

Genesis 47:27-48:22

“The God of Jacob Will Keep His Promises”

Sermon Outline

3.15.20

I. The Passage’s Tone

- A. Jacob is contented and peaceful as he places his full confidence in the proven promises of his God.
- B. His blessing pronouncements over his family have God’s covenant promises in full view.

II. God’s Covenant with Jacob

- A. The LORD’s first appearance to Jacob was in a dream at Luz in Canaan (Gen. 28:13-15)
 - i. There the LORD promised him: 1) the land Canaan 2) filled with innumerable of his offspring 3) who’d become a blessing to all nations (v. 14).
 - ii. The LORD also promised: 1) to be with Jacob, 2) to keep Jacob wherever he went, and 3) that He’d never leave him until He accomplished His promises (v. 15)
- B. Jacob initially appears skeptical over the vision in Gen. 28:20-21.
- C. The LORD proves His name and His promises to Jacob over time.
 - i. The ‘LORD’ meaning ‘The self-existing, eternal, supreme God’.
 - ii. His name is the most important aspect of the covenant promises.
 - a. I could promise to protect you, but I cannot determine that promise will come to pass.
 - b. Whereas whatever the LORD promises will absolutely come to pass.
 - c. This is what it means to be GOD.
 - 1. Every dust particle is guided by His good hand.
 - 2. If not, He would cease to be God and His promises could not be trusted (paraphrasing R.C. Sproul).
 - 3. Read Daniel 4:34-35 and Deuteronomy 4:39.
- D. Thus, Jacob concludes God has been his Shepherd every day of his life (Gen. 48:15).

III. Firstborn Blessing Ceremony

- A. The right of the firstborn was crucial to the family’s future.
 - i. Firstborn viewed as 1) ‘first of the father’s strength’; 2) ‘first rank’; 3) future head of the family after the father passed.
 - ii. As such, the firstborn received a double portion of the father’s inheritance to continue providing for and protecting the family both physically and spiritually.
 - iii. Hence, this blessing ritual looks bizarre to Jacob’s family.

B. Jacob's Unorthodox Firstborn Blessing Ceremony

- i. Jacob adopts his grandchildren and then blesses the second-born grandchild, Ephraim, with firstborn rights to the family. Why?
 - a. By doing this, Jacob sets up 3 sons as prominent within the family; 2 with firstborn rights (since Ephraim is Joseph's son).
 1. This was a way of honoring Joseph for his care and provision over the family.
 - b. This provides stable, healthy family leadership for generations to come.
 - c. It also puts Jacob's family in the best position to pursue God's covenant promises to one day settle in Canaan.
 1. Questions for dads and grandpas: *Are we putting our children and grandchildren in the best position to honor God and pursue His promises? Do we want what God wants for our families or only what we want? Are we an obstacle or a blessing to their spiritual life?*

C. Why Ephraim over Manasseh as the Firstborn?

- i. Possible Reasons:
 - a. Jacob may be following the example of Abraham and Isaac.
 1. Isaac blessed over Ishmael; Jacob over Esau; Joseph over Reuben; and now Ephraim over Manasseh.
 - b. The boys names may have influenced the decision.
 1. Names packed with meaning in the Ancient Near East.
 2. Ephraim's name reflected best the promises of God as it meant "doubly fruitful" whereas Manasseh's name meant "forgotten". God would make this family fruitful and not forget His promise to them.
- ii. Jacob's blessing is prophetic in nature.
 - a. From Ephraim's line comes faithful Joshua whom God would appoint to bring Israel into the Promised Land hundreds of years later (1 Chron. 7:20-28).
 - b. Ephraim's tribe would become greatest in Israel; Manasseh's also would be great.
 - c. Every word of Jacob's comes to pass.
- iii. Jacob's actions are evidence of the sovereign will of God who does not act according to human wisdom or custom, but according to His own counsel and purpose.
 - a. Read Romans 11:33-34; Psalm 139:6; and Isaiah 46:8-11

IV. The Greater Promises in the New Covenant

- A. All of this becomes a great comfort when we realize that Jacob's covenant promises point to future covenant promises from God.
- B. His future promise is an Offspring descended from Jacob Who would secure an eternal Land with eternal blessings for all nations.
- C. How would the Offspring secure these?
 - i. He earned an eternal inheritance from God the Father.
- D. How did He earn this?
 - i. The Gospel!
 - a. The eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ, became the firstborn son of Joseph, of the line of Jacob. Fully God and fully man, He determined to become the perfect sacrifice needed to satisfy God's wrath on behalf of sinners. And God accepted His Son's sacrifice for sin, because He raised Him from death! And of that, we are sure!

E. What are the spiritual blessings which flow from this Gospel promise?

- i. We are united to Christ (Rom. 6:5; Gal. 2:20; 1 Jn. 4:17)
- ii. We are adopted into God's family (Rom. 8:14-17)
- iii. We are cleansed from every sin and shame (1 Cor. 6:11)
- iv. We are justified; our guilt removed (Rom. 5:9)
- v. We are freed from sin's power and influence (Rom. 6:14)
- vi. We are loved unconditionally by God (Rom. 8:38-39)
- vii. We are reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:18)
- viii. We are holy and faultless before God (Eph. 1)
- ix. We are the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21)
- x. We are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who guides us as we walk by faith in these promises (Eph. 1:13-14)!
- xi. We are heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Ti. 3:7)!

V. Application

- A. Amidst the fear over the worldwide pandemic of Coronavirus, rehearse these promises we have through Christ, and share them with others that they might have them too!
 - i. Our lives are in the hands of God and not our hands.
 - ii. He is God and we are not.
- B. Let this time cause us to look forward to the Day when we all behold our God, face to face; to see His majesty, power, beauty, and glory; worshiping joyfully at the throne of His Son.
- C. Until then let's live like we're at the end of our lives, like Jacob, fixing our eyes on the promises of God, knowing that God of Jacob will keep every promise He has made to us!