



## Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

September 7, 2021

### DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

### Today's Inspiration in one sentence

**“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.”**

(Psalm 90:1)

### Did You Know?

- This chapter of **Genesis** belongs to the same “Patriarchal History/The Life of Abraham” in sections 11-25 from which we had a reading before. To brush up our memories on the date of this book, *Genesis* was written between 1446 and 1406 BC.
- The first phrase in the Hebrew text of 1:1 is “*bereshith*” (“In [the] beginning”), which is also the Hebrew title of the book. Books in ancient times customarily were named after their first word or two.
- The English title, *Genesis* comes from the Greek language, from the **Septuagint**, which is the pre-Christian Greek translation of these Old Testament books.
- Chapters 1-38 reflect a great deal of what we know from other sources about ancient Mesopotamian life and culture. Creation, genealogies, destructive floods, geography and mapmaking, construction techniques, migrations of peoples, sale and purchase of land, legal customs and procedures, shepherding and cattle raising – all these subject and many others were matters of vital concern to the peoples of Mesopotamia during this time.

(The NIV Study Bible; Genesis)

### Personal Insight

As I can see, it is a relatively common human characteristic to know the world and the visible and hidden realities around us only “**in part**” (1 Corinthians 13:9). It requires great intelligence, experience and wisdom to have a vision of the wider contexts. The ‘ugly truth’ is that we also tend to make our judgments based on this partial knowledge. We condemn or dislike others while not knowing their complete story or circumstances.

The Creator God on the other hand have “searched us” and “knows us”; and this knowledge is full, it goes beyond what can be seen with our eyes. As David put in writing, it is “**the righteous God who probes minds and hearts.**” (Psalm 7:9). Ancient wisdom also understood that “**The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.**” (Proverbs 17:3)

I believe, it is a privilege that the Almighty allows us to have a wider insight of the “fragments” of life through the Scriptures and throughout generations. It can bring out a beautiful picture, which may make us humble and compassionate; “**quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry**” (James 1:19)

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



## The Big Story of the Bible

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

2 Timothy 3:16

### READ Genesis 11:26–32

When Colin opened the box of stained-glass pieces he'd purchased, instead of finding the fragments he'd ordered for a project, he discovered intact, whole windows. He sleuthed out the windows' origin and learned they'd been removed from a church to protect them from World War II bombings. Colin marveled at the quality of work and how the "fragments" formed a beautiful picture.

If I'm honest, there are times when I open particular passages of the Bible—such as chapters containing lists of genealogies—and I don't immediately see how they fit within the bigger picture of Scripture. Such is the case with Genesis 11—a chapter that contains a repetitive cadence of unfamiliar names and their families, such as Shem, Shelah, Eber, Nahor, and Terah (vv. 10–32). I'm often tempted to gloss over these sections and skip to a part that contains something that feels familiar and fits more easily into my "window" of understanding of the Bible's narrative.

Since "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful" (2 Timothy 3:16), the Holy Spirit can help us better understand how a fragment fits into the whole, opening our eyes to see, for example, how Shelah is related to Abram (Genesis 11:12–26), the ancestor of David and—more importantly—Jesus (Matthew 1:2, 6, 16). He delights in surprising us with the treasure of a perfectly intact window where even the smaller parts reveal the story of God's mission throughout the Bible. – By **Kirsten Holmberg**

#### REFLECT & PRAY

**Father, please help me to see You and Your work more clearly. Amen.**

Why is it important to recognize each portion of Scripture as a fragment of God's bigger story?

#### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

In the ancient world, genealogies weren't always simply a straightforward record of "who begat whom." Instead, they were sometimes used to show legitimacy of relation or position. This is particularly true when it came to tracing the lineage of royalty. Ancestry (often traced back to a deity) was intended to show that the person with whom the lineage ended was the rightful and true heir. For example, the genealogy of Jesus in the book of Luke traces Jesus' human lineage back to God Himself (Luke 3:23–38).

Ancestry records often provided key information as well, as we see in today's text. In Genesis 11:26–32, Sarai's childlessness is one of the striking features (v. 30) and becomes one of the important elements of the story later on (18:10–14). – By **J.R. Hudberg**

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