

Howard's Corner

Chapter 8

The seed promise continues

As I left off in chapter 7 Abraham by faith had followed God's calling to the land of Canaan and believed the promises, He had made to give all this land to Abraham and his descendants forever. Abraham had the son of promise in his son Isaac and had even obeyed to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, but God intervened and stopped him and provided a sacrifice instead. This is a key point because as we will see later that this pointed to the sacrifice of Jesus (Messiah, The Seed, Savior) that was sacrificed for our sins and became the savior of the world.

So, Isaac continued to live in Canaan and had two sons which were twins. The one who came out first was Esau but coming out next was Jacob who was clinging to his heel. The custom was that the first born was to receive the blessing and inherit the father's estate. This then is also the inheritor of the seed line. Now as time passed their mother Rebekah plotted to have Jacob replace Esau as heir of the estate and the seed line. The plot caused Jacob to lure Esau to trade his inheritance for a bowl of stew. Then they deceived Isaac into thinking Jacob was Esau and Jacob received the blessing of the first born. So, the stage was set for Jacob to be the receiver of the seed line. So, we see that God has worked His will to establish the seed line as He has chosen even using this deception of Rebekah and Jacob. God has many times used less than righteous people to cause his purpose to be fulfilled. You will see this throughout the bible.

Now this deception causes much trouble for this family. Esau had planned to kill Jacob therefore it was necessary for Jacob to leave and go to a different country. Rebekah had come from the relatives of Abraham and had been sent for as a bride for Isaac and she had a brother Laban. So, Jacob set out for Rebekah's family to seek his bride and to escape from Esau.

Along the way he had an event where he saw angels descending and ascending upon a ladder from heaven. This we call Jacob's ladder today. God spoke to him from the top of the ladder and told him that he would possess this land and would

bless the world through him and his descendants. This is the same blessing God had promised to Abraham and to Isaac. So, the seed promise was passed on to Jacob.

Jacob reaches Laban's house and meets Rachel when he first got there and loved Rachel and wanted her for his bride. Laban however had another daughter named Leah who was the older one. Laban tricked Jacob into thinking he was receiving Rachel as his bride, but Laban substituted Leah on the wedding night for Rachel and Jacob went in to her thinking it was Rachel. Jacob had agreed to work for Laban for seven years to purchase Rachel for his bride. The next day Laban told Jacob that if he worked for him another seven years, he could have Rachel also. So, he stayed and worked for Laban for fourteen years for his two wives. It seems as though God had used Laban's deception to repay Jacob for the deception, he had played on his father Isaac.

You can read all the details in Genesis but for now I will just tell you that Jacob began to have children which became the nation of Israel. Leah had four and then the jealousy between the sisters caused the sisters to compete for more children and each used their maid servants to produce more children so eleven were born in Laban's house. The last one Benjamin was born to Rachel later. So, Joseph and Benjamin were the two children of Rachel. This then were the 12 children of Jacob (later to be named Israel). So, the seed line was somewhere in these 12 children of Israel, but we are not told which one at that time but later you will find that the seed line was through Judah who was the son of Jacob and Leah.

The number 12

We see one of the numbers God uses to amplify His word and its meaning. The number 12 is the number of God's governance. The twelve tribes of Israel grow into the nation of Israel. Although you will find that because of Israel's disobedience He scatters ten of these tribes into the world and they were never returned to the nation again. They are often called the ten lost tribes of Israel. This happened after Solomon died and the ten tribes broke off from the rest of Israel and formed their own kingdom with their own king. The remains of these 10 tribes came to be known as Samaritans which had similar beliefs as the Jews but were not associated with the temple in Jerusalem and had not kept themselves separate from the world but had intermarried with the people of the land.

The remaining tribes of Israel were Benjamin and Judah which stayed in Jerusalem and became the Judeans. When Jesus the seed did come much later this is the nation He came to. Note that Jesus called 12 apostles as His witnesses to the word He spoke on His first coming to earth. So, the number 12 is used again and in Revelation you will find that these twelve will rule over the nation of Israel in the Millennial reign of Christ. The word of promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the land would be given to them forever was not a conditional promise but when Israel rejected Jesus as their messiah (seed promise) they were then set aside for an unknown length of time so that the church age would happen during that time but once again Israel will be established and will occupy the land that had been promised. This will happen during the Millennial reign of Christ.

Now back to Jacob in Laban's house

Now Jacob had served Laban 14 years for his two daughters and their two maid servants who were the mothers of his 11 children. Laban recognized that he was prosperous because Jacob had been a blessing to him therefore Laban hired Jacob for another 7 years and made him an offer to share in the increase of the flocks but Jacob arranged the terms so that he would be prosperous, and he was, but then Laban tried to alter the terms so Jacob decided to leave with all his children and all his wealth and go back to Isaac in Canaan. So, he served Laban 20 years and then left to go back to the land of promise. God had promised to bless him during this time, and He did.

During the trip back there was much difficulty but I will let you read for yourself, but Jacob did have one encounter with God again and he wrestled with an angel (some believe this to be the pre-incarnate Christ) all night and at the end of the night the angel wanted Jacob to let him go and Jacob said he would not until he was blessed. The angel then changed his name from Jacob to Israel for he had wrestled with God.

Jacob did go back to the land of Canaan and stayed there for some time until one day the brothers of Joseph who did not like him sold him into slavery to Egypt and Joseph went through much difficulty for about 14 years until God worked in his circumstances to set him free. Joseph was gifted to be able to interpret dreams. One day the Pharaoh had a dream and Joseph provided the interpretation and

because of this he was made second in command to Pharaoh and governed all of Egypt during a famine time.

Later because of the famine the brothers came to Egypt for food. So, it came about that all the family of Jacob came to Egypt and eventually became slaves after Joseph's death. They lived as a separate nation and grew to great numbers so a new Pharaoh was threatened and treated them harshly. God heard their cry for help and sent Moses to lead them out of this bondage and to bring them back to the land of promise.

God used this time in Egypt to keep them separate from the surrounding nations and kept the nation pure and to protect the seed line. They came into the land with Jacob and all his sons and family about 70 and left with 600 thousand males along with children and wives. God's plan was to preserve them as a nation in Egypt until the time was right for them to return to that promised land. God's way sometimes seems strange to us but though it may seem to be for our trouble, but God means it for our good.

This is hard for us today because we only see the problems and the difficulties but if we are in Christ Jesus, he is working his plan in our lives to bring us to the place He has purposed for us. Sometimes patients are hard to come by, but we must keep our eyes on eternity and the sure promises of Jesus. We may not see the reason for our struggles and difficulties, but we are to always operate in faith. That is the lessons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that we are also to operate in a long-term faith, and we may not ever see the reason for why our lives are what they are.

The account of how they left Egypt and went to the promised land is recorded in the book of Exodus and others of Moses writings which are the first 5 books of the bible. These first five books are referred to as the history and the law.

I have left out a lot of detail in these writings for a purpose. I want you to go read all the detail for yourself and to get hungry to know the word for yourself. Only when you get hungry and thirsty for the truth will you find it. It does not come easily! It takes work and a lot of want to in your heart and mind. A part of it is that God is testing us all to see if we really believe and want to walk in His way. When you go back and read you will find the seed line continued through Judah and to Perez and others to Jesse and to David and then to Jesus who is **the promised seed**.

I pray His blessings be on all of you! Keep studying for the Holy Spirit will reward those that diligently seek those hidden nuggets of truth in His word.

Howard