

"But wait, there's more"

[For those online, there is the text of Scripture at the end]

Introduction

17 chapters of the Bible are given to Joseph. That's more than Abraham by 4 and more than Jacob his father as the central character in the book by 5. What a hero he must be. What a multitude of experiences we will see and from which we will learn. He will be chased by sexually charged women and apparently die ignominiously. He will escape slavery and a dungeon, will be found faithful though forgotten in prison. From the depths of the pits, he will be elevated to Prime Minister in Egypt. This is an amazing man, to be sure. Joseph is not only famous as the star in the Broadway/London show "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," he actually started in the original cast of the Bible.

A curious phrase marks the birth of this hero, and his name cries for another. It's the looking forward, that which we see in every late night infomercial, which drives his mother and father. The ad tells you "not only get the slicing, and dicing machine; you not only get the knives and the other cutlery, wait, there's more." The promise of the one thing anticipates yet another and it's not fulfilled until all the package is promised and delivered. So it is here. Rachel names him "Joseph" and the world has been awaiting his greater brother ever since.

Of course, 'wait there's more' is not always good. Think of the frog and the fortune teller.

Fortuneteller, gazing into crystal ball, to frog: You are going to meet a beautiful young woman. From the moment she sets eyes on you she will have an insatiable desire to know all about you. She will be compelled to get close to you--you'll fascinate her." Frog: "Great,

the story of the princess and the kiss. Where am I? At a singles club?" Fortuneteller: "No, froggy, in a Biology class."

Today we will reflect on Abraham's covenant renewed via similar misfortunes, through similar manipulations, and similar miracles.

1. The situation of misfortunes

"Mishaps are like knives that either serve us or cut us as we grasp them by the blade or the handle." James Russell Lowell.

Last week we observed the marriage between Leah and Jacob. The scene was ironic if not comic. Jacob was promised one wife, and instead woke up with her older sister in some bait and switch game by their father Laban, Jacob's uncle. What a wacky situation that was.

Even though Leah and Jacob had 4 children by the end of the last chapter, Jacob still loved Rachel more than her older sister Leah. But the situation was unfortunate. Rachel was barren. This sounds all too familiar in the Scriptures, doesn't it? Sarah, Abraham's wife, had been barren; Rebecca, their daughter in law, was barren, too. So the involvement of the Almighty in the fortunes or misfortunes of his patriarchs continues. No wonder then this theme continues later in the life of Hannah with her newborn Samuel. Hannah's magnificat is glorious to listen to. And then a few more hundred years later another Jewish woman Miriam has a baby, she sings a magnificat hymn of praise to God as well. That story is one that many will read and listen to over the next few days. It's the Christmas story. The story of the virgin who was visited by the Almighty, and her newborn Y'shua is the Gift of God to the world. The Saviour is born; the angels sing. The cattle are there in the manger scene. In due course, wise men from Persia arrive and bring gifts. Another startling tale, and one about which we will continue to speak, not only today, but until our Messiah returns.

Rachel, back to our story, is upset at her condition. She almost yells at Jacob and tells him to 'give her children or else she will die.' [Hava lee banim, v'eem ayin meitah anochi] (verse 1) Who would know that this hyperbolic

expression of her being upset would eventually be a true statement about her condition. When she does have her second child, Benjamin, she will die. (35.16-18)

Jacob in direct contrast to the response of his father at Rebecca's similar announcement, yells back at Rachel. (verse 2) "Am I in God's place, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" I don't imagine the household was a house of peace, by any means. Isaac had comforted his wife in her distress (25.21); Jacob lets Rachel have it. Rachel cries back in frustration for Jacob to take Bilhah, the personal maid of Rachel and have a child by her for Rachel. Dan and Naftali are both born, one after the other, meaning that Jacob visits Bilhah at least twice in the proverbial meantime. Listen to the motivation of Rachel. "God has ... given me a son" and again "I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed." Her motivation was not that of our real matriarch Eve who acquired a man, from the Lord and named him Cain. Rachel is not on about making a name for her husband or her family or for God. She is simply in a classic sibling rivalry battle with her sister Leah for the affections of their husband Jacob. This family is borderline if not consummate dysfunctional!

The battle continues years later as Reuben, Leah's firstborn finds some magic mandrakes and Rachel wants them brought to her. The mandrake is nicknamed "the love apple", the roots of the mandrake plant were considered an aphrodisiac by the ancients, and used to promote sexual activity and conception (Song of Solomon 7.13)

The old British proverb says, " Eat a live toad the first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day. " Maybe Rachel should have tried that one on.

2. Similar manipulations

What is motivating Rachel in the mandrake scene? Verse 14 says she wants them. Obviously she is still hoping for a child. Leah in verse 15 retorts that the affections of Jacob are still in the Rachel side of things, so she will keep the mandrakes.

Sure enough Jacob has two, no the Bible says, three more children with Leah: Issachar, Zebulon and Dinah the daughter.

Rachel has tried yelling at her husband; she has tried manipulating the situation with her handmaid Bilhah. What does it take for her to have a child and be the favorite of her husband? In her mind the word "I" is central. She wants him to love her. After all it was she who was wooed and kissed by Jacob upon seeing her at the well. It was she who was fought for and worked for. She should be the most relevant and more loved of the sisters.

Manipulations don't work.

3. Similar miracles

But then a miracle happens. The Bible doesn't call it a miracle, but there is an intervention by the Lord into this situation. It's introduced here in verse 22 "God remembered Rachel". Did or does He forget things? Does He need help in remembering, since He has so much on His mind? Not at all; He is simply using a human term "vayizkor". The commentators all agree that this expression indicates action based on a previous commitment (9.15, 19.29, 30.22, Ex. 2.24, 6.5, Luke 1.72, 73) not merely mental recall. God had promised; God will fulfill His promises. Rachel would be visited by the Almighty and a child would be born. But listen to her words at the birth announcement. Verse 24 "She called his name Joseph, "The Lord shall add to me another son." Huh? Is it something I missed? She named him Joseph which means the additional one or the one we add-on. But it seems to indicate that she's not finished. What does it say to you?

I believe Rachel knew she wasn't done bearing children. And prophetically something else was happening. Joseph will be the featured hero of the next section of the book, after we get Jacob reconciled to his brother Esau (which is another major theme of the book and of our Aussie lives as well). Joseph doesn't really become central to the story until chapter 37. However he is introduced into the narrative to help us get a glimpse not only of him, but of the Messiah to come and of the future.

What I mean is that Joseph, the additional one, is the one who actually announces the Future One. He is the add on who looks forward to the ultimate Add On. There is another son coming. But wait, there's more! Who is he? What will he look like? Will she have to use mandrakes to get him or will she be remembered by the Lord in a similar way? Will it come to her or to her children? These kinds of questions are all found in our minds due to the use of the name Yoseph. The NASB says "May the Lord give me another son." The NKJV says "The Lord shall add to me another son." Either way you read it, it's announcing something later.

Some will make mistakes about the future.

Theoretically, television may be feasible, but I consider it an impossibility--a development which we should waste little time dreaming about. Lee de Forest, 1926, inventor of the cathode ray tube.

I think there is a world market for about five computers.

Thomas J. Watson, 1943, Chairman of the Board of IBM.

We don't think the Beatles will do anything in their market.

Guitar groups are on their way out. Recording company expert, 1962.

Of course, we know that Rachel will have another son and his name is Benjamin. But anticipation is not fulfilled with Benjamin. The Torah continues long after him. Moses might be the fulfillment of the 'another son' imagery. His story immediately follows the stories of Joseph in Egypt. But the Bible through Moses gives us hope of another son, yet to come.

In Deuteronomy 18, we read, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. "This is according to all

that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' "And the LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. 'But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' "And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Thanks be to God who has unveiled for us the Messiah Y'shua. He is the one also born from a supernatural birth. He is the one who was the Greater Son of Jacob whose announcement reads something like, "The Lord added another son, My Son, the Son of God, who will die for our sins and give us eternal life." Anyone who will not listen to him will be judged; all of us who follow him will have eternal life and pleasure with God. Don't wait, He's more and He wants to give more to you.

Summary

Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God. Corrie Ten Boom.

Here are some things I see as we conclude, and you can add your thoughts to your own list.

- 1) God's covenants will be completed and fulfilled by God
- 2) God's covenants are not about your finding pleasure, although you will have it. It's about God and not about you.
- 3) Sibling rivalry never produces long lasting relief
- 4) Trust God to fulfill His promises and enjoy celebrating those with His people

Dear friends, we have eternal life due to the Saviour Y'shua, due to His love and forgiveness. His Resurrection has proven His new covenant. His teaching is great, and yet it goes well beyond that to His life and death. No amount of good works will give us enough information to help us overcome evil. No amount of information will help us overcome our own evil inclination. Only the messiah can repair our relationship with God, which will in turn give us pleasure with Him.

If you have never experienced this eternal and new life about which we are speaking, if you are yet outside the relationship with God, then pray with me. If you haven't yet been restored into fellowship with Him, maybe God is vindicating you today. Won't you pray this prayer and ask God to forgive you of your sins, whatever they might be, and come home to pleasure with God? Lord forgive me in the name of the Messiah, the Serpent Bruiser, Y'shua himself. Forgive me for all my sins, and make me clean again. Give me eternal life in the name of Y'shua and make me born again. I trust you.

Actual Text

Gen. 30:1 ¶ Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, "Am I