

## *Good News Daily*

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### **Sunday, January 23**

Genesis 13:2-18 *Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD.* (v.10a NIV)

How like Lot we all tend to be! It is the old adage “the grass is greener on the other side.” Lot looked up and saw lush green land and thought, “That’s for me.” The dream of being able to sit back and relax was going to become a reality to Lot. He knew that he would no longer have to wander from place to place to try to find green pastures for his flocks. The plain of the Jordan had everything Lot had always wanted. Truly this would make him happy. We see this supported in Genesis 19:1. Lot is not found with his flock but sitting at the gate. After all he was a man of means and had plenty of servants to tend to his business.

Of course, we know the end of the story. Lot lost it all with the destruction of Sodom. He barely escaped with his life. Looking at Lot’s “Uncle Abraham,” what a contrast. Abraham, the peacemaker, was willing to accept less than the best to keep peace with his kinsman. Abraham had a promise: “All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring, forever” (v.15). This was not the immediate “jackpot” that Lot’s portion appeared to be but the long-term reward.

We as believers do not always live in the immediate jackpot. Our promise is the longer “forever” of the eternal life.

Psalm 63; Galatians 2:1-10; Mark 7:31-37

***Include in your prayers:*** Our country; for wisdom and guidance for our leaders and the leaders of all nations; for our armed forces, especially those now in danger and any continuing to struggle, including Rory Fitch, Sarah Fitch, Gregory Campbell, Lieutenant Ryan Morie, Houston, General John Shepherd, Russell Clark, Peniel Reid, and their families; for our enemies; for peace, justice and reconciliation in all places where there is conflict, especially among the peoples of the Middle East; for Haiti and Bondeau; and for Todd and Patsy McGregor and their work with SAMS training missionaries.

### **Monday, January 24**

Hebrews 8:1-13 *“No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord.’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.”* (v.11)

Our readings today give us a glimpse into the future that belongs to us. The act of worship moves from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly one. From the sacrificial lamb to the Lamb of God.

In our Old Testament reading we see Abraham offering gifts to Melchizedek, king of Salem. In the beginning of this passage from Hebrews we are told that, in Jesus, we have a high priest: a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. We are also told that “there is a time coming” when the Law will be on everyone’s mind and heart.

We live in such a lawless society that it is difficult for us to imagine that all of those around us will know the Lord. How different our lives will be then! How different the way we will be able to walk around without fear! We will be able to rest in the total safety of the Lord. Not only to rest safely but to be of the same belief and mind as those around us. What a glorious day that will be!

Genesis 14:1-24; Psalms 41, 52; John 4:43-54

***Include in your prayers:*** Ricardo Acuña, Nadia Amerman and family, Joanna Aras, Karin Armbruster, Daryl Bacon, Kay Bailey, David and Jayne Baker, Liz Bardin, Todd Baron, Wally and Evelyne Bates, James Baur, Nicholas Beswick, Saxon Birdsong, Joe Bishop, Lance Block, Pete and Julie Bohnsack, Kelly Bonneau, Brad Brett and Linda Johnson-Brett, Abigail Browne, Barbara Buttner, Melanie Casey, Lenny Catalbiano, Gloria Chung, Linton Chung, Nico Clothier.

## **Tuesday, January 25**

John 5:1-18 *So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.* (v.16)

Can you imagine God sitting on His throne and just shaking His head at us and saying, “They just don’t get it”? Jesus came to give life and when he saw the man at the pool of Bethesda, his concern was more for the man’s heart than for his physical condition. Jesus asked the man if he in fact even wanted to be healed, knowing that some people are so in love with their sins and infirmities that the idea of being healed is totally alien to them. Healing would mean a complete turning around, a repentance. For this man it would mean a totally new life, to wake up each morning and do totally new things.

The Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day were more concerned for the Law than for the paralyzed man. Jesus’ concern was then and is now for the whole person. When he met up again with the man he had healed, Jesus warns him to stop sinning or something worse may happen. Jesus touches the root of the problem, the heart of the man.

When we meet people as a part of our daily journey, we need to look past what paralyzes them and be concerned with their heart need, with that deeper place that only Jesus’ love can reach and heal.

Genesis 15:1-11, 17-21; Psalm 45; Hebrews 9:1-14

***Include in your prayers:*** Martin Conlon, Robert Connell, Shirley Connell, Mark Connell, Ray Constable, Alan Costa, Sam Couillard, Cindy Croushore, Joe and Connie D’Alessandro, Ruth Dans, Pam DeFelice, Joseph Devan, Dave Downing, Marion Downing, Joan Dowrick, Lynn Duncan, Rachel Dwyer, George Dzama III, Nolan Eicher, Joan Engskow and family, Susan Feldman, Mary Fietze, Drew Fogg, Joe Follayttar, the French family, and John Fullager, Cassandra Fuller.

## **Wednesday, January 26**

Genesis 16:1-14 *“He will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers.”* (v.12)

This is the root, the beginning, of the Mideast conflict. It was born out of Sarai’s impatience. She could not wait for the Lord to fulfill His promise to Abram, so she forced an ungodly plan of her own and then complained about the results.

Although she drove Hagar away, Sarai drove her right into the arms of a compassionate God. Even though Hagar’s child was not the one to fulfill God’s promise to Abram, God blesses him because he is from Abram’s seed. He is Ishmael, “father of many.” Even before Ishmael was born, his future was set. He was truly born to be wild, his hand set against everyone. Today we are still seeing the fruit of that statement in the unrest among the Arab people, especially in their relationship with the sons of Isaac, their Hebrew brothers.

The same God who saw Hagar’s pain and suffering saw the pain and suffering in His children and sent His very own Son to remove the pain of guilt, jealousy, and sin that separates us from God’s love. In Jesus we can become “sons of Isaac” and receive the full promises of Abraham.

Psalm 119:49-72; Hebrews 9:15-28; John 5:19-29

***Include in your prayers:*** Charlie Gasperino, Bob and Kim Gorman, Jake Graybill, Janie Greene, Dennis and Janet Grote, Barbara Gustafson, Joe Hagerty, Leslie Hahn, Richard Halpern, Madeline Hanlon, Patty Hart, Hart family, Shirley Hazen, Pam Heatley, Janet Heithaus, Tom Henry, Janet Hullihen, Sally Honeyman, family of Alice Hopkinson, Mike and Alicia Howard and family, Mary Imle, Tindy Islip, Marj Johnson, Stephen Johnson, Jr. and Jennifer Corson, Kristian Joseph, Marie Kerwick and family, Allison Kieffer and family, Keith and Janet Kieffer, Susan Kelly, Roy Klein, Sarah Lawler, Jeff Lefevre, and Frank Lepore.

## **Thursday, January 27**

Psalm 50 *And the heavens proclaim his righteousness for God himself is judge.* (v.6)

For years this psalm has offered me comfort when I am in turmoil. It is a marvelous picture of the perfect nature of God. He speaks and summons the earth. No one can say “no” to God. He is perfect in beauty. We cannot even imagine a beauty that is absolutely perfect.

God will not be silent. When I want to speak out against the injustice and unfairness around me, I know there is one who will have the final say. He will judge everyone whether or not they want to believe that God is a judge.

Even the heavens proclaim His righteousness. The world view will not be able to shut this crowd up. Who can silence the heavenly host?

When I feel the world is swallowing me whole, I can take comfort in the fact that if the cattle on a thousand hills belong to God, how much more I belong to Him. I can call upon the Lord in my troubles and He will not only deliver me but also honor me.

Genesis 16:15—17:14; Hebrews 10:1-10; John 5:30-47

***Include in your prayers:*** Becky Mahoney’s family, Patricia Malloy, Elaine Mariggio, Priscilla Marshall, Steve McCue, Joey Mitchell, Bob Montheard, Judy Mozer, Ashley Munoz, Mindy Nash, Dawn Neher, Sammera & Dash Parker, Anthony, Olivia and Vincent Parrone, Peter Pawlikowski, Joe Pellegrini, Sal & Colleen Perrone, Chris Peters, Karen Phelan, Brook Pitman, Marcia Pollard, Pat Powell, Jim and Jerre Rannie, Debbie Rannie, Ana Reid, Kerry Robb.

## **Friday, January 28**

Hebrews 10:11-25 *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* (v.25)

We constantly hear people who say, “I do not need to go to church. I worship God in my own way at home.” The writer of Hebrews probably heard the same arguments because in the midst of this beautiful picture of the sacrifice Jesus made for us and, telling the Hebrew people to write these things on their hearts, he suddenly throws in not to give up meeting together.

There had obviously been some cases of “stay at home” believers, “as some are in the habit of doing.” Stay at home believers not only cannot encourage others who are fellow members of their community of faith, but they also cannot receive the encouragement that we all need. As we see believers getting discouraged in their journey of faith, it is our job to encourage them all the more as we see the day approaching. Give some encouragement today. Say a kind word, write a note, or simply lend a smile that shows you care.

Genesis 17:15-27; Psalms 40, 54; John 6:1-15

***Include in your prayers:*** Carlos Salmán, Danielle Salman, Jessica Sanchez, Maggie Sandin, Don Schofield, Paul and Lydia Schweizer, Arnie Selna, Cheryl Seyfert, Tammy Simpson, Amanda Smith, Brian Smith and family, Howard Smith, Kathryn Smith, Kimberley Smith, Melissa Smith, Philip Smith, Susan and Charlie Smith, Allison Spencer, Diane Spero, Audrey Sprague, Cliff Stehle, Rob Steiner, Leah and Kaala Taylor, Jane Thomas, Roger Thomas, Richard Timmerman, Phil Toren, Keith van Cleave, Harold Vandersea, Patricia Vreeland, Grace Wasko, Les Waton, Karen Weitz, George Whiteley, the Willcox family, Wendy Williams, Bob and Joetta Wright, Mirabelle Wrist, Peter Wrist, Ray Wrist, Ric Wrist, Ali Zymunt.

**Saturday, January 29**

Hebrews 10:26-39 *But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.* (v.39)

Here the Hebrews are given a glimpse of judgment and the hard time ahead. The writer tells them, and us, that now that we know the truth we have to live in that truth and act accordingly. No longer can we live according to the ways of the world and pretend that is okay. In fact, that would make us like enemies of God. This passage tells us that insulting the Spirit with wrong behavior is like treating the sacrificial death of Jesus as unholy.

We are told to remember the days when we stood our ground while being insulted and persecuted. God is calling His people, the Church, today to stand our ground, to publicly confess His word, His truth, and not to throw away our confidence. Let us stand together and not shrink back.

Genesis 18:1-16; Psalm 55; John 6:16-27

***Include in your prayers:*** Alec, Andy and Rita, Bonnie, Bunny, Chrissy, Clay, Dale Anne, Dave and Marion, Glenda, Jane, Jay, Kim, Karen and family, Laurette, Laurie, Leo and family, Lindy, Marilyn, Marty, Meg and family, Mika, Nancy and Stan, Noelle, Pat, Phil, Trish, Victoria and family.

*by Vicky Graham*

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