

May 5th

THE GOD WHO KEEPS HIS PROMISES

“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.” **GENESIS 12:1-3**

“Connect with your family story and discover the what, where, and who of how it all leads to you.” This is the catch slogan that appears on ancestry.com’s website. It sounds quite intriguing to people that enjoy researching their family trees. But do you see who’s at the center of the story? You guess it...you! No wonder they use this slogan, because me, myself, and mine are some of the biggest words in the English language. The slogan scratches the itch of our selfish society. The story of Abraham and his descendants flips this idea on its head. How does it do that? The story of his family tree doesn’t point to him...it all points to God and His faithfulness to fulfill His promises.

Today we close the book on Genesis and God’s men that we find there. But there’s one last thing that God shows us here, and it’s found in the family tree of Jacob. Remember what I’ve been reminding you about? Details matter. Names matter. When Moses slows down to give you all the descendants in the line of Jacob, he’s making another point about the God who accomplishes exactly what He promised to Abraham hundreds of years before. Abraham was a fatherless husband who was traveling with his father’s family, but then his father died in Haran. Abraham was stuck...until God called him. God called him to leave his father’s family and his known land. Abraham obeyed God. God’s promise to him was to make from him a great nation. But how does God do this?

In Genesis 46, it still seems like God’s promise to Abraham is underwhelming. The family tree is listed with Jacob’s sons and their sons. But Abraham’s land isn’t central. Abraham’s descendants still must depend on another great nation to protect them. Egypt is the mighty nation, while the Israelites must depend on Joseph and Egypt to survive. But look again. God is making a point through the number that Moses gives here. In Genesis 46:27 God says, “And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two. All the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy. You can see the progression from the one child Isaac that was born to an old man and woman to now seventy persons in Egypt. But there’s even more. We end Genesis and begin Exodus with 70 people. Then God gives us the short details of what about a few hundred years can bring: “But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.” Once Moses leads the people out of Egypt another number is given: “And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.” Conservative numbers place the number of Hebrews at this time of the Exodus at about two million people! God has fulfilled his promise to Abraham to give him a great nation.

Men, how are these facts significant to us? God fulfills his promises despite opposition from outsiders and the sinful hearts of his chosen people. We’ve seen that God’s men aren’t perfect, far from it. But God. God’s promises aren’t based on our faithfulness. He keeps His promise to us even when we are defiant and unfaithful. Today you have hope not because of your own strength to follow God, but because His strength to hold you. How does this give you hope today?

Spend some time praising God for His promises that He’s given to you. Ask Him for help in trusting that He’s always faithful to you, even when you’re unfaithful to Him.

For Further Reading: Genesis 46:1-27

