

“The Foundations of Our Faith Revealed, Theme by Theme in Genesis — With God, Our Weakness Reveals His Strength, Part 2”

Our Theme Verses:

[READ] Gen. 50:18-20

18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

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.

With God, Our Weakness Reveals His Strength!! Amen.

Today's Outline: In Genesis Eight Exemplars of Our Faith Stand Before Us — Part 2!

Plus eight more — Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barach, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel after the Genesis list, then many unnamed who “died in faith not receiving the promises”:

Heb. 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that **they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.**

Again, Our Weakness Reveals His Strength!!

Hebrews 11 provided our outline the last time we met:

- ***Adam — His Sin Brings the Plan of Redemption to His Fallen Race (Gen. 3 & Rom. 5)***
- ***Abel — God Provides a Path to Fellowship with Sinners though a More Excellent Sacrifice (Gen. 3)***
- ***Noah — He Preaches a Coming Judgment Never Seen Before (Gen. 6-8)***
- ***Abraham — He Is Called to Walk by Faith Where No One Has Walked Before (Gen. 12-15)***
- ***Abraham & Sarah — By Faith Their Weaknesses Are Turned to Strength (see Heb. 11 & Rom. 4)***
- ***Abraham — He Offers up the Son of the Promise Expecting to Receive Him in Resurrection (Gen. 22)***
- ***Isaac — He Blesses His Son Jacob through Weakness of Body but Strength of Spirit (Gen. 28)***

Today our outline includes the other patriarchs following Isaac, namely, Jacob and Joseph. Note as we look at these today that there is a contact of human weakness and sin emphasized in each of them, though great acts of faith and works of faith are also highlighted as the Hebrews 11 list emphasizes. For our study today though we will especially focus on the humanness of the record as we did last time:

But, to begin with, just a little review:

- ***Firstly, we remember well Abraham & Sarah, who By Faith Saw Their Weaknesses Turned to Strength (see Heb. 11 & Rom. 4)***

Gen. 16:1-2

1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

- ***And so our theme is found revealed here on nearly every page in Genesis! For now we see in chapter 17 how many years of their weakness displayed openly yields an opportunity for the Lord to reveal his power and strength:***

Gen. 17:1-8

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. *[So the promise of chapter 15 will be an everlasting one!]*

- *But again, only a few verses later, we read these words:*

Gen. 17:18-22

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac *[Meaning “laughter”]*: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.

20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

- *And then again Abraham who offers up the son of the promise fully expecting by faith to receive him back again in resurrection (Gen. 22):*
 - *And then the story of Isaac and his blessing of his sons, BUT REMEMBER THE CONTEXT OF THAT BLESSING AS IT IS GIVEN THROUGH THE WEAKNESS OF JACOB AS HE STEALS HIS BROTHER’S BIRTHRIGHT — AND THEN ALSO LATER HIS BLESSING:*
- *And then finally, the blessings of Isaac for his son Jacob through weakness of body but strength of Spirit (Gen. 28):*
 - *This leads directly into our focus today, with Jacob and Joseph. For Jacob steals Esau’s birthright AND blessing...*

Today’s Outline:

- *Jacob — He Makes a Vow to Almighty God, “If God Will Be With Me” (Gen. 28)*
- *Jacob — The Lord Changes Jacob’s Name to Israel, A Prince with God (Gen. 32)*
- *Joseph — He Hopes Against Hope for the Blessed Nation by the Visitation of Almighty God (Gen. 50)*
- *Israel — He Dies with the Hope of a Future Resurrection in the Land of Promise (Gen. 50)*

- **Joseph — He Reaffirms Israel's National Heritage In His Final Words of Testimony (Gen. 50)**

I. Jacob — He Makes a Vow to Almighty God, “If God Will Be With Me” (Gen. 28):

[READ] Gen. 28:20-22

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

- *In the realm of his flesh, he says in a vow to Almighty God: “If God will be with me ... then shall the LORD be my God”. Surely his relationship with the God of his fathers was “at arms length”. At this point in his life Jacob knew the LORD was Isaac and Abraham’s personal and faithful God. I am amazed to think of how he must have felt all these years living in unbelief.*
- *But was the Lord his own God, his own personal God? The Lord would not have this issue of relationship to continue much longer, though, and he intersected in a real and life-changing way with Jacob as he had so often in the lives of his father and grand-father. He had lived his life in the shadow of their faith — but now his turn had come and the Lord God would be faithful.*

There are so many ways this applies to ourselves, aren’t there? Are we taking these words to heart?

Our theme is written here so boldly: with God, our weakness reveals his strength.

II. Jacob — The Lord Changes Jacob’s Name to Israel, A Prince with God (Gen. 32):

Gen 32:1-13

1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This *is* God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:

5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.

12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13 And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother;

Key Verse:

[READ] Gen. 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

- *Jacob confessed that he was not worthy so he gives this example — he became two bands! These words, “With my staff”, point to what would become the sign or mark of his humanity, of his deep failure to believe and trust in the Lord God Almighty — his staff!*

Gen. 32:22-32

22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

24 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27 And he said unto him, What *is* thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

29 And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore *is it that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

31 And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

- ***Jacob was truly alone. He had sent his entire life over the river splitting his family into two groups for added safety. But he had stayed behind. Fear was motivating him as was so common, fear of Esau. He wants to defend his family though but in his heart he is in a turmoil. He is doubting the promises of God directly spoken to him, he is fearful of the coming of 400 armed men with Esau, and, he trusts in his own long-earned strength and wisdom as the patriarch of his family.***
- ***But Verse 24 says it truthfully and well: “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.” He was not worthy of the blessing of all of the mercy and all of the truth”! That in contrast to the words “now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”***
- ***So Jacob was in fear for his life and in his human heart of rebellion and sin he expected a massacre EVEN THOUGH the Lord had promised in such a marvelous way to protect him from all foes.***

- *But there is more. He knows in his heart that it is the Lord God with whom he is struggling all night. That is clear from these words: “And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” The next words must have cut him to his heart and soul, for “... he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”*

He could not have heard these words without remembering how he had stolen his brother's blessing. After all, his name means “supplanter” or “the one that takes the place of”, or simply, “thief” in the Hebrew. And what does the Lord ask him next but for his name? He relies, “Jacob”. Indeed, Jacob was attempting to steal yet another blessing.

- *The Lord's response here gets to the heart of our subject today, how God's strength is manifested and revealed “through our weakness”. It is “Jacob”, the one proving his own weakness, who rather than trusting in God, wrestled with the Lord for a blessing while trusting only in himself. He should have submitted in defeat, of course. But he would not.*

But the Lord here blessed him ANYWAY by firstly giving him a new name, and secondly, saying that he had won the match and therefore had power with God as well as with man.

- *I find this quite overwhelming, actually. The applications to us who live under the wealth of grace today should be so clear. Jacob the fallen sinner has been made into a prince before Almighty God! What about you? What about me? What should our response be?*

III. Joseph — He Hopes Against Hope for the Blessed Nation by the Visitation of Almighty God (Gen. 50):

- *This section begins with Jacob blessing Joseph in a most touching way:*

Gen. 48:1-7

1 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.

5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

6 And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, *and* shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same *is* Bethlehem.

- *This would have been so personal and moving for Joseph, since he was but a young child when his mother died during in the childbirth of his brother, Benjamin. And, of course, it was a moving statement indeed for his father as Rachel was his only true and faithful wife, the love of his heart and life.*
 - *This section continues with Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph, of him who was “separate from His brethren” (Gen. 49):*

[READ] Gen. 48:8-14

8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who *are* these?

9 And Joseph said unto his father, They *are* my sons, whom God hath given me in this *place*. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so *that* he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.

11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near unto him.

14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

- *A quick comment in passing is appropriate here since Jacob is it notes “guiding his hands wittingly or with knowledge and intent. He knew where the eldest would have been placed, at his right hand. So he crosses his hands intending to bless the younger. My, my, again God directs in the lives of his people and here Jacob clearly knew what he was doing in giving the blessing to Ephraim rather than Manasseh!!*

Key Verses:

[READ] Gen. 48:15-22

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

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.

20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

- *Why was Joseph not content to be buried permanently in Egypt? Because of the prophecy here. After blessing Joseph's sons “knowingly” or “wisely”, meaning not randomly or arbitrarily (but by a sensed guidance from Almighty God), he blesses Joseph with this prophetic statement that surely he never forgot: “God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.” I believe it is significant that in addition to the prophecy based on resurrection in the Land of Promise, he adds the words concerning a piece of land and how that was obtained, by the bow and sword!*

These words Israel (not Jacob) spoke to Joseph (not to his sons). They answer the question “why not Egypt” and must have stuck with Joseph all the rest of his life.

- ***Now we reach the most important blessing of all for Joseph:***

[READ] Gen. 49:22-26

22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him:

24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

25 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

- ***So it was that Jacob / Israel died surrounded by his sons and their families. They would all die in Egypt, but not before Joseph and his sons had made a great pilgrimage back to the promised land to bury Jacob as Joseph had sworn to do.***
- ***And they died, all of them ... in Egypt. And so our theme is magnified again. Our weaknesses but His strength is manifest!***

Gen. 49:33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

...

IV. Israel Dies with the Hope of a Future Resurrection in the Land of Promise (Gen. 50):

Genesis 37 brings Joseph into Egypt as a slave. But chapters 49 & 50 end the book with these words:

Key Verses:

Gen. 50:1-3

1 And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

3 And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days.

Gen. 50:4-7, 13

4 And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

5 My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

6 And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

7 And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

...

13 For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.

- *This is not the end of the story for Joseph. He was sold into Egypt as a slave but by the all powerful and faithful work of the Lord God Joseph becomes King Regent in Egypt now grieves his Father's Death in the burial in this sacred place where his great-grandfather and grandfather are also buried. See also Gen. 49:31.*

We have reached the final page of this inspired record and will now see it to be glorious indeed:

V. Israel's National Heritage Is Reaffirmed in Joseph's Final Words of Testimony (Gen. 50):

Key Verses:

Gen. 50:14-17

14 And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying [*they lied!*],

17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

[READ] Gen. 50:18-23

18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we *be* thy servants.

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.

[READ] Gen. 50:24-26

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.

- **Verse 26: “So Joseph died ...”: The frailty and sin of man has again raised its ugly head ... cp. Heb. 11’s ending — “all died in faith not having received the promises ...”. Why not? “God having prepared a better thing for us”!**
- **So in an amazing way God’s plan for Israel was INTERRUPTED because of his even better plan for us Gentiles.**

- *They lived under the law .. jug death. We under unlimited grace...*

Our Concluding Thoughts:

- *God did not create man in his own image with the liberty of free will and potentially sin and rebellion without the plan and promise of a coming redeemer. And then when sin and rebellion came upon mankind God through satan's tempting of Eve and Adam's sin, the Lord God used that for great blessing for many.*

Gen. 50:18-20 [Main theme verse in Genesis today]

18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

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.

With God, our weakness reveals his strength. Whether it be through Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, or Joseph, all were part of the same mighty work of the Lord God. And we ourselves are also part of the great train of witnesses:

2 Cor. 2:14-17

14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

- *Well, we have finished up our series on the Strength of God Revealed Through Our Weakness as revealed in Genesis. I hope it has been a blessing.*