

2004

Saturday, January 24th - Genesis 4: 2

The sons of Adam divide the remnants of Adam's lost dominion over creation between themselves. Abel is a shepherd, exercising residual dominion over animate creatures; while Cain exercised such residual dominion over the inanimate plants of the earth. The point here is not that one occupation was exalted over the other, but that the sons of Adam were born with original sin and subject to the curse of God, whereby their powers were diminished so that they had to divide between them even the drastically reduced remnants of their father's lost dominion. Yet, significantly, when this verse lists the brothers' occupations, Abel, the younger, is named first. Indicators are given, for those with eyes to see, of the preference of the Lord's sovereign and saving grace for elected sinners.

Sunday, January 25th - Genesis 4: 3-5

After Scripture notes the careers of Adam's sons (v.26), it records a summary of their spiritual devotion. Both Cain and Abel were religious. Both acknowledged the God in whose image they had been made, shattered though that image was by man's fall. Presumably, Adam and Eve instructed their children in the faith. Hence, the sons do not try to approach the Lord directly, as though sinners could be accepted by a holy God. Instead, each one worships the Lord through the offering of a costly sacrifice. Cain leads the way, being the first to bring his offering to God, followed by Abel bringing his offering. Yet, priority in the outward ritual of religion does not always represent holy zeal, but rather can be indicative of carnal presumption. The first is often the last in things spiritual, especially when inconsiderate haste, rather than careful and holy preparation prompts the first.

Monday, January 26th – Genesis 4: 3-5

The discriminating regard the Lord had for the offerings of Cain and Abel can be accounted for not necessarily by the fact that Abel's was a bloody and Cain's was a bloodless offering. Besides that difference in their offerings, Scripture gives us other indicators to enable us to understand why the Lord accepted one offering and rejected the other. Cain's offering, we are told, was *of the fruit of the ground*. The fruit is not specified, nor is note made of its quality. On the other hand, Abel's offering consisted of *the firstlings of his flocks*. By this we perceive Abel offering God the first and the choicest of his flocks, and so indicating his recognition that the Lord had sovereign propriety in all that Abel owned. Further more, Abel killed and prepared his offerings so that the choicest parts of each animal—the fat portions—were consciously devoted to the Lord. Cain's offering represents an indiscriminate offering of quantity, whereas Abel's offering represents a careful and holy offering of quality that best reflects the character of the Lord, who would give His only begotten Son to save His people.

Tuesday, January 27th - Genesis 4: 3-5

The gifts that the sons of Adam brought to the Lord represented the heart attitude of the givers. Accordingly, the Lord showed favorable regard for Abel and for his offering, while He rejected Cain and his offering. When formal orthodoxy guides and expresses the sincere and grateful faith of the worshipper, the Lord is pleased with and blesses such a worshipper. Neither unorthodox worship, nor formal orthodoxy without sincere heart worship, pleases God or edifies the worshipper.

Wednesday, January 28th - Genesis 4: 5-7

The sinful pride and carnal presumption of Cain becomes apparent by his reaction to the Lord's rejection of his offering. Rather than his humbly accepting divine correction and instruction, Adam's first-born son grows angry. Rather than his mortifying his sin, he moans in sullen petulance. The Lord inquires into Cain's sinful reaction, and graciously supplies the answer to the questions regarding Cain's anger and sullenness. Well doing is the requirement for acceptance with God. Sinful man, of course, cannot do well, but he can look by faith to the divine Redeemer who pays the penalty for the sinful doing of all who call upon Him for salvation. Even in Christ, we are not to grow weary of well doing (Gal. 6:9), but rather we are to please our God and delight our own souls in doing the good works our Lord has prepared for us to accomplish (Eph. 2:10).

Thursday, January 29th - Genesis 4: 6-8

Rather than mortify his sin, Cain moaned before God. Rather than mortify his sin, Cain murmured to Abel. Rather than mortify his sin, Cain murdered his brother. Thus, the first man born into the world became a murderer, slaying the second man born into the world. The true aim of Cain's anger was the Lord. All sin is essentially attempted God murder. But since men cannot lay hold of God to kill Him, they turn their ire toward their fellow man, and often succeed in killing him. Every human born of woman since Cain has had this same sinful propensity that refuses to worship God and lovingly serve men, and determines to kill God and man instead. There has only been one exception to this awful rule, and by His wounds we are healed; by His death for us, we live now and forever.

Friday, January 30th - Genesis 4: 6-8

Cain's motive for murder was no doubt his envying of his brother. Abel and his sacrifice were accepted by God, and Cain felt slighted by his own rejection before God. Cain fed this envy with animosity toward God and all that the Lord approved. Cain could have viewed Abel as an example for him to follow on the path of divine approval. However, unmortified sin in a man's heart inflames him with rage against God and man, prompting him to destroy both, if possible, rather than to be reduced to humble discipleship in the school of the Lord. Envy indulged can swell to titanicly destructive proportions.

Saturday, January 31st - Genesis 4: 6-8

We are told that Cain murdered Abel *in the field*, meaning that the two brothers were away from their parents. Adam and Eve gave life and love to both of their sons, they were wiser than their younger, less experienced sons, and they were authorities over them to be honored. Whenever men are away from the ties of love and responsibility that bind us rightly together, they are in a position powerfully to be tempted to tear down, rather than build up, the fabric of human relations. We do well ever to place and to keep ourselves under the protective shield of loving human authority.

Sunday, February 1st - Genesis 4: 6-8

Cain's evil deed was murder. He killed a man who was made in God's image, who was approved by God, who was the son of his parents, and who was his brother. The first man to die in the world did so, not at the hand of God who had promised death for sin, but at the hand of man, even the hand of his brother. The blow that killed Abel also wounded Adam and Eve, thus demonstrating that the pain in childbirth with which God cursed Eve (Gen. 3:16) was not to be confined to pregnancy and delivery of a child. What threats we sinners are to one another! How expert we are at wounding one another, and how incapable we are to heal the wounds we inflict on others. Thanks be to God that through the wounds of His Son we are healed.

Monday, February 2nd - Genesis 4: 6-8

The first two men born into the world represent the characters and destinies of all men ever to be born into the world. One man represents a class of murderers; the other represents those who are martyred for their faith in the one true and living God. Ultimately, all men are in one or the other camp. There are no options between the murderer and the martyr. All men are either sinfully driven to destroy others, or are determined to suffer the destructive sins of others against them rather than sinfully to hurt others themselves. The difference is made by God's saving grace. All people are born dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3), but the people of God, like Abel, are twice born. Those twice born die only once, and for them death is gain (Phil. 1:21). The natural man is born only once, but he dies twice—once when he is called out of this world, and again when he faces divine judgment (Heb. 9:27). The sinner may attempt to kill God and the godly, but he succeeds only in thrusting himself into his own death for time and eternity. By his faith, Abel was at peace with God but drew the hostility of his brother. By faith, Abel resisted sin to the point of his shedding his own blood (Heb. 12:4). By his faith, Abel passed through death to eternal life, and his life, with its blessed outcome, speaks to all who have ears to hear and hearts to heed the way to eternal life.

Tuesday, February 3rd - Genesis 4: 8

God had told Adam that death would result from his sin. Scripture has already shown us the beginning of death working in Adam's own person as he became self-conscious and ashamed. We have also seen the approaching shadows of death in Adam's alienation

from his God and from his own wife. But it is in the first generation of men born in the world that the substance of death makes its first appearance. Nor was it as natural death that the wages of sin came. The first man in the world to die was killed by the hand of his fellow man. Sinners are their own and others' worst enemies.

Wednesday, February 4th – Genesis 4: 8, 9

Cain killed Abel in the field, being away from his parents and from all human accountability. There were no witnesses to the murder, and thus we would be tempted to think that Cain got away with his foul deed. But what men do not see God does not miss. Thus, Cain is called to account for his murder by the omniscient God. Our sins—no matter how secret they may be—will always find us out, because no man can escape from the heavenly Judge who perceives all things, even thoughts and intentions (Heb. 4:12).

Thursday, February 5th - Genesis 4: 9

The Lord begins to call Cain to account by inquiring into Abel's whereabouts. God is aware that Abel is not where he should have been. We may wonder why a God who is all-knowing would ask such a question, but the Lord's investigation is a gracious procedure designed to convict Cain and lead him to confession. We may wonder why a God who is all-knowing and all-powerful would not have foreseen and prevented this murder. However, we do well to recall that Abel, albeit a man saved by divine grace, was still himself a sinner subject to death. That death would be gain for Abel (Phil. 1:21), and God's permitting Cain to act on his sinful impulse would manifest sin's full fruition to which God would apply His holy justice to the praise of His glory.

Friday, February 6th - Genesis 4: 9, 10

The blind folly and stupefying effect of sin can be seen in Cain's answer to the Lord's inquiry about Abel. Cain pleads ignorance, thinking that the Lord's question indicated divine ignorance rather than grace offered to lead Cain to confession and repentance. Cain's abuse of that grace leads God to declare in v.10 that He was fully aware of what Cain had done. The Lord had instructed Cain previously to do well (v.7), and Cain had done evil instead. No human eyes other than Cain's saw the deed, but the heinous act could no more be hidden from divine eyes by Cain's profession of ignorance than could his parents' fig leaves have covered the shame of their sin from the perception of the Lord. It is ever our highest wisdom that we deal faithfully with our Lord.

Saturday, February 7th - Genesis 4: 9, 10

The Lord counters Cain's attempted evasion with undeniable evidence. Cain's surly denial that he was the keeper of his brother is answered by God confronting Cain with the fact that he was his brother's murderer. Precious in the sight of God is the shed blood of his beloved people (Ps. 72:14), as the Lord here indicates. The Lord also indicates by the way He represents Abel's death as his blood crying to Him from the ground, that men of

faith are more than conquerors in all things, even in death. For though Abel was dead, yet he was alive to speak to God and to all who read and heed God's Word (Rom. 8:37-39; Heb. 11:4).

Sunday, February 8th - Genesis 4: 10-12

The sinner who refuses to confess his sin to God is justly cursed by the Lord. This is the third divine curse to be found in Scripture (cf., Gen. 3:14, 17). As is always true of the Lord, His punishments justly fit the crimes. Here it is the earth, which Cain tilled for his life and which had been abused by him as a covering for Abel's corpse, that God curses further with respect to Cain. The Lord of heaven and earth will not allow His creation to be allied with wickedness. Sooner will our God call a plague of gnats from the dust of the earth (Ex. 8:16-19) to serve His purposes than He would allow the rocks and mountains to obey the guilty and terrified cries of sinners calling on them to fall and hide them from the wrath of the One sitting on heaven's throne and from the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16).

Monday, February 9th - Genesis 4: 11, 12

Cain's curse consisted in his agricultural labors being doomed to perpetual futility. It further consisted in his being consigned to a life of rootless perpetual motion. He was to be a vagrant—a useless fugitive. He was also to be a wanderer, not a pilgrim headed with right determination to a rewarding place, but doomed to ceaseless, aimless, and restless motion. Abel's death was his gain; while Cain's cursed life became his loss.

Tuesday, February 10th - Genesis 4: 13, 14

By Cain's killing Abel, the younger and faithful son of Adam was dispatched to heaven. The Lord, however, did not put Cain to death, but sentenced him to a living death that typifies the second death to which all apart from Christ are consigned—a death where their worm does not die (Is. 66:24; Mk. 9:43-48). We should resolutely follow Abel and flee from the way of Cain!

Wednesday, February 11th - Genesis 4: 13, 14

Cain acknowledges and accepts his punishment, since he had no other choice. Yet, his complaint expresses carnal remorse over the consequences of his sin, rather than repentance from his sin. As the quintessential sinner, he is concerned neither for Abel's good nor for God's glory but only with his own punishment. He complains that God had alienated him from the ground that was the source of his living, that God had driven him from communion with the Lord, and that in his futile wandering and vagrant existence all who should find him would seek to kill him. However, it was Cain who by his sin brought upon himself this alienation from God, from man, and from all of creation. The sinner is his own worst enemy.

Thursday, February 12th - Genesis 4: 13, 14

Cain complained that his punishment was too great for him to bear. Certainly there was vast magnitude to his misery. However, while he lived he could have repented and experienced relief. As terrible as his judgment was, it was temporal, and therefore nowhere near as excruciating as would be his condemnation to hell's unquenchable flames at the final judgment that he would face after his own death. Even if God speaks words of judgment and cursing to the sinner, as He did through Jonah to the people of Nineveh, the Lord relents from His cursing at the repentance of the sinner. Now is the day of the sinner's salvation, not necessarily tomorrow, especially if his soul is required of him tonight.

Friday, February 13th - Genesis 4: 15

When Cain mentioned in v.14 that whoever found him would kill him, it was more than a mere complaint from the man who had murdered his brother. There is a strong hint that Cain would have welcomed his own death as relief from his cursed misery. In that hope, of course, Cain was deluding himself. So long as Cain lived, he could repent. Therefore, God graciously issues a sanction to prevent anyone from killing Cain, and set a mark on Cain that he might be identified easily as the man other men should especially preserve in life. He who had killed his own brother was accordingly protected from the killing hand of man by the preserving hand of God. Even the common grace our Lord showers upon the unjust as well as the just is staggering.

Saturday, February 14th - Genesis 4: 15

There has been much speculation amongst scholars as to what was the mark of Cain. It is significant to note that the mark was for him alone, and that it was not necessarily transmitted to his descendants. We cannot and need not know with certainty what the mark was, any more than we can determine precisely what was Paul's thorn in the flesh. It is sufficient for us to recognize that God can so distinguish a man that his inner cursedness is evident to all, as is the warning for all to resist the impulse to destroy or to become like that man. Believers are marked by the name of the triune God upon them, the blood of Christ justifying them, the Holy Spirit indwelling them, and the glory of God shining from them. How thankful we should be for such a divine marking.

Sunday, February 15th - Genesis 4: 16

Whatever the mark of Cain might have been, this verse clearly records the mark of his character. He departed from God. We may wonder how a man could depart from the Lord who is omnipresent. Cain did not physically leave and escape from further accountability to the Lord. Instead, he went away from the face of the Lord, meaning that he refused to seek and submit to the Lord. Cain exchanged his apprehension of the grace and glory of God for his own darkened and carnal reasoning (Rom. 1:23). Sinners can never escape from God or erase from existence His truth; they can only suppress the truth (Rom. 1:18). On the other hand, those who have faith, like that of the Canaanite woman for example, see the grace and glory of God even in the most dark and adverse providences (Mt. 15:22ff).

Monday, February 16th - Genesis 4: 16

Cain left God and also left the eastern area of Eden, in which his parents dwelt after their expulsion from the garden (Gen. 3:23,24). He settled in Nod. The notice of his settlement would seem to contradict the curse pronounced upon him by God that he should be a vagrant wanderer (v.12). However, for the sinner, there is no rest, even when he settles in a place. For that reason, the area of Cain's abode was named *Nod*, a Hebrew word meaning *wandering*. The wicked flees when no one pursues (Prov. 28:1), and there is never any peace for the wicked (Is. 48:22). The sinner carries his misery and discontentedness with him wherever he goes.

Tuesday, February 17th - Genesis 4: 17

Here we learn that the common grace blessings of marriage and family were not withheld by God from Cain. The carnally curious speculate over the origin of Cain's wife—a useless and fruitless speculation. It is more instructive for us to note the industry and tendency of Cain's godless line. The Hebrew is a bit unclear in this verse as to whether it was Cain or his son, Enoch, who built the city. If it was Cain, then he who destroyed his brother spent his energies creating buildings from lifeless materials. If it was Enoch, then Cain's son was the one who devoted his energies to such building, naming the city after himself. The name, will, and glory of God are clearly absent from the endeavors of Cain's godless family. Sinners think and act with no regard higher than their own worldly advancement.

Wednesday, February 18th - Genesis 4: 18, 19

In these verses, Scripture traces a branch of the line of Cain through Enoch. God is alluded to only in two of the descendants' names: Mehujael, meaning, *smitten of God*; and Methushael, meaning, *man of God*. The other descendants of Enoch clearly have godless names: Irad, from a word related to the noun, *flight*; and Lamech, meaning *strong youth*. God is evidently little in the thoughts, and lives of this line of Cain's descendants. Accordingly, we should not be surprised to find one of these sons, Lamech, manifesting a sinful, selfish grasping in his taking to himself two wives. The godless man hungers not for heavenly but for earthly things, and the more he feeds upon such things the less satisfied he is.

Thursday, February 19th - Genesis 4: 20-22

The sons of Lamech through his two wives are recorded in these verses, along with notice of their occupations. Jabal was a herdsman, Jubal a musician, and Tubal-cain a forger of tools and weapons. The ancient heathen believed that civilization and culture were given to men by the gods. The Bible rightly teaches us that human culture is the fruit of man's endeavor. Furthermore, we learn that it is the godless who lead the way in building cities (Enoch) and promoting trades and the arts. The worldly must improve the world, for they have no higher hope than what can be had in this perishing world. They

race to build, but do not lay their foundations on the Lord. Thus, their highest achievements will fall in the stormy days of divine judgment (Lk. 6:47-49; Rev. 18).

Friday, February 20th - Genesis 4: 23, 24

These words form a song of defiant, sinful boasting. Lamech's action of killing a man shows the use to which he, being unregenerate, put the tools and arts of his culture. He boasts to his wives of his sinful vengeance. He declares that he killed a man, not an old and feeble one, but a virile one. The man struck Lamech, only wounding him, and we see in Lamech's overreaction the necessity for God to regulate offenses by the equity of an eye for an eye (Ex. 21:22-25; Lev. 24:17-22; Dt. 19:16-21). Far from his conscience bothering him as he recalls his accountability to God for this sinful killing, Lamech defiantly boasts that God could curse him ten times more than He had cursed Cain and it would not matter to him. Lamech quintessentially represents the sinful line of Cain in its fullest fruition. Thanks be to God that we who are in Christ have been delivered from our becoming like Lamech.

Saturday, February 21st - Genesis 4: 25, 26

In contrast to Cain and the sinful development of his family line, we have in these verses a brief but highly significant notice regarding the line of the faithful. From Lamech's defiant song celebrating death, Scripture returns our attention to the loving intimacy of Adam and Eve, who had suffered unspeakable loss in Abel's murder and Cain's flight. Once again, our first parents produced a son, naming him Seth, a name related to the verb, *to appoint* or *to set* as a foundation. In this name, we perceive the still operative faith of Adam and Eve, as they rightly reckon that God had given them this son as a consolation for the one who, through his dark providence, He had taken from them. The consolations of the Lord are many and truly comforting to the faithful. Not even broken hearts or death itself can extinguish the flame of gratitude to the Lord in the hearts of His people.

Sunday, February 22nd - Genesis 4: 25, 26

In v.1 of this chapter, Eve declares that she had produced a son, adding that it was by the help of the Lord. Now, with Seth, the wounded mother puts God first, saying that He had appointed for her this son (literally, *seed*, recall Gen. 3:15). Not only so, but she sees Seth as divine consolation for the loss of Abel to murder and Cain to his desperate flight from God and from his parents. What God takes away, however mysterious and painful that taking may be, He gives back better.

Monday, February 23rd - Genesis 4: 25, 26

While the members of the godless line of Cain were busied with exalting themselves by their use of tools and building of cities, or entertaining themselves by their musical productions, the members of the line of faith, from Adam and Eve, through their son Seth, to their grandson, Enosh, devoted themselves in humble dependence upon and

grateful service to the Lord. This is not to say that the faithful were heedless and indolent with respect to life's practicalities, but is rather to say that they sought first the Lord and His righteousness, with matters of career and culture taking a secondary place in their lives. As the tares of Cain's line fed themselves furiously and with ever decreasing satisfaction upon the husks of this cursed world, the wheat planted by God's grace grew in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, finding fulfillment and being themselves fruitful. They not only fed upon God as He revealed Himself to them, but they offered themselves in prayerful and praising devotion to the Lord for His pleasure and glory. They were not consumed with the matter of city or culture building, so much as with their seeking the eternal city whose builder and architect is God (Heb. 11:10,16).

Tuesday, February 24th - Genesis 5: 1, 2

The time span of this fifth chapter of Genesis stretches from creation to the eve of the flood in Noah's day—a period of more than 1,600 years. In contrast to the worldly attainments and sinful ambitions and actions of the line of Cain, this chapter traces the line of faith from Adam through Seth to Noah. Ten primeval patriarchs are named, their ages given, and their sons through whom Noah would descend are named, while their other sons and daughters are alluded to only. This span of history takes us from the first man in creation to the one who would be the first man of a world purged by the divine judgment of a universal flood. These antediluvian fathers lived extraordinarily long lives, and yet the dark refrain of death runs through the chapter as the concluding note for each life, save that of Enoch. Here we find the growth of men, families, and societies, but it is a time of all men ripening for judgment or, in the case of Noah, for salvation. Likewise, we stand in a line of humanity ripening for one or the other of those ultimate destinies.

Wednesday, February 25th - Genesis 5: 1, 2

There is at least a three-fold purpose of this chapter. First, we are given a catalog of generations from Adam to Noah. Next, we are shown by the constant mention of death the physical wages of men's sin. Finally, as this chapter records the line of faith, we are to see that God always preserves a people for Himself in every generation. The glorious purposes of God in His having created Adam were not then, and never will be, thwarted even by the sin of Adam or the saints descended from him.

Thursday, February 26th – Genesis 5: 1, 2

These opening verses recall for us the fact that God had created man. It is a fact of which sinful men need repeated reminding, as they tend to think themselves self-generated or evolved from slime and the pressures of random forces exerted over eons of time. We are further reminded: 1) that God made man in His image, thus endowing him with mental and moral excellence; 2) that God made man male and female, and thus designed for complementary society and loving intimacy; 3) that God blessed them with fruitful powers and exalted calling to have dominion over all of creation; and, 4) that God was sovereign over man, as indicated in His authoritative act of naming him. These high divine endowments and calling men, even believing men, would have only in a fractured

and residual form due to their sin. But what man lost by his sin, God would restore to infinitely higher extent through the second Adam.

Friday, February 27th - Genesis 5: 3-5

These three verses summarize the earthly life of Adam. The scars of sin and the marks of God's grace are evident throughout this summary. We are told of Adam's bearing a son, Seth, as though that were his first son. Yet, we recall the twin loss Adam and Eve suffered due to Cain's sinful murder of Abel. The silence in this account regarding sinful Cain and slaughtered Abel, who died childless, is a deep scar of sin. But by God's grace, Adam was the father of Seth, who was godly and who begot godly issue in his son, Enosh.

Saturday, February 28th - Genesis 5: 3-5

In v.3 we read of Seth being the son of Adam in Adam's likeness and image. In v.1 we read of Adam having been made in God's likeness. That image was shattered and defiled by Adam, and so we are to understand by the notice in v.3 that Adam bequeathed to his son his own original sin and fallen nature. Yet, Adam clearly communicated his faith to Seth as well. He did this by his own faithful precept and example, and thus was instrumental in conveying to Seth godliness. The ultimate source of godliness and of a man's being perfectly conformed to the likeness of God is God Himself. It is the Lord who graciously enables a man once dead in sin but made alive by God's grace to beget a living son to be effectually called to new life in the Redeemer.

Sunday, February 29th - Genesis 5: 3-5

We are informed in these verses that Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years. This great age causes modern man to disbelieve and deny the account of Scripture on this point. However, Adam, who was made in God's image, although he lost the integrity of that divine image, yet retained sufficient residue to live years that reflect, however poorly, the eternity of God. The effects of sin are evident, even in Adam's great age, in that he died seventy years short of a thousand years, which are as but a day in the sight of the Lord (Ps. 90:4). This longevity of men persisted throughout the generations prior to the flood, after which God limited man's average years to one hundred twenty (Gen. 6:3), and, still later, to seventy years (Ps. 90:10). The image of God in man has faded by perceptual degrees, so that we might better know from what an exalted height we have fallen because of our sin.

Monday, March 1st - Genesis 5: 3-5

God graciously enabled Adam and Eve to have sons and daughters in addition to Cain, Abel, and Seth of whom special mention is made in Scripture. From this pool it is most likely that Cain's wife was drawn. That which God provisionally allowed at the dawn of creation gave way in time to the divine prohibition against a man marrying his sister (Lev. 20:17). Life in this world is a pilgrimage for the believer, and he should

expect, respect, and submit to whatever changes God brings into his situation prior to his arriving at eternal and glorious perfection.

Tuesday, March 2nd - Genesis 5: 3-5

We are not told how many sons and daughters Adam fathered, nor are any features of his nine hundred and thirty year life recorded for us in this summary. What did the first man do with all of those days and years? His worldly activities are regarded by Scripture's silence as being far less significant than his familial fruitfulness, marred as it was by such rotten fruit as Cain. Finally, we are told that Adam died. However long he lived, Adam was obliged at last to receive the wages of his sin (Rom. 6:23). This is the first natural death recorded in Scripture, and the words, *and he died* ring like a sad refrain through the generations noted in this chapter. Part of our wisdom is to know that we, too, shall die, and that we should number our days, making them count for good and for God (Ps. 90:12).

Wednesday, March 3rd - Genesis 5: 6-8

The second generation's patriarch is Seth, whose life is summarized in these verses. As with Adam, we find with Seth that he fathered his son, Enosh, at an advanced age. Yet, also, as with Adam, Seth had other sons and daughters, and some, if not many, of these were likely born when these patriarchs were younger men. Scripture in this chapter is concerned only with the line of the faithful. This does not necessarily imply that of all the children born to Adam and Seth, only one was believing. It could imply that faith was somewhat rare, and, given the state of humanity in Noah's day, this implication appears near the mark (Gen. 6:5). But the Lord was calling and preserving for Himself a people in every generation. These particular people named in our chapter form the earliest human links in the genealogy of our Savior (Lk. 3:38), and that makes them, by God's sovereign grace, the most significant of all people in any day. Our significance derives from our being united to Christ by faith, and not from our natural descent.

Thursday, March 4th – Genesis 5: 6-8

Perhaps here we should note the emergence of a pattern evident in these ten generations of primeval patriarchs. With the exception of Jared (v.20) Methuselah (v.27), and Noah (9:29), all of the sons of Adam lived fewer years than did the first man. As sin took an increasingly strong hold on men and their societies, the lives of people diminished in terms of quality and even quantity of years lived. Generally, those who honor their heavenly Father and earthly parents live longest (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:2), and, without exception, live best (Rom. 8:31-39).

Friday, March 5th - Genesis 5: 6-8

Another pattern we may observe throughout this chapter's account of the earliest patriarchs' lives is that no notice is taken of their cultural advancement, as was taken in the line of the descendants of Cain (4:16-22). This may be because their faith rightly

overshadowed their worldly endeavor. It is wrong for a Christian, especially a Christian pastor, to be ignorant of practical affairs; but it is worse for him to be known more for his mastery of worldly matters than for his faith and love.

Saturday, March 6th - Genesis 5: 6-8

The fact that no cultural advancement is noted in the line of the Sethites may be due not only to their overshadowing faith, but also may result from the fact that they were not as practically capable and culturally active as were the Cainites. God chooses and uses the weak and despised things of this world to show forth the wonders of His grace and the glories of His power (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

Sunday, March 7th - Genesis 5: 9-11

Enosh heads the third generation of the faithful. It is noted in Gen. 4:26 that in his day men began to call on the name of the Lord. The reference to the *name of the Lord* implies a communication between God and His people less direct than the sort of conversations Adam and even Cain appeared to have had with the Lord. The name of the Lord conveys the idea of God as He reveals Himself through His Word and ordinances. That revelation, until the time of Moses, was orally conveyed from generation to generation. People were increasingly obliged to know God through His Word, by which He revealed Himself and His will, and they responded with faithful prayers accordingly. They were being taught by God to walk by faith, as we are likewise being divinely taught.

Monday, March 8th - Genesis 5: 9-11

It might appear from the fact that men began calling on the name of the Lord in the days of Enosh that the line of faith from Adam through Seth was, in contrast with the godless line of Cain, making religious progress. However, other than the notice of men's prayers in Gen. 4:26 and Enoch's extraordinary piety in Gen. 5:21-24, the character of the Scriptural narrative is largely negative. It implies not so much that the Sethites grew in their religious knowledge of, devotion to, and service for the Lord, as it implies that they kept themselves relatively free from the godless degeneration of the Cainites. Yet, by the days of Noah, all people except for Noah and his immediate family had fallen so far from God that they deserved and received His righteous judgment. Let us strive by God's grace to be faithful to our Lord though all the world should forsake Him.

Tuesday, March 9th - Genesis 5: 12-14

Kenan's name is very close to the name, *Cain*. Yet, in character and destiny the two were infinitely different. Kenan was a mere seventy years old when he fathered Mahalalel, the son whose name means to praise God (cf. *Hallelujah*). Kenan was in the line of Christ, after the flesh (Lk. 3:37), and his faith was in God through Christ as is apparent from his son's name. Scripture tells us nothing more about him other than his

age of nine hundred and ten years at his death—a long life, but one that due to sin’s wages ended. Yet, for Kenan as for these other primeval patriarchs, to die was gain.

Wednesday, March 10th - Genesis 5: 15-17

Mahalalel, at sixty-five, was the youngest man in world history at that point to father a son in this line of faith. He was also the youngest of the family heads thus far given when he died, having attained fewer than nine hundred years. He named his son, *Jared*, a name with no significant meaning. Yet, for all of his apparently unremarkable living, he is in the line of Christ and a member of the household of faith, and that matters more than any other endowment or attainment.

Thursday, March 11th - Genesis 5: 18-20

Jared had attained the greatest age of the preceding patriarchs when he fathered his son that stood in the line of faith. That son, Enoch, was well worth the wait, for he attained the greatest height of piety of all the men in this line of the faithful. Jared also lived longer than any man recorded in Scripture, except for Methuselah. It will be intriguing and instructive for us to ask Jared, when we are with him in glory, how conscientiously and consistently he set a godly example for his son, Enoch, and prayed for and with him, teaching him the precepts of the faith.

Friday, March 12th - Genesis 5: 21-24

Enoch’s life was in every way extraordinarily godly. He lived in the seventh generation of humanity from and including Adam. We may begin to assess his significance when we compare him with the man who was in the seventh generation from Adam through the line of Cain, namely, Lamech (Gen. 4:16-24). Whereas Lamech lived by his own sinful passions, and thus was in hostile alienation from God and a murderous threat to man, Enoch was a faithful friend to both God and man. How greatly do the lives and destinies of the godless and the faithful differ!

Saturday, March 13th - Genesis 5: 21, 22

We read in this chapter of all these patriarchs dying, but we read of none of them killing, as Cain and his line killed. The reason for this difference is made strikingly clear when we compare the seventh generation through Cain’s branch, represented in Lamech, who killed a man, with the seventh generation through Seth’s branch. Lamech was busy murdering and boasting about it. Enoch was busy pursuing the one thing necessary, the good portion of salvation that would never be taken from him, and that made him a lover of God and man. Enoch represents the zenith of the development of faith in the line of faith prior to the flood. Therefore, we not only read of him producing Methuselah, through whom the line of faith to Jesus would continue, and other children, but notice is also given of his extraordinary piety and its result. Enoch, like Elijah to come after him, did not taste death. This was not because he was without sin, but rather because he without reservation or deviation pursued the Lord, whom to know is eternal life.

Sunday, March 14th - Genesis 5: 21, 22

Scripture notes that Enoch walked with God. The commencement of that walk would appear to have been at the birth of Methuselah, for v.22 tells us that he walked with God 300 years after that event. Enoch set his affections not on his son, though he no doubt loved and nurtured him, but rather set and kept his affections upon his heavenly Father, humbling himself under the Father's almighty hand as His trusting, devoted, obedient child, and in due time he was accordingly exalted (1 Pet. 5:6).

Monday, March 15th - Genesis 5: 22-24

In the brief summary of his life, the Word notes twice that Enoch walked with God. The word *walk* conveys to us such ideas as steady, consistent progress, right direction, and appropriate pace. The prepositional phrase *with God* indicates that Enoch had intimate communion with the Lord, neither running ahead nor lagging behind Him. Enoch was not concerned to know the way of his pilgrimage so much as he sought to know and follow the divine Shepherd who knows and leads in the way for all of His people (Ps. 23).

Tuesday, March 16th - Genesis 5: 22-24

Enoch's walk with God was not one of physical or topographic progress. Rather, he made continual spiritual progress as he lived by faith and not by sight (Heb. 11:5,6). Such faith, that sees and follows God fully, honors and pleases the Lord. Those exercising such faith do not aim to please themselves, but, because God graciously rewards the ones who diligently seek Him, those who live to please the Lord cannot avoid experiencing deep, precious, and abundant blessing. Such blessing is inconceivable to the fearful, who regard the Lord only when they feel themselves temporarily relieved from what they deem as being of paramount importance, namely, their many petty cares and anxieties.

Wednesday, March 17th - Genesis 5: 22-24

The years of Enoch's life were significantly fewer than those of all of the others in these ten generations recorded in this chapter. He lived on earth barely more than a third of the time that his son, Methuselah lived. Yet, for Enoch, it was not to be that he died to receive his infinite and glorious gain, but, instead, he was directly taken by God to that glorious gain. His faithful walk with God thus shortened his time in this vale of tears and brought him into his heavenly reward centuries sooner than a more distracted life of episodic exercise of his faith would have done. Enoch's walk served to sanctify him to a ripeness that God reaped at the perfect time.

Thursday, March 18th - Genesis 5: 22-24

Enoch walked with God. His faith was not merely speculative nor intellectual, but worked itself out in practical deeds. Such deeds must have not only pleased God but also

blessed men (Jas. 2:14-17). But the directive and empowering source of his walk as well as its aim and goal were God Himself. In this aim, he was not disappointed, for those who desire the God who is above and better than all that is in this world will find that their desire for the Lord is but an echo of His desire to have them with Him forever (Ps. 63:8; Heb. 11:16).

Friday, March 19th - Genesis 5: 22-24

Enoch is not a spectacular curiosity of piety, but rather serves as a testimony and hope to all of the faithful in every age. His walk with God is something to which the Lord calls all of His people, inviting them to come to Him and find rest and refreshing productivity in His service (Mt. 11:28-30) as we are invigorated by His sanctifying and empowering communion. The Lord calls and desires that all of His people so strive to enter into the rest that He gives (Heb. 4:11), and enjoy the soul satisfying communion that only He offers (Rev. 3:20).

Saturday, March 20th - Genesis 5: 25-27

Methuselah's name means *man of the dart*, but he certainly did not dart through this life. He lived longer than any man ever lived on this earth. He outlived his own son, Lamech, by five years (compare v.26 with v.31), and his life was terminated in the year of the flood. It is a sobering warning for us all when we observe that Methuselah may have perished in a divine judgment that fell upon the wicked. He may, however, have died just prior to the flood, but we cannot be certain. Let us rather cleave to the Lord for all of our days, knowing that we are subject to temptation and sin so long as we draw breath in this world.

Sunday, March 21st - Genesis 5: 25-27

It was during Methuselah's life that Adam died. Methuselah was two hundred and forty-three when the first man and federal head of the human race died. Lamech was fifty-six at Adam's death, and Enoch had but fifty-seven years to live before he was translated to heaven by God. John Calvin remarks in relation to this: *In the number of years here recorded we must consider especially the long period which the patriarchs lived together. For through six successive generations, when the family of Seth had grown into a great people, the voice of Adam might daily resound, in order to renew the memory of the creation, the fall, and the punishment of man; to testify of the hope of salvation which remained after chastisement, and to recite the judgments of God*

Monday, March 22nd - Genesis 5: 28-31

This Lamech is very different from the Lamech in the line of Cain (Gen. 4:19-24). The Cainite Lamech indulged his flesh by taking two wives, and vented his unholy passion by killing a man and boasting about it. The Sethite Lamech, at the ripe age of one hundred, eighty-two, had a son. The faith of Lamech is noted by Scripture telling us not only that he named his son Noah, but also indicating to us why he did so. This

Lamech was humble enough to seek salvation from sin through God's provision. That provision was the infant he named Noah, prophetically seeing in his son the preservation of the line of faith through the judgment of God. These Lamechs differ greatly. Similar names do not indicate similar characters and destinies. There was a Judas who was a faithful disciple of Jesus, not like Judas Iscariot (Jn. 14:22). May our character bring honor and not shame to our names.

Tuesday, March 23rd - Genesis 5: 28-31

Lamech had a relatively short but fruitful life, dying five years before the flood (compare 5:30 and 7:6). He begot Noah, the father of the new humanity after the flood. Lamech's faith is evident in his naming of his son. The name, Noah, is related to the Hebrew word, *rest*. Lamech declares why he gave his son this name, indicating that Noah would give all of the faithful rest from the miseries of their sins and the pains of the divine curse. Lamech did not intend to indicate that Noah was the source of salvation, but rather that he was a type and an instrument from whom would issue the One who would truly give rest to His people (Mt. 11:28-30).

Wednesday, March 24th - Genesis 5: 32

Noah was of the last generation prior to the flood, and the father of all who arose after the flood. He had three sons only, and no daughters. Noah was five hundred years old when God intimated to him the coming of the universal deluge (Gen. 6:8,13). Noah had no sons prior to this five hundredth year of his life. We are told in Gen. 7:6 that Noah was six hundred when the flood began. In Gen. 11:11 we learn that Shem, Noah's eldest son, was one hundred when he became the father of his first son, two years after the flood. Therefore, Noah had his first son two years after God pronounced His coming judgment. It is a testimony to Noah's great faith that as universal death made its certain approach, he was producing three living sons, whom he trusted to God for their salvation as he did his own. The confidence he had to do this resulted from his faith in the saving promises of God. May our faith in the great and precious divine promises ever make us to be optimistic, diligent, and fruitful in all of our endeavor for the glory of God.

Thursday, March 25th - Genesis 6: 1, 2

From Genesis chapters 6-8 we have the biblical account of the divine judgment of mankind by a universal flood. We do well to understand that the flood marks a point of significant change in the world. In fact, there are two veils drawn between our world and that of Adam's paradise. Both of these veils are drawn by the disciplining hand of the Lord. The first veil was the curse of God that was administered in consequence of Adam's sin and fall. The second veil of the flood separates a world where men lived for hundreds of years and ate no meat, from one where men could consume animals (Gen. 9:3), but could live only to one hundred twenty years (Gen. 6:3). Our science can never fully penetrate these veils, and so we are wise to rely upon the account of Scripture for our understanding of how far we sinful beings have fallen from God's very good original creation.

Friday, March 26th - Genesis 6: 1, 2

We have learned from the first five chapters of Genesis how rapidly the sinful depravity of man developed after Adam's fall. Cain, the first man born into the world, was a murderer, while Lamech, from Cain's line and in the seventh generation of humanity, took two wives, killed a man, and boasted of his sin. At the same time, the line of faith through Seth to Noah was being formed and preserved by God's saving grace. Yet, by Noah's generation, the sinful depravity of men had risen to overwhelming proportions. It was the flood of man's sin that called upon the earth the flood of God's righteous judgment.

Saturday, March 27th – Genesis 6: 1, 2

These verses summarize the social development of men and women up to the days of Noah. As Jesus said, men married and were giving their daughters in marriage until the flood rains began to fall (Mt. 24:38). Yet, while people were taken up with each other, they lived with no vital thought of God. Their sin was developing, accordingly, to overflowing extent (Gen. 6:5), and God was not only aware of it, but was determined to do something about it. Infinite patience is not one of the attributes of our God. Those who ignore the Lord's warnings will invariably fail to perceive the line that marks the terminus of God's patience, until they have crossed it.

Sunday, March 28th - Genesis 6: 1, 2

These brief verses present us with some challenges in interpretation. The central question involves the identity of the sons of God and the daughters of men. There are three schools of thought with respect to the answer to this central question. The first maintains that the sons of God and daughters of men are simply referring to men and women. Yet, if this is so, we do not see why they are designated as being respectively *of God* and *of men*. The second identifies the sons of God as the faithful descendants of Seth, who were, by their faith, adopted sons of God (Jn. 1:12). The daughters of men were women from the godless line of Cain. This view appears more plausible, yet nowhere else in Scripture is such wording used to distinguish the godly from the ungodly. The third interpretation takes the references found in Job 1:6; 2:1, where the designation, *sons of God*, refers to angels—both fallen and unfallen—and applies it here, thus maintaining that fallen angels took human wives and bred a race of evil giants (Gen. 6:4). This third view appears to have more rational objections than Scriptural ones. It makes us wonder how angelic spirits could marry human women. Yet, Abraham fed angels whom he took to be men (Gen. 18), while incarnate angels dragged Lot out of Sodom (Gen. 19). Perhaps we should understand that when men in the ancient world, as is still the case in our world, turn from God, they make sinful choices influenced by devils, whether we recognize them as such or not (1 Cor. 10:20).

Monday, March 29th - Genesis 6: 1, 2

More clearly are we instructed with respect to the moral and spiritual qualities of the choices of the sons of God and daughters of men, than we are in the matter of their precise identification. The prevailing culture of Noah's day was motivated by superficial, outward appearance as is evident in the dictating notice that men took of the beauty of women. The impulse of sinful selfishness, not dependence upon and submission to the will of God, also directed men's selections, as we learn from the words *whomever they chose* in v.2. It is this prevailing spirit of men's self reliance and selfish determinations that called down upon the world the destroying judgment of God in Noah's day, just as it will do in the final day of divine judgment (Rev. 18).

Tuesday, March 30th - Genesis 6: 3, 4

In these verses we are told of the determination of God to limit man's life span on the earth. As previously noted, people prior to the flood lived for centuries. What did they do with all of that time, all of their learning, and all of their personal and social development? They certainly did not submit to, but rather resisted the Spirit of God testifying to their consciences. Hence, the Lord speaks of His Spirit as striving with men committed to self-exaltation. The culmination of this titanic human pride appears to have been best represented in the Nephilim, born of the unions between sons of God and daughters of men. The Nephilim were mighty and renowned, but not in the eyes and ways of the Lord. They were giant in physical stature (Num. 13:33; Dt. 9:12), and Goliath appears to have been descended from them (compare Dt. 9:2 with Josh. 11:22 and 1 Sam. 17:4). Rightly did God determine to destroy them in the flood, and to limit the life spans of men, even of His own people, all of whom carried a residue of the sin, if not some of the genes of the Nephilim within them. Longer life for sinful man is not better, but grows to be monstrous. Our days are numbered by God, and we do well to make them count for His glory, and not for our aggrandizement (Ps. 90:12).

Wednesday, March 31st - Genesis 6: 5-7

For all of men's technical, cultural, and social development, they were devoid of godliness and filled with wickedness. The total depravity of man is spoken of in these verses, as well as the effect that man's sinfulness had upon God. Human sophistication can no more hide the evil character of the godless than did the fig leaves of Adam and Eve hide their shameful sin from the Lord. Man's sin results in man's misery. However, the miserable consequences of sin are the least of the sinner's problems. Towering in magnitude above the petty miseries of the sinner is the offended God of heaven and earth who will act justly to punish those who have so pained Him by their sin.

Thursday, April 1st - Genesis 6: 5

This verse summarizes how bad the men of Noah's generation had become. Their sin expressed itself in external acts of transgression, as the phrase, *the wickedness of man was great on the earth*, indicates. The intensive root from which their sinful actions issued is revealed in what is said about their hearts. Their wills (*Every intent*), their minds (*of the thoughts*), and their emotions (*of their hearts*) were evil. Their intents were

purely evil (*only evil*), and were increasingly so (*evil continually*). Here is sin ripened to its fullest measure, calling for the punitive response of the Judge of all the earth. Thanks be to God that He has delivered us from the dark and damnable dominion of our erstwhile ripening sin.

Friday, April 2nd - Genesis 6: 6

The sin of men incited a response in God. The Lord regretted that He had made man because man's sin had pierced the heart of God with deep sorrow. Men usually are conscious of their own sorrows, but never, apart from divine revelation, would they consider the grief their sin causes their Creator. The Italian commentator, Umberto Cassuto, comments accordingly:

Lamech had hoped that his son would be a source of consolation from the travail resulting from manual labor of people who perform hard work on the accursed ground, but he did not consider that just as the works of human beings in the field of physical toil brought their pain, so their deeds in the moral sphere caused suffering to their Creator. And that just as men were yearning to be comforted from the sorrow caused by them by their material work, so the Creator, out of His heart's grief, regretted that He had made man on the earth.

The Apostle Paul speaks of this as the groanings of creation (Rom. 8:22), of the redeemed (Rom. 8:26), and of the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:26). The source of all pain and suffering for God and man is man's sin. It is the plague of plagues to be dreaded above any circumstantial calamity.

Saturday, April 3rd - Genesis 6: 7

The holy sorrow of God resulting from man's sin prompted the Lord to determine a just sentence for the offending sinners. Divine righteousness determined that sinful man deserved to be destroyed from the earth. Such complete destruction, including the destruction of the animate creation over which man was to have had dominion, is what all sinners deserve. Anything other than that issues from the goodness of God's common grace, to which all men living are indebted. All living sinners are as loathsome insects suspended above the fires of damnation only by the thread of grace in the hand of the God whom they despise and defy.

Sunday, April 4th – Genesis 6: 8

The justice of God warranted the total destruction of all totally depraved sinners. Yet justice is not the only attribute of God. The Lord is also merciful, and He interposed His mercy between the righteous divine wrath that the sinner, Noah, deserved, and the salvation that Noah and his family received. When this verse says that Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord, it is not telling us that Noah was naturally good and consequently earned the favor of God. Rather, the saving grace of God found Noah amidst the sinful

mass of humanity and delivered him from the dominion of sin. The saving act of God also delivered the Lord from grief and filled Him with delight as far as Noah was concerned. The favor Noah found from God stretched from the eternal counsel of the Lord, where Noah was lovingly predestined to be blameless and holy before Him (Eph. 1:4,5).

Monday, April 5th - Genesis 6: 8, 9

Because Noah was a trophy of the saving grace of the Lord, he was radically different from all the men of his generation. He was counted righteous by God through his justification by faith in the Savior God had promised to give for sinful man (Gen. 3:15). Noah also thought, felt, spoke, and acted righteously, as he worked out the salvation God had wrought in him. Noah's life progressed in a direction and toward a goal diametrically opposed to the way of all men in his day. Noah walked with God while all other men were rushing away from the Lord. Noah had few, if any, human encouragements in his life. He, like Enoch, maintained communion with God, not with man. Sometimes the saint must walk alone with God, and if the world is against him, then he must be against the world.

Tuesday, April 6th - Genesis 6: 8, 9

The men of Noah's day were busy building up their personal fortunes, their homes, and their civilizations. They indulged the passions of the flesh and partook readily of the pleasures of sin that last for a season. They admired and endeavored to be, or at least to imitate, men of worldly renown. Inwardly, however, they were completely wicked, corrupt, and bound for divine retribution. But Noah was different. He was righteous; he acted righteously; he cultivated communion with his God. None of the natural endowments or attainments of the wicked could save them from the day of God's holy wrath. Righteousness that is by faith alone would enable Noah to stand in that awful day.

Wednesday, April 7th - Genesis 6: 9, 10

The righteous character and godly life of Noah would not terminate with Noah. The man who walked with God married a woman and was intimate with her. Their intimacy produced three sons. This righteous man, his wife, and his three sons, along with their wives, would be the only people saved from God's judgment. Those eight people would be the source of the new humanity that would fill the earth cleansed of its reprobate humanity. The Lord is not constrained to save by many, but can save by few also. Indeed, the singularly righteous Noah prefigures the one Man by whom God saves all of His people in every age. Let us, then, learn ever to regard godly quality, never mere quantity, in the things of the Lord.

Thursday, April 8th - Genesis 6: 11, 12

In v.5 we were alerted to the intensive evil that possessed all men except Noah in his day. In vv.11,12 we are told that God bases His judgment not only on His omniscient

knowledge of the sinful thoughts and intentions of men, but also upon the demonstrated transgressions men commit. In the sight of God, the whole earth, meaning the entire world of people then inhabiting the earth, was unholy. Humanity had degenerated unrecognizably from the very good character resulting from God's original creation. This moral corruption and spiritual disintegration was manifested not only to God but also to man, as self-exalting sinners filled the earth with violence in their determination to have their way at all costs. When men choose their own way, personal corruption and social conflicts result. Those who choose the way of the Lord are at peace and serve as peacemakers.

Friday, April 9th - Genesis 6: 11-13

The corruption of men that appeared to the sight of God (v.11) prompted God to issue no words of warning to the wicked, except the warning that would be proclaimed by Noah, a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5). Thus, God spoke first to Noah, declaring to him the true depth and magnitude of the world's sin, as well as the divine determination not to suffer forever the sinful rebellion of men, but rather to destroy them by covering the earth with a flood of righteous judgment more overwhelming than men's sin. God does nothing without first declaring it to His servants, who alone desire to hear the Word of the Lord so that they might heed it (Amos 3:7). Sinners are warned by the words of such servants of the Lord, but they stop their ears until they feel the painful judging works of God.

Saturday, April 10th - Genesis 6: 13-19

In v.13 Noah receives the bad news of God's coming judgment. The divine declaration would seem to include Noah's death as well. However, God has words of salvation for His people. In vv.14-19 the instrument of that salvation, the ark, is mentioned seven times, indicating the perfect saving work planned, promised, and provided by God for His people.

Sunday, April 11th - Genesis 6: 14-16

Following the decree of divine judgment (v.13) are directions given by God to Noah for salvation. The divine instructions are specific and detailed. Only God, who knows the character of His punitive judgments, can prescribe means that will be effective to deliver the righteous from such judgments. We hazard our lives and souls when we lean on our own understanding and not on the Word of our Lord.

Monday, April 12th - Genesis 6: 14-16

Noah is instructed to build an ark. The word, *ark*, is used to describe the vessel that would save Noah, his family, and the animals from drowning. The next time the word is used is in Exodus 2:3-5 where an ark of much smaller dimensions is built to save Moses from drowning. Both Noah and Moses serve as instruments of deliverance for the people of God, and, of course, they point to Christ, the substance of salvation. God designs and

delivers the means for saving His people. The Lord's designs are not what man would conceive of as being the necessary or effective means of salvation. Who in Noah's day would think it necessary to build a giant, floating box on dry land? Who in all of world history would think it essential to trust a Man crucified upon the tree of cursing?

Tuesday, April 13th - Genesis 6: 14-16

God directed Noah to build an ark of gopher wood—a tree nowhere else mentioned in the Bible. The best materials for man's salvation are selected by God, not man. The ark was to be made waterproof, a strange requirement since it was built on dry land at a time when there had never been a flood on the earth. God knows what is necessary to be provided for the safe delivery of His people from His own divine judgments. The ark was to be of vast proportions—overall 450' x 75' x 45' with three decks and capacious rooms. God knows the character and count of the objects of His sovereign election for salvation, and he designs His means of grace—be they ark or Church—accordingly. Finally, the ark was to have a door, for loading and unloading people and animals, as well as a window through which Noah would perceive the flood waters subsiding and would send forth testing birds to ascertain when the ark could be safely opened and emptied. Nothing is superfluous in the design of the ark; every detail is essential. Nothing in the whole counsel of God is superfluous; every jot is essential for our salvation.

Wednesday, April 14th - Genesis 6: 17

The ark, its design, and its details surely must have seemed strange to Noah. God was directing Noah to build something unique, and the required construction would take much time, expense, and effort. Yet, when God tells Noah why he should build the ark, the saving grace and infallible wisdom of the Lord become apparent. There are vital reasons why our God directs us as He does in His Word.

Thursday, April 15th - Genesis 6: 17

God explains to Noah the necessity for the ark after the Lord had directed its construction. Divine direction, followed by divine explanation is the usual priority of our God. Such a priority is best suited to speak to and elicit the exercise of faith in the people of God. The faithful ever seek to know first the responsibilities God would lay upon them, to be fulfilled by His gracious enabling, before they expect the reasoning of God to be given.

Friday, April 16th - Genesis 6: 17, 18

With the information God conveys to Noah in v.17, the reasoning behind all of the details of the ark become apparent. A massive and universal flood will be brought upon the earth by the hand of God. The quantity of water will result from a miraculous multiplication of terrestrial waters as the Lord informs Noah that He Himself will bring this new and universally destructive miracle upon the earth for the purpose of destroying all animate life in the world. Yet, Noah understands that the wisdom and mercy of God

had been exercised toward him and his family in the Lord having given Noah instructions to build the vessel of salvation. Noah, his wife, his sons, and their wives would ride in the ark of God's gracious provision upon the floodwaters of God's judgment, triumphing over the divine judgment as partakers of divine mercy.

Saturday, April 17th - Genesis 6: 17, 18

The ark would be but the instrumental means of God's merciful salvation of the lives of Noah and his family. The effectual power of salvation did not reside in the ark, but rather issued from the covenant mercy of the Lord. Noah would literally work out his own salvation as each day he made progress on the construction of the ark, until finally he entered into the vessel of salvation. But he worked because God was at work for him in mercifully warning the patriarch and directing him with respect to what and how to build. He also worked effectively because God was at work in him, sustaining his faith whereby day after day he devoted himself to the labors resulting from a vital belief in the threats and promises of God.

Sunday, April 18th - Genesis 6: 18-20

These verses begin to detail the contents Noah was to load into the ark. He and his family members would be preserved in the ark to form the basis of the new humanity that would cover the earth after its having been cleansed by God's judgment. Noah is further instructed by God to gather and load a seminal and reproducing pair of all of the earth's animals. God could have had a new humanity and animate creation more easily by His creating them anew than He did by preserving these chosen ones. Thanks be to God that He has mercifully chosen to preserve us at infinite cost to Himself through His giving of His Son, rather than to blot us out, as we deserved, and create a new people for Himself.

Monday, April 19th - Genesis 6: 18-20

We have noted that the task God laid upon Adam of naming all of the animals was monumental and called for the penetrating discernment, pure intuition, and profound analysis that only the first man, made in God's image and unspoiled by sin, could do. Similarly monumental was the task God gave to Noah, in the gathering of a male and female of every species of bird, beast, reptile, and insect. The task would have been impossible for a sinful man, seeking to handle so many creatures made wild by the judicial subjecting by God of the world to cursed futility due to man's sin. Yet, in v.20 we learn that even the impossible orders our Lord gives to us will be fruitfully carried out by His enabling power. God tells Noah to bring the lower creatures into the ark, while at the same time the Almighty effectually works in the creatures to prompt them to come to Noah. What the saving goodness of the Lord commands, the arm of His strength provides.

Tuesday, April 20th - Genesis 6: 21

In addition to the people and the animals that were to be loaded into the ark, God instructs Noah to load a supply of sustaining food for man and beast. Amidst such divine miracles as the multiplying of waters and subduing of animals, we would perhaps think that God should miraculously provide daily rations for all that was living in the ark. Yet, divine providence does not exclude, but rather includes the preparation and provision man can and should make for himself. Thus, we read in Scripture that if a man will not work, he should not eat (2 Thess. 3:10).

Wednesday, April 21st - Genesis 6: 22

Noah was not merely a hearer of the Word of God, but was also an effectual doer. His faith was not dead, being without works, but was vibrant and thus prompted him to carry out the instructions of the Lord with zeal and diligence. Noah obeyed God completely, carrying out all that the Lord had commanded. He did not skimp on the ark's dimensions or composition, and therefore, when the storm of divine judgment broke and the waters rose, his vessel withstood the flood as it had been founded upon the security of God's Word. So let us hear and act upon all of God's Word, so that in the storms of life our houses will stand because they have been built upon the rock of salvation (Mt. 7:24-27).

Thursday, April 22nd - Genesis 7: 1-5

In these verses, we are told of Noah entering into the fruit of his labors. We do not know how long it took Noah to build the ark, nor can we determine for how long the ark stood completed before the flood came. What we do know is that when it was needed, the ark was ready as a result of Noah's faithful diligence. We also know that Noah waited for the Lord to signal the time for entry into the ark. Noah did not judge that entry time by his own senses and reasoning but waited for the Word of the Lord, just as he had worked on the ark by the direction of God's Word. Faith fixes upon the Good Shepherd of our salvation, whether He leads us into action or makes us lie down in trusting patience (Ps. 23:1,2).

Friday, April 23rd - Genesis 7: 1

In chapter 6, the divine designation is *God*. Now, in the opening passage of Chapter 7, the divine designation is changed to *Lord*, which is God's name of sovereign mercy and covenant loving kindness. Salvation is from beginning to end a matter of the covenant mercies of the Lord (Gen. 6:18). As we draw nearer to the end of the course set before us and the day of divine judgment, we perceive with ever greater clarity the truth that we are debtors to God's mercy alone.

Saturday, April 24th - Genesis 7: 1

This verse almost reads as though Noah was saved by his own righteous deeds. However, as the divine designation, *Lord*, indicates the God of covenant mercy, and as we have seen in the account prior to this point that God has taken all initiative in the

salvation of Noah, we are to understand that Noah's righteousness is a fruit of his salvation, not the root of it. The same is blessedly true for us.

Sunday, April 25th - Genesis 7: 1

Noah was a man who by faith perceived that his help was in the name of the Lord. The key to our understanding this extraordinary man and his extraordinary deeds of preaching and ark building is our realizing that he, by faith, perceived his God to be the graciously saving and wisely guiding Lord of his life. The divine instruction given for Noah to build the ark would have called for the exercise of a strong faith in Noah, enabling him to make and keep a commitment to do something that was staggeringly different from those things other men were doing with their time, energies, and monies. No less did the command of the Lord for Noah to enter the ark require of Noah the exercise of his faith. For Noah, with no hint of the flood being imminent, was divinely ordered to leave the sunny skies of the world and the society of man and enter into a veritable tomb. John Calvin refers to this as Noah's entrance into a...*sepulcher he had laboriously been digging for himself*. Noah's faith prompted him to trust his Lord, even if his Lord's instructions seemed to lead him into death.

Monday, April 26th - Genesis 7: 2, 3

Here God instructs Noah to take male and female pairs of animals and birds as reproducing seeds of all of the lower, animate creation to replenish the earth after the flood. God cares supremely for man, the crown of His creation and the object of His redeeming love. Yet such supreme care for man does not preclude the Lord's caring for the lower creatures. A sparrow does not fall without His knowing and caring (Mt. 10:29-31; Lk. 12:6).

Tuesday, April 27th – Genesis 7: 2, 3

In Noah's day, long before the time of Moses, God revealed and men knew of a ceremonial distinction between clean and unclean animals. From the days of Adam and Abel the Lord orally instructed His people in the shadows that pointed to the substance of Christ. More clean animals were to be taken into the ark because they alone would be suitable sacrifices for Noah to offer after the flood (Gen 8:20). Thus Noah and his family were taught that it was not an ark of lifeless wood that would save their souls from divine judgment in the final day, but rather the shed blood of the perfect Lamb of God, to whom the many animal sacrifices pointed.

Wednesday, April 28th - Genesis 7: 4

Here we learn why God ordered Noah to work on the ark and to enter into it with no circumstantial reasons that Noah could perceive. Divine judgment would fall upon the earth in the form of prodigious rain. God had previously warned Noah of the flood He would send (Gen. 6:17), but in this verse the Lord tells him when the rain would begin to fall. Noah therefore entered the ark a week before the beginning of the end of all life on

the earth. More precisely, God allowed Noah six days to perform the work of loading all the animals onto the ark. On the seventh day, no doubt a Sabbath day, Noah rested in his cloistered place away from the world, awaiting the salvation from the divine judgment that the Lord had promised to him. After that Sabbath, Noah would be increasingly grateful for the warning Word of the Lord, for the saving faith God had given to him, and for the ark that the working out of his faith had produced. When the storm of God's judgment breaks upon us, we will also be most profoundly thankful that we, by God's grace, have built the house of our characters upon the rock that is Christ.

Thursday, April 29th - Genesis 7: 5

Noah complied completely with the Word of the Lord. Had he failed to heed any part of the divine instruction, or had he worked with anything less than consistent diligence that prompted him to have a vital care for every detail of the ark, he would have had no vessel capable of preserving his life through the flood of God's judgment. Similarly, we should work out our salvation throughout each day of our lives, with fear and trembling and gratitude that God is at work in us to make us desire and do that which bears us safely through divine judgments great, small, and especially, final.

Friday, April 30th - Genesis 7: 6

The notice of Noah's age, given in this verse, enables us to calculate the years between the time Noah was warned by God of the coming flood and the actual commencement of the flood. Noah was five hundred years old when he received the warning (Gen. 5: 32), and it was a century later that the flood came. He was either building the ark for one hundred years, or, if he completed it in less time, the vessel sat as a giant monument of warning to the wicked and a testimony to God's gracious patience and to Noah's vibrant and practical faith. Nor did Noah allow the ark to be a mere visual but silent testimony to the people of his day. He interpreted for them his actions, as well as the growing fruit thereof, by preaching righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5). By his words and works Noah offered a warning to the wicked for over a century—an offer which every single soul on earth rejected, except Noah and his family. Sometimes the Lord's people on earth are exceedingly few, but they remain faithful however long evil days and years may last.

Saturday, May 1st - Genesis 7: 7-10

In v.1 the Lord told Noah to enter the ark. In v.5 we are told that Noah obeyed all of the divine commands. The verses of our current passage specify how Noah obeyed the Lord. Noah worked to assure that the ark he had for years been building did not remain an empty spectacle, but was filled as a saving vessel containing precisely those people and creatures indicated by the Lord. The faith and obedience of Noah served instrumentally to save him, his family, and the creatures that would inhabit the earth after the flood. It is no wonder that faith is rightly regarded as being more precious than gold (1 Pet. 1:7).

Sunday, May 2nd - Genesis 7: 8, 9

The animals, as was noted earlier, were not rounded up by Noah, but were prompted by God to come to Noah (Gen. 6:20). Not only so, but the animals went into the ark, no doubt guided but apparently not compelled by Noah. In this amazing cooperative action, these lower creatures show better sense than all of mankind, who showed no interest in Noah's preaching or ark. The animals approached and entered the strange vessel resulting from Noah's faithful obedience. Sin had rendered all other men worse than beasts, as it always does.

Monday, May 3rd - Genesis 7: 10

After a week of final warning for the wicked and of final preparation for Noah, his family, and the animals, the day of divine reckoning came upon the earth. The just threats of God are not issued in vain. Divine patience has its limit, and sinners do well to repent long before that limit is reached.

Tuesday, May 4th – Genesis 7: 10-12

The judgment of God came quickly, decisively, and inexorably upon all of the wicked. We learn that rain fell for forty days, and we may wonder why at least some people could not have entered their own boats or even hurriedly built some kind of buoyant craft within the first few days of the falling rains. However, v.11 informs us that water not only fell from the sky, but also burst forth from subterranean sources. Thus, heaven and earth turned destructively against sinful man on the first day of the flood. If God is against a people, who or what can preserve them from the One whom all things serve?

Wednesday, May 5th - Genesis 7: 11, 12

From v. 11 we should likely understand that all of the wicked on earth were destroyed on the first day of the flood. That is apparently the meaning that all the stress laid upon the exact day of the flood's beginning is meant to convey. It may further be noted that the second month referred to would have been late spring, when the dry season in the region where Noah lived would have been starting. Contrary to nature, the flood came upon sinners by the just hand of God. The rains continued to fall for forty days, not because it took that long to destroy all sinners outside of the ark, but rather to demonstrate something of the massive proportions of man's sin that had risen as a moral flood of disobedience against God.

Thursday, May 6th - Genesis 7: 12

We are told that the rains fell upon the earth for forty days. However, the consequences of such a volume of water covering the earth lasted much longer. In v.24 we learn that it was one hundred and fifty days before the waters subsided sufficiently to allow Noah and his family to contemplate their leaving the ark and resuming life on the

earth. This fact should alert us to the wonderful, gracious, and sufficient provision of God, not only in His commanding the ark to be built, but also in His directing Noah to store the ark with food (Gen. 6:21), thus rendering the ark a self-contained system of salvation. God saves His people not only from the consequences of their sin, but also from the consequences of His own judgment upon sin.

Friday, May 7th - Genesis 7: 13

In vv. 13-14 we have a recapitulation of the coming of the flood upon the earth. In these verses, the introductory sketch of the flood's commencement and duration, recounted in vv.6-12, is set out in more detail and with particular attention to the hand of the Lord in both the salvation of Noah and his family and the destruction of all other life upon the earth. The first such detail elaborated in this passage is found in v.13, where the names of the chosen men are given along with mention of their wives. These eight persons were objects of God's sovereign and saving grace and power. They survived the universal divine judgment only because the mercy of the Lord was interposed between what they deserved and what they received. Similarly are all in Christ chosen and predestined to salvation by God's merciful, interposing love (Eph. 1:4-6).

Saturday, May 8th - Genesis 7: 13

The Lord had told Noah to enter the ark seven days before the flood waters came upon the earth (Gen. 7:1,4). In v.13, we learn that what Noah began a week prior to the coming of the flood was not completed until the very day the rains began to fall. Had Noah delayed the commencement of the massive work of loading the ark until a time he thought best, he would not have completed the work in time. The immediate response and diligent working of faith in God's Word always lead to the completion of divine assignments in perfect time.

Sunday, May 9th - Genesis 7: 13-15

All of the people on the ark were related to Noah. All of the animals on the ark came at the prompting of God to Noah, who was waiting for them at the ark. Salvation results for all who come and cleave to the man of God's choosing. A greater salvation results for all who come by faith to the One anointed by God to deliver sinners from the curse of sin and from the condemnation of God's just judgment.

Monday, May 10th - 7: 16

The might of God is manifested by the divine drawing of all of the choice animals to Noah, the man of God's choosing. Thus, the name for God that signifies divine power is used in the first half of this verse. But the exercise of God's power is based upon the saving mercy of God. Therefore, the verse concludes by employing the covenantal divine designation, *Lord*, in telling us that it was God's hand, not Noah's that closed the door of the ark. The Lord God thus sealed His saving work. He does no less for us now (Eph. 1:13).

Tuesday, May 11th - Genesis 7: 17-24

The saving work of God having been sealed by the Lord's own hand, God began the accomplishment of a perfect judgment. Seven times in these verses, reference is made to the flood waters: 1) v.17: *the flood came*; 2) v. 17: *the water increased*; 3) v. 18: *the water prevailed*; 4) v.18: *surface of the water*; 5) v.19: *the water prevailed*; 6) v.20: *the water prevailed*; 7) v.24: *the water prevailed*. No sinner could withstand such full and perfect measure of divine judgment. The glory of the Lord's mercy is seen in His perfect salvation of His people, while the glory of God's justice is seen in His perfect judgment.

Wednesday, May 12th - Genesis 7: 17-19

These verses mark three stages of the rising water of God's judgment. The waters first reached a depth that lifted the ark. The depth of water increased so that the ark was completely freed from contact with the earth and floated about upon the surface of the rising tide. Thirdly, the waters rose to cover the highest mountains on earth. Thus are we told that all earthly life was extinguished by the flood waters. There was no place on earth for anything alive, outside of the ark, to find safety. However, due to the design and construction of the ark, those within it were conveyed safely upon the waters of judgment, no matter how high they rose. Those in the ark were exalted, not extinguished, by the judgment of God.

Thursday, May 13th - Genesis 7: 20-22

The flood waters did not only rise higher than the highest mountains on earth, but they rose well above the loftiest peaks. How would Noah have known that the waters rose over the mountains by more than twenty feet? He would not have known. This detail is a matter of God's revelation to man, not of man's observation of phenomena. The Lord would have us to know the towering dimension of His righteous judgment that overwhelmed all life on earth which He justly had condemned. The Lord's chosen people are saved neither from minor inconvenience, nor from paltry pains, but from great and almighty destruction.

Friday, May 14th - Genesis 7: 23

The flood waters were but the instrumental means employed for the destruction of all of the wicked upon the earth. The Lord Himself was the sovereign determiner of that judgment. Therefore, in this verse our attention is directed above the destructive waters to the hand of God, wielding those waters to effect a universal cleansing of the world. As God is sovereign in judgment, so He is sovereign in salvation. Therefore, we are further told in the verse that only Noah and those with him were left. Implied in this notice is that, due to the gracious initiative and provision of God, Noah and those in the ark with him were passed over by the judging hand of God, while they were secure in and upheld by the saving hand of the Lord.

Saturday, May 15th - Genesis 7: 23

Apart from the grace of the Lord, all life would have perished in the universal divine judgment of the flood. However, the Lord interposed His grace between what Noah and those with him deserved and what they received. The great divide of humanity is seen in this verse. Men of the earth are covered by a life-destroying flood, while men in the ark of the Lord's providing are lifted to life, riding above the waters as more than conquerors over all that would endeavor to prevail against them—even over the judgment of God. These things are written so that we might not sin, but might, rather, cleave gratefully to the Lord and His ordinances. However, if any of us should sin, we have better than a lifeless ark to bear us up; we have the Son of God as our propitiating Advocate with the Father (1 Jn. 2:1,2).

Sunday, May 16th - Genesis 7: 24

The flood did not last forty days only. The subterranean waters gushed and the atmospheric rains fell for forty days. However, the waters of God's judgment prevailed over the earth for nearly five months. During that time, the earth appeared as it had been in its primeval chaos at the beginning of creation. However, the Spirit of God did not so much brood over these flood waters as He resided in the hearts of Noah and his family. The relatively tiny ark, floating atop a vast, universal sea, contained within it the seeds for all animate life that would fill the new earth. But the living seeds of that new life would remain sealed in the ark for months, giving no outward indication that anything but divine judgment and man's death would ever again cover the earth. Yet, in the ark, seminal grace already triumphed over justice, and would grow and fill the earth and the kingdom of heaven to the eternal glory of God.

Monday, May 17th - Genesis 7: 24

For ages people have wondered and, in our scientific age especially, they have theorized over the true nature and extent of Noah's flood. Scientists maintain that, according to the known laws of nature, such a depth of water as described by Scripture covering the whole earth would be impossible, and, were it to have happened, would have left the earth uninhabitable for centuries. These objections lose their force when we recall that they arise from finite and fallible men against the omnipotence and veracity of God. According to their views, it would also be impossible that the world could have been created from nothing, that water could be turned into wine, or that the dead could be raised. We do well, therefore, to respect and submit to the testimony of Scripture concerning the awesome judgments of God upon sinful man.

Tuesday, May 18th - Genesis 6: 7: 24

If the purpose of the flood was to destroy the wicked, and that purpose was likely accomplished within the first few days of the flood, we may wonder why God allowed the rains to fall for forty days and the waters to remain at flood depth for one hundred and fifty days. It is not that God was excessive in His execution of judgment upon the wicked in Noah's day. Rather, the long period in which the aquatic covering of the earth prevailed typifies the eternal nature of the final punishment unredeemed sinners deserve.

and will receive for their sin against the infinite and eternal God. The marvel is not that the flood waters lasted so long, but that they ever subsided.

Wednesday, May 19th - Genesis 7: 24-8: 1

The closing verse of chapter seven indicates the prevailing of divine judgment throughout the whole world. The long duration of the flood waters must have tempted even Noah to think that his own death was merely delayed by his inhabiting the ark. However, the opening verse of chapter eight reminds us that the saving grace of God was operative in the salvation of Noah and his family. Contrary to the apparently permanent mastery of water upon the earth, God graciously and powerfully intervened to deliver Noah, his family, and the selected animals from their tomb-like yet saving ark, and to allow them to re-inhabit the world cleansed of all of the unredeemed.

Thursday, May 20th - Genesis 8: 1-3

These verses indicated that the flood resulted not from God's miraculous production, or multiplication of water, but from His calling forth of the waters that originally covered the earth, but which were, by the Word and power of the Lord, contained in ocean, lake, and river basins, subterranean streams, and dispersed into the earth's atmosphere (Gen. 1:2,6-10). In judgment upon the wicked, God called forth all of these waters from their contained places where they served for man's benefit, to resume their original covering of the earth in a judicial expulsion of the wicked from the earth. Now, at the command of God, these waters began to return to their beneficial places. Our world can sustain or destroy man, according to the will and working of God. It is not marine and meteorological forces that keep man from drowning in a universal flood, but it is by the will and power of God that serves rather than swamps mankind (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).

Friday, May 21st - Genesis 8: 1-3

The word translated *wind* in v.1 is the same word used in Gen. 1:2 to describe the Spirit of God brooding over the surface of the primeval waters of the earth. Jesus noted to Nicodemus a close resemblance between the wind and God's Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:8). However, here we have the element of wind being caused by God to blow upon the waters and so promote their evaporation. God wields all of earth's elements for the blessing or cursing of man, according to the divine purposes of just judgment or gracious salvation. This God, who can still or stir the elusive winds and untamable waters of the world, causes them and all other things to work only for the good of His people (Rom. 8:28).

Saturday, May 22nd - Genesis 8: 1-3

We are told that God remembered Noah in v.1 of this passage. This does not imply that the Lord forgot the man of His choosing throughout the one hundred and fifty days of the prevailing flood waters. Instead, it means that with the termination of the rain, the closing of the earth's fountains, the stirring of the wind, and the consequent diminishment

of the waters of judgment upon the earth, Noah recognized that God had never forgotten His covenant promise to save him and his family (Gen. 6:18). The Lord ever regards the covenant He makes with His people. Especially and prevailingly does He regard the blood of the eternal covenant, shed by our Redeemer for us (Heb. 13:20).

Sunday, May 23rd - Genesis 8: 4, 5

The wind God caused to blow upon the earth signaled and was causative of new life. The ascendancy of the waters of divine judgment ceased and their dominion over the earth steadily diminished. The diminished dominion of the life-destroying waters was not so evident at first. It was not until the ark came to rest on the Ararat mountains that Noah perceived the subsiding tide. The salvation of the Lord is making its progress in the lives of God's people, even when they do not perceive its advance.

Monday, May 24th - Genesis 8: 4, 5

In the providence of God, Noah and his family would disembark in the mountains of Ararat. This was probably somewhere on or between Mt. Ararat (elevation 16,945 feet) and Little Ararat (elevation 12,877 feet), located in the far northeast of Turkey, ten miles west of Iran, and twenty miles south of Armenia. It was a spot strategically located on land-line trade routes that would later link Africa and Asia, as well as Europe and India. It was the most suitable place on earth from which the descendants of Noah could easily spread to every other place on earth. The Lord ever plants His people in the most fruitful ground.

(The following notes were first published January & February 1991)

Tuesday, May 25th - Proverbs 6: 9-11

The sluggard does not invest his time and energy in preparation for anything. He cares only about present comforts. He will not stand to walk or unfold his hands to work. His limbs hang as useless burdens which drain his energies. He reasons that the resultant weariness justifies his pleas for a little more slumber. He asks only for a little more sleep, but when that little bit is used he wants a little more. He deceives himself into thinking that his disgraceful repose may be protracted indefinitely without consequence. But his failure responsibly to redeem his allotted time will bring upon him most dire consequences. His refusal to walk does nothing to stop the advancing steps of poverty, which threaten to overtake him; his refusal to work will not stop need from robbing even current ease. Indolence is no precious luxury, but is a life-destroying sin of omission.

Wednesday, May 26th - Proverbs 6: 12-15

The indolence of the sluggard renders him worthless. The activity of the wicked man does likewise and worse. The energy and mobility of the wicked serve only to spread evil and strife. All of his faculties are pressed into the perverted use of nefarious and stealthy communication. His wicked heart drives such expressions, the design of which

is to confuse and destroy others. But although he injures others, in the end it is himself who is damaged beyond repair. We certainly should not be such, and we should also avoid being in the company of such makers of mischief.

Thursday, May 27th – Proverbs 6: 16

The fool's opinion is that there is no God (Ps. 14:1). But there is a God, and He has definite opinions about man. The closer He examines depraved humanity, the more things He finds to hate, until the measure is filled to perfect hatred. How fearful to be the object of such perfectly deserved divine wrath! How wonderful is our salvation from it!

Friday, May 28th - Proverbs 6: 17-19

Behold the portrait composed of those attitudes and actions which are abominable in the sight of the Lord. He hates people who look down on others, who lie to others, and who injure the innocent. God abhors an evil heart which feeds pride and directs the feet to hasten in their carrying out of the heart's wicked dictates. He hates that man who, through carelessness or malice, serves by his false testimony not to heal wounds between differing parties, but rather to deepen them, contributing to decided division and strife, even amongst brothers. In contrast, the Lord loves those who count others as better than themselves, treating them accordingly (Phil. 2:3,4), and who desire above all to be sanctified in the truth of God (Jn. 17:17).

Saturday, May 29th - Proverbs 6: 16-19

The Bible teaches that we are all by nature (though differing in degree), children of divine wrath (Eph. 2:1-3). We are all born with bad hearts, which manifest such fruits as are in this passage counted abominable by the Lord. Read further about such divinely condemned works of the flesh in Gal. 5:19-21. How eternally grateful we should be for the interposed blood of Jesus, which cancels sin, and removes our condemnation (Rom. 8:1), and for the indwelling Holy Spirit, who transforms our hearts into soil bearing godly fruit (Gal. 5:22-25).

Sunday May 30th - Proverbs 6: 20,21

Children do well to heed the advice of godly parents. Young people seek independence from such parental counsel at greatest hazard. Not only do godly fathers and mothers have a deeper and truer understanding of the world, with all of its snares, but parents are given divine responsibilities and resources for the nurturing of their children. Thus a child does well to hear and heed the warmly entreating teaching of his mother, as well as the sterner directives of his father. The young one should seek not only outward conformity to such, but the development of heartfelt conviction as well.

Monday May 31st - Proverbs 6: 22-24

The godly counsel of parents proves invaluable. It provides direction, security, and wisdom. Indeed, it is asserted to have qualities like those of the Word of God (Ps. 119:105). Even its painful reproofs save, rather than destroy, life. The sober counsel of godly parents serves especially to save young, passionate souls from falling victim to the flattery of seducers. The immature may enjoy the immediate gratification of being seduced, but parental commands cast light further down the road, revealing that road to be one of destruction and misery. No wonder Paul tells children to obey their parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20). This even applies to adult children who, as v.24 shows, are old enough to commit adultery. Through godly parents, children and young adults receive instruction from their heavenly Father, whose Word has to a large degree become flesh in the lives of such parents.

Tuesday June 1st - Proverbs 6: 23-29

Parental prohibitions may seem to be based on dying passion, and perhaps frequently this is the case. Children often rightly reckon that their elders have forgotten what it is like to be driven by hot emotion. But the prohibitions of godly parents are based not on the dying heat of passion, but rather on passion for the Lord which has grown to the intensity of light. That light discloses the monstrous features of unfaithfulness, as it discerns through the surface beauty of an adulteress the ruthless heart of a predator. The light of godly parental counsel also forewarns of inevitable and unavoidable consequences which attend unfaithfulness. Such light provides greater, not lesser pleasures. It teaches us to burn with the pleasures of godly zeal, which, like the fire of the burning bush seen by Moses, burns but does not consume. Adultery is a cheap and consumptive counterfeit of such holy passion.

Wednesday, June 2nd - Proverbs 6: 30-35

Here differing sins are compared in order to show the supremely despicable nature of adultery. The thief who steals to eat must pay for his crime beyond the point of simple restitution, thus making his thievery stupid, as well as sinful. Yet though the cause of his hunger does nothing to mitigate his punishment, that cause does arouse sympathy in others for the thief. It is not so with the adulterer, whose lust promotes within him the development of an appetite, the satisfaction of which will not sustain his life, but will destroy it. His desire, being not vital but wanton, begets no sympathy in others either. He deserves, and is seen by others to deserve, virtually infinite punishment. The sin of adultery, with its related sins of disloyalty and betrayal, although often committed, is thus universally despised.

Thursday, June 3rd - Proverbs 7: 1-5

Once again fatherly authority, wisdom, and love combine in an earnest appeal which urges us to prize above all things the godly instruction of those over us in the Lord. Many ties of affection, necessity, and propriety are employed to bind such teaching to our lives. We are to guard and obey these godly communications, not merely from a sense of duty, but increasingly from a well-founded sense of delight. Such commandments are to

be treasured and loved, as a dear sister to whom we are naturally related, and as a close friend to whom we freely choose to be related. It would be better for us to lose our eyes than to lessen our apprehension of these commandments (Mt. 5:29). They are not only valuable, but vital, saving us from poisonously seductive persons, while focusing our attention and affections upon the Lord, who is our life, and upon the family and friends He has given to us truly to enrich our lives.

Friday, June 4th – Proverbs 7: 6-9

Solomon is about to describe in most useful detail the tactics of godless seduction. But first he calls our attention to the victims of seduction. We see that such victims choose as companions, not strong, principled, godly souls, but rather the weak and impressionable, who will offer no challenge to the reckless course they may elect to follow. The young man seen in this picture lacks not only sense, but literally lacks heart. He is committed to nothing, and so is easily blown off course. Though we call him a victim, we see that he actually chooses to be ensnared. He puts himself in positions and situations where he is likely to be tempted, convincing himself that simply being near a source of seduction is no crime. But inevitably he elects to take deliberate steps into the dwelling of the seductress, choosing the cover of darkness to hide his guilty track.

Saturday, June 5th - Proverbs 7: 10-15

Foolish, vacant souls may be intrigued from afar by the inviting reputation of a harlot, and take steps to draw closer, so they think, for harmless amusement. Yet he who would seek such forbidden fare, thinking himself a victor entitled to taste the spoils of his plotting approach, soon discovers that he has been lured by bait, and is himself the victim of overwhelming forces. The evil woman turns to ensnare the young fool stalking her. She overpowers him with her stormy passions, devours him as one prey among countless for which her voracious appetite constantly drives her to search. She feigns affection, even makes an empty profession of religion, and declares him to be the special object of her search. But it is all a lie, poisonous fruit issuing from a devouring heart. The Word of God reveals to us and would have us to consider the cunning heart, not the mesmerizing appearance, of such evil seducers.

Sunday, June 6th - Proverbs 7: 11,14

The discerning eye perceives in the inconsistencies of outward appearance evidence of a bad heart. One who professes religion, but who lives in a wild, rebellious manner, betrays his true nature. By the fruit of how people live we know them, and there is always fruit in every life sufficient to enable those with eyes to see to identify the root.

Monday, June 7th - Proverbs 7: 16-23

The appeal from this seductress is totally sensual at the expense of spiritual integrity. The fact of her husband being away for some time is presented as a practical assurance that there can be times for indulgence in sin without fear. Yet this raises a moral factor

which young ones who are most susceptible to promises of immediate gratification do well to consider. No amount of perfumed promises can justify moral compromise. Such compromise is wrong, being a violation of the laws and regulations which God, who is never away on a long journey. The laws of the Lord, so glibly set aside by lusting hearts, are instituted in accordance with His holy perfection and for our good. Additionally, such compromise, simply on a pragmatic level, always leads to bitter pain, not to sweet pleasure.

Tuesday, June 8th - Proverbs 7: 24-27

Solomon has, in this instance of adultery, shown the bitter end of sin from its alluring beginning. He has done so as a warning for all who have attained fewer years or less wisdom than himself. We should hear and attend to his testimony, for he has been an eye witness to the devastating effects of moral compromise. Very likely he speaks from his own experience! We should guard our hearts above all, consciously removing our attention from sensual delights and setting our affections on heavenly things (Col. 3:1-4). Only such heavenly mindedness will keep our feet on the straight and narrow. Finally, we are to know that once we enter temptation, we are no match for it. Moral sin has claimed complete victory over countless hapless souls who let themselves stray within its grasp. The degradation of those souls has been deep, and their defeat has ruined their lives, and has served to bring many of them to premature death.

Wednesday, June 9th - Proverbs 8: 1-3

As in 1:20ff, so here we are reminded that the testimony of the Lord, who is Himself the source of all wisdom (Col. 2:2,3), stands in opposition to the allurements of the adulteress. Such divine wisdom does not lurk in dark corners, as do those who wait to seduce others. Instead, wisdom openly cries out, issuing a call for men to enjoy the solid and pure treasure she offers, as opposed to the entrapping tinsel offered by the deceiver. It is true that the wisdom of God is not as sensibly perceptible as the flesh and blood of an adulteress, but this does not mean that divine wisdom is less real and substantial. Heavenly wisdom presents herself as the true lover of our souls. Her graces and gifts not only match, but infinitely surpass all that any sinful seductress could offer.

Thursday, June 10th – Proverbs 8: 1-3

Wisdom is available with her warnings, holy urgings, and instructions at every critical juncture of life. If we have doubts regarding the way in which we find ourselves, she stands on the heights beside the way, ready to give us the benefit of her higher perspective. She especially stands at vital crossroads in our lives. She plants herself as a living indicator as to which path we should choose. Wisdom is there to testify when we enter a new situation, inviting us into those gates and admonishing us not to pass through such portals as lead to sin and depravity. With such enlightening and empowering wisdom available to us wherever we are, should we not ever be wise and live?

Friday, June 11th - Proverbs 8: 4,5

Wisdom addresses her call not indiscriminately, as a mechanical loudspeaker, but personally, to men. Angels are not her object, but the fallen, needy sons of Adam are. She offers precisely what such needy souls lack. To those who are impressionable, and so are subject to the tossing of every wind of doctrine, she offers sound judgment and the ability to live with discretion and efficiency resulting from that judgment. To those foolish ones—literally ones who are slow and heavy of heart, having their vision clouded by the flesh—divine wisdom offers that fiery passion and pure light of heart which comes only as things are spiritually discerned (Lk. 24:25,32; 1 Cor. 2:12-16). With such a rich offer, who would remain in dark ignorance?

Saturday, June 12th - Proverbs 8: 6-11

Wisdom speaks only true, right, and noble things, being incapable of uttering anything in the least degree base or wicked. Those who perceive and appropriate this wisdom become themselves true, right, and noble, for they are informed and nourished by the mind of Christ. This transforming power of wisdom is what makes it so exceedingly valuable. Were we to apply gold, silver, and jewels to a simpleton or a fool, the result would be a rich man who remains a simpleton or fool. However, the wisdom of God transforms the minds and hearts of simpletons and fools, rendering them wisely capable of proving in their own lives what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2).

Sunday, June 13th - Proverbs 8: 12-14

With wisdom one finds the key to unlock the treasure house of all virtues, for wisdom does not dwell alone. There are countless, valuable facets to her being, and numerous virtuous potencies residing as members of her household. Sound judgment, expansive awareness, discerning action are closely related members of the family, wisdom herself being good counsel and soundness of mind, heart, and hand incarnate. She dwells happily with such virtues, and invites us to partake of them all. Yet she cannot abide pride, arrogance, perversion, or any other evil way. Such vices we shall never discover in her dwelling. The more we abide in the wise fear of the Lord, the more we shall be transformed by these pure and powerful virtues, and the less we shall taste and be tainted by the vices.

Monday, June 14th - Proverbs 8: 15,16

Divine wisdom is the source not only of virtues and practical abilities, she is also the source of power and authority. Thus, if we would reign in life, let us seek and apply the fear of the Lord and grow in His wisdom. Let us also understand that those who rule over us are instruments in the wisely superintending hand of the Lord (Rom. 13:1-7). To the extent that they maintain and wield power, they form part of His wise plan for us.

Tuesday, June 15th - Proverbs 8: 17

We do not naturally love the truth and wisdom of God, but rather strive to suppress them (Rom. 1:18). Divine wisdom will not yield its treasure to those suppressing it, but only to those who love it and strive diligently to possess it (Jer. 29:13). Such love of wisdom blossoms in us only as the fruit of the gracious love of God for us. We love Him and esteem His wisdom only because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19). Yet it is our responsibility, as those having new natures which are being sanctified, to nurture and deepen our love for the wisdom of the Lord, and to pursue its attainment with all due industry. Anything less will fail to make deeper discoveries of the mind of Christ.

Wednesday, June 16th - Proverbs 8: 18-21

The wisdom of the Lord, besides equipping us with practical knowledge so as to enable us to live efficient and increasingly enriched lives, primarily makes us wise unto salvation. Thus, above riches we have righteousness. No amount of this world's gold and silver could purchase for a man a right relationship with God. Such a relationship is infinitely precious, and it is ours in Christ. To those who love Him and seek Him first, He gives Himself as a treasure great enough to fill the most capacious life, and He gives all manner of other good things in addition (Mt. 6:33). What He gives us is imperishable (1Pet. 1:4) in contrast with the fleeting pleasures and ephemeral trinkets afforded by this world. Those who love and pursue this wisdom will never complain of loss, but rather will testify to their having received greatest gain (Phil. 3:7-14).

Thursday, June 17th - Proverbs 8: 22-31

Prior to this passage we have beheld in the attributes and promises of wisdom the rays of glory emanating from the Sun of Righteousness, who here comes into full view. Christ is revealed to us under the designation of wisdom, just as He is revealed to us in John's prologue under the designation of the Word (Jn. 1:1-5). Thus, none of the claims of wisdom can possibly be too exalted, for we see the source of wisdom to be the infinitely exalted Son of God.

Friday, June 18th - Proverbs 8: 22-31

Mysteries too glorious and profound for our full comprehension are in this passage revealed. We behold the co-eternal nature Christ has with the Father, the Son being eternally begotten of the Father. We see Christ's participation in creation, the Son being pictured as a master workman. We see the mutual delight obtaining between the Father and Son. We also see the delight the Son of God has in man, the crown of God's creation. We can surely trust with absolute confidence One who is Himself not only prior to all being, but also the very source thereof (Jn. 1:3), and whose disposition toward us is one of joyful love so great as to sustain Him in His descent from His glorious throne to the cursed tree, so as to beget us as His own redeemed, adopted children.

Saturday, June 19th - Proverbs 8: 22-31

Our Savior, having wisely and lovingly planned with the Father, and having powerfully brought into being the created order, sustaining and governing it now by the word of His power (Col. 1:15-17), is preeminently qualified and most lovingly inclined to instruct us in every area of life. Those attending His school are made wiser than the greatest teachers of man's wisdom (Ps. 119:98-100). Let us respect learned scholars, but let us revere the living and loving Son of God, who is the source of all wisdom above all scholars.

Sunday, June 20th - Proverbs 8: 30,31

The deepest mutual delight and love exists eternally between God the Father and His only begotten Son. The reason God created the world and foreordained our redemption is so that we might be taken up into that perfect, holy love and joy. If this assertion sounds unbelievable, read Jn. 17:5,22-26, and ponder the significance.

Monday, June 21st - Proverbs 8: 32,33

All of the blessings of wisdom recounted from the first verse of this chapter are exceedingly considerable. Wisdom conveys such treasures as noble truths (vv.6,7), such powers as discretion (v.12) and authority (vv.15,16), and such possessions as enduring wealth and righteousness (v.18). All of these blessings issue from the living source of wisdom and power, the loving and beloved Son of God. Therefore, wisdom is commended to us in infinitely high terms, and our blessing, accordingly, has no bounds (Rom. 11:33; Eph. 3:17-21). However, for us so to be blessed, we must not neglect this wisdom (Heb. 2:3), but must hear and heed its instruction.

Tuesday, June 22nd - Proverbs 8: 34

Although wisdom cries out in all places and circumstances (vv.1-3), she is not to be possessed in all places. The wisdom of God is not promiscuously scattered abroad easily to be picked up as some cheap piece of trash (7:10-13). This verse teaches us that wisdom is contained within familial confines. Wisdom dwells with God, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, and cannot be enjoyed by any except those who daily watch expectantly and wait patiently for it by faith in Christ.

Wednesday, June 23rd - Proverbs 8: 35,36

Those who watch and wait for wisdom find it. They also find abundant, eternal life and divine favor, because Christ, the source of wisdom, is also the source of our peace with God (Rom. 5:1), and of our eternal life (Jn. 1:4; 5:24; 14:6; 17:3; 20:31). The only alternative to such supreme blessing is the curse of self-inflicted misery. Such woe begins simply by one's missing wisdom, perhaps only by slightly misguided aim. But the end is a settled hatred of wisdom, leading to death. Life and the favor of a heavenly Father, or misery and death—there are no other alternatives, and our relationship to Christ makes all the difference.

Thursday, June 24th – Proverbs 9: 1-6

Notice the extensive preparations wisdom has made for us. She offers not the perfumed but empty and illicit enticements of the adulteress (7:16ff). Instead, wisdom has patiently assembled provision of highest quality for our security (*house*), nourishment (*food*), and holy enjoyment (*mixed wine*). She offers not furtively, but openly because innocently she invites us through her servants to partake of her pure pleasures and sanctifying powers. Far from our being dissipated by the feast to which Christ invites us, we are enriched with solid joys and empowered with most blessed and practical potencies.

Friday, June 25th - Genesis 8: 4, 5

The wind God caused to blow over the earth (v.1) did not dry the waters of divine judgment instantaneously, though God has power to effect such a miracle. Nor did the wind represent merely natural atmospheric stirrings, for in that case it would have required years, not months to diminish the waters of a universal flood. Here, then, appears to be a measured miracle, similar to the original days of creation when God worked neither instantaneously nor through eons of natural processes. The time God uses in such cases is long enough for man to reflect in some depth and detail upon the working of God's hand, but is not so long that man attributes the working of the Lord to natural phenomena.

Saturday, June 26th - Genesis 8: 6, 7

In the seventh month after the commencement of the flood the ark rested atop Mount Ararat (v.4). It took another three months for the mountain tops to become visible (v.5). But they were not visible to Noah, as he did not open the ark's window for another forty days. As in Genesis 1:9, so here, only the Lord is witness to the emergence of dry land from the waters covering the earth. Yet, Noah judged from the time of the ark's resting on the earth that the passage of four months and ten days more would be a sufficient span of drying time for him safely to open the ark's window. This was a reasonable action on his part. It was not faithless that he so acted without a direct divine warrant for him to begin to probe the new world, for ours is a reasonable faith (Rom. 12:1). Noah rightly reckoned that he would yet emerge from the ark, and he sought an understanding as to when the time of his emergence might be.

Sunday, June 27th – Genesis 8: 6, 7

Noah sent a raven out of the ark. That unclean bird, finding the rotting residue of divine judgment covering the earth, could and did live thereafter outside of the ark. What unclean animals can do, however, is no safe guide for what clean animals or man can do. The impure creatures of the world can feed on impurities that fill this cursed world. The

pure must wait until the proper environment is prepared for them by the work of the Lord (Jn. 14:2,3; Heb. 11:8-10; 13-16).

Monday, June 28th - Genesis 8: 8, 9

The dove, being a clean bird, could not live on the rot upon which the raven fed. The dove could only live upon what was dry and clean, which, at the time of her first release by Noah, was only to be found in the ark, not in the world. Therefore, the dove returned to the ark and Noah received her and kept her for a future mission. Those animals made and designated by God to be clean served as better guides than the unclean animals in indicating to Noah and his family when the earth would be suitable for the support of their lives. Likewise, we should ever take our cue from the behavior of the righteous and not from the upheavals of the faithless nations and peoples of this world (Ps.2).

Tuesday, June 29th - Genesis 8: 10, 11

Noah waited seven days, then sent the dove on her second mission. Once again, she returned to the ark, but this time she bore a token of a world approaching readiness for human habitation. The olive tree could not grow on mountains, but only in the lowlands. Thus, the dove's retrieval of the olive leaf signified that the waters of divine judgment had almost entirely subsided. It is wonderful to note the affinity, if not affectionate cooperation, between righteous Noah and this clean bird that represents innocence, purity, and peace. The bird finds and brings to Noah precisely that which betokened peace and health. Our use of and reliance upon the appropriate means to find the way of new life will always result in our being shown that way.

Wednesday June 30th - Genesis 8: 12

The final mission of the dove took place a week after her second mission. This time, she did not return to the ark, indicating that the earth had become suitably habitable for all that the ark contained, namely, the clean animals, as well as the unclean, and the eight righteous persons who would repopulate the new earth. It is humbling for man, at times, to rely upon lower creatures to find his way. But the righteous are humble, and they can learn from a dove, or even an ant (Prov. 6:6-8).

Thursday July 1st - Genesis 8: 13, 14

In vv. 13-19 we have the account of Noah exiting the ark with his family and all of the animals. At this significant event, Scripture sums up for us the entire time that Noah and his living cargo had been in the ark. It was in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month and on the seventeenth day that the flood commenced (Gen. 7:11). From v.13 we learn that it was in Noah's six hundred and first year that he prepared to emerge from the ark. We learn in v.14 that it was on the twenty-seventh day in the second month of that year that the earth was finally ready to support the life of all in the ark. Thus, Noah and company were in the ark a year and ten days. There would have been much suffering in the salvation they experienced, the ark being a kind of floating

tomb wherein Noah must have died many deaths before he emerged into new life. He must have passed through numerous trials great and small on his way to entering the newly renovated earth. Patience and perseverance are required of all who would inherit salvation.

Friday, July 2nd - Genesis 8: 13, 14

Prior to this time, Noah had relied upon the data gathered by the dove's sorties for his understanding of the conditions of the world outside of the ark. Now Noah enlarged his perception, removing the covering of the ark and beholding with his own eyes that all of the flood waters had receded. But what he saw on the first day of the first month of his six hundred and first year of life was that the surface of the ground only was dry, while what was beneath the ground's crusted surface was saturated mud. It was not until almost two months later that the ground was dried to a depth that made it firm enough to support man and beast. Yet, Noah relied neither on the dove nor upon his own eyes for the determination of when he should leave the ark. Noah lived by faith, and thus he awaited the express Word of God to give him warrant to depart from the ark. Similarly should we trust in the Lord in all things, relying not on our own poor understanding (Prov. 3:5,6).

Saturday, July 3rd - Genesis 8: 15-17

As Noah had built the ark and entered it according to God's Word, so he went out of the ark only when God expressly told him to exit it. Noah sought an understanding of his environment by means of the probing birds and by observation with his own eyes, but he did not make his own apprehension of the things perceived to decide the question of the timing of his departure from the ark. He dared not trust his senses and experience for prompting his entrance into a world that had just emerged from a unique and universal flood. He did not let his longing to be freed from the confines of the ark propel him forth. Noah awaited the express warrant of the divine King and Judge of all the earth before he set foot in the world of that divine King's remaking. We are always right when we stay or go by the leave of our God, and not by our own desires and rationalizing determinations. Our true safety and satisfaction are found only in our abiding by the Word of our heavenly Sovereign.

Sunday, July 4th – Genesis 8: 15-17

God told Noah to depart from the ark, taking with him his family and all of the creatures contained in the ark. The Lord does not give an announcement of general import, telling Noah simply to empty the ark, but rather He specifies the occupants of the ark—Noah's sons, wife, and sons' wives, as well as all birds, animals, and creeping things. The Lord views the recipients of His saving work not only corporately, being in union with the chosen human agent of salvation, namely, Noah, but He regards them individually as well, having even the hairs of the heads of His adopted children numbered. The Lord does not perceive us generally and vaguely, but specifically, personally, and with vigorous love.

Monday, July 5th - Genesis 8: 15-17

God did not only dismiss the objects of His salvation from the ark, but He also blessed them with a renewed command to breed and replenish the earth with animate life. This blessed command is similar to that given to Adam and Eve at the dawn of creation. However, conspicuous by its absence is the dominion mandate whereby man was to have dominion over the earth. Man lost that honor and responsibility by his sin. It is only through the second Adam that believers are made more than conquerors during their militant pilgrimage through this life, and are destined to reign with Christ forever in glory (Rev. 22:4,5).

Tuesday, July 6th - Genesis 8: 18, 19

The great faithfulness of Noah that has already been recorded in Scripture's account of his having built and entered the ark at the command of God, is here again recorded to the patriarch's credit. When God instructed him to leave the ark with all of his family and with all of the animals, Noah did precisely as God had commanded. He did not fearfully cling to the ark, dreading the unknown challenges that awaited him in the world so recently deluged by divine judgment. By his trust in the Lord, Noah obeyed God's Word and entered into the tomb-like ark that proved to be the vessel of his salvation; by that same trust in the Lord, Noah obeyed the divine directive to leave the ark and replenish with righteous living and prodigy the world that just over a year previously had been swarming with godless wretches. Whether our Lord calls us into death or out of it into a new life, we do well to hear and heed His call.

Wednesday, July 7th - Genesis 8: 20

The first action Noah performed upon the newly cleansed earth was to worship God through sacrifices. By such killing of some of every clean animal he had brought into the ark and sustained for more than a year, Noah acknowledged that he and his family were sinners; justly deserving to have died in the judgment of the flood, and that, instead, they lived by and through the sacrifices that pointed to the Redeemer to come, by whose death all of God's chosen people live.

Thursday, July 8th - Genesis 8: 20

Noah constructed an altar before he built a home for himself and his family. He offered a number of the clean animals and birds as whole burnt offerings, whereby the flesh of the animals was completely consumed in the fire of the altar, when his own supply of food was surely low. The Italian commentator, Umberto Cassuto, remarks concerning this: *...of the few domestic animals and birds that constituted his sole, meager possessions for the new period of his life in a world that was completely waste, Noah gave up several animals and birds in honor of his Divine Savior for the purpose of a burnt offering. (Commentary on the Book of Genesis, vol.II, p.117).* Thus does Noah demonstrate his unbounded gratitude to God. For Noah, the glory and honor of his saving Lord took priority over his own personal needs.

Friday, July 9th - Genesis 8: 20

Noah offered his sacrifices not in craven fear, seeking to earn the favor of the powerful God who had just destroyed all life on earth by a universal flood. Instead, Noah's sacrifices represent a response of gratitude for the divine mercy that had chosen and saved him and his family from the condemnation and wrath of God which they, too, justly deserved. This focus upon the mercy of God is highlighted in Scripture by use of the covenant name for God, *Lord*. Likewise, we too serve the Lord out of gratitude for the salvation He has provided for us through Christ.

Saturday, July 10th – Genesis 8: 21, 22

These verses indicate to us the Lord's response to Noah's sacrificial worship. As God perceives the fragrance of the animals offered in the fire of the altar, He is pleased and regards with gracious acceptance the man who offers them. Our God ever has such accepting regard for those who approach Him through the sacrificial offering of His only begotten Son. We are accepted by God only in His beloved Son.

Sunday, July 11th - Genesis 8: 21

The sacrifices offered by Noah soothed the Lord. The divine displeasure and wrath against sin were appeased by the clean birds and animals offered upon the altar that Noah had built. It is not, however, that such animals had virtue to assuage the holy wrath of the Lord. They were appointed by God as types of that perfect sacrifice of Christ that actually does propitiate the sovereign divine Judge of all the earth. Man's sin not only destroyed his life, it also ignited wrath in God that could only be pacified by the perfect sacrifice of His Son. The Lord was at peace with Noah because Noah, by faith, personally offered himself to God through these sacrificial shadows that were cast by the substance of salvation.

Monday, July 12th - Genesis 8: 21

As the heart of God was grieved over the sinfulness of man (Gen. 6:6,7) so now the Lord's heart was pleased with the atoning sacrifice of Christ, to which Noah's offerings pointed. As the Lord regarded Noah and his family—sinful people who would produce more sinners—as ones whose persons were covered by the cleansing virtue of the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God, a divine determination was made never again to bring universal judgment upon the earth, until the final day of judgment. The Lord determined this based upon His knowing that the natural state of evil in man's heart could not be cured by judgment, but only by personal transformation. Such transformation takes place in the lives of those made new creatures in Christ, and, even so, is not perfected so long as they live in this world.

Tuesday, July 13th - Genesis 8: 21, 22

The shadow of Christ's sacrifice, typified in Noah's offerings, was sufficient to incline the Lord to forestall any repeated and just universal punishment of sinful humanity. How much more indebted to the substance of divine grace, namely, the Lord's giving for sinners His only begotten Son, are all men who now live on the earth? All people live in this world by the gracious patience of God, whose divine long-suffering is intended to foster in men repentance from their sins (Rom. 2:4).

Wednesday, July 14th - Genesis 8: 21, 22

Never again would the elements of creation rise up against man to destroy him as the flood waters had done with Noah's contemporaries. Rather, the earth, though still under divine curse due to man's sin, would provide those alternations and rhythms of natural phenomena that sustain man in his life in this world. There is common grace expressed here. There is also a note of divine warning. The natural, life sustaining phenomena would endure for as long as the earth endured. But a day is appointed by God when heaven and earth will dissolve before and flee from the coming of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 20:11). On that day, the creational phenomena will again rise up to testify against sinners who partook of and exploited them throughout their earthly lives without ever having given thanks to God for them (Jas. 5:3).

Thursday, July 15th - Genesis 9: 1, 2

After the flood receded, Noah and his family embarked on a new life. It was not a life without regulation, direction, and empowering provision—all given to Noah by the Lord. The old order of the world was summed up in Gen. 6:5-7, where God saw great universal sin and determined a universal judgment. The new world order is summed up in Gen. 8:21,22, where God determines to exercise universal common grace until the end of the world. The divine regulation of the new order begins with the blessing of God upon Noah and his sons. They are to live and multiply to fill the wasted earth. This blessing shows that the flood destroyed all life on earth not because God hated man, but because God hated sin. The Lord thus indicates His desire for Noah to produce a new humanity.

Friday, July 16th - Genesis 9: 1, 2

The blessing of God upon Noah is manifold. The Lord blesses him with direction, instilled desire, and enabling power to propagate his race upon the earth. The Lord also indicates His blessing of protection upon man's life. The eight persons who emerged from the ark would have been greatly outnumbered by the animals, now set free to roam and to reproduce more quickly and greatly than man. God does not give Noah and his prodigy dominion over the animals, as He had done with sinless Adam. Rather, the Lord Himself subdues the lower creatures beneath man by placing into all lower creatures a fear of man. Through man's sin, the good dominion man had over all creation and the holy harmony he enjoyed with all lower animate life was lost. Yet, God graciously preserved man by subjecting the animals to him in fear, lest they overpower a mankind greatly weakened by their sin and fall from the power of godliness.

Saturday, July 17th - Genesis 9: 3

Not only did God protect man from the animals, He made provision for man's life-sustaining food from the animals. That man could kill animals for food no doubt is part of why the animals hold man in terror. This divine allowance appears to be provisional rather than permanent. The glimpses Scripture gives of life in the new heaven and earth show a blessed harmony between man and beast restored and perfected in glory (Is. 11:6-9). Even in the current provisional state, man is to have respect for the life taken for his food. Thus, in v.4, men are forbidden the eating of raw, unprepared meat containing its blood. By this prohibition, men are directed to reflect upon the fact that they live because of the shedding of the blood of another creature. They should, accordingly, perceive the groaning of creation under man's sin and groan themselves as they eagerly await the new and glorious order to come, expressing gratitude to God for His sustaining provision and because that glorious order surely will come when Christ comes (Rom. 8:22-25).

Sunday, July 18th - Genesis 9: 5-7

God not only pledged for man protection from animals, but also from his fellow man. If a beast kills a man, God shall require the execution of that beast (Ex. 21:28). If a man kills another man, God shall require the execution of that murderer (Ex. 21:12). This would be so because the one who kills his fellow man, kills his own brother and destroys the image of God, fractured though it be by sin, in the man he murdered. It is God's revealed will that men should live, begetting life and nurturing it, and filling the earth with life, not holding life in contempt and destroying it.

Monday, July 19th - Genesis 9: 8-17

In these verses, the Lord gives His guarantee that the new order of life on earth will be preserved until the end of time. The form in which the Lord gave this guarantee was a covenant promise confirmed by a sensible sign. The perfection of the divine promise is perceived when we observe that the word, *covenant*, occurs seven times in this passage. As the perfection of God's judgment was indicated by seven references to the flood waters in Gen. 7:17-24, so the perfection of the Lord's gracious covenant promise and performance of sparing the world from future universal destruction is indicated by a similar literary device. All of the words and works of our God are perfect in their conception, pledge, and execution.

Tuesday, July 20th - Genesis 9: 8-10

The covenant that God would refrain from bringing another universal flood upon the earth was initiated and established by God Himself. Its character and provisions arose from the free grace of the Lord. It was the Lord only who also determined the extent of the covenant so far as its recipients were concerned. God made this covenant with Noah and all of his descendants—that is to say, all future humanity, for all people that came to be on earth after the flood issued from Noah. The lower creatures were also to be beneficiaries of this covenant. All animate life that was saved by the ark from the flood

would be, for as long as the earth continued, exempted from experiencing another universal divine judgment of flood waters. That which God graciously begins, He perfects until the day of Christ's coming. The lives the Lord saved through the flood, He would keep from another such flood until the day of final judgment.

Wednesday, July 21st - Genesis 9: 11

This verse delineates the substance of the covenant God made with Noah. According to the graciously given pledge of the Lord, the divine Judge of all the earth would never again send a universal flood upon the earth. There would be local, limited, and varied divine chastisements visited upon the righteous and punitive judgments upon the wicked, but not until the final day of consuming fire, when a new heaven and earth would be thereafter reconstituted, would the earth's elements rise up in total concert against man and beast in response to the righteous wrath of God against sinful man. Thus are all sinners after Noah made by the common grace of the Lord more secure in this world than any of them deserved to be.

Thursday, July 22nd - Genesis 9: 12, 13

In these verses, the Lord adds to the gracious essence of His covenant with Noah a sign whereby the pledge and sealing assurance of the covenant would be manifested. The wondrous and beautiful rainbow, that is visible only when the sun's rays refract through falling rain, was the natural phenomenon the Lord chose as the visible sign and seal of the invisible grace of His determination never to flood the entire earth again. The sign is perfectly fitting for the grace that it betokens. Whenever man would see the dark clouds of rain, the rainbow's appearance would indicate to him that the clouds did not cover the whole earth, but that the sun was shining through somewhere to produce the rainbow. Thus, the gathering clouds that had once been harbingers of universal divine judgment would be laced with the light of God's mercy, enabling a multicolored display that should remind man of the beautiful and varied dimensions of the grace of the Lord.

Friday, July 23rd - Genesis 9: 12, 13

Some wonder whether God created the rainbow at this point or endowed an already existing natural phenomenon with spiritual significance. The answer to this question cannot be reached with certainty. If it had rained on the earth prior to the flood of Noah's day, surely rainbows were produced and seen by men. If, as Gen. 2:5 indicates, it did not rain in the world before man's fall, and that condition obtained after God cursed the earth until the day of the flood's commencement, then the rainbow made its first appearance after the flood. However, we need not speculate but rather should rejoice in the certainty that all rainbows occurring throughout the earth for all time after Noah, including our own time, betoken the common grace of the Lord restraining a universal judgment until the final day.

Saturday, July 24th - Genesis 9: 14-17

Rather than our curiously speculating over the origin of the rainbow, we should concentrate upon the sure and vital spiritual significance of the rainbows that we can behold. The visible sign of the rainbow should serve for man's benefit and for God's remembrance. It is, as are all physical signs of invisible grace, a divine condescension to man's feeble faith that God teaches in His Word how man rightly can benefit from the sign. When men see clouds of rain and fear the worst, as though God had forgotten His pledge never again to flood the earth, their beholding the rainbow in the cloud should reassure them that God was perceiving and honoring the pledge He had made. Indeed, the assurance of poor, finite, and fearful man is better than he regards it to be. For rainbows appear only to some men in some areas where the relative positions of the sun's rays, the rain drops, and the position of the viewers allow it. But God, being omnipresent, behold rainbows in the clouds when men perceived none. Therefore, the emphasis in these verses is upon the Lord's seeing and respecting the sign He instituted to represent the covenant of restrained judgment. The invisible grace betokened by the visible sign is as far from being insubstantial.

Sunday, July 25th - Genesis 9: 18, 19

These verses list three sons and one grandson. The three sons not only came from Noah's loins but, more significantly, they went into and came out of the saving ark with their faithful father. The grandson, Canaan, is here mentioned because he figures later and largely in the narrative. For now we are reminded that the vast multitudes of people who have covered the earth throughout the ages all issued from these three sons of Noah. They were few in number, but in God's hand they were preserved from the destroying flood to be seeds for the scattering of humanity all over the earth. Hence, we are taught not to despise the day of small things. Modest beginnings will, by the enabling blessing of God, have momentous issues.

Monday, July 26th - Genesis 9: 20, 21

Even in the earth so recently cleansed of the wicked, to be replenished by the righteous, the new humanity had to contend with the remnants of their own sin. Thus, we have an account of Noah stumbling as he lived and worked in the new earth. The account of Noah's intoxication is given in spare and restrained fashion. It is the spirit of the wicked, as manifested through Ham's reaction to his father's sin, that rejoices to magnify and broadcast the sins of others. The Lord, who alone knows the full depth and depravity of a man's sin, barely alludes to it as it is found in the lives of His people. Holy love covers sin in the cleansing blood of the Lamb of God.

Tuesday, July 27th - Genesis 9: 20, 21

If the godly and aged patriarch, Noah, can sin on the earth so recently cleansed of sinners by the judgment of the Lord, we who think we stand in our evil day should take heed, lest we fall. Noah was a mature man, being more than 600 years old. He was a faithful servant of God, who trusted and obeyed the Lord in his building and occupation of the ark that saved him from divine judgment. He was a preacher of righteousness to his generation (2 Pet. 2:5). If sin could so entangle him, we must ever be vigilant over our own souls, constantly praying, as our Lord has taught us, asking that our heavenly Father would keep us from temptation.

Wednesday, July 28th - Genesis 9: 20, 21

We are told that it was in the course of legitimate and necessary occupation that Noah sinned. In accordance with the divine directive given in Gen. 3:17, Noah toiled upon the earth to produce his food. He also planted a vineyard from which the grapes would refresh his thirst and sweeten his days. Some see a sinister intention in Noah's planting that from which the fruit could be manipulated into an intoxicating drink. However, the Bible nowhere makes the production and partaking of wine to be a sin (otherwise, it would be a sin to partake of the Lord's Supper!). It is the partaking of wine to the state of drunkenness that is the sin. If a man like Noah can pervert the products of necessary and legitimate occupation into sinful uses, what hope does the man who wanders from his legitimate duty into the fields of illicit endeavor have for his staying out of sin?

Thursday, July 29th - Genesis 9: 20, 21

Noah's sin was that he indulged himself with wine, a gift of God to make a man's heart glad (Ps. 104:13-15). His excessive drinking intoxicated him and freed him from the holy inhibition that usually restrained him from unchaste exposure of himself. Sinners, even those saved from the flood, could not rightly appear before God or man naked, as did our first parents before their sin and fall. We must wear clothes, not supremely as protection from the harsh elements of the cursed world, but due to moral necessity. There is a holy transparency, but there is also an unholy, shameless self-exposure that degrades the one exposed and defiles those perceiving the sinful flesh paraded before them. Our need for clothing has not so much to do with our physical bodies, but everything to do with the fact that our only true dignity, beauty, and acceptability is found when we put on Christ's robe of righteousness.

Friday July 30th - Genesis 9: 20, 21

Noah's intoxication and unchaste exposure took place within his tent. Scripture here gives us insight into the private life of the imperfect patriarch. We may think that because our sins escape the notice of men, they are not serious sins. But the truth is that men more often than not discover our sins, and God, who discerns thoughts and intentions, is always seeing them and grieved by them in His people. As a man thinks in his heart and acts in the privacy of his own home, so is he.

Saturday July 31st - Genesis 9: 22

The sons of Noah discovered the sin of their father. However, their reactions to that discovery varied significantly. Ham was the first to find his father in his sin. The wicked are often the first to find and accuse the sinning saints of God. Ham's response to his father's sin was very wicked. He beheld his father as a spectacle, rather than seeing him as his loving father, a man of God whose faith and labors had been instrumental in saving him from the flood, and who now was in need of the restoring help of gracious, respectful sympathy and love. Ham also broadcast his father's sin, declaring to his brothers an audible report of what his eyes beheld. By such broadcasting of Noah's private sin, committed in his tent (and who among us would want a tale-bearer to intrude into the tent of our thoughts?), Ham served only to magnify the sin of His father. How unlike the gracious God who had just saved sinful Ham was this beholding and broadcasting son of Noah.

Sunday, August 1st - Genesis 9: 23

Shem and Japheth reacted to the report of their father's sin very differently than Ham had reacted to his discovery of it. They took effective steps lovingly and respectfully to cover Noah's sin. Subjectively, they covered his sin by their refusal to behold their father's nakedness. Our Lord has given us eyes to see, but also eyelids and necks to turn our eyes so that we might exercise holy and loving discrimination with respect to what we behold. If our God cannot look on sin, who are we to gaze upon it?

Monday, August 2nd - Genesis 9: 23

Subjectively, Shem and Japhath covered their father's sin by their refusal to look at Noah's drunken nakedness; objectively they covered his sin by their placing a blanket over Noah's exposed body. Love covers a multitude of sins (Prov. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8). Love applies helping grace, not condemning ridicule to a man overtaken in a trespass (Gal. 6:1). By his subjective covering of sin, a man protects himself from falling into similar sin, while by his objectively covering sin he helps deliver the one entangled in his sin from the miserable and degrading thrall of it.

Tuesday, August 3rd - Genesis 9: 24-27

These verses record Noah's blessing and cursing of his sons in consequence of their reaction to his sin. This is the first time in the Bible that a man's blessing and cursing others is recorded. Additionally, in the blessing pronounced upon Shem, we have the first time in the Bible where the Lord is called the God of a particular man. Our reactions to the sin of others carry more momentous consequences than we may realize.

Wednesday, August 4th – Genesis 9: 24

Noah awoke from the intoxication of the wine that had reduced him to a sinful exposure. The true man was the awakened man, while the man who slept in a drunken stupor was but the shadow of the old man. Though the righteous fall, they will arise again, for the hand of the Lord will lift them up. When they do arise, they will perceive

who has stood with them and helped them out of their sinful lapse, as well as who has served to confirm them in it. Noah's stupor did not prevent him from knowing what his youngest son had done to him. Cursing, not blessing, will come to one who sinfully and ungratefully mocked his father whose faith had served to save him from the flood of divine judgment.

Thursday, August 5th – Genesis 24, 25

As Noah had been cursed through his youngest son, so Noah curses Ham through his youngest son, Canaan (cf., Gen. 10:6). The justice of this curse is understood when we consider that Noah is here delivering Ham and a particular line of his descendants to that godless, graceless, and unprincipled manner of living that Ham demonstrated in the treatment he rendered to his own father. In effect, the curse calls for divine grace to be withheld from Canaan, as it clearly was not operative in Ham, thus judicially giving over Canaan and his descendants to be slaves to their unholy passions, as Ham was a slave to his sin. Such sinners would consequently be subservient to their better brethren. We do well to walk by grace, lest we forfeit its blessings for ourselves and for our children.

Friday, August 6th - Genesis 9: 25

The specific character of Noah's curse upon Canaan and the Canaanites issuing from him is one of degradation to servitude. All of those deprived of the Lord's saving grace are similarly reduced. Cynics, like Ham, think themselves superior to those whom they ridicule, but they are, in truth, slaves to their own sin, and will serve, by God's sinless superintendence of them, to bless the children of God, who by their dependence upon divine grace are more than conquerors.

Saturday, August 7th - Genesis 9: 26

Noah blesses not Shem, but the Lord, Shem's God. However, as the Lord is called the God of a particular man—and, by implication, of those descending from that man—the association between Shem and his God is to be considered most intimate. The Lord is properly blessed as being the One who graciously gave Himself to be possessed as the giver and the object of Shem's faith. That faith had been worked out in Shem's respectful love for his father. Noah, seeing the light of God shining in the person and performance of his son, Shem, was led to glorify the God who had given such light. Let us learn from this that when men do us good, we should not only thank them, but also trace their goodness to its true source, and thus bless the Lord who is the ultimate giver of all good.

Sunday, August 8th - Genesis 9: 27

Japheth is blessed by Noah as the son who had cooperated with his godly brother, Shem, in the application of a loving remedy to Noah's sin. Thus, Japheth's blessing is in terms of growth that will take place so long as Japheth and his descendants remain in fellowship with Shem and his descendants. This is what we are to understand by Noah's

saying that Japheth should dwell in the tents of Shem. Bad company corrupts good morals. Therefore, we do well to steer clear of it (Ps. 1:1). Yet, good company blessedly edifies, and so we do well to seek, keep and cultivate it.

Monday, August 9th - Genesis 9: 26, 27

The historical fulfillment of Noah's curse on Canaan took place when, centuries later, Joshua led Israel in the wars of conquest against the inhabitants of Canaan. The blessing of Shem is in his possession of the Lord. The Semitic people, particularly the Hebrews, fulfilled this blessing in their being chosen as God's own people. The descendants of Japheth were the Greeks and Romans, who conquered the Jews—especially did the Romans do so in 70 AD—but then the Roman Empire became largely Christian, and thus did the descendants of Japheth take up residence and enjoy blessing in the spiritual tents of Shem. The blessings and curses of the godly have prevailing effect, because they issue from the prevailing blessings and cursings of the sovereign God of all the earth and of time and eternity.

Tuesday, August 10th – Genesis 9: 25-27

Canaan is cursed and made servant of both Shem and Japheth, while the latter two brothers are blessed. These blessings and the curse prevailed for many generations as well. It is striking to note that such momentous and long-lasting consequences should attend one situation where three sons reacted differently with respect to the sin of their father. The major concern in this event is not that Noah sinned, but rather how his sons responded to his sin. Scripture realistically teaches us to expect sinful lapses in ourselves and in others. The critical issue is not so much those lapses but rather how we respond to them. If we, in a spirit of gentleness, seek to restore the fallen (Gal. 6:1), and with love, seek to cover their sin with the gracious provision of Christ's righteousness (1 Pet. 4:8), we shall be a blessing to the fallen and shall be ourselves blessed by God with a blessing that will endure. If we mock the fallen, we act cursedly and will be cursed. The choice is ever between our ridicule of the fallen, with our being cursed for it, or our running with loving respect to the fallen to apply to them the sanctifying virtues of the Redeemer, with our being blessed thereby.

Wednesday, August 11th - Genesis 9: 28, 29

These verses take us to the death of Noah. They also give us a tally of the years of his life and indicate to us the proportion of years Noah lived before and after the flood. Almost two-thirds of the patriarch's life was lived before the cleansing judgment of God came upon the earth. Noah lived for centuries, witnessing the rise of wickedness in men until sin virtually covered the earth. He was, by God's grace, delivered from the dominion of that sin. Yet he was no aloof spectator of the swelling tide of evil in his day. He preached against it and was instrumental in saving humanity's chosen remnant from the destroying judgment of God. In this, Noah prefigured Christ, to whom he looked for his own salvation, as well as for the salvation of his children. How well, how consistently, and how perseveringly do we model our Savior in our day?

Thursday, August 12th - Genesis 9: 28, 29

Noah lived for 350 years after the flood. He lived long enough to see his family grow and replenish the earth. He also lived to see the blessings and the curse he pronounced upon his descendants begin to work out in their lives. Most significantly, he lived to see Abraham's day, and, no doubt, rejoiced in it. The father of the faithful was 58 years old when Noah died (cf. the tally of years in Gen.11:10-26 and subtract them from Noah's 350 years). The man instrumental in saving mankind was allowed by God to enjoy for many years the fruit of his saving work. So may our Lord enable us to be faithful and to savor the fruits of our faithfulness.

Friday, August 13th - Genesis 9: 28, 29

Noah lived long and he lived well. Prior to the flood, his faith enabled him to rise above the increasing tide of evil in his day. His singular act of building the ark served to save his family and the lower animals from divine judgment so that they might repopulate the renewed earth. His faithful blessing and cursing formed the character of all of his descendants after the flood. The grace of God made this man great (Gen. 6:8). The grace of God makes all who are possessed by it to be great in their day, enabling them to ride as more than conquerors above the tide of evils that surround them as they serve the Lord and seek the new heaven and new earth of His making.

Saturday, August 14th - Genesis 10: 1

This tenth chapter of Genesis sketches the historical outworking of the blessings and of the cursing of Noah. By his hands, Noah had built an ark that was instrumental in saving his family. By his words, he set the destinies of his descendants from whom all people on earth after the flood have descended. It is not in vain that a man of faith, like Noah, builds, blesses, and curses.

Sunday, August 15th - Genesis 10: 1

Most of this chapter is reproduced in 1 Chronicles 1:4-23, while some of it, pertaining to the descendants of Shem, is found in Luke 3:35,36. Depending upon how the names are reckoned, there are either 70 or 72 heads of families recorded in this chapter. These heads are traced out far enough to indicate how from Noah's sons all people now living anywhere on earth descended. The names form categories. There is the category of the Church, issuing from Shem, the category of friends of the Church, issuing from Japheth, and finally, the enemies of the Church, issuing from Ham. In this arrangement we should perceive a gracious, electing plan and purpose of the Lord. The roots of post-deluvial humanity did not issue their fruits haphazardly, but rather according to the divine purpose to bless and curse as articulated by Noah (Gen. 9:25-27).

Monday, August 16th - Genesis 10: 2-5

These verses contain the sons of Japheth. There are seven sons in the first generation from Japheth. Magog is cryptically mentioned in Ezekiel 28:2, about Gomer we know little, if anything, and the same is true for Madai and Tiras. Javan produced the Ionians, from whom later the Greeks descended. Tubal and Meshech are mentioned in Ezekiel 27:13. The second generation traces through the sons of Gomer, of whom Ashkenaz is mentioned in Jeremiah 51:27 and Togarmah is mentioned in Ezekiel 27:14. The second generation also traces through Javan, whose son, Tarshish, produced the Phoenicians, while his son, Kittim, produced the inhabitants of Cyprus (recall Barnabas came much later from Cyprus—Acts 4:36). The territory of Japheth's descendants stretched westward from Ararat toward and into Europe (v.5). These people were largely friends, and after the time of Christ, members of the Church.

Tuesday, August 17th - Genesis 10: 6-20

This passage traces the sons of Ham, who were largely enemies of the people of God. The first generation contained Cush, from whom the Ethiopians came, Mizraim from whom the Egyptians came, Put, whose children spread into western Africa, and Canaan, who produced the Canaanites. In the second generation we have the sons of Cush from whom the oriental people, such as the Arabians came. From the sons of Mizraim the Philistines also came. Canaan was a fruitful father, producing eleven sons who were heads of their own peoples. Their territory was the Middle-East, the land of Canaan proper being granted by God provisionally, until they should be driven out by the Israelites, who were descendants of Shem.

Wednesday, August 18th - Genesis 10: 8-12

Among the sons of Cush, one is particularly noteworthy. Nimrod, the root of whose name means *to revolt*, towered above his brethren. He was not great in moral or godly stature, however. He was a notorious predator who became the first imperial tyrant, establishing such cities as Babel and Nineveh in Assyria that would play such large and painful parts in the later history of Israel. But even such great sinners and the sinful enterprises they produced were under the sovereign control of the Lord, who sinlessly used them to refine His people.

Thursday, August 19th - Genesis 10: 21-29

The descendants of Shem listed in these verses comprise the line of faith. Many of them remain unknown to us, except that they are listed here and some are in the genealogy of Jesus. Eber is reckoned to be the father of the Hebrews. Those in this line of faith are listed in more than the first two generations, which were all that was listed for Japheth's and Ham's sons. From Shem, the first generation is listed in v.22, the second in vv.23,24. Eber (v.24) is found in the third generation, while his two sons are the fourth, and Joktan's sons are the fifth generation from Shem. However, it is Peleg, not Joktam, who is more significant, as he begot Reu, who begot Serug, who begot Nahor, who begot Terah, who begot Abraham (Gen. 11:18-26; 1 Chron. 1:25-27). Peleg, we are told, lived when the earth was divided, evidently referring to the confusion of tongues in

consequence of men's having built the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1ff). He suffered that divine judgment, but carried within himself the seed for blessing in the future production of Abraham, by whom the nations of the earth would be blessed. The line of God's blessing extends through all times—good and bad—and into eternity.

Friday, August 20th - Genesis 10: 30, 31

The territory of Shem and his descendants is roughly east of the Middle-east. From that territory, however, would Abraham later be called by God to dwell in the land of Canaan, thus typifying the divine call of all believers to leave their natural condition for a pilgrimage to the city whose architect and builder is God (Heb. 11:10,13-16).

Saturday, August 21st - Genesis 10: 32

Sons, families, and nations of varying cultures and languages all came from Noah, the typical savior of the ancient world, who prefigures the greatest Son of his line, namely, Jesus, to whom people from every nation, tribe, family, and language are called for eternal salvation.

Sunday, August 22nd - Genesis 10: 32

If we compare and contrast these generations surveyed in this chapter, we should note how quiet and undistinguished the line of faith, passing through Shem, is in contrast with the unbelieving line of Ham, especially the notorious Nimrod. The line of faith contains fewer family heads as well, having 26 sons spread over five generations from Shem—the fifth generation containing 13 of those sons (vv.26-29). In contrast, there are 44 sons listed as descendants of Japheth and Ham over two generations. Even here in the list of these names, we are taught that the race of life is not won by the strongest or the most numerous people. The Lord has saving regard for the lowly, the humble, the contrite, and it is to His glory and our good that it is so.

Monday, August 23rd - Genesis 10: 32

Another survey of this tenth chapter teaches us that amidst the apparently random spreading of people to cover the earth, there is the gracious and guiding superintendence of the Lord. Divine order can be perceived amidst the apparent chaos. Divine grace saved Noah and made of him a world of men, women, and children, all of whom have lived, moved, and had their being by the common grace of God. Yet the saving grace of the Lord was operative as well, running through these generations to us, and, if it pleases our God, through us to our children and their children.

Tuesday, August 24th - Genesis 11: 1

Unity is usually, but not always, a good thing. After the flood, the whole world was populated by three brothers, who were the sons of Noah, along with their wives, and their descendants. The original three brothers were naturally related and enjoyed solidarity in

natural things, such as language and culture. They and their descendants maintained such unity, but it became a sinful solidarity that God determined to destroy. Unity in Christ is always a good and blessed thing (Ps.133); solidarity in sin feeds men's conceit so that they foolishly depend upon themselves and defy the Lord to their own ultimate misery.

Wednesday, August 25th - Genesis 11: 1-4

These verses show the cultural unity, technological advancement, and seemingly high aspiration of men on the earth after the flood. Nothing described in these verses appears criminal or even sinful at first sight. Is it not the aspiration of men in our day, often uncritically accepted, to cooperate with their fellows to better their lot in life? Yet, that which a common consensus among men may accept can often be seen by the Lord as a sinful impulse which, if not checked, may plunge men into sinful conceits more intoxicating than Noah's wine bibbing and more overwhelming than the universal flood that had so recently covered the earth. If the Lord moves to frustrate our aspirations, we may rightly conclude that they were sinful, and that we are better off in the frustration rather than in the fulfillment of them.

Thursday, August 26th - Genesis 11: 1-4

The families of Noah's sons shared a common mode of communication. Their single language facilitated their learning, understanding, and expansion of their horizons. Such power of unimpeded communication is a blessing, so long as it serves to carry men's transmission of the truth spoken in love for the glory of God. However, when men can so easily share their godless thoughts, it is a curse that can rapidly cover a society in guilt and shame, while consuming it in misery. Godly graces are far more vital than natural, or even spiritual, gifts that can be abused.

Friday, August 27th – Genesis 11: 1-4

In addition to a common language, the post-deluvian generations shared a communal settlement. They tended to stay together, journeying not over the entire earth, as they had been charged by God to do (Gen. 9:1,7), but finding and settling in a plain in the land of Shinar—a region roughly corresponding to modern Iran. Families and friends that stay together find blessing when their communal settlement results from the Lord making them to lie down together in green pastures of His choosing (Ps. 23:2). However, when people choose to dwell together with no higher aim than to enhance their own comfort and convenience, having no regard for the Lord's leading in their lives, their community will be cursed by the God whom they slight by their self-preoccupation.

Saturday, August 28th - Genesis 11: 1-4

Even sinful, fallen men are creative because they are made in the image of the creating God. Despite the fracturing of the divine image in man, due to his sin, he aspires to build things and accomplishes many of his aspirations. Thus, we find the descendants

of Noah's sons developing their technology. They quickly learned to make hard building material from soft mud. They also devised a material for joining the bricks they had made into an edifice. People assume that technological advancements are good. However, if the question of why the technology is developed is not considered, men will find not a blessing but a curse in their technological advancement. When men use their tools to defy God and destroy each other—as they often have done—they show themselves to be prompted by godless and loveless pragmatism, and not by godly and loving principles.

Sunday, August 29th - Genesis 11: 1-4

In v.4 we learn of the purpose to which the post-deluvian generations devoted their common language and advancing technology. Their avowed aim is world peace, security, and advancement. The people are not planning to kill or exploit each other. Their purpose appears good, right, and noble. However, God is not in their thoughts, hearts, plans, or purposes. The chief end of man is not that he peacefully glorify and prosper himself, but rather that he glorify and enjoy God. Anything falling short of that end, however benevolent it may appear, is sinful and will, in time, become criminal.

Monday August 30th - Genesis 11: 4

The common purpose of the people, as expressed in this verse, was to build. They decided—and encouraged one another in their implementing the decision—that they should build a city. Their desire was to live closely together amidst the fruits of their common labors. Yet their purpose was faulty on two counts. First, they were going to do the building themselves. Theirs would be the design, the location, and the use to which they put the buildings of their city. The Lord would be neither the ground nor the goal of their labors. Next, their metropolis was to serve entirely for their own security, enjoyment, and aggrandizement. Nothing in the design of this city depended upon or was devoted to the Lord. How different is the city that the faithful seek. It has enduring foundations, providing true and blessed security, because its builder and architect is God (Heb. 11:10,16). Whether God is or is not in our thoughts, intentions, words, and deeds makes all the difference in time and eternity.

Tuesday August 31st - Genesis 11: 4

The sinful nature of the people's godless building plans becomes more apparent when we learn that they intended to build a tower in the midst of their city. A tower, in itself, could be a useful thing for a city. However, the size of the tower envisioned here indicates sinful pride. The tower was to reach into heaven. This intention reminds us of the satanic pride expressed in Isaiah 14:12-15. The people here virtually declare their independence from God. They conceive that they themselves are adequate to ascend to heaven, thus having no need for the condescending grace of the Lord's redemption. We too, in our day of technological and scientific advancement, are powerfully tempted to think of our gadgets as being essential, while our God increasingly fades into irrelevance.

Wednesday, September 1st - Genesis 11: 4

The tower of Babel represents at the same time man's pride and his insecurity. The earth had previously been subjected to a universal flood that covered the tops of the mountains. That flood was no mere natural phenomenon, but rather was a divine judgment. These people of Shinar determine to raise themselves above any future attempt God may make similarly to judge them. Though the Lord had done nothing to warrant their mistrust, they refused to rely upon His Word of covenant promise, given to Noah, wherein He declared that He would never again flood the earth (Gen. 9:8ff). Man's sin prompts him to rely upon his own works rather than upon the sure and abiding Word of the Lord. It is faithless and foolish for men so to believe and so to act.

Thursday, September 2nd - Genesis 11: 4

While security for themselves was one concern of the people who determined to build a city and a skyscraping tower, the primary motive for their so building was sheer, godless pride. They intended by their works to make a name for themselves. Their chief end of glorifying God was entirely out of their consideration. Their determination was to promote themselves. Nor did they intend to do this individualistically, but corporately. It was humanity that was their highest concern. Thus they bound themselves together in humanistic covenant and became a counterfeit church that was devoted to their own aggrandizement. It is not just atheistic pragmatists but also faithless and ear-tickling pastors that endeavor to exalt sinful man above the holy and glorious God.

Friday, September 3rd – Genesis 11: 4

The covenantal commitment of the people to each other against the Lord is manifested in their determination to cleave to one another. They did so against the divine mandate that they should cover the earth and populate it (Gen. 9:7). They knew of the divine mandate, and they resisted it, speaking of it in disparaging terms as a wasteful, needless scattering of themselves, their resources, and their pooled abilities. Sinful men always regard the leading of the Lord to be such a waste.

Saturday, September 4th – Genesis 11: 4

Noah's descendants determined that by their city and tower building they would make their name great. They succeeded only in their being humbled by God. They sought to defy God's purposeful dispersion and to determine their own destinies. They failed in their determination and were scattered over the earth by the hand of God. Such is the outcome for all who would exalt themselves. But the humble, God exalts (1 Pet. 5:6), and gives to them new names (Rev. 2:17) befitting their exaltation. The obedient, who go to all nations to make disciples of Christ, are gathered by God in the city of celestial glory, having the Lord's commendation that they have done well and receiving the invitation to enter their Master's joy.

Sunday, September 5th – Genesis 11: 5

The actions of men do not escape the notice of God. The Lord of heaven is not distracted by heavenly affairs from tending to matters taking place on the earth. Our God, who would have His people to be heavenly-minded (Col. 3:1,2), demonstrates that it is precisely the heavenly-minded who are most understanding of earth's affairs. Thus, we read of God coming down to see men's works. The Lord does not condescend as a mere spectator, however, but as the righteous Judge of all men's deeds.

Monday, September 6th - Genesis 11: 5, 6

In v. 5, we are informed that the Lord sees all that man sees. The buildings perceived by the eyes of men are beheld by the God of heaven. Yet in v.6 we are reminded that God always and infallibly sees more than man can or will see. The Lord perceives man's motivating principle of self-glorification. The Lord also perceives the significance of the day of small things. The city of Babel would be but the beginning of a worldly empire that humanity would construct in defiance of God. The unhindered progress of man would confirm him in his delusion that he could be secure without the saving grace of the Lord. Nothing would be impossible for humanity united in such self-exaltation—nothing, except their salvation and inheritance of eternal life.

Tuesday, September 7th - Genesis 11: 6, 7

The divine reflection of thought revealed to us in these verses indicates a holy and wise conference amongst the Persons of the blessed Trinity. It is similar to the engagement of the thought and counsel of the triune God related in Genesis 1:26, except that whereas the earlier divine intention was to make man in the divine image, here it is to reduce man to a confused state of inter-human communication as a judgment against man's having abused his God-given power of speech in an attempt to create a life for himself apart from God.

Wednesday, September 8th - Genesis 11: 7

It is instructive for us to note the way God purposed to frustrate man's imperial designs. The discursive powers of men would be confused. By this miracle of divine judgment, men would be reduced to thinking, planning, and doing all things without the cooperative understanding, endorsement, and effort of all other men. Thus, men were made strangers to their neighbors, as they had determined together to make themselves strangers from God. Herein, we glimpse the power of the tongue, that small member of the body, whereby men abusing it succeed in setting aflame their own godless aspirations (Jas. 3:5,6).

Thursday, September 9th - Genesis 11: 7

The wisdom of the Lord is seen in His touching something so small in men as their tongues, thereby impeding the fulfillment of their titanic self-exaltation. This curse put upon men was significantly removed on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11). Then the Lord wrought a temporary reversal of the confusion of tongues, thereby indicating that

under the Lordship of Christ, men could be safely empowered to have clear and intimate communication with each other, as they would use their language to speak the truth in love, to the glory of God and to their own highest blessing. When men determine gratefully to use their tongues to declare the mighty and merciful deeds of God, then God will ensure that their speech is understood by other men, no matter what their nationality, language, or culture.

Friday, September 10th – Genesis 11: 7

By God confusing men's speech He righteously gives men over to the social consequences of their sin. If men would estrange themselves from God, treating Him as though they did not understand His Word, then they would find themselves estranged from their fellows, being unable to understand their speech.

Saturday, September 11th - Genesis 11: 8, 9

The Lord's confusing of men's language effectively served to impede their godless concentration and to scatter them over the face of the earth. The city being built by homogenous humanity was never completed. Consequently, it was named Babel, which is from the Hebrew verb meaning *to confuse*. By His so estranging men from each other and scattering them, we are not to understand that the Lord opposes all human construction schemes. Noah was an ark builder blessed by God. But the divine blessing was upon the faith and faithful labors of Noah as he worked according to God's direction and for God's glory and for the true welfare of God's people. The builders of Babel built in fear, not faith, and in defiance of, not in devotion to, God. Such building grieved the Lord and surely grieved aged Noah who lived to see his descendants' attempts to glorify themselves at God's expense.

Sunday, September 12th - Genesis 11: 8, 9

Because humanity's aspirations and achievements were essentially godless, the Lord acted graciously when He impeded man's communication and cooperation with his fellow man in such godless enterprises. The confusion of tongues broke up the solidarity of human society and served to block the rapid spread of societal sin through a homogenous humanity. We learned in Genesis 6:5 how far afield from God and from each other men can go in their societal wickedness. When our Lord frustrates our aspirations and accomplishments, let us bear in mind that He always does so for good and gracious reasons.

Monday, September 13th - Genesis 11: 8, 9

The Lord gave man uncommon languages to stop their communal work. Such a divine curse contained manifold blessing. It served to retard the spread of sin through mankind. It also broke the intoxicating delusion that men had in their thinking that they could exalt themselves to heaven's height. Men want to think that they can exalt themselves through the works of their hands. In contrast, the Lord does not build with

lifeless bricks but with living stones, His own Son being the chief cornerstone of the glorious dwelling place He is making for His glory and for His people's right and true exaltation (Eph. 2:19-22; Rev. 21,22).

Tuesday, September 14th - Genesis 11: 10

From a tower of human pride noted in vv.1-9, the Word of God directs our attention in vv.10ff to a temple of people built up by the Lord. Part of the divine purpose of blessing contained in the confusion of men's languages, with people being differentiated into discrete cultures, was the Lord's determination to select, save, and sanctify a certain people for Himself. The elect people issued from Noah's son, Shem, whose generations are recorded for the remainder of the eleventh chapter until we reach the birth of Abraham, the father of the faithful, who together speak the language of Zion and of the Lamb of God, whatever their natural nation, tribe, or tongue might be. Incomparably greater are the building plans of God than those of man.

Wednesday, September 15th - Genesis 11: 10

The Tower of Babel was built by finite, fallible men, using lifeless bricks of their own making. The aim of men in building it was their own security and exaltation. Yet, all they succeeded in doing was to erect a partially completed monument to the absurdity of their foolish pride. The Church of God is built by the infinite, infallible God, using the living stones of immortal souls to whom He has given natural and spiritual birth. These precious building materials are of the Lord's own sovereign and gracious choosing. Therefore, vv.10ff of our chapter focus on the descendants of Noah's son, Shem, and mention nothing of the descendants of Japheth or Ham. Blessed be the God of Shem (Gen. 9:26), who blessed him and his spiritual descendants with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm in Christ.

Thursday, September 16th - Genesis 11: 10-25

These verses record nine generations between and including Shem and Terah, who was the father of Abraham. In light of what Joshua said about their having served other gods (Josh. 24:2,3), we perhaps should not understand that everyone named in this line was a believer in the one true God. Some may have only been carriers of faith, not personal possessors of it. Nevertheless, the Lord clearly chose and prepared a people for Himself from this line. All of the accounts in Genesis up to this point have dealt with humanity as a whole. From this point through the remainder of the Bible, the Holy Spirit focuses our attention on a single family and its generational line to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the ancestors of the people of Israel. The gracious election of God did not discover greatness in this family line, but rather deposited greatness in it, through the incarnation of His Son, our Savior.

Friday, September 17th - Genesis 11: 10-26

As Noah was born in the tenth generation from and including Adam (Gen. 5), so Abraham was born in the tenth generation from and including Shem. There is an order, a balance, and symmetry to the redemptive workings of our God that would escape our notice if Scripture did not indicate it to us. We may be sure from this that our God, who is a God of order, is working out His significant purposes in and through our lives, be they ever so seemingly disorderly to us.

Saturday, September 18th - Genesis 11: 10-26

There is a significant hint that the divine election of Shem's line is an election unto eternal life. With the generations more remote from Shem, there is a shortening of life spans, Shem living 600 years, while Nahor lived only for 148 years. However, in the listing of these generations there is not the recurring note of death found in the record of Seth's generations (Gen. 5), with the phrase, *and he died* terminating the notice of each patriarch's life. Gradually but surely the eternal life that is the heritage of the Lord's people unfolds in the revelation of redemptive history, so that those in the Lord may be assured that, for them, to die is great gain.

Sunday, September 19th - Genesis 11: 10-26

Another significant point we should note in these verses is the age of Shem, the first patriarch here listed, when he had his first son, Arpachshad, and the age of Abram, the last patriarch here listed, when he had Isaac. Both men were 100 years old when they became fathers (though Abraham, of course, had an illegitimate son in Ishmael). For Shem, 100 years was a relatively young age, whereas for Abraham, it was an exceedingly advanced age, his body by then being as good as dead (Rom. 4:19). Increasingly, it is being shown to us that God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the wise, so that all boasting is in the Lord, without whom we all can do nothing.

Monday, September 20th - Genesis 11: 26, 27

Scripture pauses over the notice of Terah and does, as it were, a double take, both concluding the list of generations from Shem with the notice of Terah's sons, while taking up once more special notice given to Terah's generations (compare v.10—the generations of Shem, with v.27—the generations of Terah). Although Terah named his first born Abram, meaning *exalted father*, it is not Abram's connection with his natural father that exalts him, but is rather his faith in his heavenly Father that does so. Terah, therefore, receives special notice because of his connection with his son, Abram, and not the reverse. The Lord exalts the lowly above those who are naturally higher.

Tuesday, September 21st - Genesis 11: 26-28

As Noah had only three sons, so Terah had only three sons. One of Terah's sons, Haran, died before his father left this life or even left his homeland of Ur. Thus, Lot, Haran's son, is mentioned in v.27 as the head of the branch of Terah's family descending through Haran. Other patriarchs had, presumably, many sons and daughters—Terah had

only three sons, one of whom died at a relatively young age. However, the most significant works of the Lord take place not amongst an abundance of natural material. Our God does not choose the mighty in number or strength amongst whom to do His most glorious work, but rather the weak and the few (Dt. 7:7).

Wednesday, September 22nd - Genesis 11: 29, 30

The divine election of the weak things of this world, in order to confound the strong, is further emphasized in these verses. Terah's two remaining sons, Abram and Nahor, married. However, Abram's wife, we are informed, was barren. Who but the God of grace, whose power would make a tomb barren as a result of His resurrecting His crucified Son, would select the barren womb of Sarai from which to bring to life the son of Abraham's faith?

Thursday, September 23rd - Genesis 11: 29, 30

Sarai's name means *princess*, as though she, too, were exalted in rank by her relation to her father. We do not know the name or character of her father (though Abraham later tells Abimelech that Sarai was the daughter of his own father, Terah—Gen. 20:12), but we do know that God changed her name to Sarah, meaning *noblewoman*. Her regality, as with Abram's true exaltation, issued through her connection with her husband and son, and, above all, with their God, more than through her relation to her father. Yet her barrenness no doubt distressed her and her husband more than any inkling she may have had of her future greatness. John Calvin comments regarding Sarah's barrenness: *We cannot doubt that Abram would suffer severe pain through his privation. He sees the wicked springing up everywhere, in great numbers, to cover the earth; he alone is deprived of children and although hitherto he was ignorant of his own future vocation; yet God designed in his person, as in a mirror, to make it evident, whence and in what manner His Church should arise; for at that time it lay hid, as in a dry root under the earth.* (*Genesis*, Geneva series, Banner of Truth, p.338).

Friday, September 24th - Genesis 11: 31

God not only elected a line of people generated from Shem (v.10) to be His people, but the divine election made changes in the lives of those so chosen. After the Lord confused men's languages and halted thereby their concentration and cooperation in the godless building of Babel's tower, the general population scattered all over the earth. In today's verse, we learn that Terah, Abram's father, left Ur to enter Canaan. This move, at first, appears to be simply part of the general scattering of humanity. Yet, as we shall see upon closer examination, the hand of God was giving very specific and significant leading in the moving of this family. Man may propose, but God disposes all things in the lives of His people for His glory and for their highest good.

Saturday, September 25th - Genesis 11: 31

This verse reads as though Terah proposed the relocation of his family from Ur to Canaan. However, when we read further in the account (Gen. 12:1-5), and consider what light other Scriptures throw on the question of this move, we learn that the relocation was prompted by the Lord's calling Abram to leave his country of Ur (Josh. 24:2,3; Neh. 9:7; Acts 7:2-4; Heb. 11:8). Apparently, the sense of calling Abram had been given by God in Ur was so vivid and strong that Abram's father, Terah, joined in the venture. Since Terah was head of the family, our verse today lists him as the one leading the family's journey. What Scripture charitably declines to make explicit is that although Terah was stirred to accompany Abram to the divinely appointed destination of Canaan, the father of Abram proved not to be so committed to the venture as was his son, and thus Terah settled in Haran, which was apparently more like Ur than Canaan. Thus, we who have faith are reckoned as sons of Abraham, not of Terah, for it is the faithful who persevere to the final divinely appointed destination (Heb. 11:10,14-16).

Sunday, September 26th - Genesis 11: 32

This verse records the death of Terah. It does so first in most positive terms, informing us that he lived for 205 years. That is considerably longer than the years that his own father had lived (vv. 24,25). Because we are told that Terah begot Abram at age 70, and we know that Abraham was 100 when he begot Isaac, we know that Terah lived until Isaac was 35. Terah's was a long and meaningful life. Yet he died five years short of Isaac's marriage to Rebekah (Gen 25:20). More sadly and significantly, Terah died in Haran, short in distance and far short in spiritual significance from the promised land. Let us learn, therefore, to be more careful that we redeem the duration of our lives in highest and most godly pursuit.

Monday, September 27th – Genesis 12: 1-3

In Gen. 11:10ff we have a list of divinely chosen men. That list, however, leads to one most choice man, namely, Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel and of all the faithful in every age after his time. Abraham was the man with whom God spoke, as He had done with Noah. The Lord also established His covenant with Abraham, as He had done with Noah, and revealed to and through Abraham deeper and more detailed components of the covenant of saving grace. So significant is the character of Abraham that he is the central figure in Genesis from chapter 12 to chapter 25, in which chapter his death is recorded. Abraham's name, home, life, and eternal inheritance were all changed by God's gracious, effectual calling. Since Abraham is designated by Scripture as the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:14,16), we do well to study his life as though it were our life. In a very true sense, his life foreshadows and reflects our life of faith in Christ.

Tuesday, September 28th - Genesis 12: 1-3

God's Word came to Abram, resulting in great changes taking place in his life. As God's Word directed and prompted Noah to build an ark as an instrument of his salvation, so the Word of the Lord prompted Abram to move to a new home that would typify his eternal and glorious abode with his Savior in heaven. Those hearing and

heeding the Word of God are changed in who they are and in what they do. For those so directed by the Word and enabled by the Spirit, all things are new.

Wednesday, September 29th - Genesis 12: 1-3

We may initially be a bit confused over when and where Abram received this communication from God. From Gen. 11:31 it would seem that Abram's father, Terah, either decided on his own or was himself prompted by God to leave Ur and travel to Canaan. However, from a reading of Gen. 15:7 and Acts 7:1-4, we come to understand that Abram was the one who had received the divine order to depart from Ur and proceed to the Promised Land. Therefore, these opening verses in chapter 12 either are to be read as pluperfect tense (*Now the Lord had said to Abram...*) or as a reiteration of the original call, coming again to Abram while he was settled in Haran, which was short of his entrance into the land of God's promise. Our God is faithful to prompt us to move on to the place of His appointment when we settle for something less. His leading may seem at times inconvenient to us, as well as insistent, but He only and ever leads us to refreshing waters (Ps. 23:2).

Thursday September 30th - Genesis 1-3

The content of the divine call to Abram begins with negative features. Abram is called *from* his country. Thereby he is divinely deprived of his natural home. By his obedience to the Lord's call, Abram was deprived of all of the culture, society, economy, possessions, and people that were familiar to him. This calling was not like Israel's exodus from their oppressive miseries in Egypt. It was rather a call from all that was naturally pleasing and satisfying to Abram. Yet, Ur was a godless place (Josh. 24:2), and it did Abram no good to gain that whole country and yet lose his soul by his living and dying apart from God, the one thing necessary, whom to gain causes one to regard as rubbish all that he has lost in order to have Him (Phil. 3:7-9).

Friday, October 1st - Genesis 12: 1-3

The calling of God deprived Abram of his natural relatives. He was specifically told to go *from* his country and *from* his relatives, and *from* his father's house. His relatives would have comprised Abram's support network. His father's house had been the earthly source of love and nurture for Abram. In sum, Abram was called by God to depart from all that he had known and loved for all of his life. What would make a man give up all of that? Only his faith in, dependence upon, and loving devotion to the God of his salvation would lead a man to count as trash all that he had formerly treasured.

Saturday, October 2nd - Genesis 12: 1-3

The call of God did not only deprive Abram, it also added to him enduring riches. Abram was not only called from his native land, but he was also called to another land, a specific land of God's choice and provision. Hence it is termed not *a* land, but *the* land. This Promised Land was not initially identified to Abram as Canaan. Its specific identity

was known only to God, and would be disclosed to Abram by God upon Abram's obedience to God's call and leading (Heb. 11:8). Abram left Ur, the land he knew, for a promise of another land. It would be the land that, in the course of Abram's obedient pilgrimage, the Lord would show him. Most of the Christian's eternal wealth is now conveyed to him by divine pledge and promise. Yet faith rightly reckons these promises to be great, precious, and worthy to set the course and pace of our walk (2 Pet. 1:4).

Sunday, October 3rd – Genesis 12: 1-3

The call of God to Abram contained much more than a divine promise to provide Abram with an earthly territory in place of the one he was leaving. The call was really one *from* Ur, *through* the land of promise, *to* the city that has enduring foundations, whose builder and architect is God (Heb. 11:9,10). Faith rightly perceives that there is far more glorious and lasting blessing in the promise of God than in anything the world could provide.

Monday, October 4th – Genesis 12: 1-3

Abram was called by God from his relatives, but he was also called by God to become a great nation. The divine compensation by far exceeds the deprivation. Jesus has promised to all who leave father and mother for His sake many times as much and eternal life (Mt. 19:29). Abram was also called to leave his earthly father's house of provision for the blessing of his heavenly Father. Again, this is a call to leave the lesser, finite, imperfect, and failing earthly provision for the infinite, perfect, and enduring blessing of God (1 Pet. 1:4). Whatever our God's calling removes from our hands, His compensation replaces with incomparable, glorious, and everlasting blessing.

Tuesday, October 5th – Genesis 12: 1-3

Another facet of God's call to Abram is the Lord's promise to make the patriarch's name great. This would entail not only Abram's renown throughout his day and all time thereafter, but also a change in Abram's name that would represent a change in his character and destiny. In due course, Abram, whose name meant exalted father, would become by God's doing Abraham, meaning father of a people, an amazing thing to be promised to a man whose wife was barren. Thus would Abram's greatness be shown to derive not from his natural generation, but from the supernatural fruit that would result from his exercise of faith in his God (Gen. 17:1-5).

Wednesday, October 6th - Genesis 12: 1-3

God would make Abram to be not only great in himself, but also a gracious source of blessing to others. Indeed, God would make Abram to be an instrument and the touchstone of divine blessing and cursing upon the lives of others. Those blessing Abram would accordingly be richly blessed by God, while those cursing him would earn for themselves a divine curse. So treasured would Abram be by God that the Lord would regard the treatment the father of faith received as being treatment He Himself received.

Jesus thusly regards His people, counting their blessing as His blessing, with those blessing His people being rewarded gloriously. He also counts His people being cursed as His being cursed, with righteous and eternal cursing being repaid to those cursing His people (Mt. 10:42; 25:31-46).

Thursday, October 7th - Genesis 12: 1-3

God promises that in Abram all of the families of the earth would be blessed. For in Abram was Christ, who was to be descended from the patriarch centuries later, and who was dwelling in Abram at that time by faith. Jesus Himself declared that Abraham saw His day and rejoiced in it (Jn. 8:56). In Christ, all people on earth are blessed with the divine blessings of common grace. Not even the worst sinners receive during their life on this earth the full measure of just punishment they deserve. In Christ also, the redeemed receive special blessing through God's saving grace. In Abram was Christ, the source of every blessing not only in heaven but also on earth.

Friday, October 8th - Genesis 12: 1-3

The call of God in these verses contains three negative components: 1) *from your country*; 2) *from your relatives*; 3) *from your father's house*. It also contains a perfect complement of seven positive facets as seen in God promising that He will do seven things for Abram: 1) *make you a great nation*; 2) *bless you*; 3) *make your name great*; 4) *make you a blessing*; 5) *bless those blessing you*; 6) *curse those cursing you*; and telling him that 7) *in you all families of earth shall be blessed*. The provision of God for Abram was perfect, precious, and glorious. The divine calling and provision in the lives of all believers contain perfect and manifold blessing beyond what the children of God could deserve, ask, or think (Rom. 8:18).

Saturday, October 9th - Genesis 12: 1-3

Well might we marvel at the manifold great and precious components of God's call to Abram. However, we should realize that Abram's faith was fixed not on the fullness of the promised blessing, but rather on the faithfulness of the God who promised such blessing (Rom. 4:21). If we eye the rewards of salvation, we shall grow impatient at the slowness of their coming, or fearful that they seem never to come, or, having come, that they will be lost or fade away. However, if we fix our trust upon the Savior Himself, we shall trust Him though He slay us.

Sunday, October 10th – Genesis 12: 4

In this verse, we begin to see the outworking of Abram's faith in the Lord. In vv.1-3, prior to this verse, God spoke to Abram. We see that Abram not only heard the Word of God, but that he also heeded it. His life henceforth would be *as the Lord had spoken to him*. When Abram left Ur he did so not in fearful flight from his enemies, not prompted by escapist illusions of better things in another place, not impelled by boredom or ruined reputation or family relations. He moved because his faith prompted him to believe and

obey his God. Many hear God's Word, but only those with saving faith actually do the will of God revealed in His Word (Mt. 7:21).

Monday, October 11th - Genesis 12: 4

Abram had every natural disincentive to leave either Ur or Haran. We have seen the cost set out in vv.1-3, where Abram was called to leave his home and family. Now we learn that Abram was a relatively old man of seventy-five when he left Haran to continue on to Canaan. Old people tend not to welcome such radical changes. Not only so, but when Scripture tells us that Abram was 75 when he left Haran, that Terah was 70 when he begot Abram (Gen. 11:26), and that Terah was 205 when he died (Gen. 11:32), we realize that Abram left his father behind in Haran, where he lived for another 60 years without his son. The categorical cost of the life of faith is hereby made apparent. Yet, Abram rightly despised the cost, as do all of the faithful, and focused instead upon the glory of the God who had called him. Read Phil. 3:4-11 in this connection.

Tuesday, October 12th - Genesis 12: 4, 5

We have considered what Abram left behind. These verses tell us who and what Abram brought with him on his trip to Canaan. The father of the faithful brought Sarai, his wife, Lot, his nephew, and the people they had acquired in Haran, who were likely servants, though some may have been friends drawn into the attractive testimony and commitment of Abram to the extent that they determined to follow him on his pilgrimage. Abram also brought with him all of his possessions. Does this retinue of people and possessions represent Abram's refusal to strip himself fully for the race set before him? Perhaps it does, and that is how many Bible students and scholars view it. Yet, this full account of what Abram brought with him could also represent his radical and final departure from his old life and native country, for he left nothing behind, except his father, to which he could return. More important for us is the question of whether the things we possess help or hinder us in our pilgrimage through this life to the celestial city.

Wednesday, October 13th - Genesis 12: 6, 7

Abram was in the Promised Land before he realized it. We are told that he *passed through the land* until he reached Shechem, a site in the center of Canaan. By its appearance, Abram could see nothing to signify to him that he was in the land the Lord had promised to him. It was only when he was well into the land that was full of heathen Canaanites, who were potential enemies to contest Abram's possession of it, that God appeared to Abram, telling him that he stood amidst the territory that would belong to him and his descendants. Those who walk by faith are always farther into their inheritance in Christ than they realize. It takes the Word of God to indicate to us the extent of our freedom from sin (Rom. 6:1-11) and from condemnation (Rom. 8:1), the measure of our blessing (Eph. 1:3), and the certainty of our triumph (Rom. 8:31-39).

Thursday, October 14th - Genesis 12: 6, 7

The vision and voice of God transform everything for Abram in Canaan. They did the same for Paul at Corinth, when the Lord appeared to him in a night vision telling the apostle to stop fearing but to go on speaking the message of salvation (Acts 18:9-11). Similarly, the Word of God transforms everything for every believer, as those who hear and heed the Word apprehend by faith the presence, precious promises, and power of God in their situations (Rom. 8:28).

Friday, October 15th - Genesis 12: 6, 7

The Word of God's promise to Abram transformed the Canaanite infested land into a territory consecrated by the Lord. Therefore, Abram responded to the divine Word with a deed of devoted worship. He built an altar as a testimony and memorial to God's Word of gracious promise and provision. It was for Abram the appropriate response of his faith that he should raise an altar upon which he offered sacrifice of thanksgiving to the God whose Word is as good as His deed. It is also an appropriate response for all of the faithful to give thanks to God and to rejoice always in the great and precious promises of His Word.

Saturday, October 16th - Genesis 12: 8

Abram continued on from Shechem, heading south to Bethel. This placed the patriarch at another strategic point, for Bethel was where God would give Jacob the vision of the heavenly ladder and the words of assurance that his would be the land promised to his fathers (Gen 28: 11ff). Thus, Jacob name the place Bethel, which means house of God. At this strategic place, Abram built another altar, this one representing the patriarch's prayerful devotion and commitment to his God. Thus, at Shechem was the altar commemorating God's Word to Abram, and at Bethel stood the altar testifying to Abram's prayerful words to God. By these two consecrated witnesses the matter of Abram's inheritance and acceptance of the land of God's promise was confirmed. We have now something far better than these altars in the oath of God and the cross of Christ by which the matter of our redemption has been sealed for all time and eternity (Heb. 6:11-20).

Sunday, October 17th - Genesis 12: 8, 9

Although Abram had the most secure title to Canaan, conveyed to him by the promise of God, and backed by divine power, the father of the faithful dwelt in the land in tents, and moved about as a sojourner. By this we should understand that Abram's faith perceived in Canaan a type and pledge of the heavenly city, his eternal dwelling place (Heb. 11:8-10; 13-16). Thus, Abram traversed the whole land of Canaan, from north to south, yet showed that he was not so devoted to the land as he was to his Lord, the One who gave him the pledge and the fullness of eternal glory through Christ.

Monday, October 18th - Genesis 12: 10-13

The regenerating effectual calling of a sinner to salvation, and the directing and empowering Word of God to His people, do not make the redeemed perfect in this life. Sanctification is progressive, wherein the saints of God wrestle against and sometimes do not prevail against the remnants of their old, sinful natures. Hence, we see that Abram, the faithful, in this passage manifests sinful faults. He leaves the Promised Land for perishable food; he concocts a lie and makes his wife complicitous in it because he took counsel of his fears. The sins of the saints may at times gain a grievous ascendancy over them, but never, by God's grace, will their sins master them.

Tuesday, October 19th - Genesis 12: 10-13

Famine would seem a reasonable and legitimate cause for Abram to leave Canaan for a land where there was food. However, human reasoning does not save or sanctify the people of the Lord as does their faith. Elijah remained by the brook Cherith, even after it dried up, awaiting an express Word from God before he went elsewhere (1 Ki. 17:2-9). Jesus remained in the wilderness, though He hungered greatly after 40 days of fasting, for He rightly knew that the Holy Spirit impelled him to go there and remain until relieved by the Father's permission and provision (Mt. 4:1-11). God's people do not live by bread alone. Surely the Lord ordained this test to teach Abram that lesson. However, it was a test from which Abram sought to flee. Though our God, by His dark providences, should seem at times intent upon slaying us, let us trust Him and abide in the Savior who can and will raise us from the dead and reward us for our troubles (Mt. 5:11,12).

Wednesday, October 20th - Genesis 12: 10-13

The root cause of Abram's flight from the Promised Land into Egypt was that his trust in God grew weak. Accordingly, he leaned upon his own understanding, a thing always disastrous for a child of God to do (Prov. 3:5,6). His mistrust of God cause him to mistrust man also. He feared that the Egyptians were worse men than they proved to be in the event. The faithful perceive God's blessing ever surrounding them, but to those weak in faith, all things appear perverted and threatening (Ps. 18:25,26). Abram left the land given to him by God in order to get food, but he fed on his fears before he ever tasted a morsel in Egypt. Our fears make sorry counselors.

Thursday, October 21st - Genesis 12: 10-13

It is shocking, sad, and sobering for us to witness how quickly Abram traded the loving heart, the infallible wisdom, the providing hand, and the almighty arm of the living God for a lie of his own making. Yet, if we do not by faith lean constantly upon the Lord of truth and love, the only alternative is for us to trust in lies.

Friday, October 22nd - Genesis 12: 10-13

Faith gives us courage and integrity; fears make us cowards and liars. Abram should have been Sarai's protector, and, no doubt, would have been by God's enabling power, had his faith not lapsed amidst this trial (Ps. 18:31-36, 39-42). Instead, Abram seeks to

make Sarai his protector through the lie he urges her to tell to the Egyptians. It should be considered a blessing that a man would have a wife still beautiful when she was 65 years old. However, Abram's fears led him into viewing Sarai's beauty as a curse to him. Faith enables us to see and esteem all of the blessings of God rightly. Fears make us seek to cast away those blessings as though they were threatening curses.

Saturday, October 23rd - Genesis 12: 14-16

Initially, Abram's mistrust of God and man appears warranted. The Egyptians do admire Sarai's beauty, and Pharaoh takes her to himself. The food Abram sought, he then received in abundance, for Pharaoh treated Abram well for Sarai's sake. But had Abram reckoned on the intolerable cost of his losing Sarai? Was he really wise and right to trade his trust in the Lord for the patronage of Pharaoh? What consolation can animals and servants be for a lost wife? Where would his children and the great nation to come from him be now? These questions would have been better considered by Abram before he went to Egypt and trusted in a lie. Though our fears may for a time appear warranted, they cost us immeasurably and betray us into unforeseen and unintended results that are many times worse than what we had feared would come upon us.

Sunday, October 24th - Genesis 12: 17, 18

The Lord, whose almighty hand and loving heart Abram had forgotten in his fearful attempt to protect himself with a lie, did not forget His chosen man. Abram's lie had worked so well that he had more than enough food and possessions, animals and servants, but all were gained at the fearful and unanticipated cost of Abram's losing Sarai. Nor did the patriarch lose her to a weak peasant, but rather to mighty Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Yet, the almighty hand of Abram's God strikes Pharaoh and his royal household, sobering the king of Egypt from his intoxicated deception, then leading him to know the truth regarding the relationship between Abram and Sarai. Thus, the afflicting hand of the Lord shatters the lie of Abram's mouth.

Monday, October 25th - Genesis 12: 17, 18

Pharaoh apparently had no reason to doubt Abram's claim that Sarai was his sister. The king of Egypt may well have taken Sarai sincerely believing that she was legitimately available to become his wife. Yet, while Abram knowingly trusted in a lie for his protection, Pharaoh unknowingly trusted in a lie for his pleasure. Though Pharaoh may subjectively have thought he acted legitimately, objectively he sinned in the eyes of God. Therefore, the hand of God struck the guilty Egyptian as it will one day strike all who have trusted in lies for their eternal welfare, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Tuesday, October 26th - Genesis 12: 17-19

The words of Abram misled Pharaoh, but the hand of God convinced the king of Egypt of his wrong in taking Sarai into his house. Accordingly, Pharaoh strikes Abram, not as the patriarch had feared he would do (v.12), but rather with words of rebuke that

pierce Abram's heart, humbling and sanctifying him. Then the hand of Pharaoh restored Sarai to Abram. Surely we can trust our Lord to work all things together for our good.

Wednesday, October 27th – Genesis 12: 17-19

Once the smiting hand of God opened Pharaoh's eyes, he saw Abram's sin before Abram himself was aware of it in all of its true depth. The plagues of God served to drive Pharaoh to inquire, no doubt of Sarai, regarding her true relation to Abram. Divinely applied pains compel men to seek relief, not in lies, excuses, and diversions, but in the truth that alone sets men free, even from temporal suffering. Pharaoh's pains were physical, while Abram's were deeper, grieving his very soul. For the holy patriarch surely was humiliated and grieved that his failure to trust his God had rendered him unworthy of having the rebuke he so richly deserved come to him directly from his Lord. That rebuke, instead, issued from the lips of an unbelieving Egyptian. Thus, both Pharaoh and the patriarch were sobered and humbled by the showing of the hand of the Lord. The final day will be one wherein all sinners, great and small, will be sobered by the revelation of the Lord who sits on heaven's throne, and will be terrified by the wrath of the Lamb against whom they have sinned (Rev. 6:15-17).

Thursday, October 28th - Genesis 12: 17-20

We see in this passage how groundless were the fears and how unnecessary and inadequate was the lie of Abram. Not only does the hand of the Lord subdue Pharaoh, but it also engaged the mouth of Egypt's king to speak words of conviction to Abram, and to issue orders for Abram's safe escort from Egypt. We also see how gracious the Lord is to deliver his fearful and sinning servant, not only from potential enemies, but also from his actual sinful fears.

Friday, October 29th - Genesis 12: 17-20

Pharaoh ordered Abram to leave Egypt. Here the mind and mouth of an earthly king served the higher purposes of the King of heaven. By the sovereignly superintending rule of the Lord, Abram was sent back to where his faith had begun to fail. He was sent back to the place from which his fears had prompted him to wander. He was sent back a chastised, humbled, and wiser man. In the far country, the heavenly Father taught this prodigal son not to sin. He also caused Abram to return from Egypt full of material possessions (v.16), not because of, but in spite of Abram's sin. Where our sin increases, the Lord's grace abounds all the more (Rom. 5:20). This amazing truth should encourage us not to despair when we are entangled in a sinful course. It should also encourage us not to go on sinning, but rather to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11). If our sinful fears excite the exercise of the grace of God, our faithful obedience will surely bring us no lesser blessing.

Saturday October 30th - Genesis 12: 17-20

Abram returned to Canaan a changed man. He was enriched with livestock and servants; Sarai, whom he had lost by his fearful lying, had been restored to him; and Abram had been humbled and fortified in his faith in the Lord who had demonstrated His power to strike the enemies of His people. All of this points to our gracious redemption and deliverance in Christ. Our fearful cunning can never enrich and empower us as can the exercise of our faith in Christ.

Sunday, October 31st - Genesis 13: 1

Abram, by the exercise of his faith, went into Canaan as God directed him through His Word. Abram went out of Canaan driven by his hunger and by his fearful and sinful mistrust of the Lord. God graciously delivered Abram from Egypt, from his sinful fears, and from the consequences of his having lied about Sarai. The abundantly gracious dealings of the Lord enabled Abram to return to Canaan with *all that belonged to him*. Nothing was lost and no one was harmed. This is a testimony to the preserving, restoring, and delivering grace of God. Through the whole ordeal, neither Abram nor Sarai were harmed, though both were humbled, as God used the thorns in the thicket of Egypt to drive them back to a surer and more grateful trust in their Lord, as well as to drive them back to the land of His promise, provision, and blessing.

Monday, November 1st - Genesis 13: 1, 2

In v.1 we are told of the safe return from Egypt of all the people of Abram's household. Those people included Abram's nephew, Lot, whom the patriarch had misled by his sinful fears. Our sins tend adversely to affect others. In v.2 we are told that Abram's possessions did not diminish, but grew in Egypt. Our Lord can and does preserve and prosper His people contrary to their expectation and beyond what they deserve, ask, or think.

Tuesday, November 2nd - Genesis 13: 1, 2

Are we to view Abram's riches as bountiful blessing or ensnaring curse? Matthew Henry comments with respect to earthly treasures: *There is a burden of care getting them, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account, at last, to be given concerning them*. Yet, the great commentator goes on to say: *God in His providence sometimes makes good men rich, and teaches them how to abound, as well as suffer want*. (Matthew Henry's *Commentary*, vol. 1, pp.89,90). What we can know with certainty is that it is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to His blessing (Prov. 10:22). Scripture gives no indication that Abram's riches were a cause for his stumbling. In fact, Abram honored the Lord with his riches by tithing them (Gen. 14:21-23), thereby indicating by his giving a portion that he understood that the whole of his wealth was a stewardship entrusted to him by the Lord.

Wednesday, November 3rd – Genesis 13: 1, 2

Abram entered Egypt hungry and left Egypt filled with food, people, and possessions. The descendants of Abram would likewise enter Egypt hungry, and, centuries thereafter, leave Egypt similarly enriched. The faithful are ever blessed by the Lord, being not only delivered from their oppressors, but enriched by them due to God's causing them and all things ever to work for the good of His people.

Thursday, November 4th – Genesis 13: 3

This verse tells us of Abram's destination within Canaan. He returned to his true home, namely, the place he had abandoned when it had seemed spoiled by famine. There may still have been a famine in the land, but Abram had been strengthened in his faith by the hand of God's gracious and abundant blessing in Egypt. Not only had the Lord turned the Egyptians, whom Abram feared as foes, into instruments of divine chastisement serving for Abram's good, but the Lord also opened the hands of the Egyptians to bless Abram materially. When we live by faith in our Lord, life in the place of His choosing is a feast, even amidst famine.

Friday, November 5th – Genesis 13: 3, 4

Abram returned not merely to the place of his first settlement, but, more significantly, he returned to the place where he had erected an altar to the Lord. There were not altars of worship erected by Abram in Egypt. But at Bethel, the patriarch had erected the second of his altars to God. It was an altar of sacrifice, pointing to the substantial sacrifice of Christ to come, whom Abram rightly apprehended by faith (Jn. 8:56). It was an altar of prayer (Gen. 12:8), in response to the gracious and faithful words and works of the Lord. This place, between Bethel and Ai, was the place to which Abram returned because in his chastised and humbled condition, with his faith consequently strengthened, this place meant more to Abram than food, fortune, or life itself. When we dwell with faithful gratitude and loving contentment in the place God has chosen for us, we perceive that the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places (Ps. 16:6).

Saturday, November 6th - Genesis 13: 5-7

The material prosperity of Abram was a blessing that brought its own particular challenges. In these verses we learn that the abundant possessions owned by Abram and Lot served to crowd and then separate these men who were of the same family. Matthew Henry comments that, *poverty and travail, wants and wanderings could not separate between Abram and Lot; but riches did...* (Commentary, vol. 1, p.90). Material blessing can make a man more often poor than rich.

Sunday, November 7th - Genesis 13: 5, 6

The possessions of Abram and Lot began to crowd the people of their households. When possessions are prized above people, contention and strife result. Such strife and division can weaken a household until it falls (Mt. 12:25). Such weakness made Abram and Lot vulnerable to attacks from the indigenous Perizzites and Canaanites in the land,

and their material wealth, while being ineffective to shield them from attacks, would actually invite attacks against them. Lot eventually fell victim to such an attack, though not from his Canaanite neighbors (Gen. 14:12), and it was not his money that freed him, but rather was a man, his relative, Abram, who at this point appeared to Lot as being an unwanted liability serving only to cramp the expansion of his material wealth.

Monday, November 8th - Genesis 13: 8, 9

The fault for this strife does not seem to be so much with Abram. It is, in fact, Abram who perceives and appealingly declares to his nephew how wrong it is that their servants should fight. Abram also rightly admits that he and Lot bear ultimate responsibility for the strife between their herdsman. Furthermore, Abram appeals to the familial tie that should bind them together in loving cooperation, and not drive them apart as their riches were doing by fueling a competition between them. Finally, it is Abram who takes the initiative not only in diagnosing the problem and confessing his own part in it, but also the patriarch proposes a solution, wherein he graciously offers Lot first choice of land from which Abram would withdraw, allowing Lot an unimpeded expansion. Grace prompts a man rightly to analyze his problems and rightly to address them.

Tuesday, November 9th - Genesis 13: 9

The separation that Abram proposed to Lot was not the only possible solution to their strife. They could have sold or given away some of their possessions and then have contentedly continued to live closely together. There may have been other solutions as well. But the one proposed was not necessarily sinful and it was prompted by and full of grace. Brothers should not separate, but it would be better for them to live apart from one another in peace and loving regard than to dwell in proximity while their hearts fumed with growing enmity against one another. Abram's proposal definitely represents an improvement of the sore situation, and grace always improves relationships, usually by degrees rather than by instantaneous perfection.

Wednesday, November 10th – Genesis 13: 8, 9

This strife between Abram and his nephew was really another divinely ordained test for Abram. The famine had tested Abram's trust in God, and though Abram failed that test, he was graciously restored by the Lord and his faith was strengthened thereby. The test now is not a lack of food, but an abundance of possessions. Abram sustains this test very well. He takes the initiative to stop the strife. Grace in a man's heart will not allow him to tolerate or rest in fraternal contention. Thus, Abram places a premium upon peaceful and loving relations with Lot, and shows himself willing to suffer materially to restore such peace. Grace in a man's heart will tolerate no disturbance of the affectionate peace between himself and his brother. Because Abram had experienced the Lord's gracious dealings with him, he was enabled to deal graciously with Lot. Grace received should ever lead to grace being given.

Thursday, November 11th - Genesis 13: 10, 11

Abram made a most gracious offer to Lot. The older uncle offered his younger nephew first choice of the land. In contrast to this gracious offer we have Lot's graceless and grasping choice. Lot did not consider the cost his choice would consequently impose upon Abram, who would have to content himself with less desirable pasture land. Nor is there any indication that Lot prayerfully committed his choice to the Lord. Instead, Lot relied upon his own eyes and self regard to guide his selection. Consequently, he chose by sight, not by faith. He judged by the salubrious appearance of the land, seeing only its well watered pastures and resemblance to the paradise lost by man's sin. This sensual and superficial assessment blinded Lot to the more sinister fruit growing in the land of his choice, namely, the sins of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah that would ripen to the point of calling down the consuming wrath of God.

Friday, November 12th - Genesis 13: 10, 11

Lot's selfish and faithless choice was an endeavor to secure and prosper himself without regard for the Lord or His wise and holy will. Lot saw the glittering charms and perceived none of the growing evils in the land. The reference to Egypt may indicate that the land he chose resembled in his eyes the delights of Egypt where he had recently resided with Abram, and which he may have regretted leaving. But all of these delights were empty delusions. Lot's selfish choice would almost cost him his life, while Abram's gracious giving, though being apparently costly, would save him from a brush with death and make him to be, in a sense, a savior of Lot (Gen. 14:12ff). Grace prompts a man to give to his own proximate cost, but ultimate enrichment (Lk. 6:38).

Saturday, November 13th - Genesis 13: 12, 13

Lot's blinding self regard led him to the very heart of the growing wickedness in the land of his choosing. He had the best pastures for his livestock, but he himself dwelt near the sinful cities. In contrast, Abram had an outwardly less desirable tract of land, but he had many precious consolations. He was in the Promised Land, even if not in its supposedly prime portion. He was right with the Lord, and he had done the right, faithful, and gracious thing with Lot in the sight of the Lord, who not only sees the sins of men, but also the good works of His children that He will not fail richly to reward.

Sunday, November 14th - Genesis 13: 14, 15

Abram proposed separation and gave Lot the choice of territory. Lot exercised his choice by taking the Jordan valley, a region that appeared most suited to sustain his livestock. Lot was not obliged to take that territory or, indeed, to separate from his uncle. Yet, the continued expansion of his fortune was his priority, and thus Scripture rightly attributes to Lot the responsibility for his leaving his uncle. All strikes seemed to be against Abram. He was childless, his wife was barren, he was homeless after he left Ur, and he was now obliged to live in tents in a land that seemed less agriculturally desirable than that which Lot had taken. This childless man had a nephew who was like a son to him, but Lot was now also removed from Abram. Faithful followers of the Lord

are obliged to suffer much for the name of Christ (Acts 9:16; 2 Tim. 3:12). Yet the Lord more than repays what He appears to take from us.

Monday, November 15th - Genesis 13: 14

Lot had chosen to separate himself from Abram to enrich himself. Abram made the costly choice of giving up his virtual son and the best of the land. He did so to preserve what he could of a peaceful, though somewhat remote, relationship with his nephew. This costly giving, on Abram's part, was a test of his faith that he clearly sustained. It also served to train and prepare him for the day when God would command him to offer as a sacrifice his true and only son, Isaac. The course of our lives is set by God so that we grow from faith to faith (Rom. 1:17). Let us learn to be faithful in the little tests that prepare us for greater ones to come.

Tuesday, November 16th - Genesis 13: 14, 15

Lot leaves Abram, but the Lord draws near to the faithful patriarch. Lot has taken his desired portion of land, but the Lord draws near to give Abram a better land. What the Lord by His providence removes with one hand, He supplies for His servants with His other hand. What the Lord supplies is also many magnitudes greater than what He removes. The Lord removes rubbish to replace it with great and enduring riches, as the Apostle Paul, for example, testifies (Phil. 3:7-11).

Wednesday, November 17th - Genesis 13: 14, 15

The Lord drew near to Abram after the patriarch had soothed the strife between himself and Lot. God rewards peacemakers. Jesus informs us that such reconcilers are called sons of God (Mt. 5:9), and the Lord delights so much in His Son that He is pleased to draw near to reflections and resemblances of His Son in those whom He adopts and who live in a manner worthy of their divine adoption.

Thursday, November 18th - Genesis 13: 14, 15

The Lord drew near to Abram after his self-denying giving up of Lot and of the best portion of the land. Our God gravitates toward those who deny themselves and bear their crosses, as did His beloved Son.

Friday, November 19th - Genesis 13: 14, 15

The Lord drew near to Abram after Abram had given up Lot, the one who was practically a son to him. Abram's sacrifice of Lot to a more remote place of living was but a shadow of the patriarch's delivery to death of his only true son, Isaac, which would be, in turn, but a more full shadow of the substantial sacrifice God would make of His only begotten and beloved Son. Yet, so highly does the Father regard His own giving of His Son that He gives Himself as a friend who sticks closer than a brother to all who but typify that supreme sacrifice.

Saturday, November 20th - Genesis 13: 14, 15

The Lord drew near to Abram after the patriarch had given up what appeared to be the best of the land. Abram did so because he loved Lot more than the land, and desired to live in peace with him. This, too, is a shadow of Christ's leaving His heavenly glory to dwell as a Man in the likeness of sinful flesh among sinners to save sinners. The Father is drawn to this shadow and gives compensation of a better land, just as the Father compensated His Son's substantial humiliation with highest exaltation (Phil. 2:5-11).

Sunday, November 21st - Genesis 13: 14, 15

The lesser sacrifice Abram made was that of the land which Lot took. In compensation for that sacrifice, the Lord gave Abram a land better in quantity, quality, and title of possession. Abram's land was expansive. God gave to him all of Canaan proper, whereas Lot's portion was largely east of the Jordan. Abram's portion flowed with milk and honey and would one day contain the Kingdom of Israel, whereas Lot's portion was soon to be permanently destroyed by the judging wrath of God. Abram had better title to his land, as it was given to him by the Lord; whereas Lot graspingly chose his portion, guided by his own selfish passions. Finally, Abram had perpetual title to his land, God promising it to him and his descendants forever, while Lot would soon be carried away from his land as a captive (Gen. 14:12), and finally he would flee for his life from it (Gen. 19:12ff). The Lord knows how to take lesser things, faulty things, from His children to fill their hands with greater, perfect, and perpetual gifts.

Monday, November 22nd - Genesis 13: 16

The sacrifice greater than that of the land Abram gave up was the sacrifice of Lot, the nephew who was the closest thing Abram had to a son of his own. The compensation for this loss was the promise of the Lord that Abram would have innumerable descendants. Without faith on the part of Abram, this promise would seem very poor in comparison with the lonely life of the patriarch consequent to Lot having left him. Yet Abram did have a growing faith whereby he rightly reckoned the promises of the Lord to be as certain as His provision.

Tuesday, November 23rd - Genesis 13: 17, 18

In these verses, the Lord commands Abram to survey and claim the great and precious divine promises granted to him. To the eyes of flesh, Abram arose and moved about as a wandering sojourner. To the eyes of faith, however, he was an inheritor surveying his legacy. Abram certainly walked and saw by faith. He moved at the command of the Lord. He wanted a home, but he was obliged to stay on the move, dwelling not in a city, as Lot did, but rather in tents. This was so not because the Lord refused Abram a home, but rather because of the immense magnitude of Abram's inheritance. The entire land was his for the claiming, just as believers, who are destined to inherit the earth, are led by the Word of the Lord to the realization that all things are theirs in Christ (2 Cor. 4:15; 6:10). Accordingly, Abram's devotion to God deepened,

and we find him building a third altar to the Lord at Hebron, as a testimony of reverent gratitude to the Lord for His great and precious promises that overwhelmingly compensated for all that Abram had sacrificed.

Wednesday, November 24th - Genesis 14: 1-3

Since the days of Cain, men had killed other men in the world. Cain's descendant, Lamech, for example, celebrated his own murderous feat (Gen. 4:23). However, in our current chapter we have recorded the first war in the world. We are given significant details regarding the causes and participants in this regional if not world war. We also learn how worldly Lot was wounded in this war. Lot was unsuspecting and unprepared for this clash of the gathered forces of sinful men. His greatest vulnerability was his self-caused blindness due to his material greed. We do well to learn from Lot how not to lay up and focus upon earthly treasures.

Thursday, November 25th - Genesis 14: 1-3

The contestants in this war were confederations of peoples. There was the Shinarite alliance, comprised of four kings and their armies. Shinar is mentioned in Gen. 10:8-10 wherein we learn that the rapacious Nimrod was the founder of that kingdom and that it contained Babel. From such godless roots we should expect evil and destructive fruit. The opposing confederation was Canaanite and was composed of five kings and their armies. Leading that confederation was the king of Sodom, whose men Scripture describes as being exceedingly wicked. Amidst the maelstrom of these powerful sinners dwelt Lot, whose riches were woefully inadequate to protect him from their advances. Evil forces surrounding believers are ancient and overwhelmingly powerful against all but the full armor of God diligently applied by the saints every day, especially in the evil day.

Friday, November 26th - Genesis 14: 1-3

The Canaanite confederation held great advantages in this war. They were numerically superior, and they fought on their home turf as v.3 makes clear, the valley of Siddim being in the region of Sodom and Gomorrah. However, as we shall see, natural advantages do not determine the outcome of conflict. For all of the sinful rapaciousness of the Shinarite alliance, the Canaanites were worse sinners against the Lord (Gen. 13:13). Where a man or nation stands in relation to the Lord determines whether they shall be conquerors or conquered.

Saturday, November 27th – Genesis 14: 1-3

In chapter 13 we learned about the conflict between Abram and Lot, and how, by the gracious initiative of Abram, peace was preserved between these men who were brothers. In great contrast, we find in the opening verses of this 14th chapter how unrighteous men settle their disputes. They fight each other until one, by might, if not by right, prevails. All of the participants in this war were brethren, being descended from

Shem, Ham, or Japheth—Noah’s sons. Scholars reckon that this war took place less than 400 years after the flood. Shem, at least, who died 500 years after the flood (Gen. 11:10,11), lived to see his descendants embroiled in massive mortal conflict. The grace of the Lord alone makes men to be at peace with God and at peace with their fellow man. Grace prompts a man to prefer in honor his brother, as Abram did with Lot. Sin makes men grasping, rather than giving, and prompts men to advance themselves at the expense of their brothers, even at the expense of their lives.

Sunday, November 28th - Genesis 14: 4-6

In these verses we are informed of the cause of the war. First, Chedorlaomer seized power and became by might rather than by right an overlord, imposing his rule over his brethren. To his thuggish oppression, the Canaanites submitted for 12 years. Then the Canaanites rebelled in the 13th year, and Chedorlaomer responded by force of arms in the 14th year. In short, sinful imperial imposition on the one hand and sinful rebellion, after a period of agreed submission, on the other hand, caused this war. The root cause, however, was the same for both parties. They were all sinners against the Lord, and that rebellion would invariably turn them against one another. Sin contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

Monday, November 29th - Genesis 14: 4-6

Although the Canaanites had numerical superiority and home field advantage in this war, they were not only defeated, but were routed by the Shinarites. Indeed, we learn in v.10 of this chapter how the Canaanites’ own land turned against them, the tar pits swallowing the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. Even apparent advantages turn against those who wickedly sin against the Lord. For those who faithfully serve the Lord, all things are orchestrated by their heavenly Father for their good (Rom. 8:28). For those who sin against the Lord, all things rise up in opposition against them, just as they have rebelled against the King of heaven, against whom no wicked counsel or campaign can prevail (Ps. 2:1-6; Prov. 21:30).

Tuesday November 30th - Genesis 14: 5-10

These verses depict the rout suffered by the Canaanites at the hands of the Shinarites. Chedorlaomer, the leader of the Shinarites, easily rolled over the Zuzim as well as the Rephaim and the Emim, who were giants, as we learn from Dt. 2:10,11; 3:11. The Shinarites conquered the Amalekites in the hill country as easily as they defeated the kings of Canaan in the valley of Siddim. It should be clear to us that the hand of the Lord wielded the Shinarite forces as instruments of His just judgment against the Canaanites who so brazenly sinned against Him. When an almighty hand is against men, nothing can effectively serve for them; when the hand of the Lord is for us, nothing can prevail against us (Rom. 8:31ff).

Wednesday, December 1st - Genesis 14: 11

The Canaanites' rebellion against the over lordship of the Shinarites cost them not only in terms of military defeat, but also in terms of civilian suffering. At least two of the Canaanite cities were stripped of all goods and food. When sinful men resort to battling each other, they show no mercy to their opponents. How radically different it is with the merciful Son of God, who gave His body as food, His blood as drink, His life for the salvation of His people. And how different it is also with the Lord's people, who are directed and enabled by Him to be lovingly merciful, even to their enemies.

Thursday, December 2nd - Genesis 14: 12

This verse shows how cursed were those riches that Lot had carnally regarded as blessings. Not only do Lot's treasures attract the attention of the conquering Shinarites, so that the victors carried them off as spoils of their war, but Lot himself is captured in the bargain, perhaps because the greedy and merciless Shinarites reckoned that Lot had rich relatives who would pay ransom to have him returned. Had Lot devoted himself to the cultivation of spiritual graces rather than to the accumulation of worldly wealth, he would certainly have been spared this captivity. Our Lord tells us that there are troubles for all those who lay up treasure in this life (Mt. 6:19).

Friday, December 3rd – Genesis 14: 12

Not only did Lot's treasures make him a tempting target to the conquering hordes of Chedorlaomer, but the place Lot had chosen to live was especially marked by the Shinarites for destruction. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah led the rebellious confederation against Chedorlaomer. Sodom lay within the seemingly choice territory Lot had taken from Abram. In Gen. 13:12, we were told that Lot lived *near* Sodom. In today's verse, we learn that Lot had moved *into* Sodom. A man choosing proximity to the wicked always suffers trouble. The first Psalm explicitly tells the righteous that their blessing is found apart from the wicked (Ps. 1:1). It would have been better for Lot had he settled his strife with his uncle and remained close to him at whatever material cost, instead of moving from Abram into Sodom in order to retain his earthly fortune.

Saturday, December 4th – Genesis 14: 12

Lot had made an idol of his possessions. Their preservation and further accumulation meant more to him than did close fellowship with his gracious and godly uncle. Lot sought security in Sodom, and in that city of godless men living without the restraints of the law of the Lord, he no doubt reckoned that he had found a promising environment in which to expand his wealth. However, he found no security in Sodom. His chosen separation from Abram resulted in his suffering a forced march into a miserable captivity, and all of his possessions were taken from him. Those possessions had occasioned strife with Abram, and because Lot would not give them up for the sake of preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace with his godly uncle, Lot suffered war amidst the ungodly and had his possessions and his freedom taken from him. Our insufficient separation from the wicked makes us sharers in their judgments.

Sunday, December 5th – Genesis 14: 13, 14

Lot had separated himself from Abram, but when Lot was taken as captive by the Shinarites, the father of the faithful would not allow his nephew to be separated from him in that way. Thus, at cost and inconvenience to himself and hazarding his own life, Abram sets off to rescue Lot. Once again, the uncle is prompted by divine grace to take the initiative for the blessing of his nephew. The faithless acts of Lot in his separating himself from Abram and in his moving into Sodom, along with the bitter consequences that followed, are things written as examples to us that we might not sin. However, the faithful action of Abram in his rescuing of Lot teaches us that if we do sin, we have a rescuing Advocate of whom Abram is a type and shadow (1 Jn. 2:1).

Monday, December 6th - Genesis 14: 13

Where Lot had chosen to dwell, war raged. Where Abram was humbly contented to dwell, there was peace and security. There Abram attracted not enemies but allies to himself, namely, Mamre the Amorite, and his brothers, Eshcol and Aner. The greedy Lot had no friends, no allies, no helpers in Sodom, only wicked men who fearfully fled when enemies threatened them. When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes his neighbors and even his enemies to be at peace with him (Prov. 16:7).

Tuesday, December 7th - Genesis 14: 13, 14

Into the peace and security of Abram's situation came a man, probably from Sodom, who had survived the Shinarite attacks. The fugitive is said to have reported to *Abram the Hebrew*. This is the first mention in the Bible of the designation, *Hebrew*. It was probably derived from the name of Eber, from whom Abram descended (Gen. 11:16,26). The fugitive told Abram about Lot's capture, and whether the fugitive did so motivated by courtesy, commiseration, or a cry for help, Abram did not hesitate to hear and act upon the report. Abram's love for Lot, whom he regarded as a younger brother, if not as a son, prompted him to hear this news not as a curious spectator, nor as a distant and safely disinterested party, but as a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Abram would therefore intervene in Lot's troubles. Similarly, we have such a Friend in our Redeemer.

Wednesday, December 8th - Genesis 14: 14

The decisive action that Abram took to rescue Lot resulted not from soft sentimentality but rather from a strong love and a vibrant faith in his Lord, who could enable the patriarch to defeat his enemies (v.20). Abram's faith was a practical faith that prompted and empowered him to live so as to inspire amongst those of his house confidence in and commitment to him and his cause. Such faith yielded the practical fruit of helping resources for Abram in the evil day. When he set out to rescue Lot from enemies who were as yet undefeated, 318 men joined him in the venture without hesitation. If we led the way into a hazardous venture for the Lord, how many would follow us?

Thursday, December 9th - Genesis 14: 14, 15

Three hundred and eighteen men did not form a large force. Abram led this small unit in pursuit of the Shinarites as far as Dan, a distance of more than 100 miles over challenging terrain. Abram's men not only covered the ground, but by their swiftness they closed the distance separating themselves from the Shinarites. They would have been weary when they overtook their foes. Even so, they audaciously divided their small force in face of a larger enemy, and fought at night, with confidence in their God, to whom light and darkness are alike (Ps. 139:12). Here is a wonderful example of the righteous being as bold as a lion (Prov. 28:1). Such holy boldness prevailed, as Abram's men not only defeated the Shinarites, but routed and pursued them out of Canaan and into Syria. Faithful soldiers of the Lord are not just victors, but super-conquerors (Rom. 8:37).

Friday, December 10th – Genesis 14: 14, 15

The cost of Abram's loving and faithful action was great. The foe was a great, victorious, and greatly enriched force. In the fight, Abram's men were tired, divided, and facing greatly superior numbers. Yet, Abram and his men did not hesitate. They had no negotiations with their enemy, nor did they indulge in the impotent cursing of them, or in rash boasting of their own prowess. Instead, they struck with swift and devastating force, and succeeded in destroying their enemies and delivering Lot. Our Lord can and does deliver by few as easily as by many, and if more of us believed that and acted accordingly, there would be more exploits accomplished by us for His glory.

Saturday, December 11th - Genesis 14: 14, 15

Abram won his victory by faith in his God. This does not mean that the patriarch took a blind and presumptuous leap into a battle for Lot's deliverance. Abram's faith prompted him to make practical preparation. He was a disciplined man, and he instilled discipline in the men of his house. Unlike Lot, whose fascination with his fortune blinded him to the dangers around him, Abram realistically anticipated and prepared for the worst. He trained the men of his house for war and he forged alliances with his neighbors. Faith effectively uses means, as Matthew Henry remarks: *Those who depend on God's help...ought to make use of man's help, as Providence offers it, else they tempt God.* (Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol. 1, p. 96).

Sunday, December 12th - Genesis 14: 15

When Abram divided his forces, he was reckoning upon three factors: the complacency of his foes; the element of surprise; and the superior quality, if inferior quantity, of his own men. The faithful ever rightly consider quality to be vastly more precious and practical than quantity in any given matter. That is so because ultimately our salvation depends neither upon hosts of men nor legions of angels, but upon the work of the one God/Man.

Monday, December 13th - Genesis 14: 15, 16

The fruit of Abram's faith and love is detailed in these verses. His enemies were defeated and driven from the land God had given to him. He rescued all of the spoil, and all of the captives, including Lot and all of his possessions. The faithful are holy fighters; the righteous are effective rescuers. But the source of Abram's faith and righteousness is our divine Redeemer, who has pursued us and released us from the dominion of our sins, restoring to us all that we had forfeited by our sin, and showering upon us every spiritual blessing.

Tuesday, December 14th - Genesis 14: 17, 18

Abram performed courageous, admirable service when he rescued Lot. We are not left to wonder what the source was of Abram's brave determination and successful campaign. It was not the lure of enrichment by the spoils of war, nor was it Abram's natural ties to Lot. The source of Abram's endeavor was his grateful faith in the Lord. The goal of his efforts was the glory of God. The source and the goal are revealed to us through Abram's response to the two kings that came to meet him after his victory. The king of Sodom Abram dismissed, while he devoted himself to the king of Salem, who was a priest of the Lord. No man can serve two sovereigns. To which king do we devote ourselves?

Wednesday, December 15th - Genesis 14: 17, 18

The king of Sodom was a replacement monarch for the one that had fallen in battle (v.10). He represented a defeated, impoverished people over whom death had prevailed. The root of his misery and of the miseries of his people was their sin (Gen. 13:13). The valley in which he met Abram was called Shaveh, or the valley of the king. The name, Shaveh, means near Salem, and thus it was not the dignity of Sodom's king that accounted for the name of this place of meeting. The king of Salem also came to the place named for its connection with his domain. Scripture gives us the name of Salem's king, and it is one of the most significant names in the Word and in the world. Between these two kings the contrast could not be starker, and it points to another and greater contrast, namely the infinite one between King Jesus and any other principality or power.

Thursday, December 16th - Genesis 14: 18-20

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews has much to say about Melchizedek. From what that inspired writer draws out of this brief passage, we may well conclude that there are no three verses in the Old Testament more significant than these. This king of Salem foreshadows Christ's Person and work more clearly than any other character in Scripture. First, the way he is introduced to us by Scripture is significant. He appears without genealogy, as though he were an eternal being (Heb. 7:3). Therefore, he typifies the eternal Son of God as well as the eternally valid work He accomplished in His atoning sacrifice for the sins of His people. Our deliverance has come to us not from a

temporal, earthly king, but from the heavenly King of kings. Let us then, as did Abram, gratefully attribute all of our victories, all of our liberty, and all of our security to Him.

Friday, December 17th - Genesis 14: 18-20

The name, Melchizedek, is a compound of two Hebrew words, *king* and *righteousness*. Accordingly, the writer of Hebrews designates him the king of righteousness (Heb. 7:2). He was a sovereign, the strong basis of whose rule was righteousness in the sight of God, not the kingdom weakening wickedness that prevailed in the king of Sodom's domain. This king, who blessed Abram and all of his faithful children, rules by righteousness, not by personal, capricious, and sinful passion. All who devote themselves to the King of righteousness, whom Melchizedek typifies, will be secure and happily satisfied in time and eternity.

Saturday, December 18th - Genesis 14: 18-20

The realm over which Melchizedek ruled was Salem. That name means *peace* (Heb. 7:2). Where righteousness prevails, peace flourishes. In Christ, righteous peace has been securely made. By His perfect righteousness graciously imputed to us, we have peace with God, peace with our fellow man, and we are at peace with who we are in Christ. Those under the rule of Sodom's king knew no peace, but only warfare, defeat, captivity, and death.

Sunday, December 19th - Genesis 14: 18-20

Melchizedek was not only a king whose righteous reign resulted in peaceful and productive security for his people, he was also a priest of the Lord, the God of Abram. The combination of these two offices in this man indicates to us that peace with God comes through priestly sacrifice, and that righteousness is provided for sinful man through a substitutionary atonement. As king, he was sovereign over his people; as priest, he served for their sanctification before God. Our Lord Jesus perfectly fulfilled both of these offices, and the office of prophet as well. There could be no need we have in any area of our lives wherein He, who is the one thing necessary, would lack willingness and ability abundantly to supply.

Monday, December 20th - Genesis 14: 18-20

Melchizedek came to Abram bearing gifts of food and blessing. Regarding the bread and wine he gave to Abram, it would be blind for us not to perceive in these bloodless elements a prefigurement of the Lord's Supper, to which the Old Testament sacrifices, especially Passover, pointed. Certainly, Melchizedek offered to Abram bread as nourishment and wine as a refreshing stimulant of joy. If the person of Melchizedek so significantly portrays Christ, so, too, do his gifts. It is by the giving of Christ's body and blood—His incarnation and atoning death—that sinful man is clothed in righteousness, nourished and refreshed in his new life, and has peace with God. All of this, Abram by

faith rightly perceived in the person and gifts of Melchizedek, who served to point the father of the faithful to Christ.

Tuesday, December 21st - Genesis 14: 18-20

The blessing pronounced by Melchizedek has two dimensions. First, he blessed Abram by acknowledging and strengthening the union Abram had with the Lord of heaven and earth. Melchizedek declares Abram to be a treasured possession of God Most High. Then, Melchizedek blessed the Lord, who is the source of all blessing, specifically of the practical blessing of Abram's being made more than a conqueror over his enemies. Abram's blessing came to him from the highest source. It was none other than God's blessing that was by His priest conveyed to Abram, and that priest conveyed the grateful blessing of Abram to God, who blesses His people with every blessing on earth and in heaven. The wonderful thing about our earthly blessings is that they are but faint tokens of the limitless and glorious blessings we have in Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3).

Wednesday, December 22nd - Genesis 14: 18-20

Abram responds to the blessing he received by giving a tenth of all he had, devoting it to God through His priest, Melchizedek. In this way, Abram blesses the God and Giver of the manifold blessing he had received. The blessings of God flowed from His free and sovereign grace; the blessing Abram gave to God issued from his heart, made grateful by his reception of divine grace. Abram's giving of the tithe hereby became a sure guide to the people of God in all subsequent ages as to how they should honor the Lord out of their material substance. Indeed, our failure so to honor the Lord indicates our ingratitude to God, our faithless mistrust of Him, as well as our sinfully robbing Him (Mal. 3:8-12).

Thursday, December 23rd - Genesis 14: 21-24

The king of Sodom typifies worldly rulers. His was a wicked rule over a wicked people. War, defeat, death, deprivation, and captivity issue from wicked rulers. Nor did Sodom's king come out to bless and give to Abram as did Melchizedek, the king of Salem. Sodom's king wanted the people while he was content to give Abram the spoils. But people and possessions were all already Abram's as the spoils of his victory. So the king of Sodom really came out to take from Abram. Yet, Abram refused to keep anything that had belonged to Sodom, lest he find himself possessing things that had been generated by the wickedness of the Sodomites. Therefore, Abram refused to compromise the true riches he had in the Lord. He sought not tainted trinkets from a corrupted and crushed earthly king, but rather the immeasurable treasures that only the King of heaven and earth had graciously showered upon him. Abram had confirmed his holy determination by swearing to God that he would refuse to be, or even appear to be, enriched by Sodom's king. This oath, as we learn in v.24, Abram considerably did not make binding upon his Amorite allies. What others might have, he denied himself. Thus, the father of the faithful demonstrates that he had his affections set in heaven and

upon heaven's King, who had blessed him and would bless him with more than he could ask or think. So may our focus and affections be set upon our King of grace and glory (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Col. 3:1-4).

Friday, December 24th - Genesis 15: 1

The Lord is the vanguard and the rearguard of His people. Abram had gone to Lot's rescue confident that the Lord would go before him and enable him to prevail over his enemies (Gen. 14:20). Now, after the battle and victory, the Lord speaks consoling words to him. Our Lord surrounds His servants with His enabling and comforting presence and promises. His blessings never end; one blessing simply lays the foundation for others that are sure to be provided by His gracious hand.

Saturday, December 25th - Genesis 15: 1

This verse reveals much to us about Abram in particular and the faithful in every age in general. It also reveals much to us about the tender consideration and gracious ministrations of our Lord. The verse begins by telling us that the divine revelation came to Abram *after these things*. The Lord's promise came to the father of the faithful after his faithful, fearless, and successful fighting for Lot's rescue. It came after Abram's devotion to the Lord through his encounter with Melchizedek. Those who walk by faith, being not only hearers of the Word of God but effectual doers of it, should expect to perceive more, not less, communication from the Lord in His Word after their trusting and obedient service.

Sunday, December 26th - Genesis 15: 1

After Abram's manifold trust in and obedience to the Lord, the Word of the Lord came to him. We are told that the divine Word was declared in a vision. The combination of word and vision alerts us to the fact that this was a most strong and clear revelation to Abram. Regarding the content of this communication, the Lord begins by commanding His servant to stop fearing. Why should Abram, who fearlessly walked by faith to this point, now give in to fear? After great spiritual victories, come powerful temptations to afflict the servants of the Lord, who have been wearied in their faithful exertions. Elijah, for example, caved in to fear after his spectacular victory on Mt. Carmel, and having demolished 450 prophets of Baal, that prophet of the Lord fearfully fled from the irate threats of one woman, Jezebel (1 Ki. 18:19-19:10). Our Heavenly Father knows us and our situations and needs better than we do ourselves. He is mindful that we are but dust (Ps. 103:14), and that the devil cunningly seeks to exploit the weaknesses of our fragile frames. How vital and timely are the consolations of our Lord!

Monday, December 27th – Genesis 15: 1

Abram suffered from a two-fold fear in the aftermath of his victory over Chedorlaomer's forces. In the first instance, he was afflicted with a general and

immediate fear. Perhaps he was tempted to consider his personal vulnerability and accordingly was anxious over whether Chedorlaomer would launch a counter-attack against him. He may also have feared that his Amorite allies would come to resent his having called upon them for help. To counter these types of fear, God presented Himself to Abram as a shield. Our Lord is our sovereign Protector. Like a shield, He can be placed by our faith between our natural vulnerabilities and the threats against us—whether imagined or real. No enemies, great or small few or many, can penetrate the loving, omnipotent hold our Lord has upon us (Jn. 10:29).

Tuesday, December 28th - Genesis 15: 1

The more specific and long-term worry of Abram pertained to his reward. The father of the faithful had previously refused the spoils of war. He had denied himself so that he might depend utterly upon his God. In this dependence, Abram would not be disappointed, although he was no doubt tempted to anticipate disappointment, for the Lord knows those who look to Him in faith and honor Him by their trusting obedience. Therefore, the Lord declares to Abram literally that his reward would increase greatly. The great and glorious God of heaven and earth can and will reward His people as no earthly source ever could do.

Wednesday, December 29th - Genesis 15: 2, 3

In these verses, Abram articulates a fear that grows out of the great and precious divine promises given in v.1. The aged patriarch issues a protest from a weary and weakened faith, wherein he acknowledges that he could not conceive of any reward that would compensate for his childlessness. Whatever his reward, he would but briefly enjoy it and then have no prospect of passing it on to his son. Yet, simply because a promise is inconceivable to finite and fallible man does not mean it is vain or inadequate. The King of heaven and earth can and will swallow up all of our faults, failures, deprivations, and miseries in the infinite supply of His glorious giving (Rom. 8:18).

Thursday December 30th - Genesis 15: 2, 3

Abram's faith here weakens so that he leans, instead, upon his own erroneous understanding. He was without a son. Hence, his heir would be one of his servants. Therefore, the promised reward was clouded with this embittering prospect. Besides Abram's complaint showing his ingratitude, it reveals his failure to honor the Lord by his refusing to depend upon His omnipotence. In fact, Abram charges God with failing him when he says, *Thou hast given me no offspring*. Human logic judges all things by its own frail standard, and will ever find fault with the promises of God, rather than humbly and gratefully trust in and wait upon Him. We are not to depend on such a critical and complaining faculty (Pr. 3:5,6).

Friday December 31st - Genesis 15: 4

The grace of the Lord is in this verse marvelously demonstrated. By Abram's reversion from the exercise of his faith to a dependence upon his own reasoning, he offered manifold insults to the Lord. Abram shows contempt for the gift of faith itself, and, from human reasoning that ever regards fears above the faithfulness of God, he shows ingratitude to God and, accordingly, dishonors the King of glory. Yet, the Lord does not condemn His complaining servant, but graciously rejuvenates his sagging faith. Truly, where our sin increases, God's grace abounds all the more (Rom. 5:20).

Saturday, January 1st - Genesis 15: 4

The Lord counters Abram's misapprehensions by the truth of His Word. First, the Lord negates the patriarch's low conceptions. Emphatically the Lord declares, *No!* to Abram's anticipation of a servant being his heir (the Hebrew negating particle, *al{i*, being positioned as the first word in the Lord's reply). Then, positively, God raises the inadequate hopes of Abram by promising him a son who would issue from his own body, though that body was fast becoming, as Paul bluntly puts it, as good as dead (Rom. 4:19). If God has power and is willing to bring life out of such death, can anything be impossible to Him? We all suffer, not from extravagant hope in our God, but from inadequate hope in Him.

Sunday, January 2nd - Genesis 15: 4, 5

Human reasoning fails us because it cannot comprehend beyond its own measure. Such failure occurs amidst abundant evidence that surrounds us and cries to us of the infinite wisdom, love, and power of God (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-23). Abram could not credit, by human reasoning, the amazing promise of the Lord. Therefore, the Lord directs Abram's attention to His heavenly handiwork, wherein countless stellar objects that had been made by the Word of God's power were shining and being held in their celestial courses. The hand that created from nothing such astronomical bodies in countless quantity could surely bring from the withering frame of Abram a son. Yet, God promised Abram countless such descendants. The Lord our God can and will do ever above what we ask or think.

Monday, January 3rd – Genesis 15: 5, 6

The Lord's directing Abram to consider the work of the heavenly vault in the light of the promise of the divine Word raised Abram far above reason's height. Abram believed. He did not only believe that God had made the stars and that He could provide the son and descendants He had promised. Abram believed *in the Lord*. By this first explicit reference in the Bible to faith, we are to understand that Abram rose to consider, to trust in, and to rely upon the Lord as the one good thing necessary, who's Word was as good as His work. Abram's belief was not mere mental assent, but entire commitment to the One who was the source and goal of his being, and who, with holy, gracious, and loving purpose, infallible wisdom, and almighty power, would more than make good His promise (Rom. 4:16-21).

Tuesday, January 4th – Genesis 15: 5, 6

The object of Abram's faith was the Lord; the reward of his faith was righteousness. By Abram's belief in and reliance upon the Lord, he was reckoned to be righteous. By faith, Abram reckoned God to be more than as good as His Word. Because of his exercise of that faith, God reckoned Abram to be not the sinner that he actually was, but better than he was, namely, as having the perfect righteousness of God's Son imputed to him. By faith, Abram thought right thoughts about his God, and did right when he honored God by trusting Him. By faith, Abram had a right to all of the great and precious promises of the Lord, and to every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places was his (Eph. 1:3). The transforming and enriching power of saving faith cannot be exaggerated.

Wednesday, January 5th – Genesis 15: 6

God gave Abram faith when He called him from his homeland in Ur (Heb. 11:8). God exercised Abram's faith through the famine in Canaan (Gen. 12:10ff), through the strife with Lot, and through Abram's rescue of Lot. That exercise led at some points to exhaustion of Abram's faith, but God graciously rejuvenated that faith and rewarded its increasingly pure and potent exercise. We, too, have a faith that, by God's ordaining, is in process of exercise and refinement (1 Pet. 1:3-9).

Thursday, January 6th - Genesis 15: 7

In vv.1-6 of this chapter, God promised Abram divine protection and reward. The Lord also promised Abram a son, born from his own body, and countless spiritual descendants. This promise of people issuing from Abram is followed by a divine promise of property that the Lord would confer upon Abram. The warrant Abram had to believe this promise is as great as the warrant he had to believe in the Lord for a son, namely, the holy character and almighty power of the God who made to Abram these great and precious promises. This same God has made many such promises to all who have faith in Christ (2 Pet. 1:4).

Friday, January 7th - Genesis 15: 7

Abram knew prior to this point that the promises were given to him by the Lord. Yet, at this point, the Lord seals His promises by declaring His person and work to the patriarch. It is by His covenant name, *the Lord* (hw"©hy>), that God here manifests Himself to Abram. It is the divine designation of supreme holiness, authority, power, and redeeming love. Then the Lord reminds Abram that He had sovereignly and graciously been superintending His life, and would continue to do so, thus giving the patriarch a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11). Negatively, the Lord not only called Abram from his natural, sinful condition in Ur, but graciously brought him out of Ur, having given Abram the faith by which he believed the Lord and obeyed the divine calling. Positively, the Lord called Abram to Canaan to give him the land as a pledge and token of his eternal life in glory. As the calling and conferring of descendants and the land upon Abram were

from God, the patriarch was to understand that nothing could frustrate the gracious and giving purpose of the Lord, either for Abram or for his innumerable descendants, including us.

Saturday, January 8th - Genesis 15: 8

We may profit from a comparison of Abram's question in v.2 with his question in this verse. The question in v.2 is tainted with incredulity. Abram's weakened faith prompts him to limit to the measure of his own reasoning the work the Lord could perform. The question in v.8, however, issues from a stronger, purer faith. Here Abram is not questioning the Lord's ability to perform what He promises, but rather the patriarch seeks assurance to believe what he admits God can and will do. In effect, Abram declares: *I believe, help my unbelief* (Mk. 9:24). As John Calvin well remarks: *...the pious, who feel the impediments in their flesh, endeavor to remove them, lest they should obstruct the way of God's Word.* (*Commentary Upon Genesis*, vol.1, p.411). Such requests for assurance our God always grants.

Sunday, January 9th - Genesis 15: 9-11

The way that the Lord gave assurance to Abram may seem strange to us. Yet, we note clearly enough the patient condescension of the Lord when He gives specific directions to His questioning servant that are calculated to strengthen his assurance in the divine promise. But what do these animals and their slaughter signify? How could they assure Abram that God would give the land to him and to his descendants? In answer to these questions we are instructed by the example of Abram's obedience. Though the divine *design* in this slaughter of the animals was initially hidden from Abram, the divine *direction* for Abram to gather and kill them was explicit. Abram rightly reckons that the design would in due course become apparent as he obediently carried out the directions. Thus it was with Abram as it was with the mother of Jesus at the Cana wedding when Mary instructed the servants to do whatever her Son said (Jn. 2:5). The design of God's blessing becomes apparent only to those who yield to the clear directions of His Word.

Monday, January 10th – Genesis 15: 9-11

The animals and their ages are herein specified by God. The animals represented what would, according to the ceremonial law later given, be clean animals. Their age of three years seems to be connected with the divine disclosure in v.16 that for three generations the descendants of Abram would dwell as strangers in a foreign land. Accordingly, we may understand the clean animals to represent Abram's descendants, made clean by their justifying faith. The death and division of the animals' bodies represent their naturally dead and torn state. The birds of prey signify their foes—seen and unseen—who would be driven away by the faith and obedience of Abram that would be the heritage of his true descendants. The whole drama of Israel's sojourn in and exodus from Egypt, and their return to Canaan is herein symbolically enacted. We have, even in the more obscure ordinances of God, greater cause for assurance than we know.

Tuesday, January 11th - Genesis 15: 9-13

To the action of gathering and killing the animals prescribed by God, the Word of the Lord comes to Abram, interpreting the action of the slaughter. As Abram sat guarding the severed bodies of the animals, darkness gathered and the vigilance of the patriarch yielded to sleep. In that state in imitative death, a terrifying darkness gripped his soul. This experience of a sort of living death, amidst the animal carcasses that manifested actual death, is explained by the Word of God in v.13. Abram's descendants would experience a living death during their slavery in Egypt. The period of that death was to be of long duration, signifying an apparently eternal death, which, of course, all sinners deserve. Thus, the Word of the Lord makes clear that the slaughter of the clean animals and the terrifying sleep of Abram represent what, apart from redeeming divine grace, the patriarch and his descendants deserved, and, to some degree, would experience. Such a realization would demolish any carnal assurance Abram may have been entertaining. The good news of the Lord always rightly begins with the bad news of man's sin and guilt and death.

Wednesday, January 12th - Genesis 15: 12-14

The death Abram's descendants would undergo is detailed in the slaughtered animals, in the sleeping terror of Abram, and by the interpretative Word of God. Yet, in v.14, the resurrection they would experience is announced. The Lord would judge the instruments of their oppressive, living death, which, of course, He did through the plagues wrought upon the Egyptians through Moses. The divine judgment falling upon the Egyptians, however, would not destroy, but rather would liberate the children of Abram. Moreover, the Israelites would depart from Egypt enriched by their erstwhile oppressors (Ex. 12:35,36). Therefore, the Word of the Lord declares that the death of Abram's descendants would not be eternal, but would issue in redemption and resurrection. The God who could and would bring life from such death, could certainly give Abram the land that would serve to signify the eternal life and glory of heaven.

Thursday, January 13th - Genesis 15: 15, 16

In these verses, the Lord makes clear to Abram that he would not personally experience the living death that his descendants would undergo in Egypt, though he would personally experience actual death of which the Egyptian bondage was but a type. Abram's descendants would experience the resurrection of their exodus from slavery in Egypt. They would do so after several centuries of political captivity, so that the power and purpose of God to act, after countless centuries, resurrecting His people whose souls had been separated from their bodies by death, would give clear assurance to all who would, like Abram, live by and die in faith in the Lord.

Friday, January 14th - Genesis 15: 16

The Lord would permit His people to experience a long, living death in Egypt, then He would bring them forth into a new life in the land being promised to Abram and his

seed. God ordained that His people experience a prolonged political and social death, then a miraculous redemption and exodus, so that His people would learn to have assurance in and gratitude for the resurrecting power of their God, by which they would be saved from eternal death and brought into the eternal life and glory of the Lord's kingdom. At the same time, the Lord ordained Israel's prolonged period of slavery in Egypt because the sins of the indigenous people of Canaan had not reached the full measure that would call for the temporal judgment of God upon them. Thus, God reveals to Abram His wise and holy purpose to let the wheat and tares grow together until the day of divine judgment and separation.

Saturday, January 15th - Genesis 15: 16

While the wheat of God's field, namely, Abram's descendants, would languish for centuries in alienation, bondage, and misery in Egypt, the Amorites would enjoy life and freedom in Canaan. However, the wheat was ripening for a glorious and blessed harvest, while the tares were ripening for dispossession, destruction, and death. As it was then, so it is now (Mt. 13:24-30; 36-43). Therefore, we should not judge by current appearances pertaining to ourselves and to the wicked of the world, and we should never envy the apparent security of the unrighteous or despise our own seasons of death that inevitably lead to resurrection (Ps. 73).

Sunday, January 16th - Genesis 15: 17

This verse gives the reason behind the return of Abram's descendants to Canaan after their long enslavement in Egypt. Well might we wonder with Abram how anyone could make right for the people of God their suffering, enslavement, and death, their separation from the land and from life itself. The answer is that God would be in the midst of His suffering people. Prophetically Abram beheld in this vision the Lord, under the image of a smoking and flaming oven, passing between the cut pieces of the slaughtered animals. In ancient times, a covenant was said to be cut. The parties killed and divided an animal, then they passed between the pieces, signifying that if either broke the covenant, he should, like the dead animal, be put to death. In this instance, God only passes between the pieces because He unilaterally makes and keeps the covenant. This shadow covenant points to the substantial covenant fulfilled by the Son of God passing through the death deserved by His people.

Monday, January 17th - Genesis 15: 17

The Lord appears amidst the emblems of His slaughtered people as a smoking and flaming oven. Both smoke and fire represent the glory and majesty of God. It would be the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night by which God would manifest His leading and protecting presence with His people as they went from Egypt to Canaan. Fire and smoke enveloped Mt. Sinai when Moses received the Ten Commandments. The fire of God's zeal consumed the Egyptians who opposed God and His people, but, as the fire here does not consume the animal pieces, so it did not destroy, but saved the people of God,

Abram's descendants, amidst the darkest period of their history. God would pass through the midst of His oppressed and dying people to lead them to glorious life.

Tuesday, January 18th - Genesis 15: 18-21

The result of the covenant the Lord made with Abram would be that the people descended from the patriarch would have an expansive land and would triumph over all the evil people who would be inhabiting it without warrant from God. From the darkness and misery of death, the saints of God would emerge alive, enriched, possessors of a land given to them by God, and empowered to claim and live securely in that land. By the Lord's grace and power, Abram's descendants would be made more than conquerors.

Wednesday, January 19th - Genesis 15: 18-21

The promise, covenant, and assuring vision God gave to Abram may seem at this point as tiny as a mustard seed and as obscurely hidden as such a seed when it is planted. Yet the features of this covenant become more distinct, substantial, and glorious throughout redemptive history. Abram would have a son, Isaac, and a grandson, Jacob, who would go into Egypt with his sons and there become a great host to be led out of Egypt by Moses. Israel would conquer Canaan, but would fade as a kingdom until the coming of the Savior, the King of kings, through whose death believers have eternal life, inherit the earth, and reign with Christ forever in heavenly glory. All of this is true and real. We should not despise the day of small things, if the small things are the sure words of God.

Thursday, January 20th - Genesis 16: 1, 2

Nothing hampers the work of God like the sins of the saints. Abram, by his justifying faith in the Lord, was reckoned by God to be a saint. But Scripture makes clear that he was a sinner as well. His faith did not grow evenly, but in fits and starts, through successes and failures. In these verses we see little, if any, faith. What is set before us is a felt need and a false solution. The default reliance of the sinner is his own logic, which both Abram and Sarai employ to fulfill their need. But when the saint lapses from a walk by faith, disaster, not delight, ensues.

Friday, January 21st – Genesis 16: 1, 2

Sarai's felt need was her childlessness. Though the Lord had promised Abram a son (Gen. 15:4), Sarai points her husband to the preventing providence of God that ran counter to His promise. The solution to this problem was perceived to be at hand when Sarai determines to have a son through her Egyptian maid, Hagar. There was sound human logic apparent in this solution. Abram had been explicitly told by God that his son would come from his body, while nothing was said about Sarai's body. Human understanding and reasoning seem to make life more simple, easy, and efficient. However, the arm of flesh ever fails, and its hand only plants faithless seeds that will produce bitter fruit.

Saturday, January 22nd - Genesis 16: 1, 2

Sarai proposes a creative alternative to supply the need she and Abram had for a son. But faithless reckoning only creates counterfeit blessing that quickly shows its true, cursed nature. Sarai was theologically aware, rightly attributing her barrenness to the hand of God (*...the Lord has prevented me from bearing...*). Abram had been promised a son by God. Surely he had told his wife of this divine promise. What, then, were they to do with the apparent contradiction of the Lord's promise by His preventing providence? Faith would have prompted them to recognize that the Lord had wise, holy, and loving purposes in the delay of his giving them their son. Trust in the Lord works patience in us when the Lord delays giving us His good gifts. But Sarai and Abram are not prompted by faith. Rather, they try to find a door for the delivering of their son other than that of Sarai's closed womb, as if man's clever endeavors can force the hand of God. Human subtlety is a poor substitute for holy submission to the providence of the Lord.

Sunday, January 23rd - Genesis 16: 1, 2

Sin perverts all relationships. Though subtle human reasoning is clearly operative here, we judge the root of sinful reasoning by the fruit of these perverted relationships. Sarai exalts her slave to the status of Abram's wife, while Abram exalts the voice of his wife above the Word of his Lord. Such overdoing will prove to be their undoing. The righteousness that is by faith orders all things, especially human relationships, appropriately and blessedly. This is so because faith fixes on the Lord who is a God of order, not of chaos.