

## THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

"O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here." –12th Century Hymn

## God & His People: His Promised Visitation

### The Background:

- After blessing his sons, Jacob gave instructions to them that he be buried in the same tomb with his fathers in the Land of Canaan.

### The Death and Burial of Jacob: Genesis 49:28-50:14

"I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, <sup>30</sup> in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. <sup>31</sup> There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah— <sup>32</sup> the field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites." ... —Gen. 49:29b-32

- This was the tomb acquired by Abraham in Gen. 23:16-18
- The text mentions that Jacob was embalmed, something that the Scriptures record happening to only one other Hebrew (Joseph, 50:26).

So Joseph went up to bury his father. With him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, <sup>8</sup> as well as all the household of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's household. Only their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. <sup>9</sup> And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen. It was a very great company. —Gen. 50:7-9

- This was a large burial party that included many Hebrews, but was a majority Egyptian.

Jacob's burial in Canaan emphasized the importance of the \_\_\_\_\_ in relation to God's promises to the Hebrews.

### Jacob & His Brothers: Genesis 50:15-21

<sup>15</sup> When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." <sup>16</sup> So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: <sup>17</sup> 'Say to Joseph, 'Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.'" Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup> His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants."

- The brothers feared that Joseph's kindness to them had been solely on account of his love for his father and thus they feared he would now take his revenge. Joseph was grieved by their failure to trust him.

<sup>19</sup> But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. <sup>21</sup> So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

- Joseph's response to his brothers serves as the climax to the final portion of Genesis. Given the opportunity once again to take revenge upon his brothers, he instead shows them grace, comforting them and promising to provide for them.
- His words also provide the interpretive framework through which we are to understand all of tragic and sinful events of Genesis.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of God over all things guarantees that nothing occurs randomly or without \_\_\_\_\_.

- The overall purpose of the things which God allows may or may not be understood during our lifetimes.

#### Some other examples to consider:

- \* The story of Judah and Tamar —————> Matt. 1:3a
- \* The Polygamy of Jacob —————> Gen. 46:8-27
- \* Jacob's deception of Esau and Isaac —> Gen. 28:13-15
- \* The story of Lot and his daughters —> Ruth 1:4; Matt. 1:5b
- \* Abraham's journey to Egypt —————> Exod. 3:13-22; 7:5

## The Final Words of Joseph: Genesis 50:22-26

<sup>22</sup> So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years. <sup>23</sup> And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were counted as Joseph's own. <sup>24</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." <sup>25</sup> Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." <sup>26</sup> So Joseph died, being 110 years old. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

- Joseph gave instructions that he, like his fathers before him, was to be buried in Canaan. He did this, however, in the context of a prophecy regarding the work of God in the future.

"...God will visit you..." → The Greek term from the LXX used here is ἐπισκοπή (*episkopē*) which is one of the terms used in the NT of the role of elders in the church. So, God's visitation of His people involves His oversight and care of them.

The final words of Genesis are a \_\_\_\_\_ that, in His timing, God would act powerfully on behalf of His people!

⇒ The initial fulfillment of this promise occurred in the days of the exodus.

**Exod. 3:16-17a**—Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites

**Exod. 13:19**—Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here."

## The Promise of God's Visitation in Light of the Storyline of Genesis

### The First Promise of Genesis

**Gen. 3:15**—I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

→ This is \_\_\_\_\_ promise of God which stands as the backdrop of all of the rest of His promises to His people.

- The image is of a human deliverer who will one day come and defeat the great enemy of God's people. Throughout the OT God will raise up human deliverers for His people, and yet each of these will themselves be sinners and the deliverances they bring will be only temporary.
- Following the exodus, the greatest OT deliverance of God's people, there continued to be prophecies regarding a future "visitation" of the Lord, particularly after the fall of the kingdom when the people were taken into exile.

### The Expectations Surrounding God's Visitation

1. \_\_\_\_\_ for the unrighteous.

**Is. 29:5-6**—But the multitude of your foreign foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the ruthless like passing chaff. And in an instant, suddenly, you will be visited by the Lord of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ for the people of God.

**Is. 40:1-3**—Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

**Is. 40:9-11**—Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

The initial fulfillment of the OT promises of God's visitation of His people was the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus! (Mark 1:1-3)

- In the incarnation we see God's promise of a human deliverer combined with His promise to visit His people!

⇒ He was rejected by those who should have recognized His coming.

**Luke 19:44b**—And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

### Encouragement for the People of God Today

**1 Peter 2:11-12**—Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.