

Brian Chesemore
SESSION 5 | Genesis 37-50

Starting Next week: One Another: Pursuing Community in a Culture of Self

I. Introduction

- A. Background
- B. Gen. 1:28: *And God blessed them*. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the flesh of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.
- C. Gen. 12:1-3: Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

“God is going to set into motion his long term inviolable plan to undo the catastrophic effects of sin and to bring his people back into his rule in his designated place.” (Daniel Morrison)

II. Genesis 37-50: The Story of Joseph

- A. God’s covenant faithfulness extends to Jacob’s descendants (37.1-2)
 - B. Joseph’s Folly (37.2b-11)
 - C. The Brothers’ Series of Unthinkable Decisions (37.12-38.30)
 - D. God’s Faithfulness to Joseph and His Promises (39-41)
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GENESIS: The Origin of the World & the beginning of the people of God

"God's sovereignty over people does not mean we do not experience pain and suffering. It means God is in control of our pain and suffering, and that he has in mind a beneficial purpose for it. There is no such thing as pain without a purpose for the child of God. We may be sure that however irrational and inexplicable it seems to us, all pain has a purpose." **Jerry Bridges**

- E. Joseph's Brothers and Their Travels to Egypt (42-45)

- F. Reunited, Resettled and Blessings (46-49.28)

- G. Jacob's Death and Joseph's Words of Comfort (49.29-50.21)

- H. Joseph's Death (50.22-26)

III. Theological Themes

- A. God's Sovereignty

- B. God's Covenant Promises

- C. Sin and this Fallen World

- D. Living by Faith

- E. Our Need for a Savior

Recommended Reading: *Living in the Light of Inextinguishable Hope: The Gospel According to Joseph* by Iain Duguid; From *The Gospel According to the OT Series* (P&R Publishing)

Recommended Listening: The Life of Joseph by Sinclair Ferguson (SermonAudio.com)

GENESIS: The Origin of the World & the beginning of the people of God

Reiterations of God's promise to Abraham, which was first declared in Genesis 12:1-3:

1. Upon Abram's arrival in Canaan he found the Canaanites in the land that had been promised to Him, thus the Lord reminds him of His promise. **Genesis 12:7** **"Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him."**
 2. After Abram lets Lot choose his portion of land, as they go their separate ways, God reminds Abram of the his promise. **Genesis 13:16** **"I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered."**
 3. Abram becomes distraught, for he does not yet see the fruit of God's promise like he desires, so God reminds him again of the inevitability of his promise through covenant. **Genesis 15:5-6** **"And He took him outside and said, 'Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."** [Also note the reaffirmation in Gen. 15:18-20]
 4. Abraham is 99 years old and God comes to him to remind him of his promise, and implements the covenant sign of circumcision, and gives details to the birth of Abraham and Sarah's heir, Isaac. **Genesis 17:4** **"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations."**
 5. Abraham and Sarah are told that Sarah "shall have a son". This makes Sarah laugh as she considers her old age. The Lord responded in confirmation of His word, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" [Note: The birth of Isaac is fulfilled, "as he (the Lord) had said" in Genesis 21:1.] **Genesis 17:4** **"Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations."**
 6. During the strife between Hagar and Sarah concerning Ishmael, Abraham is commanded to send Hagar and Ismael away, and is reminded that it is Isaac who is the son of the promise, thus the nations will be blessed through him. **Genesis 21:12** **"But God said to Abraham, 'Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named.'**
 7. Abraham has been tested by and has shown his faithfulness and trust in him, in that he was willing to sacrifice his only son, the son of the promise, Isaac. God reaffirms his covenant after this great display of Abraham's faith. **Genesis 22:17-18** **"...indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 'In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."**
 8. God comes to Isaac to establish with him the understanding that he is apart of something for bigger than himself. The promise that belonged to his father belongs to him. So, God keeps him from sojourning to Egypt to escape the drought by comforting Isaac with his promise that he will preserve him and his descendants. **Genesis 26:3** **"Sojourn in this**
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land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.”

9. Isaac and his family are forced away from their settlement near the Philistines after growing in prosperity to the point where it became intimidating to these people. As Isaac is forced to move, God reminds him of the promise he made to his father Abraham, and that it remains secure. **Genesis 26:24** “**And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham’s sake.”**”
10. **[Note:** This promise has now become ingrained in the family lineage with its language being used in Isaac’s patriarchal blessing. (Gen. 28:3-4)]
11. Jacob is on his way to Haran to find a wife from his grandfather’s people when God meets him on his journey to reaffirm the promise to Jacob that God had made with his grandfather, Abraham. **Genesis 28:13-15** “**And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, ‘I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the West and to the East and to the North and to the South; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.’”**”
12. God renames Jacob (to Israel) and establishes that the promise of Abraham and Isaac belongs to him. **Genesis 35:11-12** “**God also said to him, ‘I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you.’”**”
13. God comes to comfort Jacob in his personal need for reassurance to go to Egypt. **Genesis 46:3-4** “**So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph’s hand shall close your eyes.”**”

[Note: The following chapters seem to be silent when it comes to God’s audible voice reminders for his people of the promise, but it is obvious to Joseph (and the reader) that God was continually working out that promise (Gen. 45:7-8). Jacob dies with the promise of God saturating his speech as he blesses Joseph and his brothers, and prays to “...the God who has been my Shepard all my life long...”(Gen. 48-50) The lives of these patriarchs may have ended, but the story of “The Promise” was far from over.]
