

### Reading Schedule for February 11-17, 2019

The first two chapters of Genesis are especially thrilling, as they outline the creation of the world. The primary affection of God in his creation is you and me . . . the people he created. However, things are going to get messy as people disobey God and go their own way. But there is an interesting sentence in Genesis 4:26 that reads, "At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord." Even when things seem hopeless, those who turn to the Lord will find hope. That will be true in the stories we read this week.

**February 11 – Genesis 3:** "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (v.15) There are several significant points in this chapter about the fall of man. Most of what you will read will be discouraging to you. However, the verse that I have highlighted does reflect hope. These words proclaim the ultimate defeat of the serpent, as his head is crushed. However, the offspring would be described as experiencing a bruised heel. Many people believe this is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He suffered pain and even death, but rose again to have victory over the devil and his hosts. Right away, our God is concerned about redeeming us. That is an amazing fact. This is a monumental chapter. I hope you spend plenty of time contemplating the implications of the fall of man, the promise of redemption, as well as the curse due to sin. What stands out to you? Why?

**February 12 – Genesis 4:** "Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah." (v.19) Lamech's story reveals to us that people often get worse instead of better. There is another killing and violence is on the rise. The influence of sin is affecting the majority, and they are growing indifferent to evil. However, there is the hope of people calling on the name of the Lord. With the birth of Seth, there is a renewal of God's faithful people. The Lord will raise up righteous people in the midst of the darkest circumstances. He will be faithful to sustain his message of hope though the hearts of people, even if they are the minority. How do you respond to this disappointing chapter of sin and murder?

**February 13 – Genesis 5:** "Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away." (v.24) This may not be the most inspiring day of reading because we're looking at the record of Adam's line. But tucked away in this list is the man, Enoch. We are not exactly sure what it means that God took him. We sometimes use that terminology when someone dies. But the word for "walked with God" conveys a close relationship with the living God. It is possible that through this special relationship God did deliver Enoch to heaven. We have a similar storyline with Elijah in 2 Kings 2:1-12. I am fascinated by the possibilities and inspired to be a man like Enoch, who walked with God. It reminds me of the words of the prophet Micah, who said, "Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8) How do you respond to this chapter?

**February 14 – Genesis 6:** "This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God." (v.9) Here is another man who gives us hope. He is

described as righteous and blameless. This means that Noah had a wholehearted love and obedience to God. For a lifetime he had walked step-by-step in faith as a living example to his generation. In Genesis 17:1, we will read about another man who walked with God blamelessly. His name is Abraham. The Lord shows his response to people who walk closely with Him. He is delighted to use them and promises to protect them. This was definitely true of Noah. How do you respond to our introduction to Noah?

**February 15 – Genesis 7:** "The Lord then said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation.'" (v.1) The history of the ark is fascinating. For the sceptics in our world, there is a sense of the impossibility concerning the ark and pairs of every animal. Some scholars have estimated that almost 45,000 animals could fit in the ark. I bet you didn't realize that fact. I also find the statement, "The Lord shut him in," as mind-stretching, but faith-building. Beyond the fascination of the ark and the animals, is the punishment on the earth for wickedness and sin. The timeframe, the amount of rain, the elimination of wickedness on the earth, and the beginning again reality, all are worth contemplating as we read about this amazing event that is meant to direct us toward the kind of life that Noah lived before God. How do you understand this event? What is your personal response?

**February 16 – Genesis 8:** "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it." (v.20) It is compelling to me that the very first thing that Noah does after emerging from the ark is to build God an altar. Undoubtedly, he is grateful to God for his divine deliverance. It is an amazing set of circumstances that Noah and his family were privileged to experience. Noah's sacrifice was pleasing to God because his heart was right. The clear message of the Hebrew text is that God will not send another flood. This first sacrifice would lead to the ultimate sacrifice of God's own Son, which is an interesting parallel. Mankind would be rescued through the ultimate sacrifice. What stands out to you in this chapter?

**February 17 – Genesis 9:** "When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent." (v.21) I wanted to avoid this verse, but I think it is important to recognize that people of faith are susceptible to sin. This great hero of faith was a poor example to his sons. The idea is that it might have rubbed off on Ham's life, showing a lack of respect for his father, and ultimately for God. This sets up the blessings and curses that Noah will share with his sons. He destines his younger son, Ham, to a life of slavery. On the other hand, Shem, who respected his father, would be blessed. These are complicated storylines, and I just want to acknowledge that the Bible does not withhold the messiness of our humanity, and the consequences of our sin. Even after the miraculous event of the flood, Noah is still susceptible to sin, and the ramifications can be passed on to those closest to him. How do you respond to this disappointing event?

**PRAYER: Pray for those in our body who are feeling hopeless and experiencing loss; may the Lord give them comfort and strength.**