

Gen 45:1-8, 50:19-26
The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph- A Bridge to Moses
11/13/2011
Lynchburg, Virginia

EXHORDIUM

We have been making our way through the high points of God's covenant with mankind. From the beginning God has been faithful to His covenant even if man has been unfaithful. And thus we are to see that God's blessings come through promise and not through the flesh.

One way this stands out starkly in Scripture, especially in the Old Testament, is that God's blessings do not come through primogeniture, the right of the firstborn. Man's understanding is that they should come this way. The great patriarchs were always wanting to establish the promised seed through their firstborn but God always had a secondary plan, making the last first, so to speak.

It was not Cain, but Abel. Not even Abel, but Seth. Not Japheth, but Shem. It was not Haran but Abraham, not Ishmael but Isaac, not Esau but Jacob, not Reuben but Judah and Joseph, Not Manessah but Ephraim.

And so it is with God's choice that we might see that it is He that keeps His promises. And then we finally see that the promise is in the second man, the second Adam, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. But we also see how the natural right of the firstborn is restored in Jesus. He is the second Adam but He is the firstborn son of Mary, conceived of the holy ghost and born of her, yet without sin. And now the right of the firstborn has been restored but even more than that. The right of the firstborn has been granted to all of God's children. In Christ, we have all become heirs according to promise.

Today, we look simply at the bridge of time from the calling of and promise to Abraham until God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt. My main purpose here is to simply call you to remember and reread that story.

God calls Abraham and grants great promises to Him. Abraham is a man of faith and faithfully serves God. The promise is for descendants like the stars in the sky but faithful Abraham only lives long enough to see the beginnings of the promise in his son Isaac and grandson Jacob.

Even as the promises really begin to get rolling in the sons of Jacob, God has great suffering in store for Jacob and his sons and for many generations of Israelites. For a very long time, 430 years it looks as though the promises will not be fulfilled.

At the time that Jacob goes down to Egypt, 70 souls born of him go down with him. That is goodly start to filling the sky with offspring but it is just a start. They go to Egypt in great favor but Pharaohs arise that do not remember Joseph and the children of God are enslaved by the Egyptians for centuries. But God is not slow as some count slowness to keep His promises. We may not like His way but His way is to bring hope from despair and life from death. We see this in the deadness of Sarah's womb, the provision of wives for Isaac and for Jacob. We see it in the rescue of Jacob's family from famine and death through the savior, Joseph, who was dead but was found to be alive. We see this in the rescue from Egypt by a power that could only be defeated by the mighty hand of God. We see this in the birth of Christ from the Virgin womb and we see it magnificently in the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead.

This is God's way and though we now have a greater covenant based upon better promises in Jesus, God's way is still to reveal to us that He is our Savior and not we ourselves. In our flesh, we are firstborn sons, only heirs according to the flesh. But the fleshly heirs do not inherit the promises. It is those are birthed by Christ that inherit. So, we must learn that God is our Savior and apprehend this truth and the blessings by grace through faith, just like our father Abraham did.

When we look back at history it is very easy for us to conflate the time periods. We look at the ancient world and we see it all as one piece. We do not fully grasp the span of time from Abraham to Moses. But it was 430 from the call of Abraham to the Exodus of Moses. That is a long time to wait for God to begin to fulfill His promise of a great multitude in the land.

Even the time in Egypt, roughly 215 years can be easily conflated. But look at what God did during that time. From the 70 persons that went down to Egypt, millions came out of Egypt. God used that time to establish a great nation that was truly His nation and set them against the greatest power on Earth. God's people, enslaved in the flesh, were delivered by the power of God's Spirit.

EXEGESIS

ISAAC

It looks as though God would not fulfill His promise or maybe not in the way that Abram thought God had said but God came through. And even then, God wanted to know that Abram trusted explicitly in Him and believed that God could raise the dead. And God delivered salvation for Isaac.

JACOB

Gen 28:10-15 10 And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

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Gen 33:4 4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

JOSEPH

Gen 37:17-20 17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. 18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. 19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

45:1-8 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. 2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. 3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. 4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Gen 48:1-4 48 And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. 3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

Gen 48:18-19 18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. 19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

Gen 50:19-26 19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. 21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. 22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. 23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees. 24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. 26 So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

EXHORTATION

Where are you? I know you are all here, with me, at church. But where are you in your life? Do you have life by the tail? Do you have it figure out? Have you laid hold of the promise of God through your great zeal, faith and willpower? Are you like our young men, whose glory is in their strength?

Or, are you still waiting? Are you caught in the crunching power of this life looking around waiting for God to deliver you? Have you been waiting long? How long? Are you wondering what the purpose of this suffering is? Are you wondering why God would delay His salvation so long? Are you near the end of your ability to wait longer? Are you near this end according to your own measurement? Or God's?

Who says how long you have to wait? Who says how much you can endure? If your hope is in your own strength, you will neither take the promises by storm, nor be able to persevere through the stormy night. You are neither strong enough to take them nor strong enough to wait for them.

They are we not in a hopeless state? It seems that there is simply nothing we can do. We cannot grasp God's promises and we do not have strength to wait them out.

But your situation is not so hopeless as all that, unless you continue to hope in yourself or even in those around you to rescue you. Our only hope is in our God, who brings life from death and hope from despair. If we put our trust in Him, then we will see the promises of God fulfilled. I cannot say exactly how you will see them. No doubt, you have already seen God bring you to life from death many times. Your hopes, health, children, parents, fortunes, plans have been devastated and fulfilled in this life as a little picture of death and resurrection. Remember those times and trust God for even a greater deliverance in this life and in the life to come.

All of us will die. We will all suffer and die. Some of you will see much more suffering than others but the Lord will bring us all to the place where we will have to submit to Resurrection glory because we have come to learn that we cannot obtain the kingdom of God through our own life saving attempts. The only way to the glory of the Resurrection is through suffering and death. Even God in the flesh must enter glory this way.

So, let us find that place of rest in Jesus Christ. There is no other place to find peace and rest. In the world you will have tribulation but in Christ Jesus, hope and rest. Therefore, wait on God. He will not disappoint you.

To some of you this may not be a hopeful message. You want deliverance and you want it now. But deliverance is up to the Lord. I cannot grant it to you. But I can speak about God's promises to you. I can call upon you to look to Him, believe in Him, trust in Him. He is a gracious, merciful and kind Father and He is not slow about keeping His promises to you. His Spirit is with us ,with you. Look to Him and find that peace that passes understanding. Only then will you understand the blessings of God's promise.