

GLEANINGS

GLEANEALOGY 4



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

T. M. MOORE

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Gleanings
Gleanealogy Part 4
Copyright 2020 T. M. and Susie Moore
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Cover Art: “The Gleaners” by Jean-Francois Millet, 1857

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All psalms for singing adapted from The Ailbe Psalter. All quotations from Church Fathers from Ancient Christian Commentary Series, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

Introduction

Gleanealogy 4: Gleanings

Having sorted through the genealogies of Scripture – the gleanings of Biblical revelation – it’s time to take stock, and see what’s there for our nourishment.

And there’s plenty.

God’s love for His people, His faithfulness to His Word and covenant, discovering our place in the divine *project*, experiencing the ineluctable march of revelation toward the coming of Christ – these are just a few of the tidbits embedded in the gleanings of God’s Word.

Let’s have a closer look, and see if we can’t learn to read these genealogies more fruitfully henceforth.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to discover the many resources available to help you in realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of God’s Kingdom.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

Thank you, and may the Lord bless your worship and study in this *Scriptorium* series.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Real People

Pray Psalm 106.47, 48.

Save us, O LORD our God,
And gather us from among the Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise.
Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
And let all the people say, "Amen!"
Praise the LORD!

Sing slowly and with gratitude Psalm 106.46-48.

(Trust in Jesus: 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus)

Save us, Lord, from every nation; gather us from all our ways.
And we to Your Name will offer glorious thanks and endless praise!

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Read Isaiah 43.1-7

Prepare.

1. How has God called us to Himself? Why?
2. What does God promise those He has called?

Meditate.

Pastor Jamie Cupschalk shared the following story with me, which he read from a sermon by David Strain of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, and included in a sermon of his own. It's an excerpt from the book, *Hidden People*, by Lynette Oates, telling the story of translators Des and Jenny Oatridge, who worked among a remote tribe in Papua, New Guinea, the Binumariens.

On one evening, Des arrived at a home where an important meeting was about to begin. Quoting now from Jamie's notes: "The house was packed and overflowing. There was an odd sense of tension in the air that made him nervous. He was led to a seat on the floor right in the center of the room beside the fir, and Sisia [a native assistant] immediately spoke up. 'I've asked Mata'a Des to come and read what we have translated this morning. I can't tell it to you. I want you to hear it for yourselves.'

"Then the room became extraordinarily still. Des was conscious that every eye was fixed upon him. He cleared his throat and began to read. 'These are the ancestors of Jesus Messiah, a descendant of King David and of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac was the father of Jacob, Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah.'

"Des couldn't look up. His eyes were glued to the text. He was trying to read as naturally as Sisia had spoken the sentences to him earlier that morning, but the tense atmosphere in the room was making

it difficult. He did not see Fofondai's eyes grow wider and rounder, as did Maraa'aro's and several others near him. He could sense, though, that every word he spoke was being grabbed and critically examined by his listeners.

"He became conscious that Yawo was moving near to him; so were A'aaso and Aaka and Yaa'a. He was aware that Sao watched his lips unblinkingly. As he continued reading more and more, people began pressing. The people from the other rooms were pushing into the central room. Fofo was so close that his beard almost touched the written page. Yawo's arm was rammed right against Des'.

"Des suddenly felt scared. He had a sense of being crushed. It was not only the pressure of bodies; the uncanny silence. It seemed that not a dog barked, not a baby cried, not a person released his breath. He didn't know if the list of names had offended some ritual taboo about which he knew nothing. If so, and the people were angry, that it was being so blatantly publicized, he was in an awkward position. There was no way of escape, hemmed in as he was. And with the atmosphere so charged he felt he dared not ask a question. These are volatile people; they could erupt in fury so easily.

"And so he just kept on reading, 'Matthan was the father of Jacob, Jacob was the father of Joseph, who was the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus the Messiah. There are fourteen generations from Abraham to King David and fourteen from King David's time to the exile in Babylon and fourteen from the exile to Christ.'

"They had heard him out. Des raised his eyes to look at those within a breath of his face and saw not anger but incredulity. 'Why didn't you tell us all this before?' Yaa'a demanded. Des recoiled instinctively as if he had been struck. 'No one bothers to right down the ancestors of spirit beings,' Fofondai stated. 'It's only real people who record the genealogical table,' A'aaso added. 'Jesus must be a real person,' someone else cried, his voice ringing with astonishment. Then everyone seemed to be talking at once. 'Fourteen generations. That's two hands and a foot from Abraham to King David. Two more hands and a foot from the time of the calibus, the captivity, and another two hands and a foot until Jesus' time. That's a very, very long time. This ancestry goes back further than ours! Yes, none of ours goes back two hands and a foot three times! Jesus must have been a real man on this earth then. This is not just white man's magic. What the mission has taught us is real. Yes, real.'

"Des pondered on that as he made his way home. The ancient list of names, which he'd always found boring and pretty well meaningless, had ratified Jesus as a real person to his unlettered friends. He possessed a genealogy like theirs. To the Binumariens, the truth of the Scriptures was now beyond all doubt."

'Nuff said.

Reflect.

1. Given that the genealogies of Scripture are lists of real people – with all their trials, joys, and shortcomings – how should we read them, to gain the benefit of Jesus from these lists (Jn. 5.39)?
2. The people on those genealogies were called by God, just as you are. Look again at Isaiah 43.1-7. What does God promise you as one He has called by name? How can reading genealogies help to remind us of this?
3. Who is promised in Isaiah 43.5-7? Where are their – your – names recorded? How should we

respond to this?

For we are said to have been Christ's, even before the separation from God that occurred when we as sinners went out of the garden, though by nature we were always God's. But he has made us once more to be his own through the Holy Spirit making us strong through every trial. Procopius of Gaza (465-530), *Commentary on Isaiah 43.1-13*

Thank You, Lord, for calling me by name. I call upon Your Name to help me today as I...

Pray Psalm 106.1-12.

Praise the Lord for including you in the Lamb's Book of Life! Pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ, that they might realize how much they are loved, and how constant is God's care for them. Pray for those in the Lamb's Book of Life who have yet to hear the Good News of Jesus and His Kingdom.

Sing Psalm 106.1-12, 48.

Psalm 106.1-12, 48 (*Trust in Jesus: 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*)

Praise the Lord! Give thanks and praise Him! He is good, His love endures!
More His works than can be spoken; let His praise be ever sure!

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Lord, when You Your people favor, help me, O, remember me,
that I may Your blessings savor and in joy and glory be!

Refrain

We have sinned, just like our fathers; we have done iniquity.
Just like them, our hearts have wandered; we have acted wickedly.

Refrain

For Your love we have forgotten; we rebelled against Your grace.
Yet You save us by Your power, make us stand before Your face.

Refrain

2 People Are the Mission

Pray Psalm 96.1-4.

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.
For the LORD *is* great and greatly to be praised;

He *is* to be feared above all gods.

Sing exuberantly Psalm 96.1-4.

(Mit Freuden Zart: *All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above*)

Sing to the Lord! O, bless His Name! All nations tell His glory!
Salvation's tidings loud proclaim; let earth rehearse His story!
For God is greatly to be praised; His throne above all gods is raised –
fear Him, and sing His glory!

Read Isaiah 54.1-8.

Prepare.

1. What does “enlarge the place of your tent” mean for you and your Personal Mission Field?
2. How does God show “everlasting kindness” to His people?

Meditate.

From the beginning of our study of genealogies, we observed that two “family lines” were traced out – that which belonged to the people of promise, and that which outlined the nations beyond Israel and God’s covenant. God’s *project* is to fill *the earth* with His glory, saving by name a *people* who will enlarge the place of their tents to bring in more people to the household of God. Those new members of the divine household can only come from among the lost people of this world. The genealogies of Scripture keep us ever mindful that God is not done with the unbelieving nations of the world (Rev. 7.4-10). He sends us, whom He has called by name, as He sent His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to embody and proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost people of our world.

One of the goals we emphasize in working our Personal Mission Field is that we should always seek to expand or enlarge our mission field, looking for ways to include new people into the sphere of Jesus’ love. Isaiah foresaw the day of this happening, and the genealogies of Scripture remind us that we who know the Lord must not be content merely to bask in the Good News. We are sent to proclaim Him and His Kingdom to the lost people of our world, beginning in our Personal Mission Field (Jn. 20.21).

You may not feel as though you’re strong enough in the faith to talk about Jesus. You may even think that God has hidden His face from you, or even from this entire generation of Christians. But if we look to Him in faith, calling on Him for boldness and readiness, He will empower us to tell the Good News of Jesus as often as opportunities arise throughout the day.

As we read the genealogies of Scripture, let's remember to thank God that He has called us by name, and we are His. Our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. But so are the names of many people who do not yet know our Lord Jesus. Let the genealogies lead you to pray for the lost people of the world, especially for those in your own Personal Mission Field, and to seek the power of Christ and the Spirit to enlarge the space of your tent and reach out to your lost neighbors with the Gospel.

Reflect.

1. Have you mapped out your Personal Mission Field? Are you working it daily? Watch this brief video ([click here](#)) then download the worksheet and begin the glorious work of enlarging the place of your tent.
2. Do you pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field? For the lost people of the world? Following Isaiah 54.1-7, what should you pray when you pray for them?
3. How would you summarize the Good News that you have been sent to the world to proclaim?

After the birth of the Savior and the sequence of life and miracles, the passion of the cross and the glory of resurrection, when laying down his life he saw his progeny lengthened and as righteous he justified many by his knowledge and divided the spoils of the strong and prayed for transgressors, giving a place for penance; the text then switches to the calling of the nations and describes in plain words those who would believe in him. Jerome (347-420), Commentary on Isaiah 15.2

O Lord, make me a faithful witness! Help me to enlarge the place of my tent today as I...

Pray Psalm 96.8-13.

Will you glorify God by declaring His Good News today? Whom can you tell about Jesus, and the promised blessings of revival and renewal He brings to the world? Pray that God will give you joy in your salvation, and a ready tongue to proclaim His salvation.

Sing Psalm 96.8-13.

Psalm 96.8-13 (*Mit Freuden Zart: [All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above](#)*)

Bring offrings sweet to Him, our Lord, in holy garments praise Him!
Tremble before Him, all the earth; among the nations raise Him!
The earth is fixed, it will not move; the peoples will His justice prove –
Exalt the Lord and praise Him.

Let heaven sing with lusty voice; let earth and sea sing sweetly!
Let fields and trees in Him rejoice, for He is coming swiftly
to judge the world in righteousness, the peoples in His faithfulness –
He comes; exalt Him greatly!

3 Rest(oration) Is the Goal

Pray Psalm 135.13, 14.

Your name, O LORD, endures forever,
Your fame, O LORD, throughout all generations.
For the Lord will judge His people,
And He will have compassion on His servants.

Sing with joy and thanksgiving Psalm 135.13, 14, 1.

(St. Gertrude: Onward, Christian Soldiers)

Evermore Your Name, O Savior, shall endure!
Your renown throughout all ages is secure.
For You have compassion, vindicating all
those who serve Your Name and on Your saving mercy call.

Refrain, v. 1

Praise the Name of Jesus, you who serve His Word!
Raise your voice and praise our good and glorious Lord!

Read Matthew 11.25-30.

Prepare.

1. What does Jesus promise? Who may expect to obtain that promise?
2. How is it that Jesus is able to deliver on that promise?

Meditate.

The first great *toledoth* of Scripture ends in Noah. His father, Lamech, named Him *Rest*, expressing the hope that the people of God might be comforted in the midst of their troubles (Genesis 5.28, 29). In a very real sense, every genealogy of Scripture points the faithful people of God to rest, or more specifically, to the restoration God's grace brings to them.

The genealogy of nations in Genesis 11 ends in Abram, to whom are given the precious and very great promises of God's covenant.

The census of those people of God going down to Egypt indicates relief from famine and rest in the protection of God's grace through Joseph. Jacob's prophecies concerning his sons (Gen. 49) points toward the coming of Shiloh and the restoration of all things in His Kingdom.

The genealogies of Numbers list (first) those who were restored from captivity in Egypt, and (second) those who would gain the promised rest of God in the land of Canaan.

Rest is the theme of the various allotments of land in the book of Joshua, which conclude with that great declaration of rest in Joshua 21.43-45: "So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass."

Those returning from Babylon took up the work of restoring the temple and the city of Jerusalem, as well as many of the villages, towns, and cities of the land. But they did not restore the kingdom. That would only occur with the coming of Jesus, Who has reconciled all things to the Father and is now, by His Spirit, bringing His Kingdom to the world through His faithful people.

Even the genealogies of the nations can remind us, since most of us are not Jewish, that God has had us in mind from the beginning, and that He calls us to make all the nations disciples.

And the genealogy/census of Revelation 7.1-10, the great record of the Lamb's Book of Life, includes the names of all those who have been restored to God through the redeeming, reconciling, and renewing work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The genealogies of Scripture, as we read them, call us to remember and rejoice in the rest and restoration God has provided for us, and for all who claim His promises through our Lord Jesus Christ. As you read the names of those great saints, imagine them singing in glory to the Lord, and carrying your prayers, like sweet incense, before the Lord (Rev. 4, 5); thank the Lord for each one, and for the grace shown to each one of that great cloud of witnesses. And rejoice with them in the rest and restoration which is ours through Jesus.

Reflect.

1. How can this perspective of rest and restoration help us to appreciate and benefit from the genealogies of Scripture?
2. How does this perspective suggest that we should read these genealogies?
3. Write a prayer of thanksgiving to use when you come across a genealogy in your reading. Keep it in your Bible to remind you that these genealogies point us to the rest and restoration which is ours in Jesus.

Jesus called everyone, not only the people of Israel. As the Maker and Lord of all, he spoke to the weary Jews who did not have the strength to bear the yoke of the law. He spoke to idolaters heavy laden and oppressed by the devil and weighed down by the multitude of their sins. Cyril of Alexandria (375-444), Fragment 149

Thank You, Lord, for granting me rest in Jesus. Today, help me to be more fully restored in all my ways as I...

Pray Psalm 135.1-12.

Thank the Lord for the rest and restoration He has provided for His people, over and over again, and for the restoration He is working in the world through the Gospel.

Sing Psalm 135.1-12.

Psalm 135.1-12 (*St. Gertrude: Onward, Christian Soldiers*)

Praise the Savior, praise Him, for His Name is good;

Sing, for it is pleasant, to our glorious God!

All whom He has chosen and redeemed by grace,
praise His Name together, praise Him in this holy place!

Refrain v. 1

Praise the Name of Jesus, you who serve His Word!

Raise your voice and praise our good and glorious Lord!

Great and sovereign, Jesus rules o'er all above,
doing as He pleases, sovereign in His love.
Clouds and seas obey Him, lightning, too, and rain;
He the winds brings forth in pow'r and sends them back again.

Refrain

Egypt's firstborn fell to God's redeeming pow'r.
Kings and nations crumbled in redemption's hour.
He the land of promise to His people gave;
Thus His Kingdom Jesus gives to all He's pleased to save.

Refrain

4 God Remembers

Pray Psalm 105.42-45.

For He remembered His holy promise,
And Abraham His servant.
He brought out His people with joy,
His chosen ones with gladness.
He gave them the lands of the Gentiles,
And they inherited the labor of the nations,
That they might observe His statutes
And keep His laws.
Praise the LORD!

Sing joyfully and with thanksgiving Psalm 105.26-45.

(Warrington: [Give to Our God Immortal Praise](#))

He brought His people from Egypt alive, and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations' land their own, and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

Read Exodus 2.23-25.

Prepare.

1. What did God hear? Why did He hear this? Does He still hear such things?
2. What does it mean to “remember” something?

Meditate.

The genealogies of Scripture illustrate a very important characteristic of God that we sometimes lose sight of amid the vicissitudes and uncertainties of life.

God *remembers*.

This word (the Hebrew is זָכַר *zachar*) means much more than what typically comes to mind when we use it. When we say “remember” it is simply to say that we have recalled something that had slipped our mind (Oh, gotta go, I just *remembered* that I...); or that we have not forgotten something we intend to do (“I remember saying that, and I’m working on it...”); or that something we once knew begins to materialize in our minds at its mention by someone else (“Ah, yes, I *remember* him...”). In each case, the suggestion is implied of a kind of, or at least the possibility of, a mental lapse. Something once on our minds either drifted off for a season, or may drift off if we don’t tie a string around our finger.

This is not what the verb *remember* means with God. In the case of God, *remember* means something

like *gives continuous and vital attention to*. There is no sense in which, for example, God for a moment forgot that His people were captive in Egypt (after all, it had been 400 years!). Quite the opposite is intended. Through all that time, God *remembered* His covenant *and* His people; and He cared for them unceasingly, with a view to readying them for the great events of Exodus-Joshua.

The genealogies, with their sometimes tedious lists of names, remind us that God *remembers* the names of the people with whom He has entered into covenant. And He *remembered* their needs, *remembered* His promises to them, and did not fail to keep them in mind or to care for them continually. At the same time, God *remembers* all the works of His hands, and attends diligently, constantly, and fruitfully to all that He has created, that it might serve as the proper *place* on which His *people* might fulfill His *project* of redemption.

God remembers. He remembered all those names, and caused them to be written in the pages of His Word, as a reminder to us that, though we are part of a multitude of covenant people more than anyone could ever number (Rev. 7.1-10), our *names* are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and our God *remembers* His promises to us, *remembers* us and our needs, and *remembers* to bless and sustain and prepare us for Himself, every moment of every day of our lives.

As you read these genealogies, give thanks and praise to the God Who *remembers* you and everything about you, as well as all that Christ has done for you, and everything He has promised you for now and forever.

Reflect.

1. Contemplate the idea that God remembers you. How does this make you feel? What do you want to say to Him in return?
2. Why is it important to know that God remembers, even when we are going through difficult times (Rom. 8.28)?
3. Write a prayer, thanking God for remembering you, which you can use when you come to any of the genealogies of His Word. Meditate on the people in those genealogies, and all the care and attention that God gave them during their lifetimes. Thank Him in detail for the ways He remembers you.

As to what is added, that "God remembered his covenant," it is the explanation of the cause why he heard their groaning, viz., that he might ratify his gratuitous promise made to Abraham and his descendants. He expressly mentions the three patriarchs, because God lodged his covenant with them, that it might continue firm for perpetual generations. And, indeed, since God is inclined towards us to help us of his own free mercy, so he offers himself, and invites us voluntarily; and therefore confidence in prayer must only be sought for in his promises. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Exodus 2.23

Thank You, Lord, for including me in Your people, and for giving me a place – my Personal Mission Field – to work on Your project, which today will require me to...

Pray Psalm 105.1-11.

God *remembers* His covenant and all those who are in it (Ps. 105.8, 42). How should we *remember* "His marvelous works which He has done" (v. 5)?

Sing Psalm 105.1-11.

Psalm 105.1-12 (*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!

Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.

Him and His strength and presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, You chosen ones of Jacob, stand!

He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.

That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

5 Forebears in Faith

Pray Psalm 16.1-3.

Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.
O *my soul*, you have said to the LORD,
“You *are* my Lord,
My goodness is nothing apart from You.”
As for the saints who *are* on the earth,
“They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.”

Sing contemplatively Psalm 16.1-3, 11.

(All to Christ: Jesus Paid It All)

Preserve me, O my God; I refuge seek in You.
You alone are all my good, my Lord and Savior true!

Refrain v. 11

Make me know life’s way! Pleasures fill Your hand.
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

The saints within the earth, majestic in their day,
delight me with the worth of all they do and say.

Refrain

Read Hebrews 11.17-12.2.

Prepare.

1. What do all the people in this “genealogy” have in common? Why are we one with them?
2. In what sense are we “surrounded” by this great cloud of witnesses? What are they doing all around us (cf. Rev. 4, 5)?

Meditate.

As we have seen, genealogies bridge epochs of history, creating continuity between generations, and reminding us of the importance God vests in people and His covenant. The writer of Hebrews adds an important qualifier to the genealogies of Scripture, which is taken for granted in much of the Old Testament. While it undoubtedly was not true of all the people listed in the genealogies of the Bible, it was true of a great many of them, and perhaps even most of them; and it is the one attribute that binds us with them in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and gives each of us in our *place* a role in God’s *project* for creating a *people* for His glory.

They were people of faith. And as such, they are not merely *God’s* people, or the *chosen* people; they are *our* people, our forebears in faith.

They *believed* God’s Word, *longed* for His promises, *walked in obedience* to His Law, and *looked forward* to the day of redemption. They looked forward to that which we look back to, the work of our Lord Jesus Christ in dying for our sins and rising for our salvation (Heb. 11.39, 40).

We are part of this great, nations-spanning heritage, and thus we must delight in them, and learn as much as we can from those excellent saints who are *in* (not *on*, as NKJV) the earth bodily, and among

that great cloud of witnesses in their spirits. And we can learn from them, so that our hope is daily renewed (Rom. 15.4).

Each time you come on a genealogy in your reading, remember: These are your forebears in the faith. Dwell on a new name or two each time you read a genealogy. Thank God specifically for what you know about them. Meditate on what they can teach you. Don't just read them, *study* them prayerfully, so that their history of trusting the Lord becomes yours as well.

The people listed in the genealogies of Scripture are more truly our forebears than many of the blood relations we might trace back for generations. What they imparted, from one generation to the next, is far more significant than titles, occupations, family traditions, color of eyes or hair, or anything else people typically discover by seeking their family roots. The saints who make up that great cloud of witnesses passed down to us a tradition of faith, and thus committed to us the ongoing *project* of passing faith on to those who will succeed us in this life.

Reflect.

1. Why is a heritage of faith more important than a heritage of family traits?
2. We are surrounded by that great cloud of witnesses whose faithfulness in their day made it possible for us to believe in Jesus in ours. How should this affect the way we think about them?
3. What is our role in making sure the "faith line" continues for generations to come?

*This conclusion is, as it were, an epilogue to the former chapter, by which he shows the end for which he gave a catalogue of the saints who excelled in faith under the Law, even that every one should be prepared to imitate them; and he calls a large multitude metaphorically a cloud, for he sets what is dense in opposition to what is thinly scattered. Had they been a few in number, yet they ought to have roused us by their example; but as they were a vast throng, they ought more powerfully to stimulate us. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Hebrews 12.1**

I thank You, Lord, for all those who have gone before me in faith, so that I might have faith in my day, and I may...

Pray Psalm 16.4-11.

Claim the Lord as your portion, lot, and inheritance; and bless Him for the counsel He provides. Set Him before you and preview your day with Him in prayer. Let the example of great saints you have known or read about come into your purview as you pray.

Sing Psalm 16.4-11.

Psalm 16.4-11 (*All to Christ: Jesus Paid It All*)

They endless tears shall weep who worship idols vain.
Their ways I will not keep, nor speak their empty names.

Refrain v. 11

Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand.
Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

My portion and my cup are You, my Savior dear.
You help and hold me up and ever keep me near.

Refrain

I bless Your Name, O Lord; my mind instructs each night.
You teach me by Your Word and guide me in the right.

Refrain

You are ever with me, Lord; in You I shall not fall.
But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.

Refrain

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,
You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.

Refrain

6 What Profit?

Pray Psalm 19.12-14.

Who can understand *his* errors?
Cleanse me from secret *faults*.
Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous *sins*;
Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
And I shall be innocent of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

Sing contemplatively Psalm 19.12-14.

(St. Christopher: Beneath the Cross of Jesus)

Who, Lord, can know his errors? O keep sin far from me!
Let evil rule not in my soul that I may blameless be.
O let my thoughts, let all my words, before Your glorious sight,
be pleasing to You, gracious Lord, acceptable and right!

Read 2 Timothy 3.15-17.

Prepare.

1. How have you found this study of genealogies to be of “profit” in your walk with the Lord?
2. In what ways do you hope reading genealogies in the future will make you more “complete” in Christ?

Meditate.

Here’s a simple syllogism:

All Scripture is profitable;
The genealogies are part of Scripture;
Therefore, the genealogies are profitable.

That has been the guiding premise throughout this brief study of the genealogies of Scripture. One of the ways that we may profit from this study is by gaining renewed excitement about reading and studying the Bible. Precious gems to profit our souls are embedded in each of these genealogies, and hopefully you are encouraged to mine them a little more carefully hereafter. Careful reading and thoughtful meditation on these genealogies can help us to become more complete in Christ, and equip us for good works in emulation of that great cloud of witnesses.

What profit of *doctrine* do the genealogies hold? They remind us that God is faithful, His covenant and promises are sure, and that His *project* cannot fail. They point to Jesus as the Head of the faithful people, and offer many insights to His character and work.

What profit of *reproof* or *correction* do they offer? Each name in those lists matters. But the ones we can connect to larger stories in the Scripture – the “big” names – should, as we come upon them, cause us to seek lessons for our own lives. How does this or that saint reprove or correct us? By looking

back at the lives of those mentioned in the genealogies, we can, with God's help, learn to live more Godly lives in our day.

What profit of *instruction in righteousness* do the genealogies provide? They remind us that, as God's *people*, we are called to be holy, righteous, good, and diligent about the *project* to which He has called us in our *place* of service. We see what God approves in them. We rejoice in their faithfulness in their day. We see how God corrects them. And we can learn from them what God requires of us in keeping the faith with our forebears and providing an example for the generations to come.

Now, as you read the genealogies, remember that they are the Word of God, and they can be profitable to us in many ways. Slow down. Read names aloud. Thank God for these saints. Reflect on their lives, and on God's faithfulness to and through them. Seek concrete instruction for how you can follow in their train as one whose name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Reflect.

1. What would you say to someone who asks you how to read the genealogies of Scripture?
2. How will your own approach to reading the genealogies change as a result of this study?
3. What profit do you expect to gain from reading the genealogies in this way?

To search the sacred Scripture is very good and most profitable for the soul. For, "like a tree which is planted near the running waters," so does the soul watered by sacred Scripture also grow hearty and bear fruit in due season. This is the orthodox faith. It is adorned with its evergreen leaves, with actions pleasing to God. John of Damascus (650-750), The Orthodox Faith 4.17

Help me to read all Your Word with profit, Lord, so that I...

Pray Psalm 19.7-11.

Thank the Lord for His Word – *all* His Word. Ask the Spirit to use His Word to transform you into the image of Jesus, and be specific in areas where you need to grow. Thank Him for the genealogies of Scripture, and for what you've learned concerning how they can be of profit to you in your walk with the Lord.

Sing Psalm 19.7-11.

Psalm 19.7-11 (*St. Christopher: Beneath the Cross of Jesus*)

The Law of God is perfect, His testimony sure.

The simple man God's wisdom learns, the soul receives its cure.

God's Word is right, and His command is pure, and truth imparts;

He makes our eyes to understand; with joy He fills our hearts.

The fear of God is cleansing, forever shall it last.

His judgments all are true and just, by righteousness held fast.

O seek them more than gold most fine, than honey find them sweet.

Be warned by every word and line; be blessed with joy complete.

7 What's in a Name

Pray Psalm 66.13-16.

I will go into Your house with burnt offerings;
I will pay You my vows,
Which my lips have uttered
And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble.
I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals,
With the sweet aroma of rams;
I will offer bulls with goats. Selah
Come *and* hear, all you who fear God,
And I will declare what He has done for my soul.

Sing joyfully Psalm 66.13-16.

(Regent Square: Angels from the Realms of Glory)

To Your house we come with offerings, what we vowed, Lord, help us do.
O, receive our praise and homage as we give ourselves to You.
Come and listen, all who fear Him: hear what this great God can do!

Read 1 Chronicles 1.5-7; 3.10-15; Matthew 4.4.

Prepare.

1. What differences can you observe between these two excerpts from genealogies? Do any names stand out? Why?
2. Choose one name on each list and meditate on it. Where do your meditations lead you?

Meditate.

As we bring our study of *Gleanealogy* to a close, let's look a little more closely at two excerpts from the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1-9. Our purpose will be to discover what's in a name, that is, how feeding on names from the genealogies can lead us into meditation, prayer, and perhaps even a renewed outlook on our lives in the Lord. Since every word of Scripture has some nourishment for us, we must take the time to feed on them.

For this exercise, I'm going to use what we might call a "meditation stream". I'm just going to let my thoughts run together, pausing to reflect a bit more as seems appropriate, and letting the stream lead me where it will. My purpose in this is to show you how pondering names in the genealogies of Scripture can provide food for your soul and profit for your walk with the Lord. These "meditation streams" are intended to be suggestive, not exhaustive.

So, let's start with 1 Chronicles 1.5-7.

Curious. The genealogies of those descended from Seth, who were returning to Jerusalem from captivity in Babylon, begins not with their line, but with the surrounding nations, the sons of Japheth. God doesn't want us to forget the nations; we're called to make them disciples (Matt. 28.18-20), even though the judgment of God rests on them (Rom. 1.18-32). God wants them to be before our eyes. Who are the "nations" to whom God is sending me today? Some names that the returnees would have recognized: *Tiras* – Tyre: judged by God, destroyed by Babylon and Greece. Why? Tyre was the economic giant of its day, and wealth was its god. Evidently, wealth is not god-enough. Hmmm.

Mesbech: Psalm 120.5-7. Implacable. Be ready; many unbelievers will never come to peace with God. You carry out your mission in a war zone, but you need to seek God's peace even amongst and for those who despise you. *Tarshish*: Don't run away from what God calls you to do in His *project* (Jonah 1.1-3). Don't get distracted, and don't be afraid. *Kittim*: Greece. Daniel warned about the coming power of the Greek king. Alexander's military successes would create a common (*koinê*) culture that would give us a worldwide language and the New Testament, and would expedite the initial advance of God's project. Thank God for the Greeks! God loves the nations, even those who prefer other gods. He can use them to bless His people, just as He intends to use us to be a blessing to them. Whom will You bless through me today, Lord?

Now let's turn to 1 Chronicles 3.10-15.

Solomon to Zedekiah: glory to gloom, blessing to bust, building to destruction. The glory of David's Kingdom, summarized and lost in a short paragraph; it doesn't take much to lose your way, once your heart has turned from the Lord. Good kings among bad: *Jehoshaphat* – "God judges." Yes, He does, even today (Heb. 12.3-11). *Joash*, *Hezekiah*, *Josiah*: Imperfect kings whom God used. Even as the kingdom of David declined into judgment, seasons of revival brought renewed hope and the return of God's favor. As bad as things can get, God can always revive us. He's looking for people to seek Him in prayer and stand firm in His Law. Faithful priests (Jehoida) and prophets (Isaiah) helped bring revival to the people of God. We need revival today, Lord. Help me to be faithful to seek You, and to encourage others to do so as well.

Don't miss the rich blessings that can come from feeding on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, including the names in the genealogies of Scripture. Not every name will yield such rich fare as I have outlined, but even if we only try to imagine these people as real people, needing the blessing of God in their day as much as we do in ours; and if we ponder them going about their daily tasks as the Lord *remembered* them, we may be led to give thanks for how God cares for us as well.

And let us be reminded that the fulfilling of that which is written in the Lamb's Book of Life is in our hands; for God, Who wrote the names in that Book, is pleased to secure their registration through the work His *people* do in carrying out His *project* in our own *place* and time.

Reflect.

1. What might you add to the first meditation (1 Chron. 1.5-7)?
2. What might you add to the second meditation (1 Chron. 3.10-15)?
3. Why is it important that we take the time, as we come upon them in our reading, to slow down and meditate on the genealogies of Scripture?

But the Savior's very response indicates that it was as man that he was tempted: "Not by bread alone shall man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God." So if anyone does not feed upon God's Word, that one will not live. Jerome (347-420), *Commentary on Matthew 1.4.4*

Renew me in Your Word today, O Lord, so that I might take my place as one of Your covenant people to work at Your project as I...

Pray Psalm 66.1-12.

Pray that God will revive you today, and that He will revive His people everywhere, that we might be

faithful in pursuing His *project* for making all the nations disciples.

Sing Psalm 66.1-12.

Psalm 66.1-12 (*Regent Square: Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Shout for joy to God, all people, sing the glory of His Name!

Give Him glorious praise and say, “How great Your pow’r and great Your fame!

All the earth shall worship gladly as they praise Your glorious Name!”

Great and awesome is our Savior in the works which He has done.

He the sea and river dried to let His people cross as one.

Then our joy was great to worship Him our mighty, sovereign One.

He the nations watches ever – all you rebels, humbled be.

Bless our God, all men and nations, praise His Name eternally!

He preserves our souls, and He will keep His paths beneath our feet.

You have tried us, Lord, as silver, and have brought us into nets,

made us carry heavy burdens, let men trample o’er our heads.

But through all Your grace sustained us and has brought us through to rest.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. A friend who has just begun to be an earnest reader of God's Word expresses frustration at having to read "all those lists of names!" What do you say to your friend?
2. You are reading the Word of God and suddenly you come upon a list of names – a genealogy. Rather than skim or skip it, what will you do – at least, this time through?
3. How can careful reading of the genealogies enhance our prayer life?
4. How can careful reading of the genealogies help to keep us on track with our calling in God's *project* to redeem His chosen people?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from part 4 of our study in *Gleanealogy*? How are you putting that lesson to work in your own life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

Thank you.