

Genesis, Part 37

As we continue our story, Joseph has been reunited with his family, and with the permission of Pharaoh, they have settled in the land of Goshen, also known as the district of Rameses, in the fertile Nile Delta. There they will be somewhat isolated from Egyptian influence to prosper and grow as a nation. The text now gives us a look at Joseph's wise administration of the affairs of Pharaoh.

Joseph and the Famine

Genesis 47:13 Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine. ¹⁴ And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain that they bought. And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁵ And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone." ¹⁶ And Joseph answered, "Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone." ¹⁷ So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. He supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. ¹⁸ And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent. The herds of livestock are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land. ¹⁹ Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate." ²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe on them. The land became Pharaoh's. ²¹ As for the people, he made servants of them from one end of Egypt to the other. ²² Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived on the allowance that Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land.

²³ Then Joseph said to the people, “Behold, I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. ²⁴ And at the harvests you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households, and as food for your little ones.” ²⁵ And they said, “You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh.” ²⁶ So Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh’s.

²⁷ Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly.

Joseph proved to be a wise administrator in the land of Egypt, so that under his authority the people were saved from starvation and Pharaoh prospered. The ruler by now was Sesostris III (1878–1843 B.C.).

In selling food to the people during the severe famine, Joseph accepted money until they had exhausted their supply of money. He then took livestock (horses, sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys) as payment for the grain until that was exhausted. All this he turned over to Pharaoh. With no more money and no more livestock to purchase grain from Pharaoh, he collected the land as payment, except for the land of the priests. Once the land belonged to Pharaoh, Joseph instructed the people to plant seeds which he gave them. His only stipulation was that Pharaoh must receive a fifth of all the produce. In a word, the people survived but they (except the priests) were in bondage to Pharaoh.

However, in the land of Goshen, the Israelites prospered and multiplied greatly. So God blessed His people according to the promises He made to Abraham. They were fast becoming a great nation. Moreover, God blessed Pharaoh because he had blessed the seed of Abraham with the best of Egypt. Later in the time of Moses, when another Pharaoh oppressed Israel, God dealt harshly with the Egyptians.

Gen 47:28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years.

²⁹ And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If now I have found favor in your sight, put your

hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, ³⁰ but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place.” He answered, “I will do as you have said.” ³¹ And he said, “Swear to me”; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.

Genesis 47:28 begins a long segment about the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh that runs through Genesis 48:22. It begins with the statement that Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years to the age of 147. If the year of Jacob’s move to Egypt was 1876 B.C. then Jacob died in 1859. His birth, 147 years earlier, would have been in 2006 B.C.

At the end of his life, Jacob exhorted Joseph to swear that he would bury him where his fathers had been buried. He was referring, of course, to the Cave of Machpelah which had been purchased by Abraham (Gen 23). Wanting Joseph to affirm that he would carry through on his promise, Jacob asked his son to put his hand under Jacob’s thigh which was a solemn sign that if the oath would be carried out, Even as he neared death Jacob (here called Israel) worshiped.

Jacob? Israel?

Why is Jacob sometimes called Israel even after his name was changed to Israel by God? Some have suggested that the name “Jacob” represents his old nature and “Israel” his new. That is, he is called “Jacob” when functioning in his carnal old nature, but he is called “Israel” when he is acting out of his new nature. This interpretation could have limited merit in some passages, but it does parallel the Christian’s experience as presented in Ephesians 4:22–24, “To put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Buried in Canaan?

Why is Jacob/Israel so concerned that he will be buried in the land promised to him by God? One suggestion is that he is concerned the 12 brothers and their descendants will get too comfortable living in Egypt and not want to return, but God will deal with that issue when we get to the next book Exodus. More likely it is because all the promises of God to the

patriarchs and Israel are earthly in nature. That is fulfillment of the covenant promises happens here on earth with the establishment of the Kingdom (Millennium) and the earthly reign of Messiah after the Tribulation. It does however continue into eternity. The Church, on the other hand, sees its future as more heavenly – being snatched away by the Rapture to live in the Heavenly Jerusalem. And like for Israel, that also continues into eternity. I am not suggesting that Israel and the Church will be segregated but that the process for getting to eternity is down two different paths to the same end. With that earthly fulfillment in mind, the fact that Jacob wants to be buried in the land is evidence of his faith in the resurrection. He hopes to be raised from the dead in the Promised Land. Israel is now a man of faith.

Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

Genesis 48:1 After this, Joseph was told, “Behold, your father is ill.” So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ² And it was told to Jacob, “Your son Joseph has come to you.” Then Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed. ³ And Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, ⁴ and said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.’”

Israel is near death when Joseph takes his two sons to visit the old man. Though weak, he sat up in bed and gave details of a dream when God appeared to him back in Canaan and restated the Abrahamic Covenant.

There are three specific points in the Abrahamic covenant: 1) the nation, 2) the land, and 3) the blessing. But two important points for Jacob are when God said: 1) “I will make you fruitful and multiply you,” and 2) “And I will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.”

The third part pertaining to the “blessing” is what is important to you and me. “In you shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” “So that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith” (Gal 3:14). While God has made good on two parts of the covenant, the nation and the blessing, but the Jews do not yet have the promised land. They may be residing there now, but one could easily argue that they are still subject to ejection from

the land. Full and eternal possession will not formally begin until Christ reigns here on earth, and they will be called to return to the promised land. Only then will they live there in peace.

Gen 48:5 And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. ⁶ And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁷ As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).”

Jacob adopted Joseph’s two sons as his own, thus they would have equal standing with Reuben and the others. In the future inheritance of the land, all other sons of Joseph would be reckoned as belonging to either Ephraim or Manasseh. Jacob gave the birthright to Joseph by elevating Ephraim and Manasseh to the rank of firstborn sons, thus giving a double portion to Joseph (1 Chron. 5:1-2). The recognition of Joseph’s sons would affect the apportioning of the land of promise years later in the days of Joshua (Josh. 16–17). Jacob’s elevation of the sons of Joseph was prompted by his recollection of Rachel, his favorite wife, who died in the land of Canaan (cf. Gen. 35:16–20).

Joseph’s two sons will become the heads of two tribes in Israel. Joseph will not have his own tribe, instead, he received a “double blessing,” and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, each became his own tribe (Genesis 48; Joshua 14:4; Ezekiel 47:13). The Bible does, on occasion, refer to a “tribe of Joseph” (Numbers 13:11; 36:5; Revelation 7:8). However, in the contexts, the “tribe of Joseph” seems to be referring to either the tribe of Ephraim or Manasseh, or to the “house of Joseph,” which included Ephraim and Manasseh. The fact that there were tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh makes 13 tribes, but Levi was not counted as a tribe because he was the father of the priestly tribe who was not given land or territory but scattered among the other tribes. In this scene, Ephraim and Manasseh would have been over 17 years old and probably in their early twenties because they were born before Jacob came to Egypt.

This next passage gets a little confusing, and I will later attempt to remove that confusion. Meanwhile, read it carefully, maybe at least twice, and I think you will see what I mean.

Gen 48:8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?"
9 Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them."
10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. 11 And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." 12 Then Joseph removed them from 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 him. 14 And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn). 15 And he blessed Joseph and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, 16 the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

There were a lot of eye issues in the Middle East, especially in those days. The reason may have been the brightness of the sun and so few clouds to mitigate the effects of its brightness or cataract from age. Jacob's eyes were "dim with age" and he had trouble identifying the two young men with Joseph and asked for their identities. Once identified he called for them to come near to receive his blessing.

Stop there! It appears to me, and many others, that this scene is very disjointed. Consider that Jacob is nearly blind and sees the two boys with Joseph but does not recognize them, and he would have known them. They are brought near to him, and *it appears* they sit on the old man's knees where he hugs and kisses them. He then makes the statement about being surprised he is seeing Joseph (who he thought was long dead) and

his sons. “Then Joseph removed them from his knees.” What? He then seems to return the boys to Jacob where he blesses them.

The Torah we have today, the first five books of the OT, are thought to be a combination of much older sources. Jewish Biblical scholars believe what we are seeing in this passage and some preceding it is the amalgamation of two of these older sources. Furthermore, they believe that this scene is a combination of two scenes. One is when Joseph rode his chariot out to meet his family arriving in Egypt, and the other is 17 years later when Jacob is near death and Joseph brings his two sons for Jacob’s blessing.

Genesis 48:1-7 is part of the later second meeting between Joseph, his two sons, and Jacob. The boys would have been adults probably in their early twenties at that time.

Verses 8-12 shift back to the first meeting 17 years earlier when Jacob arrives in Egypt and is met by Joseph and his sons who would have been around 4 or 5 then. It is then that the old man asks who the two boys are. Identified by Joseph, Jacob puts them on his knees, kisses them, and embraces them. It is then that Jacob makes the statement that he thought he would never see Joseph again and certainly not his children. That earlier scene concludes in Genesis 48 with verse 12, “Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.” The rest of the scene in Chapter 48 with the formal blessing takes place some 17 years after the first meeting and begins with verse 48:13. This is the only interpretation that makes any sense to me.

Continuing with Chapter 48

Joseph brought the two boys closer and arranged them in a manner so that the right hand of Jacob would fall on the head of the elder son and his left on the younger. Normally the elder son would receive the greater blessings, thus the right hand of the one blessing would fall on the elder. But even though his eyes were “dim with age” he saw what Joseph did and crossed his arms so that his right hand fell on the younger and his left on the elder. I am assuming the two boys (young men) kneeled here for Jacob to be able to place his hands on their heads.

Joseph, like so many others, expected God to work in a certain way but found that He is often pleased to work differently and sometimes even unconventionally. But faith recognizes that God's ways are not man's ways. It took Jacob a lifetime of discipline to learn that fact. But he learned it, and now he blessed the younger over the elder. For four consecutive generations, this reversed pattern was followed: Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben, and Ephraim over Manasseh.

Gen 48:17 When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head." ¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations." ²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. ²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. ²² Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow."

Joseph saw what his father was about to do by swapping his hands to bless the younger over the elder. Probably thinking the old man's eyesight was deceiving him, Joseph tried to correct his father, but the old man knew exactly what he was doing. Why did he do this? Jacob's words, "I know, my son, I know," expressed the confidence of his faith: he was blessing the boys according to the divine plan revealed to him by God, not according to normal custom. He had learned that despite what man attempted to do, God had blessed him, the younger. This he now carried forward to Joseph's sons. Years later Ephraim became a leading tribe in the Northern Kingdom, much superior to the tribe of Manasseh, just as Jacob had predicted. And Joseph through his 2 sons would get a double portion in the land.

Jacob Blesses His Sons

Genesis 49:1 Then Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come.

Before he died, Jacob uttered patriarchal prophecies regarding the future of all of his sons. The expression “days to come” (49:1), sometimes translated “last days,” is regarded by some as embracing in some sense the Messianic age. Others think the expression simply means something like, “in the distant future.” In any case, the eleven paragraphs that follow outline Jacob’s predictions regarding his sons. The sons are not all mentioned in the order of their birth and no satisfactory explanation for this unusual order has been suggested.

Gen 49:2 “Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel your father.

³ “Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power.

⁴ Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father’s bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!

Ruben gets nothing because of his sin of violating his “father’s bed” when he bedded his concubine.

Gen 49:5 “Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords.

⁶ Let my soul come not into their council; O my glory, be not joined to their company.

For in their anger they killed men, and in their willfulness they hamstringed oxen.

⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel!

I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.

Simeon and Levi were men of violence and not justice, men of uncontrolled anger and fury, with disregard for men and animals. Here was God’s moral

judgment on their slaughter of the Shechemites (34:25–29). God distinguishes holy war from vengeance. Both tribes were later scattered (49:7). Simeon was largely disintegrated with its land inside that of Judah; (Josh. 19:1, 9), but Levi was afforded an honorable dispersion because it was the priestly tribe (Josh. 21).

Gen 49:8 “Judah, your brothers shall praise you;
your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
your father’s sons shall bow down before you.

⁹ Judah is a lion’s cub;
from the prey, my son, you have gone up.

He stooped down; he crouched as a lion
and as a lioness; who dares rouse him?

¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,
until tribute comes to him;
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

¹¹ Binding his foal to the vine
and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine,
he has washed his garments in wine
and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

¹² His eyes are darker than wine,
and his teeth whiter than milk.

What we have here is a picture of Jesus Christ in His Second Coming. In this oracle, Jacob predicted a fierce lion-like dominance of Judah over his enemies and over his brothers who would praise him. A wordplay was made here on the name Judah which means “praise”. The oracle pivots on the word until Genesis 49:10b. When the Promised One who will rule the nations appears, the scene will become an earthly paradise. These verses anticipate the kingship in Judah culminating in the reign of Messiah (cf. the tribe of Judah, Rev. 5:5), in which nations will obey Him.

The NASB renders the third line of Genesis 49:10, “Until Shiloh comes.” Many sources, including the Targum (Aramaic paraphrase of the OT), see “Shiloh” as the title of the Messiah. However, the Hebrew word *šîlōh* should be rendered “whose it is,” that is, the scepter will not depart from Judah “... until He comes whose it (i.e., the scepter) is” or as the NIV puts it, “to whom

it belongs”. We have similar words in Ezekiel 21:27, “until He comes to whom it (the crown, Ezek. 21:26) rightfully belongs” were addressed to the last king of Judah.

Gen 49:13 “Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea;
he shall become a haven for ships,
and his border shall be at Sidon.

¹⁴ “Issachar is a strong donkey,
crouching between the sheepfolds.

¹⁵ He saw that a resting place was good,
and that the land was pleasant,
so he bowed his shoulder to bear,
and became a servant at forced labor.

Zebulun would be enriched by seaborne trade (though it did not actually border the Mediterranean; cf. Josh. 19:10–11). Like a strong donkey, the tribe of Issachar would be forced to work for others. Issachar, located in the fertile broad pleasant plain of Esdraelon, was often subject to invading armies.

Gen 49:16 “Dan shall judge his people
as one of the tribes of Israel.

¹⁷ Dan shall be a serpent in the way,
a viper by the path,
that bites the horse’s heels
so that his rider falls backward.

Dan shows another disparity between calling and achievement. Dan was to provide justice (“Dan” means “judge”), but the tribe chose treachery, like a snake by the roadside. In the time of the Judges, the first major practice of idolatry appeared in the tribe of Dan (Jud. 18:30).

Gen 49:18 I wait for your salvation, O Lord.

¹⁹ “Raiders shall raid Gad,
but he shall raid at their heels.

²⁰ “Asher’s food shall be rich,
and he shall yield royal delicacies.

²¹ “Naphtali is a doe let loose

that bears beautiful fawns.

Jacob then interjected a request for deliverance by the Lord in verse 18. He may have been indirectly reminding his sons of their need for dependence on the Lord. Or he may have been expressing his desire to enjoy the messianic hope when he would be delivered from all trouble and grief.

Three of the six Hebrew words in verse 19 are a play on the name Gad (“attack”): “Gad will be attacked by a raid of attackers, but he will attack.” The verb *gādaḡ* means “to break into” or “to attack.” Border raids were often experienced by the tribes settled east of the Jordan River (e.g., 1 Chron. 5:18–19).

Asher would be fertile and productive, providing rich food. That tribe settled along the rich northern coast of Canaan. Naphtali, like a doe, would be a free mountain people. Deborah sang of the people of Naphtali risking their lives “on the heights of the field” (Jud. 5:18). That tribe settled northwest of the Sea of Kinnereth (Galilee).

Gen 49:22 “Joseph is a fruitful bough,
a fruitful bough by a spring;
his branches run over the wall.

²³ The archers bitterly attacked him,
shot at him, and harassed him severely,

²⁴ yet his bow remained unmoved;
his arms were made agile

by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob
(from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),

²⁵ by the God of your father who will help you,
by the Almighty who will bless you
with blessings of heaven above,

blessings of the deep that crouches beneath,
blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

²⁶ The blessings of your father
are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents,
up to the bounties of the everlasting hills.

May they be on the head of Joseph,
and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers.

This oracle treats Joseph more lavishly than any of the others. Jacob took up the promise of fruitfulness from the name of Joseph's son Ephraim (which means fruitful) and lavished the promise of victory (Gen. 49:23–24a) and prosperity (v. 25b) on Joseph's two tribes. Victory in battle was experienced by Joshua, Deborah, and Samuel, all of the tribe of Ephraim, and by Gideon and Jephthah, both of Manasseh's tribe. In these verses are several marvelous titles for God—the Mighty One of Jacob ... the Shepherd (cf. 48:15), the Stone (Rock) of Israel ... your father's God ... the Almighty—the One who ensures blessings from the heavens above (i.e., rain for crops) from the deep ... below (i.e., streams and wells for water), and from the breast and womb (i.e., abundant offspring). Jacob bestowed on Joseph the greater blessings because he was the prince among his brothers.

Gen 49:27 “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf,
in the morning devouring the prey
and at evening dividing the spoil.”

²⁸ All these are the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him.

The oracle about Benjamin describes a tribe violent in spirit: a ravenous, devouring wolf like the cruel Benjamites in Judges 20, and Saul, a Benjamite, as seen in 1 Sam. 9:1–2; 19:10; 22:17.

These oracles serve a purpose in the book similar to that of Noah's oracles about his sons (Gen. 9:24–27). Both look ahead prophetically to the destinies of the sons at the end of their respective ages—Noah in the primeval days and Jacob in the patriarchal.

Jacob's Death and Burial

Gen 49:29 Then he commanded them and said to them, “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, ³⁰ 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. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and

Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah— ³² the field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites.” ³³ When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

Once more the subject of a patriarch’s grave became important, as Jacob instructed Joseph to bury him with his fathers in Canaan, not in Egypt (cf. 47:29–30). That is where his hope was. At the Cave ... of Machpelah near Hebron were buried Sarah (23:19), Abraham (25:8–9), Isaac (35:27–29), Rebekah (Isaac’s wife, 49:31), and Leah (Jacob’s first wife, v. 31).

So Jacob died after 147 years of struggle; his sorrow came to an end. Infirmities, he had many; sins, not a few. But Jacob had an unquenchable desire for God’s blessing. He had a deep piety that habitually relied on God despite all else. In the end, he died as a man of genuine faith. He learned in his life where the real blessings came from, and he fought with God and man to be privileged to hand them on to his sons.

He ends a final act of faith, looking forward to the day he would be raised from the dead in the land, according to the promises of God.

Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.