

Watching Daily At My Gates

October 6 Read Genesis 41

One of the truths brought out in the life of Joseph is that of the providence of God. Think about his life in his father's house, his being sold into slavery, his stay in prison, and now his elevation to the second highest position in the kingdom. Then look at verse 57. We know how the story ends. It obviously God's hand in all of it. We can go to Lord's Day 10 of the Heidelberg Catechism to see this blessed truth defined. Do you see God's providence in your life? It is there, and in that providence God brings his people into the church. Sing Psalter 287.

October 7 Read Genesis 42

We may wonder why God chooses this way to reunite the brothers and Jacob with Joseph. We can speculate all we want, but the truth is it is God's sovereign will. That will, which we saw yesterday contains his providence, is his working out the salvation of all of his people. Sometimes we do not understand God's way, but as we see in the story of Joseph, God's will is right. We need not question God's ways for us; they will turn out for our good and his glory. Let us rest comfortably in that truth knowing that he will guide us in the right way in our lives. Sing Psalter 332.

October 8 Read Genesis 43

We do not know the spiritual character of Joseph's steward. The words of verse 23 could just be a recitation of what Joseph told him to say, or they could be the words of a man who had been converted by the actions and words of a Godly Joseph. Would we be able to live as Joseph did in a heathen land? He could have given up his faith, and reveled in his power in a powerful nation. He did not. He lived his faith. Do we live our faith in the midst of a wicked world? Sing Psalter 176.

October 9 Read Genesis 44

In the strange method of these chapters, God brings Jacob's sons to repentance. We do not know Joseph's motives in all of this, but we know that the sovereign God is in control, and he will bring his people to repentance when they stray. The brothers are brought face to face with their sins, and they repent as we find out in the next chapter. As we walk through this world, we, too, fall into sin. We, too, must be brought to repentance from those sins. Thanks be to God who has given to us Jesus Christ our Savior. In the way of God-ordained repentance, we can live a life of thankfulness to him. Sing Psalter 83.

October 10 Read Genesis 45

Notice Joseph's words of forgiveness in the first part of the chapter. Humanly Joseph could have punished his brothers very severely including sending them to their deaths. He forgives because he sees that God was behind their actions. We, too, must have this attitude toward our brothers in this life. We must forgive them when they sin against us. All things are in God's hands, as Joseph confessed. God has forgiven each of us great sins; we must also forgive those who sin against us. Sing Psalter 140.

October 11 Read Genesis 46

Here we have an account of Jacob's trip to Egypt. The merciful God assures him that this trip, unlike the one of Abraham many years ago, would be blessed by God. We also have an accounting of the church at that time. This was the purpose of that trip into Egypt. God would preserve his church and bring it forth many times larger. Joseph could have said to Pharaoh let my family live in the best of the land, but no, Joseph made it so his family would be able to live separately from the Egyptians in Goshen. They would live the life of the antithesis even away from Canaan. Is that our life on this earth? Sing Psalter 354.

October 12 Read Genesis 47

People of God, are we ready to make the confession, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been..."? Do we see our sin and do we see that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"? This was Jacob's confession of faith. Here he stood before one of the greatest monarchs of the land, and he turned the attention away from himself. Do we do this? This is how we must live even in the Egypt of the world. We must be satisfied to go to the "Goshens" of our day and live away from the spotlight of the world. Sing Psalter 289.

October 13 Read Genesis 48

The story of God's people continues to unfold. In blessing Joseph's children, Jacob bestows on his son part of the double portion of the birthright. Jacob, by faith, blesses those sons and through that blessing blesses Joseph and us. He tells Joseph that even though he would not see Canaan again Joseph would. It happened not as Jacob understood it, but in the multitude of people that made up Manasseh and Ephraim. We, too, have a hope in a promised land. It will be the promised land which is heaven. Are we looking for it? Sing Psalter 276.

October 14 Read Genesis 49

Picture Jacob sitting on his bed with his sons gathered around him. And then picture their faces as he spoke the cryptic words which were their inheritances. These were words of prophecy. Some of them were not very nice. Others would not come to pass until later. Then look at Judah's inheritance once more. Judah received one of the parts of the birthright blessing. He received the part that has been passed down to us. He and we received the promise of Christ. What are we doing with our inheritance? Let us use it in this life well so that when God calls us to heaven we may leave, like Jacob, in peace. Sing Psalter 27.

October 15 Read Genesis 50

This chapter, which closes this book of beginnings, is a chapter of faith. First of all, there is the family's faith as they carry their father's coffin to the cave of Machpelah. Secondly, there is the faith of Joseph when he tells his brothers that he will continue to care for them in Egypt. He knows the whims of rulers, but he trusts in God's providence to carry them through until they are delivered from this land. Finally, Joseph shows his faith in eschewing a state funeral in Egypt for a burial of his bones in Canaan. This is the faith we must have as we live in our Egypts looking for our final resting place in heaven. Sing Psalter 313.

October 16 Read Exodus 1

From the book of beginnings we go to the book of the going out. The chapter begins with a roll of names that made up those who went to Egypt. Then we have that significant verse: "Now there rose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." Throughout history this has been true in many countries. The government has been favorable to Christians, and then with a change in government comes a change in policy, and Christians are persecuted. This is a sign of the times. Even as we look for Christ to return, there will be many "kings who don't know Joseph." Our faith must be strong in such days; as those days bring us ever closer to our entrance into the promised land which is heaven. Sing Psalter 213.

October 17 Read Exodus 2

By faith Amram and Jochebed did what they did. They obeyed God and disobeyed the evil command of the king in saving their son alive. They believed in the covenant and the signs of the covenant. They saw in their children the promises that God had given to them. And as we read in the last part of the chapter, "God remembered his covenant." Of course, God had not "forgotten" them as we think of forgetting. God, through the trials in Egypt would bring them out ready to enter the promised land. Are we faithful to our covenant God? Do we believe that he will care for us in this wicked world? Let us pray for the faith of Amram and Jochebed even as we see the world

coming to an end, and persecution may loom on the horizon. In this faith we will see the blessings that will be ours in heaven. Sing Psalter 278.

October 18 Read Exodus 3

After leaving his familial home, after leaving the luxuries of the palace, Moses spends the second forty year period of his life in God's school in the wilderness. As his schooling comes to an end, he hears the call from Jehovah, the I Am that I Am. Now, Moses is ready even though he thought he was not. God reveals to Moses the big picture of what would happen. God would bring judgment on wicked Egypt, and in that judgment would save his people from that wicked nation. This is the picture of our deliverance from this world that grows more wicked every day. Are we ready for our deliverance? Are we watching for Christ's return? Sing Psalter 289.

October 19 Read Exodus 4

Moses continued to protest his fitness for the task to which God had assigned him. Patiently God worked with his servant. Then Moses meets his brother and goes to the people of Israel. We read that they bow their heads and worship believing that God would deliver them. This acceptance was for Moses's sake for we know that later the people would be anything but willing. God is patient with us as well. Let us bow our heads accepting the way that he leads us in this life knowing that God will lead us to the promised land in the way of our pathway on this earth. Sing Psalter 217.

October 20 Read Exodus 5

The path on which we are led on this earth is not an easy path. We see that even as Pharaoh speaks his first refusal to Moses. As Israel is led on this path, we know that it is for the strengthening of the faith of the faithful and also for the hardening of the wicked. More than Pharaoh's heart was hardened by the events of this part of Exodus. God would winnow out those who did not believe. As we walk on our path, let us constantly pray that God will deliver us in his way, hard though it may be. The end of that path has a glorious end. Let us keep our eyes and our hearts fixed on that end. Sing Psalter 208.

October 21 Read Exodus 6

Our lives on this earth are part of the process by which God brings his whole church to the eternal Canaan. Moses had to see his part in this process. After God once more reveals to him the covenant promise, he is told to go and announce to Israel and to Pharaoh that they are to leave Egypt. When Israel fails to believe Moses's words, he is discouraged and does not want to see Pharaoh. Then God shows to him the covenant

line and his place in it. Do we see our place? Do we heed God's commands as we should? Sing Psalter 147.

October 22 Read Exodus 7

In this chapter the first of the ten strokes is laid upon Egypt. After not believing the initial miracles, God through Moses turns the Nile River into blood. This was one of Egypt's most important gods. In striking the Nile, God shows his sovereignty. When the magicians through sleight of hand or Satan's hand (by God's permission), also make water turn into blood, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and the process of his destruction is put into motion. Israel's faith is also being tested, as they go through this process as well. As we read about this process, let us see that it was for us that this was done. Sing Psalter 289.

October 23 Read Exodus 8

After seven days of water turned into blood, we might think Pharaoh was ready for Israel to leave. But no, his reprobate heart was hard, and this chapter recounts three more plagues. Like the first plague these two affected their comfort. First of all frogs were brought throughout the land. Now a frog might be cute, but many frogs were a plague. After Pharaoh seemingly relents and then hardens his heart, the third plague, that of the lice, is brought without warning. In this plague God separates himself from Egypt's so-called gods. The Egyptian magicians were unable to produce lice. Then comes the fourth plague. In this one God separates his people from the Egyptians. Not one of the flies comes to Goshen. The line of the antithesis is drawn in Egypt. Pharaoh's heart is still hard. Sing Psalter 253.

October 24 Read Exodus 9

With Pharaoh's continued obstinacy come plagues five and six. First a sickness is sent upon Egypt's cattle. The sovereign God strikes another of Egypt's gods. Israel's cattle are untouched. Then from the furnaces, over which Israel had been made to slave, ashes are thrown into the air and grievous boils are brought upon the very bodies of the slave masters, and the whole country feels the pain of those boils. Again Pharaoh refuse to acknowledge almighty God. Finally a storm is brought upon the land. It was announced, and those who were stubborn did not heed the warning but let their livestock be pummeled and killed by the lightning and hail. Was Egypt and their cantankerous ruler convinced? No! Sing Psalter 206.

October 25 Read Exodus 10

Our God is a sovereign God. One of the purposes of the plagues was to show Pharaoh this fact. Pharaoh would confess this with his lips for a short time, but then his heart would harden, and in his unbelief he would refuse to continue in his confession. The eighth plague wiped out all the crops that remained after the hailstorm. Then Moses announces the ninth and tenth plagues. During the three days of darkness all of Egypt had to contemplate the truth that God was God. For three hours those at the cross had to contemplate what they were doing. Do we contemplate God's love for us? Sing Psalter 154.

October 26 Read Exodus 11

This short chapter tells of the last stroke upon Pharaoh and Egypt. Israel's stay in the picture of hell was coming to a close. But even this had to be part of the process by which God would redeem his people. Israel, too, must know and confess that God was God. As we live in Egypt today we must look toward Canaan. This world is not our home. Even as true Israel anticipated the final plague and the resulting order to leave Egypt by faith, so we must live our lives by faith. Sing Psalter 107.

October 27 Read Exodus 12

This long chapter tells us about the Passover Feast and the reasons behind it. For Israel it was to remind them how God had not only led them out of the land of Egypt, but also had given them favor in those wicked people's eyes. It was also for them to look ahead to the final Passover lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ. Children were to learn from all the ceremony that went with this feast. We, too, must teach our children about Christ. Our sacraments give to us opportunities to do this. May we look ahead, just as Israel did, for the coming again of Christ on the clouds of heaven. Sing Psalter 203.

October 28 Read Exodus 13

God went with Israel as they made their way out of Egypt toward Canaan. He led them by a very visible presence—the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. God leads us as we make our way through the Egypt of this world toward the Canaan of heaven. He leads us by a very visible presence, his Word. Are we following that Word? Do we keep it in view by reading and studying it throughout our daily lives? Once again in this chapter it mentions the education of the children in the things of God. Do we “suffer the little children” to come unto Christ day by day? Sing Psalter 290.

October 29 Read Exodus 14

God was not finished with showing to Egypt that he was the sovereign God. He also was not finished with showing Israel that he was Jehovah God. God led Israel to a way in which there seemed to be no escape. Pharaoh probably was exulting over this final slaughter of Israel. Then God showed that he was God. Pharaoh and all his armies met their destruction in the sea while Israel was led by God's hand to dry land beyond. Israel believed God and his servant Moses. Let this be for our edification as we walk toward our Canaan. Sing Psalter 88.

October 30 Read Exodus 15

After singing the song of Moses that exalted the power of Jehovah, the people began their long journey. It was not long, however, before their faith was tested. God took them this way in order that he might make them ready to enter Israel. They had many lessons to learn, and God would have them learn those lessons in the school of the wilderness. They had to learn about Christ even as it was shown them by the tree at the waters of Marah. But God was gracious to them even in the rest found in the oasis of Elim. As we visit our Marahs and Elims, let us keep our eyes fixed on the goal-communion with God and his Son in heaven. Sing Psalter 71.

October 31 Read Exodus 16

God's people throughout the ages are a complaining and stubborn people. After the ten plagues, after the miracle at the Red Sea, after Marah, Israel still had not learned to trust in Jehovah for everything. How quickly they had forgotten the toil and troubles in Egypt when they ran out of food. God once again showed his grace to them when he gave them manna. They had to learn what it was and how it would sustain them. We have been given the manna of Christ and the Word. Do we know what it is and how it sustains us? We need that manna; let us use it in the way God has commanded us. Sing Psalter 213.

November 1 Read Exodus 17

At Rephidim God showed Israel his care in two ways. First of all, from a rock he gave them water. That rock and that water were both pictures of Christ who is our rock and our living water. Paul in one of his epistles to the Corinthian church tells us that fact. We receive from Christ all that we need to be sustained in this world. Secondly, God showed Israel how they would defeat Amalek. Through the rod and Joshua's prowess as a leader, God gave Israel the victory. Is Jehovah our banner, our Nissi, even as he was Israel's? Sing Psalter 147.

November 2 Read Exodus 18

One of the reasons God led Israel in the way of the wilderness to Canaan was so that they could learn how to be a nation. Through the wise counsel of Jethro Moses set up a judicial system that would guide Israel for many years. God has given to the church today men who are to guide us in our lives. These are the officebearers of the church. We need to respect them for the office that God has given to them. We need to see that in them God leads us in the right way on our path to the heavenly Canaan. Let us give thanks for such men and their work in Christ's church. Sing Psalter 53.

November 3 Read Exodus 19

God brought Israel out of Egypt to the mountain of Sinai where he would give to them through Moses the various laws that would govern them. Chief among those laws was the Ten Commandments. That law, which served as Israel's guide to point them to Christ, is our rule of thankfulness. We, too, have been borne on eagle's wings just as Israel was. We, too, must have these ten words to guide us and show us the way. It is a blessing to us that we hear the law each week. Thank God for that blessing. Sing Psalter 306.

November 4 Read Exodus 20

After giving to Israel the Ten Commandments from that smoking, quaking mountain that showed God's power, judgment, and justice, God began to show Israel how he must be worshiped. Altars were part of their culture for many years, ever since the first sin. But now ordinances were given to guide them in their worship. Jesus fulfilled all those ordinances with his death on the cross. But yet we, too, must worship God in the way that he has ordained in the Bible. In the way of proper worship, we come to our Creator and Savior. Sing Psalter 40.

November 5 Read Exodus 21

There were three types of laws given to Israel at Sinai. First of all, there was the moral law, which were the Ten Commandments. Then there were the ceremonial laws that showed Israel how God was to be worshiped. These first two types of laws are summed up in the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart..." The second of the great commandments was shown to them in the third type of laws, the civil laws. This showed to Israel how they must live with their neighbors and function as the nation of God. While we are no longer under these laws, the principles found in them should guide us every day of our lives on this earth. Sing Psalter 331.

November 6 Read Exodus 22

This chapter contains several of the civil laws that we mentioned yesterday. As we read through them, we see their common sense nature and practical nature for us of the new dispensation. Notice, however, at the end the two great commandments are brought together. We love our neighbor because we are God's holy people. If we concentrate on what Christ called the two great commandments, we will find that we have great peace in our homes, in our schools, and especially in our churches. Let us seek that peace by obeying God. Sing Psalter 223.

November 7 Read Exodus 23

One of the lessons that Israel had to learn as they traversed through the wilderness was to obey God. Sometimes we look at their history and shake our heads and wonder why they were so stubborn. If we do this, we had better go look in the mirror as James says. We are like Israel. We see just as many mighty works and just as much grace, and how do we treat God and our neighbor? We want the gods of the nations round about us. We like to follow many modern day gods. If we do, they will lead us not to Canaan but back to Egypt. Follow God, and he will lead you in the green pastures. Sing Psalter 55.