tho' oft he has try'd)
The heart-cheering promise, The Lord will provide.*

*He tells us we're weak, our hope is in vain,
The good that we seek, we ne'er shall obtain;
But when such suggestions our graces have try'd
This answers all questions, The Lord will provide.*

*No strength of our own, nor goodness we claim,
Our trust is all thrown on Jesus's name;
In this our strong tower for safety we hide;
The Lord is our power, The Lord will provide.*

*When life sinks apace, and death is in view,
The word of his grace shall comfort us through;
Not fearing nor doubting with Christ on our side,
We hope to die shouting, The Lord will provide.*

Chapter 23

In this chapter we will see the death of Sarah and purchase of burial ground for Abraham's family.

vs. 1 – Sarah lived to be 127, dying when Isaac was 37.

vs. 2 – Moses is using names for this place that appear current to his time. The site is in the Judaean hill country about 20 miles south of Jerusalem. Kirjath-arba means “city of Arba” and Hebron means “alliance”. Arba’s sons were defeated by Caleb when he claimed the land in Numbers 13-14.

vs. 3 – At this time, the descendants of Canaan’s son Heth dwelt there (10:15). In Caleb’s time the descendants of Anak lived there. Whether the two people are related is uncertain.

vs. 4 – Abraham has lived in Canaan for over sixty years but had never purchased any land. This is the first and only parcel of land he will own.

vs. 6 – The children of Heth greatly respected Abraham and offered the use of the best of their own tombs.

vs. 8-9 – Abraham has a particular place he desires called the cave of Machpelah, meaning “double” or “portion”. Evidently it was a cave with two rooms, likely upper and lower.

vs. 10 – Note again that business is conducted at the gate of the city.

vs. 11 – Ephron kindly offers to give the cave to Abraham at no charge.

vs. 13 – Abraham refused to accept it was a gift and desires to pay for it. Thus the transaction would be official and final.

vs. 15 – Four hundred shekels is today about \$13,000.

vs. 16 – There was no standard currency like coinage that would be used for over thousand years later. The pieces of silver were carefully weighed at each transaction, not accepted at any face value.

vs. 17-18 – the real estate transaction is finalized and sealed.

vs. 19 – Sarah will not be the last to be buried there. Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah will also be buried in this cave. There is also a very doubtful Jewish tradition that Adam and Eve were buried there before this.

Genesis 24

This chapter tells of the retrieval of a bride for Isaac.

vs. 2 - This is often thought to be Eliezar who is mentioned in 15:2-3 but no name is given here.

vs. 2 – Matthew Poole writes about the method of swearing an oath used here: “ This ceremony was used in swearing, as now, so anciently in the eastern parts, as Genesis 47:29, either as a testimony of subjection, and promise of faithful service, for this rite was used only by inferiors towards superiors...”

vs. 3 – Not only would taking a Canaanite bride for Isaac go against God’s command, but it would also have entangled the family into local affairs as happened to Lot.

vs. 8 – Isaac lived his entire life in the land of Canaan.

vs. 10 – The city of Nahor is Haran, where Abraham’s father Terah died and was buried.

vs. 11 – Camels kneel to rest and to load and unload their burdens. In these warm climates, the women would go to draw water in the morning and evening to avoid the heat of the day.

vs. 14 – The servant sought a sign from the Lord that would direct him to the right bride for Isaac. A camel may drink up to 20 gallons of water if they are sufficiently thirsty. The route the servant took was not extremely arid so they likely would not have drank that much. Still, the commitment by the woman to water the camels was a sign of great hospitality because of the extra labor it entailed.

vs. 15-20 – We see much of Rebekah’s character in these verses. Not only is she beautiful, but kind and diligent. Her name means something like “to ensnare by beauty”, but there is far more to her than just good looks.

vs. 22 – If the weight of the two bracelets combines in 10 shekels, this about \$19,000 worth of gold. Double that amount if each bracelet weighted 10 shekels on its own.

vs. 24 – Can you imagine the relief on the servant’s face when she said she was the granddaughter of Abraham’s brother Nahor? God had providentially brought the right woman to him.

vs. 28 – Rebekah runs to her mother’s house. Some take this to mean her father Bethuel is dead, but he appears in vs. 50. Likely this house was a place her mother had for herself,

not uncommon in that part of the world. It would be no surprise that a young woman would run first to her mother and not her father with such news.

vs. 29 – We meet here Laban that Jacob will later work for.

vs. 32 – Every courtesy of hospitality is being shown to the servant and his fellow travelers.

vs. 34-48 – The servant helpfully repeats everything that has happened in detail.

vs. 50 – Bethuel and Laban can only agree that God's hand of Providence was at work bringing all these things to pass. They seem resigned to this being the proper course whether they approve or not.

vs. 58 – Usually brides-to-be had little say in their choice of husbands. Her father usually did all of these arrangements. Here Rebekah is given the choice of trusting in God's Providence for herself, and she chooses to go be the bride of Isaac.

vs. 59 – this servant is named Deborah and her death is mentioned in Genesis 35:8

vs. 60 – This parting blessing calls for the kinship between Rebekah and her family at Haran to no diminish and that her descendants be many and powerful.

vs. 62 - Lahairoi is the well that God appeared to Hagar at in Genesis 16:14.

vs. 65 – By putting on a veil, Rebekah is not only showing her status as an unmarried woman, but also showing modesty and reverence toward her future husband.

vs. 67 – The narrative speeds through many details here, such as the wedding itself. We see that a good match was made between Isaac and Rebekah.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 8

We have seen the highs and lows of life in today's reading. We go from the sorrow of mourning to the joy of a wedding. God works through all of these.

Hymn for Day 8

Today's hymn, sometimes titled "Hinder Me Not", was written by Baptist pastor John Ryland (1753-1825). He was an early supporter of the missions efforts of William Carey. This text takes the words of Abraham's servant in 24:56 and challenges us to not let anything hinder us in our walk with God.

*When Abram's servant to procure
A wife for Isaac went,
He met Rebekah—told his wish,—
Her parents gave consent.*

*Yet for ten days, they urg'd the man,
His journey to delay;
Hinder me not, he quick reply'd,
Since God hath crown'd my way.*

*'Twas thus I cry'd when Christ the Lord,
My soul to him did wed;
Hinder me not, nor friends nor foes,
Since God my way hath sped.*

*Stay says the world, and taste a while,
My ev'ry pleasant sweet;
Hinder me not, my soul replies,
Because the way is great.*

*Stay, Satan my old master cries,
Or force shall thee detain;
Hinder me not, I will be gone,
My God has broke thy chain.*

*In all my Lord's appointed ways,
My journey I'll pursue;
Hinder me not, ye much lov'd saints,
For I must go with you.*

*Thro' floods and flames, if Jesus lead,
I'll follow where he goes;
Hinder me not, shall be my cry,
Tho' earth and hell oppose.*

*Thro' duty, and thro' trials too,
I'll go at his command;
Hinder me not, for I am bound,
To my Immanuel's land.*

*And when my Savior calls me home,
Still this my cry shall be;
Hinder me not, come welcome death,
I'll gladly go with thee.*

Chapter 25

In this chapter we will transition the narrative from Abraham to Isaac and his sons.

vs. 1 – Keturah, which means “incense”, was married to Abraham after the death of Sarah.

vs. 2-4 – Outside of Midian we know practically nothing about these sons of Abraham and their descendants. The Midianites lived east and north of the Gulf of Aqaba and were usually the enemies of Israel.

vs. 5-6 – Abraham is generous to his other sons but clearly marks Isaac as the true heir.

vs. 7 - Abraham dies at age 175.

vs. 8 – What a beautiful verse! What a blessing it would be to have this said about us.

vs. 9 – The final appearance of Ishmael in the narrative is him faithfully attending to the funeral of his father. We will see more about his descendants later in this chapter.

vs. 9-10 – Abraham is buried with Sarah at Machpelah, see chapter 23.

vs. 11 – Lahairoi is south of Beersheba in the Negev desert, 16:14, 24:62

vs. 13-18 – The descendants of Ishmael lived in the desert regions south and east of Canaan. Many Arab tribes find their origin here.

vs. 20-21 – Isaac is 40 when he married, and Rebekah is probably around 20. It is 19 years before they conceive their twin sons.

vs. 23 – In the ancient world the older son was considered greater than any younger children. This is going to be subverted in this case.

vs. 25 – Esau means “hairy”.

vs. 26 – Jacob means “supplanter”. Even in the womb he was trying to get the best of his brother.

vs. 27 – The twins could not be any more different. Esau was a rugged outdoorsman, and Jacob was a gentle homebody.

vs. 28 – This unhealthy favoritism by the parents helped drive the brothers even further apart. Esau as firstborn and favored by his father was in line to receive the birthright. The birthright generally went to the eldest son, and with it came leadership in the family and a double portion of inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). The problem is that the spiritual character of Esau was lacking.

vs. 29 – John Gill writes concerning the meal Jacob was preparing: “this the Jewish writers say was the food of mourners; and so this circumstance furnishes out a reason for Jacob's boiling pottage of lentils at this time: and hence also they gather, that Jacob and Esau were now fifteen years of age; for Abraham was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, and Isaac was sixty at the birth of his sons; and Abraham lived to be one hundred and seventy five, and therefore Esau and Jacob must be fifteen years old when he died:”

vs. 29 – Quite the twist here as the hunter is empty handed but the homebody has food.

vs. 30 – Edom means “red”. He could never outrun his mistake this day.

vs. 34 – Esau’s heart was only set on the carnal needs of the present. The birthright was too sacred to be treated so flippantly.

Genesis 26

This chapter tells of Isaac's sojourn in the southern Promised Land.

vs. 1 – This was the first terrible famine in almost 120 years in 12:10.

vs. 2 – Isaac was moving toward Egypt and God stopped him from leaving the Promised Land. He stays in the territory of the Philistines at Gerar. This Abimelech is likely the son of the king Abraham interacted with in chapters 20 and 21.

vs. 3-5 – Clearly shows that God's covenant with Abraham now goes through Isaac.

vs. 7 – Isaac repeats the same mistake as Abraham did in lying about his wife (12:12, 20:2).

vs. 8 – Isaac and Rebekah are found out when they are spotted flirting. God did allow things to progress further as happened with Sarah.

vs. 12 – Isaac is branching out from livestock into farming. A hundred-fold return is extraordinary. A third of that return would be celebrated.

vs. 14-16 – The Philistines are beginning to push back at the prosperity of Isaac, fearing he might overthrow them.

vs. 18 – To me, the digging and opening of wells by Isaac was proof of his desire to be in the Promised Land. He was putting down roots for his family to be there permanently. Of course this would face opposition by the Canaanites.

vs. 20 – Esek means “strife”

vs. 21 – Sitnah means “opposition”

vs. 22 – Rechoboth means “room”. He had discovered just how much space was needed between the Philistines and himself.

vs. 24 – God again reaffirms the covenant with Abraham (12:1-3, etc.) to Isaac

vs. 26-31 – Isaac makes a peace treaty with the Philistines just as Abraham did in 21:22-34.

vs. 33 – Shebah means “seven” or “oath”, so Beersheba is “the well of the oath”. The same place was so-named earlier by Abraham when he made his treaty with the Philistines in 21:31. That meaning and treaty must have been forgotten and no longer effective requiring the new treaty to be made by Isaac.

vs. 34-35 – Esau makes two mistakes in his marriages. First, he marries Canaanite women. Second, he marries two wives. All the care taken by Abraham and Isaac in finding their proper brides was ignored by Esau.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 9

Issac is largely overshadowed in the account by his sons, mostly by the poor decisions of Esau. As the story develops further we can understand why God intervened in the customary order of the day to have the birthright go through Jacob. While Jacob has his faults (as we all do!), he is still a man of faith so unlike his brother.

Hymn for Day 9

The author of today's hymn was not given when it was published in the 1791 hymnal named *The Christian's Duty*. It appeals to the example of Esau to warn us to not trade the priceless things of God for the trifles of this world.

*Poor Esau repented too late,
That once he his birthright despised;
And sold, for a morsel of meat,
What could not too highly be prized:
How great was his anguish when told
The blessing he sought to obtain,
Was gone with the birthright he sold,
And none could recall it again!*

*He stands as a warning to all,
Wherever the gospel shall come:
O hasten and yield to the call,
While yet for repentance there's room!
Your season will quickly be past,
Then hear, and obey it today;
Lest when you seek mercy at last,
The Savior should frown you away.*

*What is it the world can propose?
A morsel of meat at the best!
For this are you willing to lose
A share in the joys of the blest?
Its pleasures will speedily end,
Its favor and praise are but breath:
And what can its profits befriend
Your soul in the moment of death?*

*If Jesus for these you despise,
And sin to the Savior prefer,
In vain your entreaties and cries,
When summoned to stand at his bar:
How will you his presence abide?
What anguish will torture your heart?
The saints all enthroned by his side,
And you be compelled to depart!*

*Too often, dear Savior, have I
Preferred some poor trifle to thee;
How is it thou dost not deny
The blessing and birthright to me?
No better than Esau I am,
Though pardon and heaven be mine;
To me belongs nothing but shame,
The praise and the glory be thine.*

Chapter 27

This chapter contains the story of how Jacob received the birthright over his brother Esau.

vs. 1-2 – Isaac believes that his days are growing short, though he will live on for about another fifty years (35:28-29)

vs. 3-4 – Isaac desires to officially pronounce the birthright blessing upon his eldest son Esau but first asks him to go and hunt for the meat he loved to eat.

vs. 6-10 – Rebekah hatches a plan to secure the birthright for Jacob by deceiving Isaac into thinking he was Esau. She has taken it upon herself to do what God surely would have done without the trickery. However, God works through this anyway. In reality, every person involved in this story bears some fault in their actions. Isaac should have been more careful, Rebekah should not have schemes, Jacob should not have acted, and Esau should not have claimed the birthright he had so frivolously traded away.

vs. 11-13 – Highlighted here is the great risk in their actions. If this plan fails, Jacob would certainly be cast out for his impudence.

vs. 15 – The clothes would smell like Esau. Since Isaac's eyes were failing there was little chance of him actually recognizing Jacob by sight.

vs. 16 – The goat hide placed on Jacob's hands and neck were to convince Isaac by touch that he was the hairy Esau . This begs the question: Just how hairy was Esau???

vs. 17 – The meat prepared by Rebekah in the same style as prepared by Esau was the final piece of the deception.

vs. 18 – Some have pointed out that Jacob would not have lied if he had only said he was “the firstborn” and not specifically “Esau the firstborn”. But since he is wearing Esau’s clothes and disguised to feel hairier and came bearing the meal requested of Esau, I think we may be splitting hairs here. Everything Jacob is doing is to pass himself off as Esau by deceit.

vs. 19-27 – Isaac is suspicious but is convinced by the deception that this was truly Esau.

vs. 27-29 – The beautiful blessing of Isaac is recorded here. It is a prayer for prosperity and authority that goes alongside the bestowing of the birthright.

vs. 30-35 – The deception is uncovered as Esau returns.

vs. 36-40 – The blessing of Esau differs from that of Jacob’s in many ways. Both are prophetic in nature. Esau would prosper, but his home would be in the rugged wilderness.

Albert Barnes gives the best summary the future of Esau's people that is prophesied here: "The history of Edom was a perpetual struggle against the supremacy of Israel. Conquered by Saul, subdued by David, repressed by Solomon, restrained after a revolt by Amaziah, they recovered their independence in the time of Ahab. They were incorporated into the Jewish state, and furnished it with the dynasty of princes beginning with Antipater [father of Herod the Great]."

vs. 41 – Esau plots to seek revenge upon Jacob by killing him.

vs. 42-46 – Rebekah intervenes by sending Jacob away to her family in Haran. The primary reason for this was to save his life from Esau's anger, but the secondary reason is that he may find a suitable wife there.

Genesis 28

In this chapter Jacob begins his journey to Haran and has an unexpected encounter with God along the way.

vs. 1-5 – Isaac blesses the plan to send Jacob to Haran. Nothing is said about Esau's anger, possibly because Isaac did not know about it. Here Isaac recognizes that the promises of the covenant of Abraham were to flow through Jacob.

vs. 6-9 – Esau was well aware of his parent's displeasure at the two Canaanite wives he took in 26:34. Seeing that it pleased Isaac to send Jacob to Haran for a bride, he plans his own version of finding an acceptable bride. Instead of going to his mother's family through he goes to his uncle Ishmael's family. Matthew Poolw writes: "...he mends one fault by committing another, and taking a third wife when he had one too many before, and her too he unwisely fetcheth out of that stock which was begotten to bondage, and was utterly uncapable of the inheritance."

vs. 11 – Jacob arrives at this place not through planning but by Providence. It was a humbling place to be, far from wealth and luxury he enjoyed at home. No soft cushions are found to find rest and comfort. He improvises with all that he has at hand, which were the rocks scattered about the place. How wonderful would it be if these were the same stones that Abraham had used for an altar in 12:8?

vs. 12 – B.H. Carroll writes: "That dream was God's method of communicating with this lonely man. The ladder in that dream, according to John's Gospel, represents Jesus Christ, the connecting stairway between earth and heaven, upon which angels descend to earth and ascend to heaven. In that dream Jacob saw a grand sight for any man. Earth and heaven had been separated by sin with earth's inhabitants under a curse. By grace that chasm was spanned by the coming of the Redeemer. Upon that stairway angels come to earth and carry back their reports. Jesus said (John 1), 'Hereafter you shall see the angels of heaven ascending and descending upon the Son of man,' showing that he fulfilled the type of Jacob's ladder."

vs. 13-15 – Isaac had told Jacob that the blessing of Abraham would go through him. Here God tells makes the promise personally.

vs. 17 – Such is the proper response of awe that comes from an encounter with God.

vs. 18 – It would be fitting after such an encounter to build an altar and offer sacrifices to God. Jacob is obviously travelling with few supplies and does not have an animal to

sacrifice. He instead marks the spot with a pillar that he pours oil over as a method of consecration.

vs. 19 – Bethel means “house of God”.

vs. 20-22 – This is the first vow made in Scripture. The “if” of vs. 20 should not be interpreted as Jacob doubting God or the making of a bargain. He is saying, “*When God cares for me and I return I will honor God here and give him a tithe.*”

Devotional Thoughts for Day 10

I have thus far tried to not jump too far ahead into later portions of Scripture and the light they may shine on these passages. I will make an exception here to address the Providential choice of Jacob over Esau. There was far more at stake than just two brothers fighting over an inheritance. God is preparing the nation of Israel and the line of the Messiah. At such an early stage having a carnally minded man like Esau take the lead might prove disastrous. We see the type of nation that Esau would foster in the history of his descendants, the Edomites. God rightly chose the faithful, though rascally, Jacob to be in the line of patriarchs of the Jewish nation.

B.H Carroll writes about this: "In one of the old prophets [Malachi 1:2] it is said, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated." That refers not to the persons of Jacob and Esau, but to the nationalities. Esau was heathen, and Jacob was Israel. None of this work of election in any particular had anything to do with the character of either. None of it with the wishes of the father and mother. It was God's sovereign disposition of the case and touched the descendants rather than the two persons. Hebrews 12:16 brings out the character of Esau a little more plainly: 'Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his birthright. For ye know that when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.' That used to trouble me. It looked like Esau wanted to repent of his sin and God would not forgive him. I will read it to you according to the true rendering: 'For he found no place for a change of mind in the father.' It was not Esau's repentance, but Isaac's repentance. Don't ever misapply that scripture."

Hymn for Day 10

Our hymn today is the classic "Nearer, My God, to Thee", written by Sarah Adams in 1841. The complete five verses of the hymn are rarely published or sung, which hides the fact that it is largely based on Jacob's experience at Bethel. This song was famously played by the band on the Titanic as it sank into the icy waters.

*Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee:
Ev'n though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.*

*Tho' like a wanderer,
Daylight all gone,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.*

*There let the way appear
Steps up to heaven;
All that thou sendest me
In mercy given,
Angels to beckon me,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.*

*Then with my waking thoughts,
Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs,
Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee.
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.*

*Or if on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly,
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to thee;
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee.*

Chapter 29

In this chapter Jacob arrives at the home of his mother's family and begins his family.

vs. 1 – This is Haran, where Terah died in 11:32 and Rebekah's family lived in 24:10

vs. 2-3 – The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown commentary explains the stone covering the well: "In Arabia, owing to the shifting sands and in other places, owing to the strong evaporation, the mouth of a well is generally covered, especially when it is private property. Over many is laid a broad, thick, flat stone, with a round hole cut in the middle, forming the mouth of the cistern. This hole is covered with a heavy stone which it would require two or three men to roll away. Such was the description of the well at Haran."

vs. 4-6 – Thus it is proven that by Providence Jacob had arrived at his destination.

vs. 7-9 – Jacob is advising the shepherds that it was not good for the flocks to be standing in the sun waiting for the water in the heat of the day, but they had no choice until men enough came to roll the stone back.

vs. 10 – It appears that Jacob took it upon himself to roll the stone from the well without waiting for aid. The reason for doing so was so that Rachel and her flock could be the first to drink.

vs. 11 – This is not a romantic kiss, but an expression of love between friends and family.

vs. 12 – The word "brother" is often used for any kinsman. Ancient Hebrew did not have as many names for relations as we do today.

vs. 17 – Leah means "weary". There is much debate about the meaning of the phrase "tender eyed" that describes her. It could be she suffered from an ailment in her eyes, or that eyes were weak or unattractive.

vs. 17 – Rachel means "ewe". Her description is all about the natural beauty she possessed.

vs. 18-20 – Since Jacob had left home without any portion of the family fortune, he agrees to work seven years to pay the dowry price for Rachel to be his wife.

vs. 21-26 – It is almost comical that Jacob, who had obtained the birthright by supplanting his brother through trickery, is now the subject of trickery. Laban switches brides and instead of wedding Rachel, he finds it is Leah.

vs. 24 – Zilpah means "drooping"

vs. 27 – The week here is the traditional wedding/honeymoon period.

vs. 28-30 Laban allows Jacob to go ahead and marry Rachel before he serves another seven years to pay her dowry.

vs. 29 – Bilhah means “bashful”.

vs. 31 – Leah is “hated” in a comparative sense to Jacob’s love for Rachel.

vs. 32 – Rueben means “behold a son”

vs. 33 – Simeon means “heard”

vs. 34 – Levi means “joined”

vs. 35 – Judah means “praised”

If you are keeping score as the two wives of Jacob were certainly doing, the child count is now 4-0 in favor of Leah. This does not bring any more favor upon Leah from her husband.

Genesis 30

This chapter shows the continued growth of Jacob's family and the start of his personal wealth.

vs. 1 – Rachel's jealousy caused her to lash out at her husband in dramatic fashion.

vs. 3 – The carnal emotions of a carnal person led to a carnal solution. Just as Sarah had given Abraham Hagar to wife, so would Rachel give her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob to be a wife. Essentially, she would have a child through a proxy.

vs. 6 – Dan means “judgment”, which is meant here as a vindication because Rachel's scheme worked.

vs. 8 – Naphtali means “my wrestling”.

vs. 9 – Since Rachel could have children by proxy through her maid, so could Leah. Two could play this game!

vs. 11 – Gad means “troop”. The sense is that a host of children were about to be born through Leah and Zilpah. Rachel is certainly not the only petty one in this competition.

vs. 13 – Asher means “blessed”

vs. 14 – Reuben, who is only 4 or 5 years old, finds mandrakes in the field. These are the fruit of a toxic plant of the genus *mandragora*. It is likely that they believed it helped in conceiving children.

vs. 15 – The deal is struck: Rachel receives the mandrakes and Leah receives a night with her husband.

vs. 18 – Issachar means “reward”.

vs. 20 – Zebulun means “dwelling”.

vs. 21 - Dinah means “judgment” as in acquittal or vindication. This is the only daughter born to Jacob.

vs. 24 – Joseph means “added”. If you are still keeping score, Team Leah/Zilpah has 9 sons and 1 daughter while Team Rachel/Bilhah has 3 sons. The only other child will be Benjamin, born in 35:18.

vs. 25-26 – Joseph has served his 14 year commitment for his wives and is ready to go back to Canaan.

vs. 27 – Laban has gotten the best of Jacob in their dealings so far. He is expecting the same if he can keep him working a little while longer.

vs. 30 – Jacob does not need to work to expand his family, but does need to build his personal wealth.

vs. 31-33 – The deal made between Jacob and Laban was that Jacob could have the abnormally colored animals from Laban's herds. Henry Morris writes: "The dominant color traits in Laban's flocks and herds were evidently white among the sheep, black among the goats, and brown among the cattle. Most of the animals were these colors, but there were a few that were spotted and speckled among the cattle and goats, and brown among the sheep. It was of such as these that Jacob's pay would be."

vs. 35-36 – The abnormally colored animals that were already born are removed from the herds and moved far enough away that they could not breed with the rest of the herds that were of the dominant colors.

vs. 37-42 – Jacob is far more advanced in his knowledge of sheep than his uncle Laban. In his experience with his father's sheep and his uncle's, he had come to an understanding of genetics and the passing on of dominant and recessive traits. Many have accused Jacob of using superstitious means to create more abnormally colored livestock, but careful reading and understanding of livestock proves otherwise. The striped rods in vs. 38 could have been used to segregate animals to encourage the proper pairings to produce the desired traits. I do think another scenario is more likely though. The word used in vs. 38 for *conceive* literally means to be in heat. We saw in chapter 29 that the well that was used to water the livestock was communal. Jacob could by these rods induce the animals to go into heat and breed with other animals gathered for water. Vs. 40 tells us that through this breeding program he encouraged the birth of abnormal colored animals without breeding with those already separated for himself. He not only bred the animals for their color but also for strength.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 11

It amazes me how God uses Jacob's family to be the foundation for the twelve tribes of Israel. I have often joked that they remind me of "The Jerry Springer Show". This is only the beginning and we have the rest of Genesis to cover them! I then realize that it is amazing that God uses any human at all. It is only through His grace that we can amount to anything. He specializes in working with flawed people for His glory.

Hymn for Day 11

After reading today's chapters I am sure it will come as no surprise that that there are not really any hymns based on them. I have chosen a hymn by Anna Beeman (1738-1809), who was one of the first American Baptist women to write hymns. It begins with Jacob being blessed by God in a foreign land where he found his wives. It then quickly turns this metaphor into Christ seeking His Bride, and His love and care for her.

*Jacob was found in desert land,
In a waste howling wilderness;
God takes and leads him by the hand,
To promis'd seats of happiness.*

*Christ finds his bride in deserts too,
Yes, in a howling wilderness;
And by her hand he leads her through
To seats of endless happiness.*

*She doth not boast she found him there,
But he found her and brought her out;
He makes her his peculiar care,
Fair bride saith he, you could not doubt.*

*You need not wish to have the care,
Of your salvation in your hands:
Could it be so you might despair,
Of reaching to the promis'd land.*

*My bride the favorite of my choice,
For her this work I undertook;
She's like the apple of mine eyes,
Her name is written in my book.*

*But in our hearts these thoughts will rise,
Can I be one he makes his choice?
Our tears alas! be-cloud our eyes,
While in his love we would rejoice.*

*But oh we've no where else to go,
We throw our souls into his hand;
Lead us dear Jesus while below,
And bring us to the heavenly land.*

Chapter 31

In this chapter covers Jacob leaving Haran with his family and wealth.

vs. 1-2 – It was apparent that Jacob had worn out his welcome with Laban after growing his herds through this breeding program in chapter 32. Sometimes God has to make us uncomfortable where we are at before He can call us somewhere else.

vs. 3 – God tells Jacob it is time to return home and that He will honor the promises He made at Bethel in 28:11-22

vs. 7-8 – John Gill writes about the changes in terms in the deal made between Jacob and Laban – “...he had now served him six years upon a new bargain; that he should have all that were of such and such different colours, which were produced out of his flock of white sheep. Laban was at first highly pleased with it, as judging it would be a very good one to him, as he might reasonably think indeed: and it is highly probable he did not attempt any alteration the first year, but observing Jacob's cattle of the speckled sort, &c. prodigiously increasing, he did not choose to abide by the any longer. Now it must be observed, that the sheep in Mesopotamia, as in Italy, brought forth the young twice a year; so that every yeaning time, which was ten times in five years, Laban made an alteration in Jacob's wages; one time he would let him have only the speckled, and not the ringstraked; another time the ringstraked, and not the speckled; and so changed every time, according as he observed the prevailing colour was...”

vs. 10-13 – An earlier vision is recorded here than we see in vs. 3. This one occurred at the beginning of Jacob and Laban's deal to work for the livestock. I think vs. 13 may be from the more recent vision and Jacob jumps from the older to the more recent.

vs. 14-16 – Jacob's wives agree to leave their homeland, recognizing their future was far brighter with Jacob than Laban.

vs. 17-22 – Jacob slips away with his family and his herds. It takes three days before Laban notices as he has been busy shearing sheep.

vs. 19 – What Rachel stole were small household idols used as talismans for protection or divination. There are far more questions here than we have answers. Were Laban and his family idolators? Did she take them because they were made of precious metals and thus valuable? Was she taking them to use for herself? Was she trying to stop Laban from consulting them to find Jacob? Whatever the case, nothing good comes from idolatry.

vs. 23 – Gilead is the hilly region on the eastern side of the Jordan River. The place they meet is about 250 miles from Haran. Laban travelled lighter and faster than Jacob did and made up for the three day delay.

vs. 24 – God warns Laban to be careful what he says and not mix violent words with peaceful.

vs. 26-30 – Laban meandering accusation against Jacob is full of empty platitudes. When it comes down to it, his only real concern is the return of his stolen idols.

vs. 31-32 – This may be the only time in Jacob's life to this point that he had not been involved in the scheming or trickery. He pledges to put to death the one that stole the idols, unaware it was his precious Rachel.

vs. 34-35 – Rachel hides the idols in the saddle gear of the camels and sits on them. She complains that she was dealing with woman issues and they do not disturb her.

vs. 36-42 – Jacob vents out twenty years' worth of frustrations against Laban.

vs. 43-44 – Instead of admitting to anything, Laban shifts any sort of blame against him by saying Jacob had only prospered because of him. He offers a covenant to save face.

vs. 45-46 – Jacob erects a pile of stones as witness to this agreement. It is formally entered into with a feast as the custom generally was.

vs. 47 – Jegarsahadutha means “the heap of testimony” in Laban's Aramaic language and Galeed means “the heap of witness” in Jacob's Hebrew.

vs. 49 – Mizpah means “watchtower”. The idea is that God is watching both of these men to make sure they honor their agreements.

vs. 52 – Mizpah is settled as a border between Jacob and Laban.

vs. 53 – It may be that there is indication of Laban's idolatry in this verse. If you get very technical with the language he appears to separate the God of Abraham from the God of Nahor, making them to two different entities.

vs. 54 – This was an offering of thanksgiving for the treaty and the settlement between Jacob and Laban.

Genesis 32

This chapter tells of the buildup to the reunion of Jacob and Esau, and of Jacob's encounter with second God at Bethel.

vs. 1 – When Jacob fled the Promised Land twenty years before he had a vision of angels at Bethel in 28:12. Now as he nears home he has this reassuring vision that God's angels were there watching out for him.

vs. 2 – Mananaim means “two hosts”. Jacob had his host made up of his family and livestock, the other host was the angels.

vs. 3 – Seir is the area south and east of the Dead Sea.

vs. 4-5 – Jacob is unsure of Esau's attitude toward him and sends this humble notice to get a sense of his brother's state of mind regarding him.

vs. 6 – Esau had already learned about Jacob's coming and was enroute.

vs. 7-8 – Jacob's arrangement is a sound defensive strategy. He knew he could not defend against Esau's greater numbers. In dividing his family and herds into two, one would have a good chance to escape if Esau attacked the other.

vs. 9-12 – Jacob is placing his trust in God Who had prospered him and brought him thus far.

vs. 13-21 – Jacob sends waves of gifts to Esau hoping to soften his mood.

vs. 15 – KJV – *milch* is “milk” and *kine* is “cow”.

vs. 22-23 – Jacob sends all of his family and possessions to the south side of the Jabbok River and remains alone on the northern side. Jabbok means “wrestler”, which it was probably named after these events.

vs. 24 – This was no mere man. Hosea 12:3-4 calls him an angel, but in vs. 30 Jacob says he has “seen God face to face”. I believe this to be another preincarnate appearance of Christ, just as we saw with “the angel of the Lord”.

vs. 25 – Jacob refuses to let up even when his hip is out of socket. Albert Barnes writes: “Jacob now finds that this mysterious wrestler has wrested from him, by one touch, all his might, and he can no longer stand alone. Without any support whatever from himself, he hangs upon the conqueror, and in that condition learns by experience the practice of sole reliance on one mightier than himself. This is the turning-point in this strange drama.

Henceforth Jacob now feels himself strong, not in himself, but in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

vs. 26 – The importance of the dawning of the day would be that others might see what was happening.

vs. 26 – What sort of blessing was Jacob so desperate to receive? It is tempting to think it is something temporal like wealth, but that does not fit the desperation of the hour. Jacob knew he wrestled with God, so what is it that Jacob would want from Him? It must be confirmation that He would honor the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob, too. It must be that God would reassure Jacob that Esau would not kill him and wipe out his family, but that they would be the heirs of those same promises.

vs. 28 – Jacob means “supplanter” and Israel means “prince with God”. It is by this name that his descendants will be known by: “the children of Israel”.

vs. 29 – Jacob already knew His name. He used it in prayer in vs. 9!

vs. 30 – Peniel means “face of God”.

vs. 32 – Jacob was left humbled by his encounter, but through it he learned to truly trust in God.

vs. 32 – Today the Jews associate this with the sciatic nerve, or *gid hanasheh*, which is carefully removed when slaughtering animals. While this custom is not directly commanded by God, it is the second uniquely Jewish custom in Scripture after circumcision.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 12

Jacob as an amazingly capable and crafty individual. Anything he set his mind to he could do. But what is human strength compared to Divine strength? While Jacob may have thought it was by his own power he prospered, it was always because God was blessing him. When he is at his lowest moment, fearing for his life as Esau approached, he then was humbled enough to truly rely on God. I pray we may learn this same lesson without being taken to such a desperate place.

Hymn for Day 12

Our hymn today, “Wrestling Jacob”, was written by Charles Wesley and originally published in 1742. Isaac Watts told Charles’s brother John that this poem was worth all the verses Watts himself had written. Even though the work is highly praised it has rarely been included in hymnals.

*Come, O thou traveler unknown,
Whom still I hold, but cannot see!
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee;
With thee all night I mean to stay
And wrestle till the break of day.*

*I need not tell thee who I am,
My misery or sin declare;
Thyself hast called me by my name;
Look on thy hands and read it there!
But who, I ask thee, who art thou?
Tell me thy name, and tell me now.*

*In vain thou strugglest to get free;
I never will unloose my hold.
Art thou the Man that died for me?
The secret of thy love unfold;
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know.*

*Wilt thou not yet to me reveal
Thy new, unutterable name?
Tell me, I still beseech thee, tell,
To know it now, resolved I am;
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know.*

*'Tis all in vain to hold thy tongue,
Or touch the hollow of my thigh:
Though every sinew were unstrung,
Out of my arms thou shalt not fly;
Wrestling, I will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know.*

*What though my shrinking flesh complain,
And murmur to contend so long,
I rise superior to my pain;
When I am weak, then I am strong;
And when my all of strength shall fail,
I shall with the God-man prevail.*

*My strength is gone, my nature dies,
I sink beneath thy weighty hand,
Faint to revive, and fall to rise;
I fall, and yet by faith I stand;
I stand, and will not let thee go,
Till I thy name, thy nature know.*

*Yield to me now—for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair!
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak,
Be conquer'd by my instant prayer;
Speak, or thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me, if thy name is love.*

*'Tis love! 'tis love! thou diedst for me!
I hear thy whisper in my heart.
The morning breaks, the shadows flee:
Pure, universal love thou art;
To me, to all thy passions move;
Thy nature and thy name is love.*

*My pray'r hath power with God; the grace
Unspeakable I now receive,
Through faith I see thee face to face;
I see thee face to face and live!
In vain I have not wept and strove;
Thy nature and thy name is love.*

*I know thee, Savior, who thou art:
Jesus, the feeble sinner's friend;
Nor wilt thou with the night depart,
But stay and love me to the end;
Thy mercies never shall remove,
Thy nature and thy name is love.*

*The Sun of Righteousness on me
Hath rose, with healing in his wings;
Withered my nature's strength; from thee
My soul its life and comfort brings;
My help is all laid up above;
Thy nature and thy name is love.*

*Contented now, upon my thigh
I halt, till life's short journey end;
All helplessness, all weakness I,
On thee alone for strength depend,
Nor have I power from thee to move;
Thy nature and thy name is love.*

*Lame as I am, I take the prey,
Hell, Earth, and sin with ease o'ercome;
I leap for joy, pursue my way,
And as a bounding hart fly home,
Through all eternity to prove
Thy nature and thy name is love.*

Chapter 33

In this chapter Jacob prepares to meet his brother, fearing his retribution.

vs. 1 – Jacob again enters a defensive stance as Esau approaches, dividing his party so that if one group was attacked the other might escape.

vs. 2 – You can tell who Jacob valued by the placement here. The bottom tier are the handmaids he had taken as wives and their kids. The next tier was Leah and her kids. The top tier was Rachel and Joseph.

vs. 3 – In this way Jacob exposes himself to danger first. He bows seven times, far beyond what anyone would consider appropriate.

vs. 4 – God had softened Esau’s heart for this moment, and he greets Jacob with the tenderest of affection.

vs. 8-11 – Esau at first refuses the gifts Jacob had sent but Jacob implored him to take them. As wealthy as Jacob is at this point he is still far poorer than Esau. The clues to this are abundant in this passage, such as Esau being able to lead 400 men to meet Jacob yet Jacob could not afford to hire men for a defense.

vs. 12 – Esau here invited Jacob to come with him to his home. This would make sense if Isaac still dwelt in Hebron as it would not be very far out of the way to see their father.

vs. 13-14 – Jacob makes a good excuse to not follow at this time. All of his children are under twelve years old and he has the flocks to care for, many of which are also young. It would be dangerous to press them too hard. But he does promise to visit at some point in the future. If he went at this time it is not recorded.

vs. 15 – Esau offers to lend Jacob some of his men to act as a guard. Jacob was confident in his safety and protection of God now that he knew he did not need to fear his brother.

vs. 17 – Succoth means “booths”. This place is in the Jordan valley where the Jabbock river enters it.

vs. 18 – Shalem, meaning “peace”, is likely the Salim that John the Baptist preached at in John 3:23. It is on the west side of the Jordan and part of the region controlled by the larger city of Shechem, meaning “shoulder”.

vs. 19 – 100 shekels is about \$3,000 today. Though through God’s promise it would all belong to his descendants, for this present time he pays for the right to dwell peacefully in this spot.

vs. 20 – Elelohe-Israel means “the mighty God of Israel”

Genesis 34

This chapter is one of the darker ones in Scripture, as Jacob's rascally boys show their darker side. Like Lot, Jacob had allowed his family to get too close to the Canaanites and their wickedness both hurts them and entices them to evil retribution.

vs. 1 – Dinah, being the only daughter born to Jacob, lacked for female companionship that was near her own age. She is likely now in her teens.

vs. 2 - The Hivites are one of the descendants of Canaan in 10:17. The Bible, history, and archaeology all agree that the Canaanite peoples were extremely promiscuous, even as part of their religion. Shechem likely thinks he is doing nothing wrong or unusual in his actions.

vs. 3-7 – Shechem sends his father Hamor to attempt to arrange a marriage with Dinah. Jacob learns what had already transpired, but his now adult sons were away with the livestock. Jacob kept his cool, but his sons were enraged when they heard what had happened.

vs. 8-10 – There is a difference between the goals of Shechem and Hamor. Shechem only desires Dinah for a wife. Hamor seeks an alliance with Jacob, one that would lead to the blending of their peoples and their possessions.

vs. 11-12 – Shechem desperately tries to make the situation right in the eyes of Jacob's family that he might have Dinah.

vs. 13-17 – The wily sons of Jacob were truly sons of their father. They step in and manipulate the situation to their advantage. Nothing said here is genuine. It is a means to an end that we will shortly see.

vs. 19 – Shechem is more than willing to submit to being circumcised if it meant gaining Dinah. There is more nobility in his self-sacrifice than the others who submitted. Jacob had no other daughters and they sought only worldly gain, see vs. 23.

vs. 20-24 – The greed that drove these men astounds me in that they so readily agree to submit to circumcision and at least embrace outwardly the religion of another. Then again, we still see this today as people choose which church to attend based on how it aids their business purposes.

vs. 25-26 – The full plan is finally revealed. It was never an honest offer made that if these men were circumcised they could have an alliance with Jacob. Simeon and Levi execute

the final stage of the scheme by attacking the weakened men of Shechem. This was something they could not have done except through trickery.

vs. 27-29 – Not just satisfied with bloodlust, they pillage the town and take anything that was of value, including the people as slaves.

vs. 30 – Jacob reprimands the actions of his sons but it is too late. Jacob saw the larger picture that his sons could not yet understand. Jacob and his family were not match for the more numerous and stronger Canaanites. He, like his father and grandfather before him, sought to live peaceably among them. This provocative act could put them in danger and sour any attempts at relations with other Canaanite tribes.

vs. 31 – The sons can only reply that they acted in defense of Dinah's honor.

Genesis 35

This chapter records how God again promises to fulfill God's covenant with Abraham through Jacob, along with an overview of his family and the death of Isaac.

vs. 1 – This is very shortly after the events of the previous chapter. He is called to return to the place where God revealed Himself to him as he ran from Esau in 28:10-22. Jacob understands that is more than just a command to move to a new place but that it is a call to renew his own relationship with God.

vs. 2 – Jacob's first order for his family is to clean their lives up by removing any idols that remained and to clean up themselves.

vs. 4 – It is strange to me that Jacob does not destroy these token of their old lives and old gods. Most commentators think that the choice of the tree was because the Canaanites revered that type of tree and would not disturb the bundle hidden there. My best guess is that this action was something like a funeral service, burying the dead paganism as they turned to the Living God. We see a similar practice in vs. 8.

vs. 5 – The Canaanites are driven by God to retreat as Jacob and his family moved to Bethel. It seems that if God had not intervened there may have been opposition from them after the events of the previous chapter.

vs. 6 – Bethel is about 12 miles north of Jerusalem.

vs. 7 – Elbethel means “the God of Bethel”.

vs. 8 – This Deborah (“a bee”) is presumed to be the nurse mentioned in 24:59 that accompanied Jacob's mother Rebekah from Harah. There is no record of Rebekah's death, which is assumed by most to have happened while Jacob was in Haran. Deborah seems to have been serving in Jacob's family since that time.

vs. 8 – Allonbachuth means “oak of weeping”

vs. 10 – God again tells him, as He did in 32:28, that his name will no longer be Jacob (“supplanter”) but Israel (“prince with God”)

vs. 11-12 – The verses again reiterate that the covenant promises first made to Abraham in 12:1-3 and restated many times were to go through Jacob's descendants. God chose to only use one of Abraham's sons and one of Isaac's son, but the time has come that the nation of Israel to begin.

vs. 14 – This is likely Jacob rebuilding the pillar he had set up in 28:18

vs. 15 – Bethel means “house of God”.

vs. 16 – Ephratah means “fruitful”. This is the ancient name for the town of Bethlehem. See Genesis 35:19, Ruth 1:2, and Micah 5:2 for proof of the connection.

vs. 18 – The dying Rachel named her son Benoni, meaning “son of my sorrow”, but Jacob named him Benjamin, meaning “son of my right hand”.

vs. 19 – Rachel is not buried in the family tomb at Machpelah.

vs. 20 – This monument was well known even in the days that Moses wrote Genesis and is mentioned in 1 Samuel 10:2. There is a site about a mile north of Bethlehem today that is claimed to be the Rachel’s tomb. The current structure there was built by the Ottomans in the 1600’s.

vs. 21 – Edar means “flock”, which makes this the “tower of the flock”. It is referenced again in Micah 4:8. It was near Bethlehem going toward Hebron.

vs. 22 – The crime of Reuben, defiling Jacob’s wife who had been Rachel’s maid so shortly after Rachel’s death must have been excruciating for Jacob to bear. Just as in the case of crimes of Simeon and Levi in avenging Dinah in the previous chapter, there is no record of any repercussion against Reuben here. When Jacob blesses his sons in chapter 49, he does not grant the birthright to Reuben, Simeon, or Levi. We find some explanation as to who received the birthright in I Chronicles 5:2, where Judah, the fourth son, is made the ruling tribe but Joseph received the double portion. Joseph’s sons Manasseh and Ephraim become full tribes as Joseph’s double portion is split between them.

vs. 22-26 – Here is the record of the sons of Jacob through his four wives. We saw most of this information in greater detail in chapters 29 and 30.

vs. 27 – Jacob visits his father who is still dwelling near the family tomb at Hebron.

vs. 28 – Isaac dies at 180 years old. Much of his life is overshadowed by his father and his sons.

vs. 29 – It is beautiful to see the reconciliation continuing between Joseph and Esau.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 13

As we read about these patriarchs of the nation of Israel, we must wonder why in the world God would use such men for His purpose. But that is just the reason He does. Israel did not arise because of the greatness of its fathers. In fact, Israel prospered much of the time in spite of its heritage. When we look at Israel we see not the glory of a powerful people, but the glory of the almighty God at work in their history.

Hymn for Day 13

Today's hymn, "Back to Bethel" was written by B.B. McKinney in 1931. It is inspired by Jacob's return to Bethel and his rededication to serve God. It is a common theme in sermons and song.

*Back to the Bible, the true Living Word,
Sweetest old story that ever was heard;
Back to the joy-life my soul longs to know,
Bethel is calling, and I must go. [Chorus]*

*Back to the beautiful path I once trod,
Back to the church and the people of God.
Out of the cold world of sin and its woe,
Bethel is calling, and I must go. [Chorus]*

*Back to the giving of money and time,
Back to the life of contentment sublime,
Back to protection the world cannot know,
Bethel is calling, and I must go. [Chorus]*

*Back to the prayer-life in Christ I once knew,
Back to its beautiful life-cleansing dew,
Back to help others to conquer each foe,
Bethel is calling, and I must go. [Chorus]*

Chorus:

*Back to Bethel I must go,
Back where the rivers of sweet waters flow,
Back to the true life my soul longs to know,
Bethel is calling, and I must go.*

Chapter 36

This chapter contains the genealogy of Esau's descendants. This would be an easy chapter to overlook as it seems to be a diversion from the primary narrative concerning the founding of the nation of Israel. However, it is further proof of God's blessing on Abraham and the various branches of his descendants. He was truly "a father of many nations" (17:4). This adds a type of nobility to Israel being close kin to other powerful nations.

vs. 1 – Esau means "hairy" and Edom means "red".

vs. 2-3 – The names do not match what we have already seen in 26:34 and 28:9. It is very common in the Bible for people to change their names or have multiple names. We just witnessed this in Abram becoming Abraham and Jacob becoming Israel. This is the simplest solution here. It could also be the case of having names from two different languages, such as when Daniel is renamed Belteshazzar by the Babylonians.

vs. 4-5 – Esau has five sons total.

vs. 6-8 – Esau acknowledged that Jacob had received the birthright and with it the claim to the Promised Land. He moves southeast to the area beyond the Dead Sea to the region around Mt. Seir.

vs. 12 – The descendants of Amalek, meaning "dweller in a valley", would become a nomadic tribe that roamed the regions south of the Promised Land. They would become a hated enemy of Israel and employed terroristic tactics.

vs. 15-19 – Highlighted in Esau's descendants are these 14 chiefs (KJV *dukes*). Though not fully crowned kings they are still powerful regional leaders.

vs. 20-30 – These are not descendants of Esau but of Seir, who are first mentioned in 14:6. Their inclusion in Esau's genealogy appears to indicate that when Esau moved into their area the two families intermarried and became one. Again, the purpose for including this is to add nobility to the origins of Israel as a people who came from a broader family of mighty nations and kings.

vs. 24 – There has been some debate over what Anah found. The Hebrew *yem* (Strong's H3222) is only found here. The traditional reading used in the KJV, by Martin Luther, and based on Jewish tradition is this refers to mules. Jerome, the Catholic translator of the Bible into Latin in the 4th century A.D., seems the first to suggest it means "hot springs" but that is by assuming the word had the same meaning as a Punic word. I much prefer the traditional translation of mules. I think he may not have just stumbled upon mules, but he was the first to breed horses and donkeys to create a hybrid mule.

vs. 31-39 – This is a list of kings over Edom. It is interesting to note that the title is not hereditary but seems to go to the strongest contender after the previous king falls.

vs. 31 – Moses was writing prophetically concerning kings. He knew it was part of God's plan for Israel sometime in the future, as we see in Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

vs. 35 – This verse is interesting in that it is the only mention of warfare in this chapter and for the place the battle was fought. Going from north to south on the east side of Jordan, you would have Moab, Edom, then Midian. That this Edomite ruler defeats a Midianite army in Moab seems to indicate that the Midianites had swept north around Edom to attack Midian, possibly to divide and conquer Edom and Moab.

vs. 40-43 – This final list of chiefs in Edom is a geographical listing of the location of the main leaders and tribes.

Genesis 37

In this chapter we see the jealousy of Joseph's brothers against him that leads to him being sold into slavery.

vs. 2 – Joseph's problems with his brothers start with him reporting back to his father the unspecified misdeeds of Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

vs. 3 – Jacob had been hurt as a young man by his father's favoritism towards Esau. He repeats this error in his own family by doting on Joseph, the eldest son of this deceased favorite wife. The gift of a special, ornate coat made him further stand out, maybe signaling Jacob's choice of Joseph for the birthright (I Chronicles 5:1).

vs. 6-11 – Joseph further incites his brothers' hatred by telling them of his prophetic dreams. The sheaves of grain in the first, and the sun, moon, and stars, in the second, all represent his family bowing to his. These will be fulfilled about 20 years later in Genesis 42:6, but that is no consolation for his brothers at this time.

vs. 11 – Once again (see 34:5 and 35:22) we find Jacob not acting when his sons misbehave.

vs. 12-13 – We see more favoritism here as Joseph is not working with his brothers.

vs. 14 – The distance between Hebron and Shechem is about 60 miles.

vs. 17 – Dothan is about 8 miles further.

vs. 18-20 – His brethren are presented with their opportunity to rid themselves of Joseph.

vs. 21-22 – Reuben's intervention saves Joseph from sure death. The last phrase indicates that he planned on using Joseph as a bargaining chip to get back into his father's good graces after his sin in 35:22.

vs. 25 – Such trading caravans were common in the ancient world.

vs. 26-27 – Judah creates the new plan to sell Joseph as a slave, thus ridding themselves of their annoying brother and keeping his blood off their hands. Reuben is not present as we will see.

vs. 28 – There is no contradiction here in regards to the Ishmaelites and the Midianites. They lived in close and are often seen together, see Judges 8:24,26

vs. 29-30 – Rueben had left while Joseph was sold and not returns to find him gone. This likely had been his plan to return and free Joseph to return to his father, but it is all for nought now.

vs. 31-35 – To finish the deception, Joseph's special coat is ripped apart and dipped in goat blood to make it seem that he had been attacked by some wild beast. This token was sent to Jacob who was convinces his son was dead.

vs. 36 – Joseph is taken into Egypt and becomes property of Potiphar, which is Egyptian for “belonging to the sun god Ra”. He is described as an officer in Pharaoh's court. Interestingly the Hebrew word for *officer* may also be translated as “eunuch”. This is very unlikely seeing he had a wife, but so many officials in Eastern courts were eunuchs that the terms became practically synonymous. The word *guards* may be translated as “executioners”, again two concepts that are tightly interwoven in this time and place.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 14

I know everyone has focused far more on the chapter about Joseph than the one of Esau's genealogy. I want to reiterate here that genealogies are an important part of Bible history. They are testaments to God's grace and providence in the affairs of men. They tell us that everyone comes from somewhere and that blood and background make a difference. So much of Esau's original animosity against Jacob is multiplied through his descendants so that tribes like the Edomites and Amalekites become mortal enemies to Israel. They also testify of the veracity of Scripture, as these careful records have been vindicated in their accuracy through the centuries. Chapters such as these may make for dry reading, but there are wonderful treasures to be found in them if one only takes the time to dig deep enough. In the case of Genesis 36, I believe the purpose is not to uplift the glory of Esau's family, but to show the greatness of the stock from which the nation of Israel came.

Hymn for Day 14

Our Hymn for Day is an English translation of an anonymously published German hymn from around the 16th century. Joseph must have been overwhelmed with despair as he went from his father's favorite to a slave in Egypt. He is far from the only person in the Bible to face such degradations. This hymn uses Joseph, Elijah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as examples that, although our heart may be overcome with darkness, God is still in control and all things work together for good by His mighty power.

*So melancholy why, poor heart,
So heavy and so full of smart,
And still for earthly things?
Resign thee to the Lord thy God,
Who Heaven and the earth hath made.*

*Elijah, speak: Who gave thee bread,
When dearth and drought had overspread
Thy land for several years?
Did not the widow's cruse supply
Her own and thy necessity?*

*When near the jun'per thou didst stay
God sent His messenger away
To furnish thee with food,
Which that uncommon vigor gave,
That thou couldst reach Mount Horeb's cave.*

*Good Daniel: In the lion's den
God ne'er forgot, tho' left by men,
But sent His angel down
To seize the prophet's harvest-mess
For His belovèd in distress.*

*Tho' Joseph, into Egypt sold,
By Potiphar was laid in hold
For keeping God's command:
God raised him up to great renown,
To save that nation and his own.*

*Did not the furnace lose its pow'r
When sev'n times heated, to devour
The three men in the flame?
God sent His angel to their aid,
And made the tyrant sore afraid.*

*Thy plenty, Lord, is still as great,
As 'twas in times of ancient date;
In Thee is all my trust,
Enrich my soul with faith and love,
Then have I everywhere enough.*

Chapter 38

This chapter is the record of Judah's great sin.

vs. 1 – The fallout from selling Joseph into slavery causes Judah to remove himself from his family home and relocate to Adullam, about 16 miles to the northwest.

vs. 2 – Judah marries the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shuah, which means “wealth”.

vs. 3 – Er means “watchful”.

vs. 4 – Onan means “strong”

vs. 5 – Shelah means “a petition”.

vs. 6 – Tamar means “palm tree”. If this chapter is to fit into the time between the sale of Joseph into slavery and his brother's visit to Egypt in chapter 42 (a period of about 21 years), it would mean that Er and Tamar marry in their mid to late teens.

vs. 7 – God has not seen it fit to reveal what sins Er was guilty of to deserve an early death. Before we judge him, we should remember that as sinners we are all guilty and doomed to a death penalty (Romans 6:23).

vs. 8 – This is called a Levirate marriage and was common in the ancient world. When a husband died and left a childless widow, a near kinsmen would marry her. Any children they had would be counted as the deceased husband's. The most famous example of this is in the Book of Ruth.

vs. 9-10 – Onan refused to perform his duty because of greed. He wanted to absorb his brother's estate and not lose any of his own possessions. For his actions God kills him as He did his brother Er.

vs. 11 – A problem arises in that the third brother Shelah is not old enough to be married to fulfill the Levirate obligation. Judah promises his daughter-in-law that she will marry the youngest brother when he is of age.

vs. 12 – Judah's unnamed wife dies in the time waiting for Shelah to grow older so he could marry Tamar. Judah goes with his shearers to Timnah, about six miles from Adullam. This is typically a time of great celebrations like at a time of harvest.

vs. 13-14 – A key detail is buried in vs. 14, namely that Shelah is now old enough to marry but nothing has been arranged between him and Tamar as Judah had promised. Tamar

takes matters into her own hands in order to humble her father-in-law into fulfilling his obligations.

vs. 15-18 – Judah bargains with Tamar, not realizing who she was, for her services as he believes she is a prostitute. He promises a sheep, but provides surety until its delivery by leaving some of his personal items. Through these sinful relations, she conceives twins.

vs. 19-23 – Tamar slips away before Judah can send the promised kid as payment. His friend Hirah the Adullamite cannot find her to deliver the payment. Instead of going around and proclaiming what had happened by looking for the harlot, they decide she could just keep the personal items Judah had left with her as her payment and be done with the matter.

vs. 24 – When it is known that Tamar is pregnant Judah demands her death, which the custom of this time was by burning.

vs. 25-26 – Judah is forced to admit that he was the father of the Tamar's children when she produces the personal items he had left with her. He acknowledges that he is to blame and that the root cause was that he had not given Tamar to Shelah as promised. He claims that Tamar was "more righteous" than himself in this affair, but in reality all are guilty of shameful acts.

vs. 29-30 – Realizing there are twins, the first baby that began to be born was duly marked by tying a thread on its finger as it was being born. However, this first baby pulled his hand back in and the second baby was born fully before the first. Pharez means "breach or burst" and Zarah means "dawn or rising". It is through Pharez that Christ's genealogy goes, see Matthew 1:3.

Genesis 39

In this chapter we return to Joseph and see him tempted by Potiphar's wife.

vs. 2-6 – God's hand of blessing on Joseph is evident. He rises through the ranks of slaves until he is steward over Potiphar's household. Reese's Chronological Bible calculates that this occurs over 9 or 10 years.

vs. 7 – KJV – wot means “to know, to be aware” (Webster's 1828 Dictionary)

vs. 7-10 – Joseph refuses the advances of Potiphar's wife. This places him in an awkward position. He had little or no rights as a slave, and she could easily have him disposed of if he did not give in to her. If he did, he violated the trust of his master and would face his wrath and death. Joseph walks this tightrope for some time by denying his master's wife's advances.

vs. 11 – Joseph violates the modern “Billy Graham rule”. Graham established a safeguard for his ministry by refusing to be alone with any woman that was not his wife. This is good advice and removes the likelihood of temptation and talebearing.

vs. 11-19 – The playwright William Congreve wrote in 1697, “Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.” How true these words are in this situation! Potiphar's wife's affections toward Joseph turned to anger when she tired of Joseph's refusals.

vs. 20 – These ancient prisons are a far cry from their modern versions. Men were treated little better than animals, thrown into rocky cells with no thought of comfort or wellbeing. It may have been preferable to die than to endure prison. Some think that Potiphar did not kill Joseph because he did not believe that he did it.

vs. 21-23 – God continues to bless Joseph in spite of his circumstances. As a slave he rose to be the steward of Potiphar's household. As a prisoner he rises to be something like a deputy jailor.

Genesis 40

In this chapter we read about two of Joseph's fellow prisoners and their dreams.

vs. 1 – Both of these men held offices that required trust. The butler was the cupbearer, selecting and tasting the drinks the Pharaoh took. The baker was the chief cook, whose foods were daily set before the Pharaoh. While the accusation against them is not recorded, it is likely that the Pharaoh believed one of them had attempted to poison him, throwing them in to prison until the investigation was over.

vs. 8 – Remember that Joseph has some experience in the area of dreams (37:5-10).

vs. 9-11 – The men's dreams both relate to their occupations. The butler dreams of a vine with three branches, from which he took grapes and made wine to serve to Pharaoh.

vs. 12-13 – Joseph interprets the dream to mean that in three days the butler will be restored to his former position.

vs. 14-15 – Joseph asks only this simple boon for interpreting the dream: that the butler would take his case to Pharaoh.

vs. 16-17 – The baker's dream is that birds eat the food that he carried in three baskets atop his head.

vs. 18-19 – Joseph interprets this dream to mean that in three days the baker will be hanged.

vs. 20-22 – All transpires just as God had revealed through the dreams.

vs. 23 – One of the saddest verses in the Bible to me. The butler forgets the kindness paid to him by Joseph in interpreting his dream. Joseph remains in prison for another 2 years.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 15

It would be easy to focus on Joseph here, but I want to instead look back on the drama regarding Judah and Tamar. It is such a terrible situation and no one really does right in it. We would be tempted to think that surely no good could come this. But we see in I Chronicles 2:3-15 that it is this from this line that the royal line of David would spring. We already saw that in Matthew 1:3 that it is the line from which Christ came. God can take hopeless situations and bring beauty out of them.

Hymn for Day 15

When God used Joseph to interpret the dreams of the baker and butler, he says in 40:8, “Do not interpretations belong to God?” We something similar in Deuteronomy 29:29, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God”. There is so much we simply do not understand, but we serve a God who knows all things! It reminds me of the famous words penned by William Cowper in 1774, “God Moves in a Mysterious Way”:

*God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

*Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sov'reign will.*

*Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.*

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.*

*His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.*

*Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain:
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.*

Chapter 41

In this chapter we see God bringing Joseph from the prison to Pharaoh's palace, using him to lead the preparations for the coming famine that would drastically shift the powers in the world.

vs. 1 – God's timing left Joseph in prison for two years since the close of the chapter 40.

vs. 1-4 – Pharaoh's first dream is that seven fat cows are devoured by seven scrawny cows.

vs. 5 – I want to make a quick note about the word *corn* in the Bible. There is a difference in how this word is used historically in Britain and the way it is used in America. In America we think of what is technically called maize, but this was unknown to the Old World until Columbus brought some back from the New World. The word *corn* is simply the generic word for grain in most places outside of America. So, these “ears of *corn*” are really heads of wheat or barley. In America, the old usage of *corn* is still present in words like *peppercorn*.

vs. 5-7 – Pharaoh's second dream is that seven good ears of grain are devoured by seven poor ears of grain that had been blighted by dry eastern wind.

vs. 8 – God must have acted in this as much of the divination of dreams is truly chicanery and false. That they could not imagine some answer that satisfied the king shows God's hand at work.

vs. 9-13 – The butler finally remembered Joseph after two years!

vs. 14 – Even in Pharaoh's desperation to understand his dreams, there is certain decorum that must be followed. Joseph cleans himself up before entering Pharaoh's court.

vs. 16 – We must mark the modesty in Joseph's words. He removes himself and gives God any glory that may come.

vs. 17-24 – Pharaoh repeats his dreams from the first part of the chapter.

vs. 25-32 – The interpretation of the dreams is that they refer to the same foretelling. Egypt would see seven very bountiful years of harvest, followed by seven years of terrible famine. The famine would consume everything that could be laid by in the good years.

vs. 33-36 – I think this is Joseph's counsel and not part of the interpretation of the dreams. He advises Pharaoh to prepare for the coming famine by setting aside 20% of the harvest from the coming good years.

vs. 37-44 – Joseph is finally delivered from the prison and exalted by God into a place next to the Pharaoh himself. Joseph’s new role as second-in-command is declared throughout the land.

vs. 45 – Zaphnathpaaneah means “revealer of secrets”. Asenath means “worshipper of Neith” who in Egyptian mythology is the goddess of war and motherhood (she is mother of the sun god Ra), and sometimes shown as creator of the world. Asenath is the daughter of Potipherah (no relation to Joseph’s former master Potiphar), who is a priest at the city of On, which will later be known as Heliopolis.

vs. 46 – Joseph is now 30 years old and has been in Egypt about 13 years.

vs. 46-49 – Joseph is diligent in his work and faithfully creates stockpiles of provisions for the coming famine.

vs. 51 – Manasseh means “God has made me forget”

vs. 52 – Ephraim means “doubled fruitfulness”

vs. 53-57 – It is remarkable to read of the results of the famine. It was not just localized to Egypt but was throughout Egypt, the Middle East, and presumably the Mediterranean. Egypt is the one power that was prepared, so while other nations were weakened Egypt grew only stronger. The stockpiled supplies are sold back to the people, so now Pharaoh and his state grow only richer. The people from surrounding areas come and buy of the supplies also, further weakening them and strengthening Egypt. While everyone else in the vicinity are merely trying to survive, Egypt has become the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth.

Genesis 42

In this chapter we see Joseph's family turn to Egypt (and thus Joseph) for aid during the famine.

vs. 1 – This is probably early in the seven years of famine.

vs. 3-4 – The importance of this task is shown in Jacob sending ten of his sons. He keeps only Benjamin back, who is about 25 years old at this time.

vs. 6 – This is the fulfillment of the prophecy by Joseph in 37:7.

vs. 7 – I have it said by some that there is no record of Joseph ever doing anything wrong. I heartily disagree. We can easily see the actions of his arrogant youth and his failure to protect himself from Potiphar's wife as wrong. I think Joseph had realized that in time his family may come for aid during the famine. He could hold a grudge and deny them any food. He could instantly reveal himself to them. Instead he toys with them. We could explain away a justification for this, as many do, in that he was trying to judge if his brothers had changed in the twenty years that had passed since they sold him into slavery. I find it difficult to ascertain exactly what his motives are, but I am sure he takes enjoyment in what he is about to do to his brothers.

vs. 9-12 – Joseph first accuses them of being spies and acts like he does not believe their story. Through this he is able to learn much.

vs. 13 – Joseph now knows that they believe him to be dead and that his brother Benjamin lives.

vs. 14-20 – Joseph, under the guise of making them prove they are not spies, tells them that they will be cleared only if they go and return with their youngest brother that had not accompanied them. He threatens to kill them if they do not, and takes them into custody so he could judge their response.

vs. 21-22 – The brothers suspect they are being punished for what they did to Joseph years before. This is actually true in a sense, but not in how they suspected. Reuben reprimands the others for not sticking his original plan.

vs. 23-24 – Joseph overhears these words and is satisfied that his brothers regretted what they did to him.

vs. 24-26 – The next part of Joseph's scheme unfolds. He does not keep nine of the ten prisoners as he had previously staid. He keeps Simeon prisoner, possibly because he was the cruelest of the family as seen in his actions in chapter 34. Joseph has grain loaded for

other brothers to return home with, but secretly places the money they paid into the sacks of grain.

vs. 27-28 – Only one of the brothers discovers the hidden money while headed back home. We must presume they are closer to home than to Egypt because the how the story unfolds only makes sense if that is the case. If they were only a short distance from Egypt, they likely would have been too frightened to continue home until the issue were resolved.

vs. 29-34 – The nine returning brothers report back to Jacob of the events in Egypt and how they are expected to return with Benjamin to prove themselves and secure Simeon's release.

vs. 35-38 – The matter is further complicated when they discover the rest of the money in the sacks of food. They will surely be accused of theft when and if they return to Egypt. Jacob is unwilling to risk losing Benjamin by sending him to Egypt. Rueben even swears on the lives of his two sons that he would make sure Benjamin would be brought back safely. Still Jacob is unmoved.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 16

We cannot read this section of Scripture without marveling at God's providence. He knew that there would be a great famine that would endanger the family He had promised to bless and become a great nation. It was no accident what had befallen Joseph. God had put him in Egypt and set things in motion so that through him the nation of Israel would endure. We may not always understand what He is doing, but we know He is doing something! Hold fast to the promise of Romans 8:28!

Hymn for Day 16

Our hymn today is technically not a hymn at all. It is a reworking of a psalm into a metrical form, which was very popular in English sacred music. This version of Psalm 105 is from Tate and Brady's 1696 psalter "A New Version of the Psalms of David", which was very popular in the 1700's.

*O render Thanks and bless the Lord;
invoke his sacred Name;
Acquaint the Nations with his Deeds,
his matchless Deeds proclaim,
Sing to his Praise, in lofty Hymns
his wondrous Works rehearse;
Make them the Theme of your Discourse,
and Subject of your Verse.*

*Rejoice in his Almighty Name,
alone to be ador'd;
And let their Hearts o'erflow with Joy,
that humbly see the Lord.
Seek ye the Lord, his saving Strength
devoutly still implore;
And where he's ever present, seek
his Face for evermore.*

*The Wonders that his Hands have wrought,
keep thankfully in Mind;
The righteous Statutes of his Mouth,
and Laws to us assign'd.
Know ye his Servant Abr'am's Seed
and Jacob's chosen Race,
He's still our God, his Judgments still
throughout the Earth take place.*

*His Cov'nant he hath kept in Mind
for num'rous Ages past,
Which yet for thousand Ages more,
in equal Force shall last.
First sign'd to Abr'am, next by Oath
to Isaac made secure;
To Jacob and his Heirs a Law
for ever to endure:*

*That Canaan's Land should be their Lot,
when yet but few they were:
But few in Number, and those few
all friendless Strangers there.
In Pilgrimage, from Realm to Realm,
securely they remov'd;
Whilst proudest Monarchs for their sakes,
severely he reprov'd:*

*"These mine Anointed are, said he,
"let none my Servants wrong,
"Nor treat the poorest Prophet ill
"that does to me belong."
A Dearth at last, by his Command,
did through the land prevail;
'Till Corn, the chief Support of Life,
sustaining Corn did fail.*

*But his indulgent Providence
had pious Joseph sent,
Sold into Egypt, but their Death
who sold him to prevent.
His Feet with heavy Chains were crush'd,
with Calumny his Fame;
'Till God's appointed Time and word
to his Deliv'rance came.*

*The King his Sov'reign order sent,
and rescu'd him with Speed;
Whom private malice had confin'd,
the People's ruler freed.
His Courts, Revenues, Realms, were all
subjected to his Will;
His greatest Princes to control,
and teach his Statesmen Skill.*

Part II

*To Egypt then, invited Guests,
half-famish'd Isr'el came;
And Jacob held, by Royal Grant,
the fertile Soils of Ham.
Th' Almighty there with such Increase
his People multiply'd,
'Till with their proud Oppressors they
in Strength and Number vy'd.*

*Their vast Increase th' Egyptian Hearts
with jealous Anger fir'd,
'Till they his Servants to destroy
by treach'rous Arts conspir'd.
His Servant Moses then he sent,
his chosen Aaron too;
Empower'd with Signs and Miracles
to prove their Mission true.*

*He call'd for Darkness, Darkness came,
Nature his Summons knew;
Each Stream and Lake, transform'd to Blood,
the wand'ring Fishes slew.
In putrid Floods, throughout the Land,
the Pest of Frogs was bred;
From noisome Fens sent up to croak
at Pharaoh's Board and Bed.*

*He gave the Sign, and Swarms of Flies
came down in cloudy Hosts;
Whilst Earth's enlivin'd Dust below
bread Lice through all their Coasts.
He sent them batt'ring Hail for Rain,
and Fire for cooling Dew.
He smote their Vines, and Forest Plants,
and Garden's Pride o'erthrew.*

*He spake the word, and Locusts came,
and Caterpillars join'd;
They prey'd upon the poor Remains
the Storm had left behind.
From Trees to Herbage they descend,
no verdant Thing they spare;
But like the naked fallow Field,
leave all the Pastures bare.*

*From Fields to Villages and Towns,
commission'd Vengeance slew
One fatal Stroke their eldest Hopes
and Strength of Egypt flew.
He brought his Servants forth, enrich'd
with Egypt's borrow'd Wealth;
And, what transcends all Treasures else,
enrich'd with vig'rous Health.*

*Egypt rejoic'd, in hopes to find
her Plagues with them remov'd;
Taught dearly now to fear worse Ills
by those already prov'd.*

*Their shrouding Canopy by Day
a journeying Cloud was spread:
A fiery Pillar all the Night
their desart Marches led.*

*They long'd for Flesh; with Ev'ning Quails
he furnish'd ev'ry Tent:
From Heav'n's own Granary, each Morn,
the Bread of Angels sent.
He smote the rock; whose flinty Breast
pour'd forth a gushing Tide,
Whose flowing Stream, where'er they march'd,
the Desart's Drought supply'd.*

*For still he did on Abr'am's Faith
and ancient League reflect;
He brought his People forth with Joy,
with Triumph his Elect.
Quite rooting out their Heathen Foes
from Canaan's fertile soil,
To them in cheap Possession gave
the Fruit of others Toil:*

*That they his Statutes might observe,
his sacred Laws obey.
For Benefits so fast, let us
our Songs of Praise repay.*

Chapter 43

In this chapter we see Jacob reluctantly sending his sons, including Benjamin, back to Egypt to purchase more food.

vs. 1 – This is probably the next year after the events of the previous chapter.

vs. 2 – Jacob wants to send the same brothers, minus Simeon who is still incarcerated in Egypt and Benjamin who he does not want to lose, to Egypt to buy more food as they did the previous year.

vs. 3-5 – Judah refuses to go unless Benjamin accompanies them, as Joseph had commanded them to do.

vs. 6-7 – Jacob blames them for putting him in this situation. It is a true accusation but not for the reasons he thinks. He thinks they should not have told the Egyptians about their youngest brother back home. In reality, the only reason they are going to Egypt is because the brothers had sold Joseph into slavery and God providentially placed him atop the Egyptian government.

vs. 8-10 – Judah promises his own life as surety for Benjamin's safe return. He blames his father in part for their predicament in that he did not allow Benjamin to go back with them immediately upon their return in the previous chapter

vs. 11-14 – Jacob has no choice but to send Benjamin with his brothers to Egypt. He prepares to send a gift with them to hopefully soften the response of Joseph. He also sends the money that Joseph had sent back along with an additional doubled amount to pay for the grain. He is doing everything in his power to try to sway the situation in his favor.

vs. 15-16 – For the first time in twenty years Joseph sees his younger brother Benjamin. Seeing him helped assure Joseph that it was safe to attempt to reconcile with his family.

vs. 16-18 – Joseph prepares to eat the midday meal with his brothers. This makes them fear another plot is at work against them.

vs. 19-22 – The brothers attempt to plead their innocence regarding their money they fund returned in their sacks of grain.

vs. 23-25 – The steward speaks kindly to the brothers. Through words and deeds his attempts to set their minds at ease. Simeon is brought from his captivity to join them and they are treated as honored guests.

vs. 26-28 – The brothers present Joseph with the gifts their father had sent. He finds out that Jacob is alive and well.

vs. 29-30 – What a beautiful scene when Joseph sees his younger brother for the first time in 20 years. His heart is so moved that he excuses himself to weep privately.

vs. 31-34 – The setting of the feast is described. No one can eat until their master Joseph returns and gives the command to begin. The custom of the time did not allow the Egyptians and Hebrews to eat together, so the two groups were separated. As the brothers are set in their places, they discover they have been set in order from eldest to youngest. In this small detail Joseph was trying to communicate that he knew more about them than they realized. Benjamin was treated grandly, with five times more food is placed before him compared to the others.

Genesis 44

In this chapter we see Joseph's plan completed and the softened hearts of his brothers laid bare.

vs. 1-2 – The next phase of Joseph's testing of his brothers involved repeating the return of their money in the sacks of grain. Also Joseph's personal cup was placed in the sack belonging to Benjamin.

vs. 3-6 – The brothers depart the next day, but Joseph sends his steward after them to claim they have stolen from Joseph.

vs. 7-9 – The brothers deny any wrongdoing. They unknowingly condemn Benjamin by saying that whoever had the missing cup would be put to death.

vs. 10-13 – The search, conducted oldest to youngest, reveals the cup in the possession of Benjamin. No mention is made of the money being found that had also been placed in the bags. We can only assume that Joseph only focused the ruse on the theft of the cup with little concern for the money. Egypt had much money, but Joseph only had the one cup he used. The brothers ripped their robes, a sign of great despair and remorse.

vs. 14 – Note that it is Judah who is the spokesman here. He seems placed as the leader instead of the eldest Reuben. To explain why this, revisit the note on 35:22.

vs. 16 – Judah, as spokesman, for the brothers, does not mount a defense but puts them all at the mercy of Joseph. This is significant. They could have blamed Benjamin and possibly escaped, but they all willingly laid down their lives in attempt to protect their youngest brother.

vs. 17 – Joseph's judgment is that the obviously guilty party, Benjamin, would have to remain in Egypt and become a slave.

vs. 18-32 – Judah lays out their predicament before Joseph. Jacob had very reluctantly allowed Benjamin to come to Egypt with them that Judah believes the shock of him not returning would kill Jacob. In vs. 28 Judah makes a partial confession about what they had done to Joseph, not telling the whole truth but repeating the cover story that assumed he had been killed.

vs. 33-34 – Judah offers himself as substitute for Benjamin, forfeiting his own life so that his brother could return.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 17

I want to highlight something that Joseph does that is sadly missing many today, especially our men. Seven times we find Joseph weeping:

- 42:24 – when his brothers first came to Egypt and he overhears their words while he kept them incarcerated for three days.
- 43:30 – when he sees Benjamin for the first time in twenty years.
- 45:2 – after he reveals his identity to his brothers.
- 45:15-16 – when he sends his brothers back to bring Jacob with them to dwell in Egypt.
- 46:29 – when he is reunited with Jacob.
- 50:1 – when Jacob died.
- 50:17 – when he heard how his brothers still feared him.

So many today have lost such passion. Those that shed tears have been deemed weak. We would do well to remember that our Lord Himself wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41) and at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). “The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” – Psalm 34:18

Hymn for Day 17

Our hymn today, written by John Newton, takes up the theme of Joseph, specifically his forgiveness and compassion on his brothers, and uses it as a picture of Christ’s love for sinners.

*When Joseph his brethren behold,
Afflicted and trembling with fear;
His heart with compassion was fill'd,
From weeping he could not forbear;
A while his behaviour was rough,
to bring their past sins to their minds;
But when they were humbled enough,
He hasted to shew himself kind.*

*How little they thought it was he
Whom they had ill-treated and sold!
How great their confusion must be,
As soon as his name he had told!
"I am Joseph, your brother he said,
"And still to my heart you are dear;
"You sold me, and thought i was dead,
"But God, for your sakes sent me here."*

*Though greatly distressed before,
When charg'd with purloining the cup;
"They now were confounded much more,
Not one of them durst to look up,
"Can Joseph, whom we would have slain,,
"Forgive us the evil we did?
"And will he our household maintain?
"O this is a brother indeed!"*

*Thus, dragg'd by my conscience, I came,
And laden with guilt to the Lord;
Surrounded with terror and shame,
Unable to utter a word:
At first he look'd stern and severe,
What anguish then pierced my heart;
Expecting each moment to hear
The sentence, "Thou cursed depart."*

*But oh! what surprise when he spoke,
While tenderness beam'd in his face;
My heart then to pieces was broke,
O'erwhelm'd and confounded by grace;
"Poor sinner, I know thee full well,
"By thee I was sold and was slain;
"But I died to redeem thee from hell,
"And raise thee in glory to reign.*

*"I am Jesus, whom thou hast blasphem'd,
"And crucify'd often afresh;
"But let me henceforth be esteem'd
"Thy brother, thy bone, and thy flesh;
"My pardon I freely bestow,
"Thy wants I will fully supply;
"I'll guide thee and guard thee below,
"And soon will remove thee on high.*

*"Go publish to sinners around,
That they may be willing to come,
The mercy which now you have found,
And tell them that yet there is room."
Oh, sinners, the message obey!
No more vain excuses pretend;
But come without further delay,
To Jesus, our brother and friend.*

Chapter 45

In this chapter we find Joseph finally revealing his identity to his brothers.

vs. 1 – Judah's willingness to substitute himself for Benjamin in the closing of the previous chapter prompts Joseph to privately reveal his true identity to his brothers.

vs. 2 – Joseph's emotions boil over and he weeps before he can tell them who he is.

vs. 3 – Up until this point Joseph has spoken through an interpreter. Now he speaks in the familiar Hebrew language to his brethren. The sudden change in demeanor and language added to the shock of his revealed identity.

vs. 4-8 – Joseph places no guilt on his brothers, recognizing the Providence that had brought him to Egypt so that he would be in place to sustain his family through the terrible famine that was only going to worsen.

vs. 9-13 – Joseph tells his brothers to return to Canaan and fetch their father. All of his family would be provided for and dwell in the land of Goshen, the fertile region in the eastern side of the Nile River delta.

vs. 14-15 – What a reunion this must have been!

vs. 16-20 – Pharaoh hears about Joseph's family and immediately puts everything into motion to bring Jacob and all his family to settle with honor in Egypt.

vs. 21-23 – The brothers are provided with not just provisions for the journey, but are sent with gifts. Benjamin and Jacob receive special honors in this.

vs. 24-25 – They likely travelled along the trade route that followed the Mediterranean shore until entering Canaan and then turning east to find Jacob at Hebron.

vs. 26-28 – Jacob can hardly believe the news that Joseph lives but cannot deny the evidence of the great gifts that had been sent. I imagine his sons confessing to what they had done to Joseph helped also. Jacob, though 130 years old, determines to go to Egypt and reunite with his long lost son.

Genesis 46

In this chapter we have the account of Jacob's travelling to Egypt along with a record of his offspring.

vs. 1 – Jacob pauses his journey to Egypt at Beersheba. If you recall the notes from 21:31, this is often considered the southern border of the Promised Land.

vs. 2-4 – Whatever apprehensions Jacob had in making the journey disappear as God appears to him in a vision. It was God's will that he go into Egypt and the promises made to Abraham would still happen through his family. His descendants will return to the Promised Land and not stay in Egypt forever. The final phrase of vs. 4 about Joseph closing his eyes says that he will be reunited with Joseph before he dies.

vs. 5-7 – What a sight this great caravan must have been! Jacob, his family, their herds, and all their possessions make their way to Egypt.

vs. 8-27 – Here is the reckoning of Jacob's family at this time as he enters Egypt. There are a number of curious features here. Er and Onan in vs. 33 had already died in chapter 38. Four great-grandchildren are listed, being the two sons of Pharez in vs. 12 and the two sons of Beriah in vs. 17. Dinah in vs. 15 is the only daughter mentioned and Serah in vs. 17 is the only granddaughter. The wives of the sons are overlooked, outside of a passing reference in vs. 10 and Joseph's wife in vs. 20.

vs. 10 – It appears Simeon had children through at least two women, the mother of Shaul being "a Canaanitish woman". We do not have enough details to speculate if she was not his wife, was his second wife after his first wife passed, or was one of multiple wives. The fact that she is described as being from Canaan seems to indicate that it was unusual for the sons of Jacob to marry Canaanite wives.

vs. 15 – This verse says there are 33 total offspring through Leah, yet there are 34 names. It is tempting to not include Dinah since she is a daughter; but the only other female, Serah in vs. 17, is including in count for Zilpah. The best solution here is to remember that these are the family members he brought into Egypt (vs. 7 and 27). Er and Onan were already dead, so they should not be included. Some try to remove the sons of Pharez claiming he was too young, but Reese's Chronological Bible says he could be married by age 15 and this work. Anyway, this makes the total 32. When we read in vs. 27 that the total of all the people was 70 it implies that Jacob is one of those 70. So, Jacob is probably included in the count with his first wife.

vs. 26 – The number 66 is the total number from the roll in the previous verses when not including Jacob (note it says these “came with” him so he is excluded in the count), Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim. As a side note, Stephen says in Acts 7:14 that it was 75 souls and not 66. This seems to include the nine surviving wives of the sons, assuming Judah and Simeon were widowers, but we will deal with that when we get there.

vs. 27 – This number is the total combined number of the totals in vs. 15, 18, 22, and 25 ($33+16+14+7=70$). Unlike the count in the previous verse, this one does include Jacob in “house of Jacob”.

vs. 28 – Judah is sent ahead so that Joseph could meet his father and family in Goshen.

vs. 29-30 – After 22 years Jacob and his beloved son are reunited. Joseph can only weep while his father finally finds the peace that has alluded him for so long.

vs. 31-34 – Joseph prepares his family to meet Pharaoh. One curious Egyptian custom of this time was that they despised shepherds. Joseph instructs them to downplay their flocks of sheep and highlight their herds of cattle.

Genesis 47

In this chapter we see God's provision caring for His people through the famine.

vs. 3-4 – Joseph's brothers ignore his advice from the previous chapter and proudly proclaim they are shepherds. They use their flocks as an excuse to stay separated from Egyptians.

vs. 5-6 – Pharaoh graciously offers any choice of land for Jacob's family, but they choose to settle in Goshen. He also offers employment in caring for his herds of cattle.

vs. 7 – Pharaoh respects the aged Jacob and allows him to pronounce a blessing upon the ruler.

vs. 9 – Jacob at age 130, a considerable age for this time, says that his days had not been easy. We have seen his troubles at home with Esau, his troubles with Laban, and his troubles with his children. It is wonderful here to see a happy and peaceful retirement.

vs. 11 – Goshen is called here the land of Rameses. This name appears in Exodus 1:11 as the name of a city built later by Hebrew slaves and it is the name of where the Israelites began their exodus journey from in Exodus 12:37. The two names are either synonymous or perhaps Rameses is a subregion of Goshen.

vs. 13 – The terrible famine continues. If it was not evident how important God providing for his people was, we surely see it here.

vs. 14-17 – Joseph oversees one of the most amazing transformations of a government in all of history. All the wealth and power in Egypt are going to be reallocated and centralized into Pharaoh's control. It begins here as all precious metals used in trade have been paid to Pharaoh for food. A new offer is made, and the people now trade their cattle for food.

vs. 18-20 – With all the wealth and cattle now controlled by Pharaoh, another offer is made and the people trade their land for food.

vs. 21-22 – The Egyptian government continues to grow in power and people lose their individual freedoms. They are now vassals of the state and Joseph relocates many people to put them in places where they can best serve the state. The one class unaffected is the priestly class, which were always a powerful faction in Egyptian history.

vs. 23-26 – The Egyptian people are now made to work for the state as tenant farmers. They are subsidized by the state and pay 20% of their harvest as a tax.

vs. 27 – It is quite the contrast as the Egyptians grow poorer and weaker the Hebrews grow richer and more powerful. We can probably begin to trace at this point the hatred against the Hebrews that will lead them to being enslaved.

vs. 28-31 – Joseph here is 46 and Jacob 147. Jacob senses the end of his earthly life approaching has Joseph swear that he will be buried with Abraham and Isaac at Machpelah.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 18

Modern society is so self-centered that we usually only think about the will and purposes of God on an individual, personal level. What Joseph endured from the pit, to Potiphar's house, to prison, and finally to the palace must have left him with many questions along the way. Joseph's story really not about him. It is about God using him for the good of his family. What we may endure in our own lives may not necessarily for our own good, but God works all for good in His own way.

Hymn for Day 18

Our hymn today was translated by Joseph Morris in 1854 from an old Welsh hymn. That is all I can find out about it. It looks at God's care for the children of Israel in putting them in the rich pastures of Goshen and asks God to so care for Christians today.

*Fix a dwelling, Lord, in Goshen—
Shall thine Israel be denied?
From thy shining exaltation,
Deign to bow, and here abide:
Dwell among thy pilgrim people,
Where the tribes to praise Thee come,
Nor depart, Redeemer, from us,
Till the final day of doom.*

Chapter 48

In this chapter Jacob blesses Joseph's two sons.

vs. 1 – This is a continuation from the previous chapter as Jacob at 147 years old prepares for his soon departure from this life. Joseph takes his two sons so that their grandfather can bless them. Manasseh, the firstborn, is 25 and Ephraim is 24.

vs. 2 – I have not commented on it previously, but it is interesting how Jacob is sometimes called Jacob and sometimes Israel. In this verse he is called by both names.

vs. 3 – Luz means “almond tree”

vs. 3-4 – Jacob recounts his encounters with God at Bethel, which is also called Luz, in 28:10-19 and 35:6-13

vs. 5-7 – Jacob in a sense adopts Manasseh and Ephraim, making them equals to Joseph and his brothers. Part of his rationale for this was that it effectively increased the number of sons of his favorite wife Rachel, who died before she could bear more than two sons. Joseph's two sons will be the fathers of two of the twelve tribes of Israel.

vs. 8-10 – Jacob's eyesight had largely failed at this point, which is not surprising since his father Isaac had such problems the latter part of his life. He is unable to tell the two sons apart by sight.

vs. 11 – What a blessing, that God had honored the prayer of Jacob to see his lost son again! What a further blessing that was multiplied by God in that he also saw that son's sons! God so often pours out from His grace far more than we ask.

vs. 13-14 – Joseph positioned his sons so that Manasseh, the firstborn, would be at Isaac's right hand and Ephraim on his left. In the Biblical world the right-hand side was the place of greatest honor. But God providentially and prophetically moves so that Isaac first places his right hand on the Ephraim and then his left on Manasseh. Joseph had bowed himself to the ground and did not see this at first.

vs. 15-16 – Jacob's blessing is that the promises made through Abraham, Isaac, and himself. He calls them his own sons.

vs. 17-18 – Joseph sees the mix up and protests that Manasseh should have had the higher honor in the blessing.

vs. 19-20 – Jacob refuses to change his blessing and prophesies that, though both boys would found mighty tribes, Ephraim's would be greater than his older brother. The record of

history in Scripture bears this out, especially in the Divided Kingdom period after Solomon's death where Ephraim was the leading tribe in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

vs. 21-22 – The final blessing was reserved for Joseph. God would continue to be with him, and he would return from Egypt to the Promised Land. This occurs briefly when they go to bury Jacob and then permanently when his remains are interred there in Joshua 24:32. He grants him a specific piece of land; the only land he truly held deed to. This was at Shechem where he purchased a field in 33:19 and then gained more area after his sons slaughtered the inhabitants of Shechem in 34:26-29

Genesis 49

In this chapter Jacob gathers his sons together and pronounces prophetic blessings on each.

vs. 3-4 – **Rueben**, firstborn, had forfeited his birthright by his sin in 35:22. His tribe would never be great.

vs. 5-7 – **Simeon** and **Levi** are dealt with together. They had linked themselves in their attack on Shechem in 34:26-31. The tribe of Levi had no tract of territory for their own, but were dispersed in cities throughout the Promised Land. The tribe of Simeon had settlements dispersed through southern Judah and at times sought out new territories (see I Chronicles 4:38-43).

vs. 8-12 – **Judah** is here prophesied to not only be a strong tribe but the one that one rule of the others. We find in vs. 10 a prophesy of the Messiah coming from this tribe, calling him Shiloh, meaning “peaceful one”. They will be a prosperous people. We see later this is the tribe of David and Christ.

vs. 13 – **Zebulon** had its territory in the northern Promised Land, west of the Sea of Galilee. It had territory that bordered the Phoenicians in Sidon.

vs. 14-15 – **Issachar** had a territory southwest of the Sea of Galilee. They were prosperous but not powerful.

vs. 16-18 – **Dan** would produce one Judge in Samson in Judges 13:24-25. Their history will be full of treachery and idolatry (see Judges 18:27 and Joshua 19:47). It is in light of their sinfulness that Jacob cries out for salvation.

vs. 19 – **Gad** had its territory on the east side of Jordan where they were constantly attacked by other peoples.

vs. 20 – **Asher** had its territory in the fertile coastal plains in the far northwestern area of the Promised Land.

vs. 21 – **Naphtali** had its territory north and east of the Sea of Galilee. They were a prosperous people given more to diplomacy than to warfare.

vs. 22-26 – **Joseph** is rarely counted as a tribe himself (see Revelation 7 for the exception). Jacob's blessing essentially acknowledges what God had already done in Joseph's life, highlighting the prosperity and power he had acquired in Egypt. He was the greatest of all the descendants of Abraham until this point.

vs. 27 – **Benjamin** would be a tribe of warriors, like a wolf always on the hunt.

vs. 29-32 – Jacob's final request is that he be buried in the family tomb in the cave of Machpelah.

Genesis 50

In this chapter we have the funerals for Jacob and Joseph.

vs. 2 – Embalming was not and would not be common among the Hebrew people. Joseph ordering that Jacob be embalmed was in part to afford his father the highest honors that nation could offer, but practically also to prepare him for the final journey to Machpelah.

vs. 3 – The embalming process took 40 days, and a period of public mourning lasted another 30.

vs. 4-6 – Pharaoh grants Joseph leave that he may go with his family and bury Jacob.

vs. 7-9 – 17 years before Jacob had left for Egypt in a large caravan with his family. Now he returns home with greater honors and a greater retinue.

vs. 10-11 – This location is lost to history. Atad means “thorn bush”. The phrase “beyond Jordan” is subjected. From Egypt, this would be on the eastern side. But Moses could have written this before his death when in the territory of Moab in Deuteronomy 32, in which case it would be the western side. The public mourning made such an impact on the locals that they named the place Abel-mizraim, meaning “meadow of the Egyptians”.

vs. 12-14 – Joseph and his brethren are not wrong in returning to Egypt here. It was not God’s timing for them to take possession of the Promised Land just yet.

vs. 15-18 – Joseph’s brothers fear that with Jacob gone that Joseph may take revenge against them.

vs. 19-21 – Here are some of the most beautiful words in Scripture. Joseph recognized that all had happened according to God’s will and held no grudges. We will do well to put the words in vs. 20 into our memories that we have it ready to recall when needed: “ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good”.

vs. 22 – Joseph lived another 54 years after the death of his father.

vs. 24-25 – Joseph had faith that one day, when God’s timing called for it, the descendants of Jacob would return to the Promised Land. He makes his family promise that when that day comes they will take and bury his body there.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 19

The scope of the Book of Genesis is astounding. We have seen Creation, the Flood, and the establishment of the nation of Israel. While these views are grand, it is also amazing to note the great decline in the book. We begin with a perfect world untainted by sin in chapter 1. Mankind falls in sin in chapter 3. Wickedness is so rampant that God destroys the world in a Flood in chapters 7 and 8, sparing only Noah and his family. In chapter 12, Abraham is called to the Father of Israel, a witness of the true God in a pagan world. We read of the trials and triumph of him and his family through the rest of the book. But then, and such an anticlimactic ending, the final scene is the temporary tomb of Joseph in Egypt. This is the price of sin the process of its deadly work. We see the truths of verses played out before time and time again:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” – Romans 5:12

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” – James 1:15

But, in spite of the deadly terror of sin, there is also seeds of hope to be found:

“For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” – Romans 6:23

Christ is the seed of the woman in 3:15. He is the Shiloh of 49:10. He is the lamb God provides, as pictured when Abraham offered Isaac. Yes, there is plenty of darkness, death, and despair in Genesis, but there is also the glow of hope on its horizon.

Hymn for Day 19

Our hymn today is primarily based on Isaiah 53, but its second line strikes that wonderful note of “Shiloh” from 49:10. The earliest printing I see is in 1790 and I have not found any author to attribute this work to. Perhaps that is fitting since it is all about lifting up the name of Christ!

*Who hath our report believed,
Shiloh come, is not received,
Not received by his own;
Promis'd Branch from root of Jesse,
David's offspring sent to bless ye,
Comes too meekly to be known.*

*Like a tender plant that's growing
Where no water's friendly flowing,
No kind rains refresh the ground:
Drooping, dying we shall view him,
See no charm to draw us to him,
There no beauty will be seen,*

*Lo! Messiah unrespected,
Man of grief, despis'd, rejected,
Wounds his form disfig'ring,
Marr'd his visage more than any,
For he bears the sins of many,
All our sorrows carrying.*

*No deceit his mouth had spoken,
Blameless, he no laws had broken;
Yet was number'd with the worst:
For, because the LORD wou'd grieve him,
We, who saw it, did believe him
For his own offences curst.*

*But while him our thoughts accused
He for us alone was bruised,
Stricken, smitten for our guilt:
With his stripes our wounds are cured,
By his pains our peace assured,
Purchas'd with the blood he spilt.*

*Love amazing so to mind us!
Shepherd come from heaven to find us
Silly sheep all gone astray!
Lost, undone by our transgressions;
Worse than stript of all possessions,
Debtors without hope to pay.*

*Fear our portion, slaves in spirit,
He redeem'd us by his merit,
To a glorious liberty:
Dearly first his goodness bought us,
Truth and love then sweetly taught us;
Truth and love have made us free.*

*Blessed be the pow'r who gave us,
Freely gave his Son to save us;
Bless'd the Son, who freely came:
Honour, blessing, adoration,
Ever from the whole creation
Be to GOD, and to the Lamb.*