



SOUTHLAND CHURCH

THE BOOK OF
GENESIS

Part One

25 Day Devotional



foundations
daily devotional

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DAY 1 **READ:** Genesis 1

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (v. 1). Everything in our world has a beginning, except God. He is eternal and was already there when the universe came into being. We live in a world that feels it needs to prove the existence of God, but the Bible was written with the assumption that God was always there. Instead of seeing chapter 1 of Genesis as a chapter about the creation of the universe it is important to see it as a chapter that introduces the Creator. Although this chapter does tell us how the world came to be, it is important that we do not miss WHO made it come to be. This chapter, which contains 31 verses, uses the name God 35 times!

This chapter is beautifully structured and it is orderly, starting with a formless and void earth (v. 2). In the six days of creation we can see a correspondence between the first three days and the last three days. In the first three days God creates contrasting environments: light and darkness (v. 3-5), sky and ocean (v. 6-8), and land and sea (v. 9-10). On the third day, God also begins to fill this earth, which now has form, with plants (v. 11-13). On the fourth day God creates the sun, moon and stars (v. 14-19) which correspond to the light and darkness that were created on day one. The fifth day has God creating the birds and fish (v. 20-23) filling the sky and sea that was created on day two. Then on the sixth day He creates animals (v. 24-25) and Adam (v. 26-31) to live on the land which was created on day three. The earth is now full of LIFE!

There are a few things worth noting about the creation of Adam and Eve. God created both Adam and Eve in His image (v. 26-27). This is quite meaningful and important to mediate on – when God wanted to make something in HIS image, He created people! Our world is pretty incredible with its starry nights, mountains, plants, and animals but we are the culmination of God’s creation and the only ones who bear His image. Even though sin has marred this image, every single human being, from the unborn baby to the elderly in a nursing home to those with disabilities is all created in the image of God. This gives value to life – all human life. We must treat ALL people with respect and dignity because they are God’s image-bearers. This means we respect and honor others with our actions and our speech. We must align completely with scripture; we cannot depreciate human life to being merely a higher form of animal life.

God also gave Adam and Eve dominion over all of creation and commanded them to subdue it (v. 26-28). This means that humans are to bring the world under their control, to rule and develop the world’s resources in a way that is beneficial for them to use. This does not mean that humanity is to exploit the world’s resources as a result of greed. We are to use the earth wisely and govern it in a responsible way showing care of God’s creation. The chapter is concluded with the statement, *“God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.”* When God looked at His creation it was pleasing to Him. In this chapter we see that God created the universe out of nothing and that He was pleased with what He had made.

It is important to note that Genesis does not give us complete scientific explanations of creation but rather emphasizes that God is the Creator. Hebrews 11:3 tells us that it is *“by faith that we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God”*. We must also understand that this book celebrates God as creator and worship Him for His creation and for creating us in His image.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. In this chapter we see a personal God who makes decisions, has thoughts and speaks. He spoke things into being, which tells of His power – He gives ten commands in this chapter and each are fulfilled according to His will. Our God is creative! There is so much variety in creation, there is symmetry, there is artistry, there is uniqueness, and there is imagination! Our God is living and active, He speaks and wants to relate to His creation. Our God is good therefore everything that He creates is good. Spend some time praising and thanking God for these attributes. Ask Him to give you words, thoughts and pictures about the variety in His creation and how this represents Him. Linger, wait on Him and let yourself give Him glory for who He is.
2. Scientists all believe in the laws and rules that govern the universe. Why is the universe orderly? The answer is clear; it is because God the Creator of all things who is the rational, loving God and who constantly reveals himself to humankind, upholds the universe by His own power. God created everything in an orderly and precise way. The universe follows laws of physics that God created because He is orderly. Spend some time thanking and praising God for His design of the universe. Ask Him to grow in you an appreciation for the science around you and help you see Him in the world through it.
3. We must treat ALL people with respect and dignity because they are God's image-bearers. This means that we respect and honor ALL people with our actions and our speech. Ask the Lord to reveal to you a time when you dishonored somebody. This could be an individual person or a people group. Ask Him to forgive you for this sin. Pray that you would grow to love and respect ALL people, as His image-bearers (the unborn, the disabled, criminals, the elderly, other ethnicities, etc.)

DAY 2**READ: Genesis 2**

In chapter one God was the center of the creation account, now in chapter two we see a shift as man is the primary subject of this chapter. In the first chapter we were given a generic name for God and now in chapter two we see an added word, "Lord God" which is better translated Yahweh. We also saw in chapter one that humanity was merely seen as man and now in chapter two we are introduced to Adam and Eve, specific people who actually lived. Genesis 2 goes back to talk about the creation of humanity in order to emphasize Adam and Eve and their relationship to God and each other. God wants us to be awestruck at these realities. God's purpose has always been for His people to live together with Him.

The first concept we are introduced to in Genesis 2 is that God rested on the seventh day (v. 1-3). In our Western mindsets we think of rest in terms of relaxing, refreshing and recovering strength but God did not rest because He was tired or in need of rejuvenation as He lacks nothing. The reference to rest merely means that He ceased to work; His creating was done so He stopped creating.

In verses 4-7 we get a more detailed account of the creation of Adam, sort of a literary flashback so that we can have more understanding about the creation of mankind. God created man from the dust of the earth and breathed life into his nostrils, the breath of life (v. 7). God then creates a Garden for man to live in (v. 8), this Garden was called Eden and it was beautiful and contained food for Adam. It also contained a special tree of the knowledge of good and evil (v. 9). In spite of the reference of four rivers and regions (v. 10-

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14), the exact location of Eden still remains a mystery. Verse 15 tells us that man was given work to do in the Garden as Adam was to work and keep it. This refers to actual physical work as well as watching, guarding, protecting and taking care of the Garden. The same word for work can be used for ministry, serving or worship in other passages of scripture. This shows us that work did not come as a result of sin; it is a good thing and part of God's purpose for people. It also shows us that Adam was given the responsibility of guarding or maintaining the sanctity of the Garden, this implies that God gave Adam a leadership role or responsibility. God then commanded Adam, prohibiting him from eating from one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The consequence for eating of this tree was death (v. 17).

The rest of the chapter describes how God created woman and marriage. God said that it was not good for man to be alone so He would make a "help meet" for him, a counterpart of himself, one formed from him and a perfect resemblance of his, possessing neither superiority nor inferiority but alike and equal to himself. First, God brings all the animals before Adam for him to name. This was, in part, to show Adam that He was without a human companion. Then, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and as he slept, God took one of his ribs and made woman. As God formed her out of a part of man, Adam saw that she was of the same nature, same ingredients and consequently would have equal rights, powers and abilities. This excited Adam as he exclaimed, *"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man (v. 23)."* The creatures that had previously passed before Adam were not suitable but when the woman came, he knew she would be the perfect companion for him. It was then that the first marriage was created by God. Man and woman shall leave their parents and become "one flesh" (v. 24). This means that husband and wife shall be considered as one body, having no separate or independent rights. Marriage was instituted by God and it is to be between one man and one woman, joining together into one flesh, for the rest of their lives.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. This chapter speaks of various relationships:
 - The relationship between God and humanity, who are created in His image. This tells us that humans have the affinity to have a spiritual relationship with God that animals do not.
 - The relationship between man and work, telling us that we have a job to do here on earth.
 - The relationship between God and moral authority. God's moral authority is seen in His command for Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In doing this God was retaining moral authority over them. It is God that decides what is right and wrong and He determines the consequences.
 - The relationship between man and woman. Man needed a suitable counterpart, so God created woman. In doing so, God created the first marriage and it is clear that marriage was created to be monogamous.
2. Ask the Lord to speak to you about each type of relationship listed above. Go through each one and ask the Lord what He wants to say to you about this relationship. He may want to affirm you or show you your attitudes about these things. He may want to reveal some hidden sin in your life. Give Him permission to tell you what you need to hear. It takes humility to let God speak truth into your life. Be patient as you go through each type of relationship.

DAY 3

 **READ:** Genesis 3

Genesis 3 gives us insight into the origin of evil in our world. Evil was not always in the world, sin had a beginning. It is important that when we read this chapter we understand that these were real events happening to real people. In the first few verses of Genesis 3 we find that Satan deceives Eve (v. 1-5). He starts by questioning God’s command in which Eve responds by adding to the command, “*and you must not touch it*”. Satan then lies to Eve, telling her that she won’t die but that instead her eyes would be opened and she would be like God (v. 4-5). Satan is flatly contradicting God’s Word. He is tempting her with wisdom and power! He tempts their human desire for an increase in knowledge, persuading them that they would not die and playing on their pride, enticing them to believe that they could be like God. In the next two verses we see that Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s command (v. 6-7). Since the tree appeared to be good, pleasing and desirable, she ate and gave some to her husband, who was with her. The original command was given to Adam and Adam stood by and watched as his wife stumbled into disobedience. He then ate of the fruit. Eve was deceived into sinning, Adam sinned willfully. Upon eating their eyes were opened and they saw what they had never noticed before – they were naked. They had lost their innocence so they attempted to cover themselves with fig leaves (v. 7). Adam and Eve’s response to their sin was to hide from God because they were afraid. Here we see that shame and fear are the result of sin. Yet God, in His goodness, calls to them (v. 9). When questioned about his sin Adam shifts the blame from himself and puts it on the woman. When the woman was questioned, she lays the blame upon the serpent (v. 13) for deceiving her. Adam and Eve hearts have been hardened by the deceitfulness of sin as they did not respond with repentance and confession of sin but instead made excuses for their wrongdoing. Acknowledgement of sin is the first step towards repentance, but Adam and Eve were not repentant. What would have happened if Adam wouldn’t have blamed Eve but instead would have responded in genuine repentance? God then pronounces judgement on the serpent (v. 14) as He curses it to crawl on its belly and eat dust. In verse 15 we see that God has put hostility between men and Satan. This verse is the first prophecy of the Messiah as the seed of the woman (Jesus) would crush the serpents head. Here we see hope of the promise of redemption through Christ! Even before pronouncing judgement on Adam and Eve God is graciously showing His plan of redemption for them. Next we see the punishment of Eve (v. 16) and then Adam (v. 17). She would experience pain in childbirth and the relationship between her and her husband would be marred. Adam is told that the ground is cursed. Instead of producing nourishing grain and useful vegetables, harmful weeds will grow. Humans would no longer be given the privilege of eating fruit from the Garden but would now eat plants of the field (v. 18). Work would increase for mankind as Adam would sweat and toil the ground in order to eat. God then tells Adam that he will return to the ground, as dust. Human death had just entered the world as a result of sin. Adam then gives his wife the name Eve (v. 20), as she would become the mother of all the living. Once again we see God’s goodness and grace here. Adam and Eve had just sinned and deserved death, yet they would be able to propagate and bring life into the world. God’s goodness continues as He made them clothes out of animal skins. This would have required the death of an animal – atonement comes through death, eventually through the death of Christ. As a result of sin, man was now unfit to live in the Garden and was expelled from it by God (v. 23-24).



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. It is easy to be judgmental of Adam and Eve as we see how they stumbled into sin. The fact is that we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23) in need of forgiveness.
 - a. Take a moment and ask the Lord to show you any areas in your life where you have unconfessed sin.
 - b. Check off these areas below
 - c. Pray a prayer, confessing your sin and admitting that these things are sin.
 - d. Thank the Lord for His forgiveness.
 - e. Ask the Lord to show you what you can do today in order to flee from this sort of behaviour in the future. For example, are there friends you need to avoid? What environments do you need to avoid? Who do you need to apologize to? Etc.
 - Lustful Thoughts
 - Suggestive TV/Movies/Books
 - Fantasizing
 - Dressing Inappropriately (to attract attention)
 - Other Sexual Impurity: _____
 - Anger
 - Fear/Anxiety
 - Judgmental
 - Materialism
 - Negativity
 - People-pleasing
 - Perfectionism
 - Pride
 - Self-pity
 - Unforgiveness/Bitterness
 - Dirty Language/Swearing
 - Gossip/Slander
 - Lying/Exaggeration
 - Other (s): _____
2. God’s response to Adam and Eve’s sin is critical for us to understand. Yes, God punishes sin, we cannot overlook His judgment. Adam and Eve experienced real consequences for their sin. Yet God, in His goodness, provided atonement for sin, through Jesus Christ. In His goodness He gave them the ability to propagate life, in His love He made clothes for them, in His mercy He made a way for them to continue to fellowship with Him and eventually live with Him forever in eternity. Spend some time thanking God for forgiveness. Thanks Him that we don’t get what we deserve (eternal punishment) if we honestly repent and turn from our sin. He is good, He is loving, and He is merciful. We have much to be thankful for!

DAY 4

 **READ:** Genesis 4

In Genesis 4 we have the story of Adam’s sons Cain and Abel. It is interesting to note that Adam was originally a gardener, Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a farmer (v. 2). Both Abel and Cain brought offerings to the Lord. Scripture does not tell us the details of why

they made offering to the Lord but we can assume that it was some sort of act of worship. Hebrews 11:4 sheds some more light on their offerings, *“By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.”* Cain brought a grain offering (Lev. 2:1), Abel brought a sin offering to the Lord (Lev. 4), acknowledging himself to be a sinner and in need of a redeemer. His offering was brought in faith and his offering was accepted by the Lord (v. 4). Here we see the vast importance of worshipping God according to His will and not our own. We can bring offerings to the Lord that are not pleasing to Him, although they are offerings. We must bring what pleases Him, not what pleases ourselves.

God approaches Cain and gives him hope, *“if you do what is right, will you not be accepted?”* (v. 7) God also warns Cain of what will happen to him if he doesn't do what is right. God is giving Cain the opportunity to do what is right but Cain chooses to become angry with his innocent brother instead. The Saviour is willing to save Cain but in pride and anger, Cain chooses his own path. In verse 8 we read of the first murder committed in the world as Cain kills Abel. Here we see how envy turned into anger and hatred leading to murder. Sin is destructive in all its forms. We must not let sin creep in because it will eventually destroy ourselves and others. In verse nine we find that God approaches Cain, asking where Abel was. God says that Abel's blood calls out to Him from the ground, for the punishment of the murderer. In verses 11-12, God states two parts of Cain's punishment. First, the ground would not yield crops for him; secondly, Cain was to be a wanderer on the earth. Cain's response in verse 14 shows that he also would be hidden from God's presence and that he feared death. In verse 15 we see God's grace and goodness as the Lord puts a mark on Cain to protect him from being killed. We then read of Cain's family, his wife gives birth to a son and names him Enoch (v. 17), he also built a city. Verse 18 gives us the genealogies of Cain up until Lamech, who was the first polygamist mentioned in scripture, having married two wives. This shows the fallen state of Cain's descendants. Lamech had several sons: Jabal taught the use of tents and feeding cattle (v. 20); Judal was the inventor of musical instruments (v. 21); and Tubal-Cain was the inventor of smith-work (v. 22). Verse 23 then records some strange words that Lamech spoke to his wives. Lamech boasts of killing a young man, making himself out to be greater than God, who pronounced a mere seven-fold judgment on anyone who sought vengeance on Cain (v. 15) but Lamech would take 77-fold vengeance if needed. The chapter concludes with the birth of Seth (v. 25) to Adam and Eve. The woman's seed was re-established with a holy line by which the Messiah could come from. The final verse tells us that men began to call on the name of the Lord (v. 26)! True followers of God are now being distinguished; two paths are emerging - the path of Cain and the path of Seth.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. We can bring offerings to the Lord that are not pleasing to Him although they are offerings. We must bring what pleases Him, not what pleases ourselves. We can serve without the right attitude, we can give without being cheerful, we can obey but our hearts remain in rebellion. Ask the Lord to show you any places where your actions and the attitudes of your heart are not in alignment. You may be doing the right “stuff” but your heart may be far from God. Give Him permission to speak truthfully into your heart and then repent of any sin that He reveals to you.
2. Even though Cain murders Abel, God treats Cain fairly and honestly. God gives Cain a chance to repent and do the right thing but Cain refuses. Here we see the goodness of God, He is willing to save Cain but Cain chooses a life of rebellion instead. Even in his

rebellion, God protects Cain with a mark showing the grace and goodness of God. Ask the Lord to show you times when He protected you, even though you may not have made the right choice. Thank Him for His love and goodness and that He is willing to save us all! Pray that many would accept salvation and turn from their wicked ways to love and serve Him. Pray that they would see God rightfully.

3. At the end of this chapter we see the first instance of generational sin. Lamech commits the same sin as his great-great-great grandfather. The following are lists of things that can be generationally inherited:
 - General Health Predispositions - high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, cancer, etc.
 - Temperament - shyness, aggressiveness, anxiety, fear, etc.
 - Spiritual Weaknesses – attitudes or behaviors, (look at the list on Day 3 question 1)
 - Demonic Influences and Curses

Often the big issues that we deal with in our lives are generational, meaning that they have been problems for our parents, grandparents or even great-grandparents and often become problems for our children. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any generational issues that are affecting you or your children. Go through the list on Day 3, question 1 prayerfully, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what generational sins affect you. Now go through each, one by one, confessing these sins and asking the Lord to break any generational tie that may exist. For bigger issues, commit to doing this regularly or consider booking a personal prayer ministry appointment or attending after service prayer.

DAY 5



READ: Genesis 5

Chapter five covers a vast number of years in the lives of the ancient patriarchs. Verse 1 reminds us again that man was originally created in the image of God, even though sin has marred the condition of humanity. Since man was created by God, He is the rightful authority in our lives. Verse 2 tells us that God created us to be male and female, both in the image of God. We are counterparts of each other, companions and together we propagate life. It also tells us that God *“called them man.”* In Hebrew, this reads, *“called their name Adam”*. He gave this name to both the man and the woman, being one by nature and one in marriage; they should have the same name.

Seth was born when Adam was 130 years old and he was born in the likeness of Adam. Adam was made in the likeness of God but was fallen and corrupted by sin, even so, he had a son in his own likeness that would also be fallen and corrupted by sin. Death is a consequence of sin therefore even though Adam lived a long life, he eventually died. Genesis five then goes on to leave a record of the rest of the patriarchs before the flood. Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah and his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It is especially noticeable that they all lived extraordinarily long lives. Did God design this in order to fill the earth with people? Or was it for the preservation of knowledge as Adam could give them all a firsthand account of the Garden and the fall of man, since he lived so long?

Enoch walked with God (v. 22), this means that he lived a life of communion with God, complying with His will showing a determination to live for God. Here we find something

peculiar, as Enoch escaped death and was transferred immediately to the paradise of God. Hebrews 11:5 tells us that *“By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.”*

Methuselah was the oldest person to ever live as Scripture tells us that he lived 969 years. His name means “his death shall bring” and it commonly supposed from the chronological records that he died a little before the flood. We will learn the significance of this in a future devotional!

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. In verse 1 God is clearly showing us that male and female are equal in His eyes (*“He called them ‘man’”*). Yet for thousands of years both the people of God and secular cultures have de-valued women as inferior creatures. This is wrong and sinful. Many Christian women unknowingly are struggling in their walk with God because deep inside they believe lies about women, their role in marriage and their role in the church. Pray that the Lord would bring His Truth out into the light so that many women will embrace their calling as ministers in the Kingdom.
2. Enoch walked with God. What does this mean? Is this something that is evident in your life? If so, how? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you three ways which you can grow in walking more closely with God. Then commit to following through on what He shows you.

DAY 6

 **READ:** Genesis 6

The first few verses of Genesis six give us background on why the flood was necessary. It tells of the moral corruption that had been going on in the earth, which was staggering (v. 5). Yet, even in the midst of this moral failure and the evil that was escalating on the earth, God gave them 120 years to repent (v. 3). Verse 6 tells us that God was grieved by all the evil on the earth and that His heart was filled with pain. What had happened to His beautiful creation? The first few verses of this chapter mention several beings that walked the earth at that time. First we read of men (v. 1), then we read that these men had daughters (v. 1) which are referred to as “daughters of men” (v. 2). Verse two also speaks of a third being, the “sons of God”. Who are these “sons of God”? This phrase is only used in the Old Testament and in every place in Scripture where it is used it means angelic beings, not human beings (see Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:1-7; Psalm 82:1-7; Deut. 32:8; Dan. 10:13-14, 20-21). So what is going on here is that fallen and powerful angelic beings had sex with women and impregnated them bringing forth incredibly evil hybrid offspring called Nephilim (v. 4). This was a direct perversion of God’s creation! Satan was actively trying to corrupt the bloodline of man so that there would be no Messiah to crush his head (Gen. 3:15). The Messiah had to be 100% human (we also know that He was 100% God)! These events were so wicked that the New Testament tells us that God had to lock up all the angels who participated in them and that they still sit chained, waiting for judgment (1 Peter 3:18-20; 2 Peter 2:4-5; Jude 1:6). These demonic hybrid offspring were the *“heroes of old, men of renown”* (v. 4). What’s going on here? It is commonly thought that some of the ancient legends and pagan mythologies about super-humans and god-men are probably loosely based on some of these demonic giants (Greek mythology concerning evil characters like Achilles and Ajax and Zeus and that sort of thing). Yet even throughout all this corruption, we see God’s grace, goodness and love. He did not judge the world immediately but rather called Enoch to be a

prophet and name his son Methuselah which we learned means “his death shall bring”. This prophetic name spoke loudly about the coming judgement of God. When Methuselah died, God would judge the earth! Do you think it’s a coincidence that Methuselah was the oldest man to ever live? God gave the people of the earth 969 years to repent! As Methuselah got older and closer to death Noah, his grandson, began to build an ark – further warning that judgment was coming. Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord (v. 8); he was righteous, blameless and walked with God (v. 9). God told Noah of His plans to destroy the earth and commanded him to build an ark (v. 14) and gave Noah the specifications (v. 15-16). God then established a covenant with Noah (v. 19) and commanded him to bring two of all living creatures into the ark to keep them alive and to collect food to be eaten for all of them (v. 21). Noah obeyed everything that God commanded him (v. 22).

Throughout history, people have attacked the story of the flood saying that God would have to be an immoral God, an angry and violent and murderous God, to wipe out the entire human race, except for one family, with a flood. But when we understand the background of what’s going on here we realize that this flood wasn’t God killing humanity, but God SAVING humanity. Human beings had a choice to either follow totally evil demonic super-beings or they could follow the one true God. Through the influence of these demonic beings humanity was becoming unbelievably corrupted and turning to wickedness. If God would have let it continue the whole human race would have been sucked in, and the Messianic bloodline destroyed causing humanity to be lost forever. The flood was God’s mercy in saving mankind from the Devil’s plan of domination and destruction.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. God was grieved and filled with pain over the evil on the earth (v. 6). We too live in a world full of evil. Marriages are falling apart, sexual sin is rampant, babies are aborted, and additions are increasing as teens experiment with drugs and alcohol. This is not God’s plan for His creation! Yet do Christians feel pain over the evil in our world? Do they grieve over the sin that is widespread? God’s grief shows that He cares, that He loves us and that He desires us to walk with Him. Ask the Lord to awaken His children to how terrible sin is and how appalling the effects of sin are. Pray that your heart would be softened so that you will grieve over your sin and the sins of our nation. Pray for a heart of love and care for those who are destined for an eternity in hell.
2. In Genesis 6 we see how Satan tried to pervert humanity and corrupt mankind. He is still at work today trying to take what God has made as pure and pervert it. Impurity is rampant in our society, especially sexual impurity. Yet sex and sexuality were created by God. They are lovely and good.

Common forms of sexual impurity: TV, movies, coarse joking, pornography, same sex relationships, sexy novels, immodest dressing, adultery, fornication, voyeurism, lustful thoughts, masturbation, bestiality, mooning and many more sexual impurities.

God calls us to guard our hearts against impurity. We cannot allow even the smallest vile thing into our minds and into our homes.

- a. Ask the Lord to show you any areas where you have sexual impurity in your life even if it is in the smallest form. Don’t make excuses, just write it down in your journal.
- b. Pray a prayer of confession, confessing your sin and admitting that this is sin.
- c. Thank the Lord for His forgiveness.

- d. Ask the Lord to show you what you can do today in order to flee from sexual impurity. For example, what TV shows do you need to stop watching? What about movies? Or environments? Etc.

3. God is good! Even in the mist of the perversions of Genesis 6, He shows His love and grace in not judging the world immediately but giving people time to repent. Thank Him for His goodness. Praise Him for His grace and forgiveness. Ask Him to impress on your heart how good He has been to you!

DAY 7

 READ: Genesis 7

At the beginning of chapter seven, God informs Noah that in seven days He will send rain and flood the earth for 40 days and nights and He commands Noah to take his family, with the different clean and unclean animals, and enter the ark (v. 1-4). Noah obeys the Lord and goes into the ark with his family and the animals (v. 5-9). Then after the seven days, the rain begins and the fountains of the great deep broke open. The windows of heaven opened, raining forty days and forty nights (v. 10-12). It would have been physically impossible for Noah to have collected all the animals to put them in the ark. This was done by the power of God. Just as God brought each animal to Adam to name He now brings two of each animal to Noah for the ark. Verse 16 tells us that *“the Lord shut him in”*. God took Noah, his family and the animals under His protection, shutting them into the ark by closing the door and shutting the others out. God had given the rest of humanity years to repent and then His wrath came upon those who chose to remain in their sin. The waters increased as the rains fell, but the ark was lifted up and floated on the waters (v. 17-18). Everything that had breath in its nostrils died in the flood (v. 22). All living creatures were destroyed and wiped from the earth except Noah and those with him in the ark (v. 23). The waters flooded the earth for 150 days (v. 24).

 JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. When we read Genesis 7 we must remember that God gave the people years to repent. We also must acknowledge that sin did not come from God and that God cannot be blamed for sin. It was man who sinned, by voluntary choice. Yet God protected the human race, He saved Noah and his sons. The ark shows God’s love and care for humanity. Ask the Lord to show you a time when He protected you or one of your family members. Thank Him for this. Thank Him for the love that He has for you!
2. God keeps His Word. He warned the people, He sent Noah to warn the people and when they didn’t repent He followed through on what He had said and destroyed them. There are consequences for sin! This should cause us to tremble in holy and rightful fear of the Lord. We must repent and leave our sinful ways behind us; this includes even the smallest areas of selfishness and pride as well as the “big” sins. If you are struggling with an ongoing sin then commit to booking a personal prayer ministry appointment. All Southlanders should commit to going to an Encounter and an Empower Retreat (and go repeatedly for tune-ups). As Christians, we should be quick to forgive and not hold grudges or offense against people. Ask the Lord what step He is asking you to take in order to grow in righteousness and holiness today.

DAY 8

 READ: Genesis 8

In chapter eight we begin to see the redemptive purposes of the flood. God did not forget Noah and his family which shows us that He loves and cares for people. God sent a wind to evaporate the waters and they receded from the earth (v. 3). After some time of drying the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (v. 4) as the waters continued to recede (v. 5). Noah then sends out a raven and then a dove to test the level that the water had receded (v. 6-12). Eventually the dove does not return, signaling that things were drying. But still Noah had to wait. On the first day of the first month Noah removes the covering from the ark so that he could finally see himself that the ground was dry but he had to wait almost two more months for it to be completely dry (v. 13). We are told in Scriptures that the rains started on the 17th day of the 2nd month (Gen. 7:11). We are told that Noah left the ark on the 27th day of the 2nd month (Gen. 8:14). The months of the ancient Hebrews were lunar; the first six consisted of 30 days each, the latter six of twenty-nine days each. The whole twelve months would have therefore taken 354 days. If we add this to the 11 extra days (from the 17th to the 27th) then we get exactly 365 days, a complete solar year! I think God likes math! God called Noah out of the ark (v. 16) and commanded all the living creatures to come out so they could multiply on the earth, be fruitful and increase in number (v. 17). So Noah obeyed and they all went out! Then, Noah built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings on it (v. 20), signifying worship. The Lord accepted Noah’s offering and was pleased with his worship. He promised to never again destroy all living creatures (v. 21); this promise will be described more thoroughly in chapter nine. It was made even though every inclination of man’s heart is evil from childhood (v. 21). Verse 22 gives us the first glimpse into the eternal nature of the earth. Seasons were first introduced in Genesis 1:14 but now we see more distinctions between them – seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night. This is a merciful promise to the inhabitants of earth. There may be a variety in seasons but no season will fail, they will continue at their proper time for all eternity. This ends the actual account of the flood, although the next few chapters still focus on Noah. Through the flood we see both the justice and love of our God. He punishes the wicked yet He is merciful, giving them time to repent. He is fair in waiting as long as possible to extend His grace to all who may seek Him.

 JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Noah stayed in the ark where God shut him in until God told him to come out. He didn’t go running out at the first sign of dry land. It is sometimes hard to wait on the Lord and not rush into things on our own strength. God asks us to wait on Him. This means that we pray and actively seek His will and guidance as well as His timing. Waiting does not mean that we are inactive but that we seek His ways and look for confirmation before rushing ahead. In what areas do you need to wait on the Lord? In what areas have you been anxious to run ahead of God? Pray that you would learn to prayerfully wait for God to show you His direction, will and timing for these things.
2. After Noah and his family came out of the ark he built an altar to the Lord signifying worship. Think about it, God had just preserved Noah and his family and miraculously kept them and all the animals alive for a year on the ark. They now set foot on dry ground; the earth was to be restored. Noah had LOTS to be thankful for and He worshipped the Lord. God accepted His worship. What are 5-10 things that you can thank and worship God for today? See if you can even come up with a list of 15-20 things. Then go through each in prayer, thanking God and worshipping Him for each one.

DAY 9 **READ:** Genesis 9

Chapter nine signifies a new beginning. Just as God blessed and commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28), He now blesses and commands the same of Noah and his sons (v. 1). In verse two God reaffirmed that mankind would rule over all creation, including the animals. God now gives animals to man to eat as meat (v. 3) including further guidelines. Though animals were granted as food for man, the blood was not permitted to be eaten because it was the life of the beast (v. 4). Blood was sacred because it points to the blood that was shed by our Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the sin of the world. In verse five we see the seriousness of how God views human life. Any animal that takes a man's life was to be held accountable, through human representatives. This is also true for any person that takes a human life (v. 6). Human life is so valuable by God that it is protected by God. Murder is the highest offence that can be committed against an individual or against a society as it demonstrates contempt for God since man is created in the image of God. The highest punishment a man can receive is to lose his own life. God is now appointing man to judge and punish these sins as this is seen as the first form of human government being permitted by God. Government is responsible for the sanctity of human life and for instituting penalties for wrong moral conduct. Here we see God appointing humans to punish sin in order to keep the world from being filled with violence once again. God then repeats in verse 7 what He stated in verse 1, *"be fruitful and multiply"*! God desires for humanity is to flourish! God then establishes His covenant with Noah and his offspring (v. 9) and all living creatures (v. 10). God promised to *"never again cut off all life by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth"* (v. 11). Then God gave the rainbow as sign of the covenant between Himself and all living creatures (v. 13). This was the first covenant that God made with humanity and He promises to unconditionally keep this covenant as it is an everlasting covenant, not dependent on the obedience of mankind.

The chapter ends with a peculiar story of Noah's foolishness and the response of his three sons. We do not know how much time has passed between Noah's leaving the ark and the events at the end of this chapter. After the flood, Noah became a farmer and grew a vineyard (v. 20). One day he became drunk and lay naked in his tent (v. 21). Ham saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers (v. 22). To have seen it accidentally or involuntarily would not have been a crime but whether accidental or intentional, Ham should not have told his brothers but rather should have covered up his father and kept his father's disgraceful action to himself! Instead we see that it was Shem and Japheth who honored their father by covering him up and in doing so, they did not fall to the temptation of taking a peak at his nakedness (v. 23). By covering Noah up they were making sure no one else would see him in this disgraceful state. When Noah awoke, he uttered prophetic words over his sons (a sign that the drunkenness may have been accidental and not intentional since God granted him the spirit of prophecy on this occasion – although the text never tells us so we are assuming here). Noah pronounces a blessing on Shem and Japheth for treating him with respect and decency (v. 26-27). On the other hand, Noah pronounces a curse on Canaan (v. 25), not specifically on Ham's son Canaan but rather on Ham's descendants who would become the Canaanites. Here we see the third curse in the book of Genesis. The first was the curse on the serpent (3:14), the second was on Cain (4:11) but this is the first time a human is doing the cursing as the first two were curses from God. Noah's curse was not a vindictive outburst but rather a prophetic utterance from the Lord. The curse was that Canaan would be a servant to his brothers, whom by birth were his equals, but through conquest would rule over him (see Deut. 7:1-3). This certainly occurred when the Israelites conquered the land of Canaan almost 800 years later

which shows God's goodness, grace and patient endurance before judging a nation! It is important to note that this curse does not exclude them from the possibility of obtaining salvation if they chose to walk with God. Unfortunately, Biblical history shows us that they instead chose to refuse to be saved on God's terms and eventually the justice of God came upon them. Shem received the greatest blessing as He will become the line of Abraham, David and eventually Jesus! Japheth's blessing was to be enlarged. His offspring was to be numerous and dwell in the tents of Shem showing again that Shem will eventually be dominant over even Japheth. Even though this story is a bit odd we can see why it was included in Scripture as it shows the ancestry of the children of Israel and one of their greatest rivals, the Canaanites. Noah's prophecy shows us how the nations of the world were divided into three natural divisions stemming from the sons of Noah. This provides the framework for the history of the nations. We'll learn more about that tomorrow!

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Government is responsible for the sanctity of human life and for instituting penalties for wrong moral conduct. Yet in our country we kill babies through abortion and allow same sex marriage – both of which are detestable to God. Judgement will come! God will not restrain His wrath forever. Pray and repent on behalf of the nation of Canada. Cry out to God for His forgiveness for how we have not followed His ways. Ask Him to forgive our moral failures and turn the people of Canada towards Him through repentance. Pray for the church in Canada to be strengthened and renewed so that she can be a prophetic voice to the nation of the coming judgment if they do not repent and turn wholeheartedly to God. Commit to coming to the next prayer summit where we pray corporately for these things. Confess your own lack of desire to see our nation renewed and repentant.
2. The rainbow is a sign of God's faithfulness, goodness, grace and love. Did you know that there is a rainbow encircling Christ's throne in heaven (Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:3)? Rainbows come after each rain to remind us that God will never destroy the earth again through a flood. They also should remind us that Christ will judge the earth again upon His return. Thank God for giving us promises in His Word. Thank Him for His End Times plan to judge the earth and reward those who have faithfully loved and served Him. Pray that you and your family would hold fast to the truths in the Word of God though the tribulation and End Times so that you will be spared the final judgment of God.
3. Shem and Japheth honored their father by covering Him up. Honoring parents does not end when we become adults; it is a command we are to keep for our entire lives. This means that we are respectful in word and action and are thankful that they gave us life. If they have hurt us, this means that we forgive them (it doesn't mean that we necessarily trust them unconditionally or put ourselves or our children in harm's way). This also means that we take care of them as they get older. Ask the Lord to show you how you can honor your parents this week. Commit to following through on what He shows you and making this a habit in your life. If you have a broken relationship with your parents then it will take much prayer and wisdom to know the specifics of what this should look like. Pray with a godly leader who hears God well and come up with a plan for how you can honor your parents.

DAY 10 **READ:** Genesis 10-11

It is important when reading genealogies or lists of who descended from whom that we realize that they were included in Scripture for a reason. Sometimes we just gloss over them and jump to the next chapter but they do give us great insight many areas. Did you know that you are either a descendent of Shem, Ham or Japheth? The whole earth was filled by the descendants of Noah's three sons including you and me!

It is extremely difficult to trace many of the nations that formed from Noah's grandchildren yet some are distinctly marked and can be easily determined. In general we see a pattern that Shem's offspring inhabited regions in the Middle East, Ham's offspring the regions around present day Israel and Northern Africa, and Japheth's descendant's in the coastal regions of Europe and Asia Minor (around present day Turkey). Ham's descendants include many of Israel's enemies such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, Philistines and various Canaanite people who first lived in the Promised Land. Nimrod, one of Ham's grandsons, is specifically mentioned as the first person to establish a kingdom (v. 10). He is linked to the city of Babel (v. 10) which would eventually give rise to Babylon and Nineveh (v. 11) which is in Assyria. Both these countries will invade Israel in the Old Testament. Ham's descendants will also make up Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 19). Shem's descendants are those who the Israelites would feel closest to since Abraham was a descendant of Shem. Shem's great-grandson Eber is noted for having two sons; Peleg's (whose name means divided) line is listed more specifically in the next chapter. Eber's other son Joktan is emphasized here. The chapter concludes by showing that Noah's offspring did repopulate the earth. Each nation listed in chapter ten had an ancestor who both witnessed and was preserved through the flood.

The eleventh chapter of Genesis begins with a tragic rebellion against the Lord. According to verse 1, the whole world had one language so everyone could understand everyone else. Verse 2 tells us that men moved eastward and began to settle down. They decided to build a city with a tower to reach the heavens (v. 4). They wanted a place to be settled instead of scattering over the whole earth (v. 4) and they wanted to make a name for themselves. But the Lord came down to see the city and tower and confused their language so they couldn't complete their task (v. 7-8). God intervenes and the people are dispersed throughout the world (v. 8-9). Here we again see the grace and love of God as He restrained the people from continuing in sin. God's response to their pride and sin was to make it harder for them to communicate with each other so they couldn't unite in deeper rebellions against Him. Once again, we see God's love and mercy present here as He was protecting them from their very own sin nature!

The rest of the chapter gives the rest of the genealogies of Shem until Abram. As the generations pass people's life spans are getting shorter than they were before the flood. The last six verses of this chapter focus on the descendants of Terah. Here we see the focus narrow from the nations of the earth to one man who will become a nation (Abraham becoming the nation of Israel). Only enough details are given of Terah's family so that we can understand the upcoming chapters. We are told of Lot and the barrenness of Sarai and of the relocation of this family to Haran.

Note: We must note that in Genesis 10:5, 20, and 31 each of the descendants of Japheth, Ham and Shem is said to have their own languages, lands and nations. This tells us that chapter 11:1-8 must fit somewhere in chapter ten. Many commentators believe that the Tower of Babel incident happened in the life of Peleg because his name means divided.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. If we dig a little bit deeper in the account of the Tower of Babel we find the heart of what is going on here. The building of the city and tower were outward expressions of heart issues. Their actions show human independence and self-sufficiency which are both forms of pride. These attitudes are praised by our culture but loathed by our Lord. What are your attitudes towards human independence and self-sufficiency? How do you know if your attitudes are aligned with God and His Word?
2. In this account, the people were no longer seeking to glorify and honor God but rather wanted to glorify and honor themselves (v. 4). The sin of self-glorification is subtle but sin nonetheless. We do this in so many ways, often without realizing it. Ask the Lord to show you in what ways you seek glory, fame and worry about your reputation. Ask Him to reveal where this subtle attitude has a stronghold in your life.
3. In this story we see that pride is equated with rebellion, independence and disobedience. Yet pride is prevalent in most believers' lives. We need to repent of pride! Look at the following common areas of pride. Ask the Lord to show you which areas you struggle with. Repent of these things as sin and commit to praying regularly about growing in humility.
 - Struggling with admitting you are wrong
 - Feeling that your achievements are your own, 'self-made' success
 - Striving for self-advancement
 - Boasting about accomplishments either outwardly (spoken) or inwardly (unspoken)
 - Seeking acknowledgement or praise of others
 - Grandiose thoughts about yourself
 - Feeling like you know everything
 - Controlling others
 - Inflexible, not wanting change unless you initiate it
 - Wanting to have your own way.
 - Making assumptions, tending to want to speak first and be heard
 - Struggling to listen to others
 - Thinking you are better than other people, whether unspoken or spoken.
 - Harboring grudges, not forgiving easily
 - Feeling self-righteous about wrongs that have been done to you
 - Being critical of others, judgmental

DAY 11 **READ:** Genesis 12

Genesis 1-11 focused on the history of the world and its peoples covering 2000 years of history. In chapter 12 the book narrows in focus to one family, the family of Abraham. Over the next 11 chapters we will see Abram mature and grow into a man of God. It is through him that the promised seed will come; we'll see the beginnings of the nation of Israel and their Promised Land. The rest of the book focuses primarily on four people – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. God is preparing the way for the rise of the children of Israel. It is this nation that God will use to be His witness to the world.

Chapter twelve begins with God's conditional promise that Abram could become the source of blessing for the rest of humanity. It was conditional because it was dependent on Abram's obedience. Yet blessing would not just be for Abram but also for all the

families of the earth (v. 3). God invites Abram to abandon everything and trust Him. He was called to leave his security and identity and move his family to a new country that God kept hidden from him. Would Abram believe and obey? Abram responds to the call of God on his life (v. 4-9) and at the age of 75 he packed up everything and began his journey. When he arrived in Canaan God promised to give his offspring that land, even though it was inhabited by the Canaanites (v. 6-7). Here we see an incarnate Jesus appearing to Abram, who is the first man to whom God showed Himself. This is significant as we see Jesus in the Old Testament! Abram responds by building an altar and worshipping God (v. 7). He calls on the Lord and builds another altar in verses 8-9.

Abram's faith is tested when a famine comes to the land and he goes to Egypt to avoid this hardship. There is no record of him consulting God or seeking direction from God, apparently he just went. As they approached Egypt, Abram had his wife agree to say that she was his sister (v. 13). He feared that he would be killed so that she could be claimed as Pharaoh's wife. We know that Sarai was his half-sister but this is a half-truth because the whole truth was that she was his wife. Abram admits to lying when confronted by Pharaoh (v. 18-20). Abram prospered from this lie as he was given sheep and oxen, servants and camels (v. 16) on account of her. But God cursed Pharaoh and his house with great plagues (v. 17). When Pharaoh discovers all of this, he rebukes Abram and sends him away (v. 20).

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. In this chapter we see Abram's faith as he answers God's call with willing obedience. He left the life that he knew and followed the Lord. But when he comes to the very land that God had promised him he doesn't find plenty but a famine! It is in the tough times when our faith is tested. This is one reason why God allows tough times in our lives. Think about a tough time you have been through recently. Ask the Lord to show you how He has and is using that to refine and grow you spiritually.
2. Abram told a lie to save his hide but this lie shows more than just fear, it shows lack of trust in God. Abram chose to give into fear instead of trusting, his faith was deficient at this stage in his life. He tried to fix the problem with his own ideas instead of looking to God and trusting Him. Ask the Lord to show you a problem in your life that you have been trying to solve with your own ideas. Repent of this. Then ask the Lord to give you insight into this problem and to show you His solution. Commit to praying about this regularly, until you can see His solution.

DAY 12

 **READ:** Genesis 13

At the end of chapter 12, Abram was sent out of Egypt. Now we see him returning to Bethel, the place where he had made an altar back in Genesis 12:7. It was here that Abram called upon the Lord (v. 4). Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold so that the land could not support both him and Lot (v. 2, 6). This caused strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot (v. 7); there was not enough room for both of them. Abram suggests that they go their separate ways and he humbly agrees to let Lot make the first choice (v. 9). Lot chooses the Jordan Valley, near Sodom, so Abram settled in the land of Canaan (v. 11-12). Lot chose the Jordan Valley because it was well-watered, apparently it did not matter to him that the inhabitants in that area were wicked (v. 13). In 2 Peter 2:7-8 we read that Lot was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men, living among them day after day, tormented in his righteous soul by their lawless deeds which he saw and heard. Eventually judgment came to this area and Lot lost some of his own family as a result (see Gen. 19:26).

In verses 14-17, Abram receives a revelation and a promise from the Lord. God tells Abram that He will give him and his offspring ALL the land to the north, south, east and west, FOREVER. This is significant because when God says FOREVER, He means FOREVER! Even though throughout history God has temporarily removed the Jews from the land of Israel as a punishment for their sins, He has always considered the land of Israel to be their rightful inheritance because of His covenant with them (see Gen. 17:8, Heb. 6:18, Prov. 105:8-11, 1 Chron. 16:15-18). God also promises to increase Abram numerically into a great multitude (v. 16). God invites Abram to walk through the land (v. 17) so Abram moved his tent to Mamre, near Hebron, and again we see Abram's response to God as he builds and altar of worship (v. 18).

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Lot selected the lush and best land, sacrificing reverence for worldly advantage. Later in Genesis we see the consequences of this choice as Lot lost all his possessions and his wife in the land that appeared to be better. We must not make decisions with physical eyes but with spiritual eyes. The choices that we make today can have big consequences later in life and they usually affect our kids in some way. What may look like a good option now may have dire consequences later in life. Pray for the Lord to give you spiritual eyes when making decisions. Pray that you would not decide based on material and earthly things but based on future spiritual rewards. Pray that Christians would give up worldly thinking and desires so that they can live godlier lives and make godlier choices.
2. God has not rejected His people, the Jews. They still exist today in the land that He gave them thousands of years ago. In the news we hear of much conflict between the Arabs and the Jews over this little piece of land. Many wars are fought even today over this land which God has given to the Jews. As Christians, we must support God's ways and His desires, even when they are politically incorrect. Pray for Israel to stand strong in the midst of pressure to give up the land. Pray that many Jews would accept Jesus as the Messiah and make Him the Lord of their lives. Pray that the church across the world would stand with Israel and support them as a nation. Ask the Lord to grow in you a heart of love and compassion for the nation of Israel and for the Jewish people.

DAY 13

 **READ:** Genesis 14

Chapter fourteen begins with an alliance of four kings making war against the five kings that lived near each other in the Jordan Valley in the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar (v. 1-3). Apparently the cities had been paying tribute money for twelve years and in the thirteenth year they rebelled and refused to pay the tribute so the next year they were attacked (v. 4-7). The alliance of four kings conquered everyone who stood in their way, seizing all the possessions and provisions (v. 11). They also took Lot and all his possessions (v. 12). One person escapes this battle and tells Abram what had happened. Abram's response was to gather 318 of his servants and pursue them (v. 13-14). Abram brought back all the possessions that they plundered, his relative Lot with all Lot's possessions and the women and the people (v. 16). The most significant event of this chapter occurs on Abram's return from the rescue of Lot. He is met on his return by two people – the king of Sodom and Melchizedek, the king of Salem. Melchizedek is compared to Christ in Hebrews 5, 7 and 8; Jesus is said to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The superiority of Jesus over the priests of Aaron is demonstrated in the fact that Abraham and all his descendants paid homage to Melchizedek by giving him a tenth of the spoils (v. 20). Melchizedek was both priest and king. Jesus was also both priest and King, but He is forever both. So we can see how Melchizedek was an extremely important person even though he is mentioned once in the Old Testament. Melchizedek provides Abram and his men with a meal (v. 17-18). He then blesses Abram's victory, attributing the victory to the power of God (v. 19-20). Abram then gives Melchizedek a tithe of ten percent (v. 20). The king of Sodom asks Abram for the return of the people and offers to Abram the goods plundered which Abram was returning (v. 21). But Abram refused to accept this generous offer (v. 23) but allowed his men to take what was rightfully theirs (v. 24). It is important to note that Abram didn't go after the enemy to seize plunder rather he wanted to save his nephew Lot. We already know that Lot foolishly chose the more fertile land without considering the long term effects of this decision. Now his life was in danger. For Abram, going to war was an issue of saving his family member and was not about gaining wealth or riches. Here we see evidence that Abram was not bitter towards Lot for taking the best land. This also shows that he had great faith in God as he only took 318 men to fight the armies of four kings who just overtook vast regions. Abram came back from battle the victor because God was with him. Melchizedek noted this and gave the glory to God. Abram's response was to give Melchizedek a tenth of everything. Abram's tithe was tangible proof that Abram understood that it was God who deserved the glory. On the other hand, the king of Sodom proposed that Abram keep the plunder from the battle, this would be a reward for his accomplishments. So why did Abram refuse? Abram did not go to war for riches; it was to save the innocent, to save his family member. Abram showed that he was not greedy for personal gain but that He desired that his riches come from the Lord and not from war.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Earlier we read of the danger that Lot put himself in by choosing the better land and now we see that the company a person keeps is not an indifferent thing – it will either bring him/her to salvation or destruction. Ask the Lord to show you if you have any relationships in your life that are causing you to be complacent or apathetic towards God. Are there any people in your life who drag you down spiritually? What is He asking you to do about this?
2. In this account we find Abram arming his men and attacking a victorious army showing his strength and courage. His motive was saving his nephew Lot, the guy who had taken the best land. We can see by Abram's actions that he not only forgave Lot's offense but that he repaid evil with good. Ask the Lord to show you if there is anyone in your life who you are struggling to forgive. What is the next step in forgiving this person so that you can repay evil with good?
3. Abram went to war with the motive to repel aggression and to rescue the innocent from suffering, not for the purpose of plunder or the extension of his territories. Pray that believers would have a heart for the innocent, for the orphan and the widow. Pray that works of love would be seen all throughout the church.

DAY 14



READ: Genesis 15

We have already seen in the previous chapters that God had given Abram a great promise, but as time ticked on, Abram began to become worried that the promise might remain

unfilled. Abram was concerned that Eliezer, a servant in his household, would be his heir (v. 2). God clarifies to Abram that Eliezer would not be his heir but rather his own son would be the heir (v. 4). Do you see what Abram is doing here? He is coming up with his own solution to a problem that He thinks God can't solve instead of trusting the promise. God told Abram to look to the heavens and number the stars, promising Abram that his offspring would be numerous (v. 5). Abram believed the Lord and this was counted to him as righteousness (v. 6). This is one of the most important verses in the Old Testament as it shows justification by faith. No works of Abram could merit the salvation of the entire human race. It was all based on God's promise! God then goes on to reaffirm Abram's promise of an inheritance of land (v. 7). Abraham asks for a sign (v. 8), as this was customary on such occasions. The Lord directs him to offer a sacrifice of five different animals (v. 9). It is noteworthy that every animal listed here was allowed to be sacrificed under the future Mosaic Law. The ancient method of making covenants included dividing the animals in half (v. 10) and passing between the pieces. Verse 11 tells us that Abram drove the birds of prey away from the carcasses showing that he stood by his sacrifice waiting for the manifestation of God, who had ordered him to prepare it. He didn't want the wild animals to pollute what had been consecrated to God. Next, we read that Abram fell into a deep sleep and the Lord spoke to him. God tells Abram that his offspring would be sojourners in a foreign land and be slaves and afflicted for 400 years but that He would bring judgment on that foreign nation and that they would come out with great possessions (v. 13-14). This was fulfilled in the book of Exodus. God then tells Abram that they will come back to the land that was promised to them in the fourth generation, implying that the land will be taken from the Amorites as an act of Divine punishment for their iniquity (v. 16). The covenant is sealed when a smoking fire pot and flaming torch passed between the animal pieces (v. 17). The boundaries of the promised land are given in scripture for the first time in verses 18-21. Israel came close to controlling much of this territory but has never fully occupied it, giving many reasons to believe that Israel still has a future in God's plan as they will eventually receive all this land, even if not until the Lord's return.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. *"I am your shield, your very great reward (v. 1)"*. Ask God to show you a situation in your life where He has acted as a shield for you. What was the circumstance? what was He shielding you from? Praise and thank Him for this. Ask Him to continue to shield you and protect you.
2. In this chapter, Abraham asks God for confirmation of His promise and God gives this to him. This shows the kindness and goodness of God. God did not rebuke or get mad at Abram when he asked, *"how can I know..."* but rather He provided an extensive ceremony which proved without a shadow of a doubt, that He would give Abram the land. Ask God to reveal to you 5-10 things that this shows about His character. Praise and thank Him for each thing that He shows you.

DAY 15



READ: Genesis 16

As time goes by, Sarai still has not conceived a son and she becomes concerned and resorts to a pagan custom to resolve the problem. The childless Sarai gave her Egyptian maidservant, Hagar, to Abram as a wife (v. 3). Slaves were the property of their owner therefore any children she bore would also be considered the property of the owners.

This action was not suggested by God (polygamy is sin) therefore Sarai will experience consequences! Hagar's ability to conceive causes her to look down on Sarai (v. 4). Sarai initially becomes angry with Abram, whom she probably feels is favouring Hagar because of the pregnancy so he permits her to deal harshly with Hagar (v. 5-6), causing Hagar to run away (v. 6). While on her journey, a pre-incarnate Christ appeared to her (v. 7). He recommended that she return and submit to Sarai (v. 9) and promised that her seed would be greatly multiplied (v. 10). The Lord tells her that she will bear a son and that he is to be named Ishmael, which means "God hears", a reminder to Hagar of God's special intervention on her behalf. Verse 12 tells us that Ishmael will be a strong, independent person who is wild, untamed, fearing no man, unlike his mother. Unfortunately this would also mean that he would live a life of hostility. Hagar called the place where the Lord spoke to her, Beerlahairoi, meaning "God sees me" (v. 13-14). When Hagar give birth to Ishmael (v. 15), Abraham was 86 years old. This was the first child that was named by God before he was born. Eleven years have now passed since God first promised an heir to Abram and God's promise was still unfulfilled, because Ishmael was not the promised son.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Sarai decided to secure the inheritance by means that were in her power and we do not find Abram objecting. They were both acting naturally when God wanted to act supernaturally! God had made a promise and God does not lie so they should not have meddled with His work. Ask the Lord to show you an area in your life where you have been trying to solve a problem naturally instead of praying and trusting Him to solve it supernaturally. Repent of this and ask God for forgiveness. Then ask Him to show you how to pray about this situation.
2. Even in her troubling circumstances, God asks Hagar to submit to authority. He did not remove the problem but rather asked Hagar to obey in the midst of a tough circumstance. Ask the Lord to show you a situation in your life where you have or were tempted to run away from a difficulty. Pray that God would give you strength to face your problems, take responsibility for your part in them (if any) and trust and obey Him in the midst of them.
3. In this story we see God mercifully intervening on Hagar's behalf, He heard her cry! Our God hears! He listens to our prayers and He cares! We often bring distress into our lives from our own foolishness but God does not forsake us, He restores the repentant. God permits Hagar to run away to the wilderness and provides a spring to quench her thirst. He even sends the pre-incarnate Christ to comfort her. How gracious is God! Ask the Lord to show you a time in your life where you were in a distressing situation. Did you run to God? Why or why not? Are you in a distressing situation right now? How are you running to God? If you aren't, ask Him to show you what is keeping you from doing so.

DAY 16



READ: Genesis 17

At the end of the previous chapter Ishmael had just been born and Abram was 86 years old. At the beginning of chapter 17 we find that Abram is now 99 years old. Abram had heard nothing from God for 13 years! When God did appear to Abram, He identified himself as God Almighty and He asked Abram to walk blameless before Him (v. 1). In verses 4-5, God changes the name of Abram to Abraham, alluding to the coming of the

promise, as Abraham means "father of the multitude". In verses 6-14, God reiterates the covenant He had established with Abraham 14 years earlier (in Genesis 15), repeating and emphasizing certain parts of it. This was an everlasting covenant (v. 7) and the land that was promised in it was an everlasting possession (v. 8). This has far reaching eschatological implications! Verses 9-14 stipulate Abraham's part in the covenant – he was to circumcise, eight days after birth, every male child born in his household, whether born to him or to his servants (v. 10-12). Refusing to do this would break the covenant (v. 14). At the end of Genesis 17, God changed Sarai's name to Sarah. The Scriptures do not say why her name was changed but it probably has to do with the coming of the promised heir. When God told Abraham that He would make Sarah into the mother of nations and kings (v. 16) he fell facedown and laughed (v. 17) and questioned whether a 100 year old man and his 90 year old wife could bear a son. Commentators disagree as to whether the laugh was one of joy or doubt but Abraham's attempt to have God agree that Ishmael should be the heir shows his scepticism (v. 18). God says NO! Sarah would have a son and his name was to be Isaac and God's covenant with him would be everlasting (v. 19). God does tell Abraham that Ishmael's descendants will be a great nation (v. 20). History shows that the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs, are numerous and with the discovery of oil they have become "great". But they are not the children of the covenant; scripture is clear that the covenant is with Isaac whom Sarah will bear (v. 21). This does not imply racial inferiority but indicates that God has plans and purposes that would only be fulfilled through the descendants of Isaac, not Ishmael. Abraham carefully fulfilled God's instructions regarding circumcision that very day! Abraham was 99 when he was circumcised; Ishmael was 13 (v. 22-27).

In Genesis 17 God established the rite of circumcision for the people of Israel as a symbol that they were His people. Today there is no spiritual significance attached to this procedure. For Israel this was an outward act with great spiritual significance, it was also a national sign. In Romans, Paul teaches that circumcision without obedience is uncircumcision. It is also important to note that when a child was circumcised it was not to indicate that the child was saved but rather that the parents were being obedient. Circumcision was not a guarantee of salvation as all are justified through faith.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Sometimes obedience is painful (I'm sure Abraham felt pain when he circumcised himself at age 100!). But obedience is always worth it. Is there something in your life right now that is hard for you to obey? Ask the Lord to show you the benefits of being obedient to Him; ask Him to show you how it will be worth the pain in the long run.
2. What's in a name? God changed Sarai's name to Sarah and Abram's name to Abraham. What names do you call yourself? Do you call yourself bright or stupid, hardworking or lazy, fat or healthy, stubborn or obedient, kind or unkind, angry or loving, etc.? God has good names for you. He can speak a prophetic name over you if you let Him. Ask Him to show you who He has designed you to be, ask Him to show you the name that He calls you!
3. Pray for the nation of Israel. Pray that they would turn to Jesus and accept Him as their Messiah. Pray that the church would grow in loving Israel and standing with them.

DAY 17 **READ:** Genesis 18

The first fifteen verses of Genesis 18 give us a detailed description of the Lord appearing to Abraham. Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent during the heat of the day when he saw three men standing in front of him (v. 1-2). When he saw them he ran to them and bowed before them saying, "O Lord...do not pass by your servant". There is little reason to doubt that Abraham recognizes that one of his visitors is the pre-incarnate Christ.

Abraham spared no expense in providing these visitors with a lavish feast. He does not eat with the visitors but rather like a servant, he waits on them (v. 8). One of the visitors questions, "Where is Sarah, your wife" (v. 9)? The fact that they knew Sarah's name indicates that they were not ordinary visitors and that their visit had something to do with her, as the dialogue continues this will be confirmed. Sarah was in the tent but within hearing range. She heard all that the visitors said and when they gave a promise to return about the same time the next year and that she would have a son (v. 10), Sarah laughed to herself (v. 12). Sarah was old and advanced in years, her monthly menstrual cycles had stopped so there would be no way that she could become pregnant. The visitor's response was, "is anything too hard for the Lord" (v. 14)? Sarah then denies laughing (v. 15) but the visitor, who could not see her, had the ability to discern her inner laugh which proved that he was no mere man and says, "No, but you did laugh" (v. 15).

The primary reason for the visitors' visit was to make the announcement that Sarah would have a baby which would fulfill the covenant promise. But the Lord gives Abraham another message from these visitors, in the next section of the chapter he learns of the potential destruction of Sodom. God discloses to Abraham what He is about to do to Sodom so that He may teach Abraham's descendants to keep the way of the Lord and do righteousness, so that the Lord can bring to them what He had promised them (v. 19).

Sodom and Gomorrah were evil, wicked cities (v. 20). Abraham understood that God was going to destroy these cities and he knew that his nephew Lot and his family lived there. Abraham's response was to intercede for these cities. He appeals to the nature and character of God, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked (v. 23)...shall not the Judge of all the entire earth do what is just" (v. 25)? Abraham engages with God and presents various scenarios of hypothetical numbers gradually reducing the number of righteous from 50 down to 10 (v. 26-32). Abraham was not merely haggling with God, he knew God's character and that God takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11).

In this chapter we see that God was teaching Abraham many things before making him into a great nation. God was teaching Abraham about the nature of sin and wickedness and about His holiness and the necessity of judging sin. God was showing Abraham that His judgments are just and He was teaching Abraham to fear God.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. "Is anything too hard for the Lord (v. 14)?" What is one prayer request where you have not received an answer yet? First, ask the Lord whether or not you are praying according to His will in this particular situation. Then, ask the Lord to show you any changes that are needed to your prayer strategy – what are you missing in praying for this situation? Then, pray what the Lord shows you and commit to continuing to seek His strategy on this issue.
2. God revealed the coming judgement of Sodom to Abraham. The secrets of the Lord are with those who fear Him. Abraham had chosen to live a life of communion with

God, walking with God and therefore He was given foresight into what was to come. As we get closer and closer to the end times the importance of hearing God becomes even more important, so does foresight. Ask the Lord to grow you in hearing His voice. Pray that you would hear with clarity and that the Lord would give you insight for you and your family in the times to come.

3. Intercessory prayer is most effective when we have a deep realization of God's judgment. It is hard to pray for the lost when we don't have an understanding of their eternal punishment. Pray that you would grow in an healthy fear of the Lord and that the Lord would place an urgency in your heart about the end times. Pray that you would stand firm and that you would learn to love prayer and praying for the lost.

DAY 18 **READ:** Genesis 19

The two angels who visited Abraham with the pre-incarnate Christ in chapter 18 now arrive in the city of Sodom in the evening (v. 1). Lot is sitting at the gate to the city when he meets them and offers them refuge in his home (v. 2). They initially declined his offer, but Lot pressed the matter and they finally accepted (v. 3). Lot then made a feast for them. Before long, the men of the city surrounded the house and called to Lot, asking about the visitors (v. 4-5). These wicked men wanted to have sex with the visitors (v. 5). This invitation shows us the wickedness of the Sodomites. Later in the Scriptures we read that the sin of homosexuality is classified with bestiality and incest (Lev. 18:22, 29; 20:13), it is also condemned in the New Testament (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10). God did not consider these to be alternative lifestyles but sinful lifestyles. Lot confirms their intentions to have sex with the visiting men as sinful when he pleads for them not to act so wickedly (v. 7). Not wanting to violate his responsibility to protect his guest, Lot offers his own virgin daughters instead (v. 8). Such an offer is shocking and ungodly! This got the mob of men angry and they accused Lot of judging them (v. 9), the men started to break down the door when the visitors reached out and saved Lot (v. 10). The angelic visitors then struck the angry mob with blindness (v. 11) so they couldn't barge in the door. They then commanded Lot to gather his family and belongings and to get out of the city because they were going to destroy it, as instructed by God (v. 12-13). Lot tried to gather his future sons-in-laws but they thought he was joking (v. 14). As morning approached the angels urged Lot to flee the city, but Lot lingered so they seized him and brought him out of the city, commanding them to flee to the mountains and not look back (v. 15-17). Lot asks instead if he can flee to a town nearby (v. 20) and they agreed (v. 21). That city would be completely spared of the judgment coming to the other cities in the valley because of the presence of Lot. This shows how the very presence of the righteous can ward off judgment! The Lord destroyed the valley cities by raining down sulfur and fire from heaven (v. 24). The destruction came from God the Son, as He has been given all judgment and is the destroyer of those that reject salvation. He overthrew the cities and all the inhabitants, it was utter ruin. Lot and his two daughters escaped, but Lot's wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt (v. 26). She disobeyed and was struck dead in her place, her body becoming like a monument. The judgment of this area was so severe that this once fruitful valley remains today as the Dead Sea. Still to this day it has no living creature in it.

The story now shifts to Abraham (v. 27) who saw the smoke of the land like the smoke of a furnace (v. 28). The smoke would have communicated to Abraham that there were not 10 righteous people in Sodom. Four were lead out of the city by the angels but only three survived the judgment. But God, in His goodness, kept Lot safe. Lot managed to escape

Sodom but the events that happen next make it clear that the influence of that culture had a profound effect on his daughters. Their desire for offspring was stronger than their desire to be holy so they got their father drunk so they could get pregnant by him (v. 32-35). Notice how in both cases the Scriptures are clear that Lot had no knowledge of what was happening (v. 33, 25). The offspring of this sinful behavior became the Moabites and the Ammonites (v. 37-38), who will both later be trouble for the people of Israel!

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Sodom and Gomorrah was a wicked city full of sexual immorality, greed and injustice. Regrettably, our country and most of the developed world is going the way of Sodom and Gomorrah. Wickedness abounds. Billy Graham's wife Ruth was quoted as saying, *"If God doesn't soon bring judgment upon America, He'll have to go back and apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah!"* Yet where are the intercessors today? Who is praying for God to save our great nation? Who is praying for God's hand of judgment to be restrained and for many to repent and turn from their wicked ways? Our land desperately needs prayer! Ask the Lord to show you what part He is calling you to play praying for our nation. Ask Him to show you something about our nation that you can pray for today.
2. Thank the Lord for His love and mercy, how He desires for people to repent and turn from their wicked ways. God protected Lot! This shows the power of intercession. Praise Him for this!
3. Ask the Lord to show you strategies you can implement in order to protect your children from the negative impact of our sinful culture. Ask Him to speak to you about their friends, the media, their school, etc. How can you model a life submitted to God to your kids?

DAY 19

 **READ:** Genesis 20

This chapter sort of feels like a *deja vu* of Genesis 12:10-20. It starts with Abraham journeying through several regions, ending up in Gerar (v. 1). It is here where Abraham says that Sarah is his sister and she is taken by King Abimelech (v. 2) – you would have thought that he would have learned his lesson! I guess old sins die hard. This is a crisis of HUGE proportions! The woman who is to bear the seed of the nation of Israel CAN NOT lie with another man! So, God intervened! God comes to Abimelech in a dream to ensure that Sarah did not have sexual relations with the king (v. 3). Abimelech asserts his innocence of the entire situation (v. 4-5), which God affirms is true (v. 6). It is written in verse 6 that God did not let Abimelech touch Sarah, in other words, they did not have sex. It is extremely important for the nation of Israel to know that they were birthed from Abraham's seed and that Abimelech did not touch Sarah! Abraham is called a prophet, by God, in verse 7. This is based on his ability to intercede, pray and make supplication which we saw in chapter 18. God warns Abimelech that the consequence for not returning Sarah to Abraham would be death to him and those in his kingdom (v. 7). Abraham's prayers would play a part in removing this consequence. Abimelech then admonishes Abraham for bringing this great sin into his kingdom (v. 9). He then asks Abraham why he did it (v. 10). Abraham then admits that he was afraid that they would kill him because they wanted his wife (v. 11), and admits to telling a half-truth (v. 12) and that he told Sarah to tell people that they were siblings (v. 13). Basically, Abraham was making excuses for his conduct. The king then restores Sarah back to Abraham, including gifts of sheep, oxen and slaves (v. 14).

He offers Abraham residence in any part of his lands (v. 15) and gives money as a sign that he did not act inappropriately with Sarah (v. 16). The king is making sure that everyone knows that he is not the father of any child that she may have! The chapter ends with Abraham making intercession for Abimelech and his household. As a result, God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his female servants and so they could have children (v. 17). This was because the Lord had closed up their wombs because of Sarah, Abraham's wife (v. 18). It seems necessary to imply that Abimelech and his household were afflicted with some sort of disease that would have made it impossible for them to have children. This may have been another way of protecting Sarah from being defiled by Abimelech.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. By this time in his life, Abraham had experienced much in his relationship with God and was slowly maturing into a man of God. He is even called a 'prophet' by God. Yet Abraham was still susceptible to sin and in this case he lied because of fear. Sin is not something that we deal with once and then move on, never to sin again. We must carefully examine our hearts, attitudes and actions regularly and confess any areas of sin. Ask the Lord to reveal to you any attitudes or actions in your life that are sinful. Confess these things as sin and ask the Lord to forgive you. Then ask Him if there are any steps you can take to make these wrongs right.
2. God intervened! He prevented Abimelech from sinning (v. 7) by not letting him touch Sarah. Part of God's intervention was to cause a great distress on the king's entire household (v. 18). Sometimes God's interventions don't make sense to us, in fact, sometimes we may think that He is being mean or unfair or even attribute His interventions to the enemy. Ask the Lord to show you a time in your life where He intervened in order to help you. Maybe you misinterpreted this as a punishment? Dialogue with God about this. Ask Him to show you the truth of how He has intervened many times in your life.
3. Praise and thank God for His character. He is active and He intervenes because He cares! He loves! He is good! He is merciful! He is slow to anger and abounding in love! Ask Him to show you 5-10 things about His character that you can be thankful for today. Worship and praise Him for these things.

DAY 20

 **READ:** Genesis 21

God fulfilled his promise to Sarah by giving her the ability to conceive and bring forth a son (v. 1-2), according to what He had told them. Abraham named him Isaac (v. 3) and circumcised him on the eighth day (v. 4). Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (v. 5)! Isaac grew and was weaned (v. 8), probably at the age of 2-3 years old. Abraham threw a feast to celebrate but the celebrations were dampened by Ishmael's mockery (v. 9). This caused Sarah to desire to have Ishmael and his mother Hagar be expelled from the household (v. 10). Although Ishmael is Abraham's son, Sarah does not want him to receive any of the inheritance. Sarah knew that God had planned for the promise to be fulfilled through Isaac so she wished to have this other son removed from all claim on the inheritance. This greatly troubled Abraham (v. 11), but God intervened by reassuring Abraham that this was for the best (v. 12). God then renews the promise that He gave to Ishmael (v. 13). So Abraham did something that would have been very difficult. He sent Hagar and his first born son away and they departed (v. 14). Ishmael would have been around 16-17 years old at this time. In the wilderness, Hagar and Ishmael ran out of water

so she cried out to the Lord (v. 15-16). God heard her cry and called to her. He promised to make a great nation out of Ishmael and opened her eyes to see a well with water so they could drink and be refreshed (v. 18-19). This section concludes with telling the reader that Ishmael grew up and became a great archer (v. 20) and his wife was from Egypt (v. 21).

The chapter then goes back to Abraham and Sarah. We are now reintroduced to Abimelech and his chief captain Phichol who make a covenant with Abraham and surrendered the well of Beersheba for seven ewe lambs (v. 22-32). These men acknowledge Abraham's success to God (v. 22) and ask Abraham to deal honestly with them (v. 23). Do you think may have anything to do with Abraham's past record of telling half-truths? Abraham then tells Abimelech that his servants had seized one of his wells (v. 25). Abimelech says that he knew nothing about this (v. 26), so the men made a covenant and used the exchange of seven ewe lambs to show that Abraham had dug the well (v. 30). The place was called Beersheba (v. 31) and Abraham planted a tamarisk tree there (v. 33). Abraham then worshipped the Lord, the Everlasting God and sojourned many days in the land of the Philistines (v. 34).

You may wonder what the significance is of this account being included in the Scripture. Why tell a little story about a well? As you read through the Bible you will find Beersheba mentioned many times. Isaac built an altar in Beersheba (Genesis 26:23-33). Jacob had his dream about a stairway to heaven after leaving Beersheba. (Genesis 28:10-15 and 46:1-7). Beersheba was the territory of the tribe of Shimon and Judah (Joshua 15:28 and 19:2). The prophet Elijah took refuge in Beersheba when Jezebel ordered him killed (1 Kings 19:3). The sons of the prophet Samuel were judges in Beersheba (1 Samuel 8:2). Saul, Israel's first king, built a fort for his campaign against the Amalekites (1 Samuel 14:48 and 15:2-9). The prophet Amos mentions the city in regard to idolatry (Amos 5:5 and 8:14). Following the Babylonian conquest and subsequent enslavement of many Israelites, the town was abandoned. After the Israelite slaves returned from Babylon, they resettled the town. This city is still there today in Israel and it is the largest city in the Negev desert of southern Israel and the seventh-largest city in Israel with a population of 196,355. (Reference: Wikipedia)

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. When Abraham did things his own way (think Hagar/Ishmael) the end result was pain and the breakdown of his family. Abraham did not get away with the sin of polygamy; rather it caused heartache, rejection, fighting, hurt and pain – big consequences and suffering! As a result of his sin, he lost his son Ishmael. In what ways are you doing things your own way? In what ways are you trying to get away with so called “little sins”? Ask the Lord to speak to you about these things. Ask Him to forgive the areas of sin that He reveals. Pray that you would learn to give Him control of your life and follow His path of righteousness.
2. Abraham's sin left Ishmael without a father and left Hagar without a husband. His sin affected these innocent people. Yet God intervened for Hagar and Ishmael, He protected them and kept them alive. They could trust God's goodness, love and mercy. God heard Hagar's cry back in Gen. 16 and He intervenes again, 14 years later in Gen. 21! God hears! God answers prayers! Thank God for this, tell Him that you love Him and trust Him. Even though we go through tough circumstances, we have a God who hears!
3. Why include a story about a well in Beersheba? It helps to remember that the book of Genesis was a historical book written for the Israelite people. This well had great

significance to them as it represented God's faithfulness throughout history. This well also shows us God's faithfulness and love. Ask Him to show you how He has been faithful to you throughout your life. Praise and thank Him for this.

DAY 21

READ: Genesis 22

In this chapter we find God putting Abraham to the ultimate test (v. 1). The conditional promise which was given in Genesis 12:1-3 would be guaranteed if Abraham passed the test. The death of Isaac would contradict everything that God had promised Abraham. Would Abraham obey? Does he fully believe in the promise that God gave him? He had failed before therefore Ishmael was born and now was lost to him. Now God commands Abraham to take the son of the promise, his beloved son and offer him as a burnt offering (v. 2). Abraham promptly obeys, gathers his supplies and begins on the journey to Moriah (v. 3). It is commonly believed that the mountain upon which Abraham offered up Isaac is the exact same mountain on which God offered up His Son, Jesus, to be the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the world. On the third day they arrived. This number is significant because of Christ's rising from the dead on the third day. Abraham and Isaac then leave the servants behind as they go to worship the Lord. Isaac carries the wood for the offering and Abraham carries the knife and fire (v. 6). Did you notice how Abraham said, “*and come again to you*” to his servants? Hebrews 11:17-19 gives us further insight into this incident: ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, ¹⁸even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ¹⁹Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. Abraham went fully prepared to offer his son, and yet confidently expecting to have him restored to life again. Isaac, questions, “*where is the lamb*” (v. 7)? Abraham replies, “*God will provide*” (v. 8). If Abraham had any doubt that God would not miraculously intervene in some way the binding and placing of his son on the altar would have been agonizing. Abraham raises the knife. But God intervenes! Abraham's action confirms his faith and obedience to God. His faith is now active, it is complete. God provides a ram to be sacrificed as a burnt offering instead of Isaac (v. 13) and Abraham offers it up as a burnt offering. The place was called Jehovah-Jireh (v. 14), the Lord will provide!

The angel of the Lord then calls to Abraham a second time (v. 15) and in the most solemn manner Abraham is assured of the promise that God made with him back in Genesis 12:1-3. The Lord blesses Abraham by promising him many descendants (v. 17) and also by promising that one particular seed shall possess the gate of his enemies and through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (v. 18). Here we see that once again Genesis is interested in tracking a single unique line of offspring that will eventually lead to the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Abraham then returns and dwells at Beersheba (v. 19). He is told that his brother Nahor has eight children by his wife Milcah (v. 20). We are given their names in verses 21-23 as well as told of the children by his brother's concubine Reumah (v. 24). The reference to Rebekah shows the significance of this mini-section of genealogies. God is further preparing the line of Abraham by a suitable spouse for Isaac.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. This test shows that Abraham now fully believes in the promise of the covenant. He is no longer doing things his own way (think Hagar and Ishmael) and he is no longer

full of fear (think lying to Abimelech). Abraham is no longer thinking naturally. He now sees that God can intervene supernaturally (see Heb. 11:17-19)!!! Over the years Abraham has grown in trusting God. He isn't doubting anymore, He isn't fixing the problem himself, he isn't lying either. Abraham is obeying! He had experienced many failures but God continued to mold his character so that he would pass the final test, when it mattered most. Thank God for the ordinary people in the Scriptures who help teach us about spiritual growth and maturity. Thank Him for the patience and love that He has for His children and that He doesn't give up on us but rather picks us up and encourages us to press on! Pray that you would grow in sensing these aspects of God's character.

2. Is there a promise that God has given you that requires a step of faith or obedience? Ask the Lord to show you what that step is. Or, ask Him for a promise and then for a step of faith or obedience that you can take.
3. Worship God! He grew Abraham into maturity even though it took many years! He'll do that for you too – if you let Him. If you choose to follow Him and if you choose to endure and press on. Ask Him to show you the work of transformation that He has done in your life so far. Thank Him for this transformation. Pray that you would continue to seek Him and follow Him. Pray for endurance.

DAY 22

READ: Genesis 23

This chapter begins with the death of Sarah and tells of how Abraham buys a cave in Hebron to be her burial place. This is significant for the children of Israel as it marks the ownership and future rights to the land of Canaan. Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age, death and burial are distinctly noted. Isaac's age at the death of Sarah would have been 36 years old. Abraham wept for Sarah (v. 2) and asked the Hittites to sell him land so that he could bury his dead (v. 4). The Hittites recognize his special relationship with God by calling him "*prince of God*" (v. 6) and they generously offered him one of their best tombs for Sarah's burial (v. 6). Abraham did not want to bury her in any tombs owned by somebody else, he wanted to bury her in a place that he could claim as his own. He had been wandering for 62 years in Canaan and still had no permanent location of his own. Yet God had promised him many times that his descendants would possess all the land of Canaan. Abraham rather asks to buy the cave of Machpelah, paying the full price (v. 8-9). The owner of this cave, Ephron, offers it to Abraham free of charge (v. 11). Abraham declines the free offer and once again offers to pay the full price (v. 13). They agree on a fair price, Abraham pays and the field now rightfully belongs to Abraham (v. 15-16). It was important for Abraham to buy the property because that would be the only way to ensure that the land legally belonged to him. The transaction was completed in the presence of the Hittites (v. 18). God is providing witnesses to this transaction. Abraham then buried Sarah in the cave, in the land of Canaan (v. 19). Verse 20 concludes by repeating that Abraham owned the field and cave. We'll see later in the book of Genesis that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Rebekah and Leah will all be buried in this cave.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. In this story we can see the sovereignty of God in Sarah's death. It was God's plan to give Abraham's descendants the land. God used Sarah's death to accomplish a purpose. Abraham bought the land giving the Israelites full rights and claim to it. Ask the Lord to show you a time in your life where He was accomplishing a purpose but

you were feeling hardship and adversity, maybe even a loss of a loved one. Ask God to speak truth into this situation and show you His sovereignty over all things. Praise Him for His sovereignty. Thank Him for being in control of your life.

2. In the time of Abraham people customarily buried their dead with their fathers. By purchasing this burial place, Abraham indicates his commitment to the Lord's purposes. Ask the Lord to show you 1-2 purposes that He has for you right now, in whatever place He has put you. Are you fulfilling those purposes well? Ask Him for some steps that you can take in order to fulfill those purposes well!
3. God gave the Promised Land to Israel, they rightly own the land and have full rights to it. Yet there exists in our world today much conflict over this land. There is no two state solution! The land rightfully belongs to Israel! Pray for Israel to stand strong in the midst of pressure to give up the land. Pray that many Jews would accept Jesus as the Messiah and make Him the Lord of their lives. Pray that the church across the world would stand with Israel and support them as a nation. Ask the Lord to grow in you a heart of love and compassion for the nation of Israel and for the Jewish people.

DAY 23

READ: Genesis 24

In this chapter we see the change from focusing on Abraham to now focusing on Isaac. Abraham is growing old. He has already buried his wife Sarah and now he now desires to find a suitable wife for Isaac before he dies. Abraham calls his trustworthy servant Eliezer for this task, requesting that he not take for him a wife from among the Canaanites (v. 1-3). Abraham desires for Isaac to have a wife from his own kin (v. 4). The servant asks what he should do if the woman is not willing to come with him, should Isaac go there to get her (v. 5)? Abraham gives him strong assurance of God's direction (v. 6-7) and assures him that if the woman doesn't follow he will be freed of the oath (v. 8), so the servant swore the oath (v. 9).

The servant makes preparations for his journey and sets out for Mesopotamia, the residence of Abraham's kin (v. 10). He arrives at a well just outside the city (v. 11) and prays to God asking for a sign. Eliezer is leaving the choosing of Isaac's wife up to God (v. 12-14). Before he could even finish praying, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, comes to the well to draw water (v. 15). Eliezer and Rebekah engage in conversation in which everything took place according to Eliezer's prayer (v. 17-21) as Rebekah offered to water his camels. Watering ten camels would have been hard work. Rebekah is showing both physical strength and benevolence. Upon realizing that this was God's chosen bride for Isaac, Eliezer offers gifts and asks for lodging at her father's house (v. 22-23). She replies favourably and invites him to her father's house (v. 25). The servant then worships the Lord and thanks Him for the prosperous journey, acknowledging how God directed his steps (v. 26-27). Rebekah informs her family (v. 28) and her brother Laban comes out and invites Eliezer home (v. 29-31). Laban offers food for the camels, water to wash his feet and food for him to eat (v. 32-33). Before accepting the food, Eliezer describes the mission that he is on for his master (v. 33-41). He continues to describe how he prayed for God to provide the right woman and asks her to be Isaac's wife (v. 42-44). Recognizing that this is of the Lord, Laban responds favourably and gives Rebekah to be Isaac's wife (v. 50-51). The servant responds by worshipping God (v. 52) and gives presents to Milcah, Laban and Rebekah (v. 53). They then eat and they ask Rebekah to leave with him and she consents to go (v. 54-58). She is accompanied by her nurse (v. 59) and after receiving a prophetic blessing from her parents and relatives (v. 60) they depart (v. 61). They are met by Isaac, who was on an evening walk for the purpose of mediation (v. 62-65). The servant relates to Isaac all that he had done (v. 66) and Isaac and Rebekah are married (v. 67) and he loved her.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. It is clear from this account that God guided the servant to Rebekah, showing His sovereignty in finding a wife for Isaac. It is commonly known that the journey from Abraham to where Rebekah lived was over 520 miles and would have taken 21 days to travel. Only God could have orchestrated their meeting and her positive response! What does this show about the importance of following the Holy Spirit and letting Him lead in your life?
2. One of the biggest barriers to experiencing the supernatural in your everyday life is control. When we try to control things and when we call the shots, God is virtually pushed out of our lives. We must give complete control over to the Lord, we must let Him lead and guide our lives and we must let Him call the shots. We do this through obeying the Word and through intentionally listening in prayer about all areas of our lives. Ask the Lord to show you two areas of your life where He wants control today. Let Him speak (write them down in your journal). Then, ask Him what He wants to say about each of those areas of your life. Commit to following through on what He showed you!
3. Abraham desired that Isaac get a suitable wife. He knew the importance of not intermarrying with the pagan Canaanites. He knew this was not acceptable because their sinful ways would more than likely permeate his son and future grandchildren. As Christians, we too are called to be set apart yet there are many believers who have been permeated with the world. We are to be in the world but not of the world, we are to be salt and light yet many of us are unsalty and our lights are dim. Ask the Lord to speak to you about these things. What does He want to tell you about this? Give him permission to show you areas of your life that have been permeated by the world.

DAY 24**READ: Genesis 25**

This chapter concludes the life of Abraham. It begins by telling us that Abraham married Keturah and had six children with her (v. 1-2). The point is that Abraham had more children than just Ishmael and Isaac but that he gave all that he had to Isaac (v. 5). Isaac is the one who received his flocks and his right to the land of Canaan and the promises of God. In order to keep things civil, while he was still alive, Abraham gave his other sons gifts and sent them away to the east country (v. 6). The writer is making it very clear that only the descendants of Isaac can lay claim to the promised land! Abraham was 175 years old when he died (v. 7) and he was buried by his sons Isaac and Ishmael, in the same cave where Sarah was buried (v. 9). After his death, God blessed Isaac and he settled at Beerlahairoi (v. 11).

The text concludes the life of Abraham by giving the genealogies of his son Ishmael (v. 12-18) who had 12 sons each becoming chiefs of tribes in Arabia, fulfilling the promise of Genesis 17:20. God had promised to multiply Ishmael so the writer shows that this promise was kept by God. Ishmael died at the age of 137 years (v. 17). This dialogue also shows that these descendants did not live in the Promised Land and that they lived in hostility (see Gen. 16:12).

The focus of Genesis now shifts to Isaac, who was 40 years old when he took Rebekah (v. 20). Isaac prayed to the Lord because she was barren (v. 21) and the Lord answered his prayer and she conceived twins, who struggled together within her (v. 22). Not knowing what was happening inside her Rebekah inquired of the Lord who told her that she had

two nations in her womb (v. 23). What was prophesied about Esau and Jacob we see coming true in their descendants. The Edomites were the offspring of Esau and the Israelites were the offspring of Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons who would become the twelve tribes of Israel as one nation. The Edomites and the Israelites are very different people in manners, customs and religion. Esau was a hunter (v. 27), Jacob was a tent dweller (v. 27) who kept sheep and cattle. Although history shows that the Edomites started out as more powerful than the Israelites, eventually David (an Israelite) made an entire conquest of the Edomites and they served the Israelites for 150 years. After many years the Edomites were incorporated among the Jews. We will see in future chapters that the relationship between these twin boys was largely hostile. It is interesting to note that the twins were born when Isaac was 60 years old, 15 years before Abraham died. The text also tells us about Esau's hairy body and Rebekah's love for Jacob – which will come into play in future chapters.

The chapter concludes with Esau, the oldest twin, selling his birthright to his younger brother for a bowl of stew (v. 33). It appears that Esau was so extremely fatigued that he thought he was going to die without immediate refreshment (v. 30). The birthright was a matter of great importance in the ancient world and this transaction proves that it was transferable between children. The birthright would have included being consecrated to God, receiving a special honor from your parents, receiving a double portion of goods from the father and succession of the family line. In Hebrews 12:16, Esau is called a profane person for selling his birthright. His mind was not on spiritual things as he did not see that the birthright was linked to God's promise to Abraham. But we can't let Jacob off the hook too easily. What kind of brother wouldn't freely give his famished brother a bowl of stew? This shows the deceptive and selfish nature of Jacob as he exploits his brother. We see these qualities in Jacob until he has an encounter with God later in Genesis.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Only the descendants of Isaac can lay claim to the Promised Land! This was God's way back then and it is still God's way today. Sometimes we may not understand God's ways but that does not make God's ways unjust or unfair. As the Creator of the world and as the Creator of humanity, He gets to formulate the standards of morality and he gets to determine what is right and what is wrong. It is our job to obey and not debate the truths of His Word. Ask the Lord to show you if there are any Biblical laws which you struggle understanding or living by. Then, commit to following the ways of the Creator God and commit to asking Him to help you to understand His ways and trust in them.
2. Isaac was 40 when he married Rebekah and was 60 when the twin boys were born. This means that they were married over 19 years before she conceived. That is a lot of years to pray for a child! But God kept His promise of making Abraham a nation by giving Isaac not just one son, but two sons. Are there any things in your life that you feel you have been praying about for a long time? Ask the Lord to grow in you a deep trust in His timing for answering your prayers. Also pray that He will show you how to pray according to His will, through listening prayer. Then ask Him if there is anything else that He wants to say to you about this prayer request today.
3. Rebekah inquired of the Lord and He answered her. This is the first instance of a woman inquiring of the Lord in the Scriptures. Women have full access to the Lord! Thank God for the equality that He has established between men and women. Thank Him for the opportunity to lead your family, to volunteer in the church and to be a minister in His Kingdom! Ask Him to show you what a next step is for you in each of these areas.

4. Isaac loved Esau and Rebekah loved Jacob (v. 28). This inexcusable parental attachment to one child in preference to another will have consequences as the family will become divided and in opposition with itself. Many evils will result in the descendants of both families because of these foolish attachments. If you have more than 1 child, ask the Lord to show you if you hold any preferences of one child verses another. Often parents are blind to the subtle ways that they favor the compliant child over the child that requires more attention, or the subtle ways the favor one gender over another. Ask the Lord to open your heart to His truth about this today. Listen in prayer, asking Him to show you what He wants to show you about favoritism. Ask Him to show you patterns of favoritism in your family history and in the family history of your children's father. Pray against any generational strongholds. Commit to loving each child and in growing to appreciate their differences.

DAY 25

 **READ:** Genesis 26

A famine in the land (v. 1) leads Isaac to leave Beersheba and go to Gerar. God appears to Isaac and warns him not to go down to Egypt (v. 2). God then reaffirms the promises to him that were made to his father Abraham (v. 3-5). When Isaac settled in Gerar he committed the same sin as his father by saying that Rebekah was his sister (v. 7) except this time it was a complete lie not a half-truth. Sarah was Abraham's half-sister, Rebekah was Isaac's cousin. Isaac feared that he would be killed and Rebekah would be taken by another man – sounds familiar! But the truth comes out when Isaac is caught doing something with Rebekah that made it obvious they were married (v. 8). The king confronts Isaac on this and he admits to lying (v. 9-10). Abimelech scolds Isaac for potentially having brought wrath upon him and his people and tells his people not to touch Isaac or his wife (v. 10-11). Abimelech was acting rightly in desiring for impurity to be avoided by himself and his people. He understood that taking another man's wife was adultery of which the penalty was death. It is important to note that the Abimelech in this chapter was probably a descendant of the Abimelech that had similar discussions with Abraham back in chapter 20.

Isaac become quite wealthy in this land (v. 12-24) as the land produced a hundredfold and he gained the possessions of flocks and herds and many servants. In fact, he became so rich that the Philistines envied him (v. 14). This leads Abimelech to ask Isaac to leave their region (v. 16). Isaac listens and moves to the valley of Gerar (v. 17). He reopens the wells that were dug by his father and had been filled by the Philistines (v. 18) and also digs new wells (v. 19-22). In such times a good well was a great possession and often there were predatory wars in where it was usual for the enemy to fill the wells with earth or sand in order to cause distress. The filling up of Abraham's wells by the Philistines was corrupt as they had made a treaty in Gen. 21:25-31. We can see in these verses how Isaac chose to move on instead of cause strife and contention over the well disputes. God blesses him for this.

Isaac then returns to Beersheba and the Lord appears to him to renew the promise (v. 24). Isaac responds by building an altar and worshipping the Lord (v. 25). Abimelech comes to him from Gerar, along with his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his military (v. 26). Isaac questions why they came to him, subtly accusing them of unkindness for sending him away (v. 27). They beg him to make a covenant with them (v. 28-29). Isaac responds by preparing a feast for them and making the covenant (v. 30-31). Isaac's servants then discover a new well (v. 32) which they call Beersheba, restoring the ancient name for that place. The chapter concludes by mentioning that Esau (Isaac's oldest son),

at age 40, marries two wives of the Hittites, at which Isaac and Rebekah were grieved (v. 34-35). This was probably because Esau married for secular power and influence without consideration of the idolatry and carnal ways of the Hittite people.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. God warned Isaac about not heading to Egypt but He doesn't tell him why he shouldn't go there (v. 2). This shows God's love and concern for His children and that He is to be obeyed, even when we don't fully understand why. It is often hardest to obey and trust when we can't see what God is doing and when we don't know why He is doing what He is doing. It is hard to obey when His actions seem irrational but we must remember that God loves and is just and fair and that it is often our own interpretations that are incorrect. Has there ever been a time in your life when you didn't understand what God was doing and why? Are you in that place now? Ask the Lord to grow your trust in Him. Ask Him to help you learn to trust Him, even when you don't fully get it. Pray for strength to follow and obey in these times.
2. In this chapter we see that Isaac commits the exact same sin as his father, Abraham. As parents we need to break generational strongholds of sin in our lives so that they don't get passed down to our children. We do this by first acknowledging our sin and confessing it. The following are lists of things that can be generationally inherited:
 - General Health Predispositions - high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, cancer, etc.
 - Temperament - shyness, aggressiveness, anxiety, fear, etc.
 - Spiritual Weaknesses – attitudes or behaviors
 - Demonic Influences and Curses

Often the big issues that we deal with in our lives are generational, meaning that they have been problems for our parents, grandparents or even great-grandparents. These things often become problems for our children too. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any generational issues that are affecting you or your children (write them down in your journal, don't discard anything – even if it seems to be irrational or insignificant). Now go through each, one by one, confessing and breaking any generational tie that may exist. For bigger issues, commit to doing this regularly or consider booking a personal prayer ministry appointment or attending after service prayer.
3. Esau was foolish in marrying two wives and even more foolish to choose to marry pagan women. It seems here that Esau didn't just despise his birthright but that he also didn't care about the religion of his family. Esau didn't care about heavenly things. If you have children, pray that they will grow in their walk with God and that they will care about following the Lord. Pray that they will focus on heavenly things and not be overtaken by the cares of this world. Pray specifically that they will choose to marry a person that is also following the Lord and walking in His ways.



The Book of Genesis

Genesis speaks of beginnings – of the world and human beings, of sin and redemption, of marriage and family and of society and civilization. It introduces us to the way in which God initiates and makes covenants with his chosen people and is foundational for the understanding of the rest of the Bible.

Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”



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