

Wednesday June 10 th	Genesis 36	61 Oh, sing a new song to the Lord
------------------------------------	------------	---

Today's hymn is the Scottish metrical version of Psalm 98

- 1 Oh, sing a new song to the Lord,
for wonders he has done ;
with his right hand and holy arm
the vict'ry he has won.
- 2 The Lord has made this triumph known,
displayed his saving might ;
he has revealed his righteousness
in every nation's sight.
- 3 He mindful of his grace and truth
to Israel's house has been ;
the saving power of God our Lord
earth's farthest ends have seen.
- 4 Earth, shout aloud to God the Lord
and make a joyful noise ;
break into song and celebrate,
sing praises and rejoice.
- 5 Sing to the Lord with sound of harp,
let harp and voices ring ;
with blare of trumpets, blast of horn,
acclaim the Lord, the King.
- 6 Let seas, and all within them, roar,
the world, and dwellers there ;
let streams clap hands, and mountains sing —
as one their joy declare.
- 7 Let these all sing before the Lord
who comes earth's judge to be ;
he'll judge the world with righteousness,
its folk with equity.

God's people are summoned to sing anew to God for his salvation and grace. But it isn't only his people who praise him: so do the land and sea, since they too are part of God's creation, and will also be redeemed. The musical side of the Psalmist comes to the fore, with the string and brass

sections of the orchestra joining in. This is a full-blown 'hallelujah chorus'!

The Psalm ends with a reference to God's judgement. Does this seem out of place here? Not at all, because the same justice for which people praise God near the start of the psalm is also what underlies the day of judgement. God's people have nothing to fear, because God is just. The judge of all the earth *will* do what is right. That is also a reason to sing praise to him, and a reason for hope in this sin-weary world. 'Spoiler alert' - read the last two chapters of the Bible to see this!

I recently asked a someone of they would do the reading for our Sunday service. 'Yes' they said, 'as long as there aren't too many 'begats' in it! I don't think they would have appreciated being given this chapter to read!

*Today's reading is **Genesis chapter 36***

This is the account of the family line of Esau (that is, Edom). Esau took his wives from the women of Canaan: Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite - also Basemath daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the sons of Esau, who were born to him in Canaan.

Esau took his wives and sons and daughters and all the members of his household, as well as his livestock and all his other animals and all the goods he had acquired in Canaan, and moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob. Their possessions were too great for them to remain together; the land where they were staying could not

support them both because of their livestock. So Esau (that is, Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir.

This is the account of the family line of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.

These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath. The sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz. Esau's son Eliphaz also had a concubine named Timna, who bore him Amalek. These were grandsons of Esau's wife Adah. The sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath. The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon, whom she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

These were the chiefs among Esau's descendants: The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau: Chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, Korah, Gatam and Amalek. These were the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in Edom; they were grandsons of Adah. The sons of Esau's son Reuel: Chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the chiefs descended from Reuel in Edom; they were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath. The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: Chiefs Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah. These were the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these were their chiefs.

These were the sons of Seir the Horite, who were living in the region: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These sons of Seir in Edom were Horite chiefs. The sons of Lotan: Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister. The sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal,

Shepho and Onam. The sons of Zibeaon: Aiah and Anah. This is the Anah who discovered the hot springs in the desert while he was grazing the donkeys of his father Zibeaon.

The children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah. The sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran. The sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan. The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

These were the Horite chiefs: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeaon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These were the Horite chiefs, according to their divisions, in the land of Seir.

These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned: Bela son of Beor became king of Edom. His city was named Dinhabah.

When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah succeeded him as king. When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king. When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, succeeded him as king. His city was named Avith. When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah succeeded him as king. When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the river succeeded him as king. When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan son of Akbor succeeded him as king. When Baal-Hanan son of Akbor died, Hadad succeeded him as king. His city was named Pau, and his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-Zahab.

These were the chiefs descended from Esau, by name, according to their clans and regions: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel and Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their settlements in the land they occupied. This is the family line of Esau, the father of the Edomites.

So, what are we to make of this chapter of 'begats'?

It comes straight after the final 'parting of the ways' of Jacob and Esau. This is a crossroads, not only of their two lives, but of history. Jacob would go his way to become Israel, and Esau in another direction as the ancestor of the Edomites. The rivalry between the twins would be repeated down the generations between Israel and Edom.

The tiny book of Obadiah is an oracle of judgement on Edom, because they stood by while Jerusalem was destroyed and its people exiled by the Babylonians in 597 BC. Not only did the Edomites fail to intervene, they even gloated over Israel's misfortunes, priding themselves in their mountain stronghold, perhaps a reference to their 'rose-red city of Petra, half as old as time', in the poem by John Burgon (any relation?). Obadiah promises that Edom will get its own judgement in due course, as indeed it did- Arab tribes from the Nabatean desert took it, and it eventually became the Roman province of Idumea, from where King Herod came. And yet, despite the long history of rivalry and even hatred, this chapter details the descendants of Esau. Like Ishmael before him, his family line is not blotted out, but is remembered by the Bible, and also by God. As scripture says, our names are engraved on the palms of His hands. John Gibson says that, humanly speaking, we may think that Jacob was a *greater* man than Esau, and Esau was a *nicer* man than Jacob. But if we cry 'unfair!', 'It belongs to God's peculiar grace not only to lay us in the dust but to challenge us to stand on our feet like men and dare Him to save us. Have we got what it takes to do that?'

Prayer

The day after the funeral of George Floyd in Houston, today's prayer is from Chris Hall, President, The Renovaré Institute (founded by Richard J Foster: www.renovare.org)

We bow the knee. We make no excuses. We name our sin as specifically as possible. We ask for grace for genuine repentance. And we pray: "Lord, have mercy."

We have refused to listen attentively to our black and brown brothers' and sisters' cry for justice.

We have been deaf to the prophet's call: "God he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress."

We have been intellectually lazy and morally obtuse. Our minds and hearts listen only to voices that reinforce opinions we already hold.

We have been blind to our complacency and complicity. We have caricatured or ignored books, poems, art, and films that challenge our prejudice and rebuke our ignorance.

We have been complicit in a culture that delights in falsehood and disregards the truth.

We have expected applause for our feeble thoughts and tottering steps toward your precious image bearers who daily experience the hatred and violence of racism.

We have been self-absorbed and self-deceived.

We have preferred teaching rather than being taught. We have manipulated and exploited.

We have feared losing our "rights," while withholding rights from the genuinely oppressed and desperate. We have lacked steady compassion and sturdy courage. Our response to the evil of racism has been short-lived and shallow.

We have loved the big deal and shunned hidden service.

We have hated our enemies and loved those who love us.
We have equated our own country with the kingdom of God.
We have embraced power and ignored the demands of love.
We have delighted in cultural conflict and disdained the pursuit of peace and understanding.

We have walled out the alien and the foreigner.

We have enacted unjust and oppressive laws.

We have incarcerated the poor and released the rich and powerful. We have gladly travelled the wide and easy road that leads to destruction and avoided the narrow road that leads to life. Oh, Lord, we have sinned, against you and against our neighbour, in the things we have done, and the things we have left undone.

We acknowledge our ignorance and willful neglect.

Forgive us. Cleanse us. Renew us. Reset our moral compass.

Fill the wind of our sails with the breath of your Spirit.

Propel us to the places and people who can teach us to love in new and unexpected ways.

We plead for deeper courage and compassion.

We ask for a quiet, teachable spirit. Give us love and humility to erase the boundary lines we drew in fear. Expand our vision to life and flourishing for all – from the unborn to those living on death row. We invite you, we welcome you, to plant new seeds in the garden of our minds and hearts.

The Lord is calling us to sacrificial love, a love where the currency of our words is backed by the gold of our lives. We have not yet reached this congruence. Jesus beckons. "Walk with me into a future that seems uncertain to you. It is not to me. I have a much larger pasture for you. Other sheep are waiting for you there. And I promise you, I will always be your Shepherd. Trust me. Be not afraid."