

00-07-23a

As we continue our worship this morning, turn with me for our scripture reading to Psalm 65. Psalm 65. One of the themes that has been woven through both our New Testament study in Luke and our Old Testament study in Genesis is the great provision of God that is available to the people of God if we choose to claim it.

If we take advantage of the opportunity to submit ourselves to the righteousness of God instead of seeking to establish our own, as Paul talks about over in Romans. That was the problem in Israel, seeking to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God. It's a fairly common observation when you look around that everyone pretty well thinks they're right in what they do.

There was a program on television this past week that we watched about as much of as we could tolerate, but they had a group composed of former homosexuals and current homosexuals. And the former ones are believers and have established a ministry that helps people recover from that lifestyle. And then, of course, they set them in opposition to those who think that it's a perfectly fine lifestyle and why are you trying to rescue people from something that we think is perfectly okay? You're born this way.

You should be encouraged to be all that you can be as the person you were born to be kind of a thing. But this is exactly what Satan would love the world to believe, that as a man thinketh in his heart, he's right. The Bible says, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

And if you think toward God, if you pursue righteousness by faith, you're going to be one thing. If you follow the dictates of your own heart, the heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, according to Jeremiah 17.9, then that's what you're going to be. We are what we think.

And our thoughts can be taken captive for Christ if we turn them over to God, if we pursue the transformation, the laying of ourselves on the altar of Romans 12. We choose what happens to us. We are the captains of our own soul.

And that is something God has given each one of us. And we can run our ship into the rocks, or we can sail into the safe harbor, seeing how many different metaphors I can weave into one introduction here. But the opportunity is ours.

The choice is ours. It's not predestined. It's not predetermined.

It's not conditioned by birth or circumstance. In that light, when we come to Psalm 65, we find that deliverance is available from God. That's salvation in the absolute sense.

Salvation from eternal damnation is available. Also, daily deliverance. Deliverance out of this present evil age.

Deliverance from ourselves. Remember the little comic strip guy that said we have met the enemy and he is us. We sometimes need to be delivered from ourselves.

We don't have the power to change our own nature. I had another conversation this week with, in fact, two different conversations and exposure to some material about the psychopathic personality and how modern treatment and psychiatrists and psychologists acknowledge, you can read this in the professional journals, that when someone is diagnosed as psychopathic, they've made many efforts over the last decades to attempt rehabilitation of psychopaths. But the problem with trying to rehabilitate a psychopath, part of the definition of being psychopathic is that you think your aberrant, abnormal behavior is normal and that everyone else is out of step.

When you do wrong things, wrong by an objective standard to you, it's not wrong. Therefore, you have no motivation to change. You have no sense of guilt.

You have no sense that you're the one that is abnormal. You think you're normal and everybody else is strange. So attempts to rehabilitate psychopaths have been a dismal failure.

There is a 0% success rate in treating psychopaths, except when those individuals come to Christ. Even then, it's not unheard of for believers to be psychopaths. The deliverance is available, but it has to be claimed.

And it is along the lines of demon possession. The same principle is pictured in demon possession, where you're in the grip of something beyond your control. It's something inside you, and only falling at the feet of the Master can bring about deliverance.

But there were many demon-possessed people in Jesus' day who never came to Him, who didn't take advantage, who didn't avail themselves of that deliverance. But Psalm 65 is a song of praise to God because deliverance is there if we claim it. Praise is awaiting you, O God, in Zion, and to you the vow shall be performed.

O you who hear prayer, to you all flesh will come. Iniquities prevail against me. As for our transgressions, you will provide atonement for them.

Blessed is the man you choose and cause to approach you, that he may dwell in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, of your holy temple. By awesome deeds in righteousness you will answer us, O God of our salvation, you who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth and of the far-off seas, who established the mountains by His strength, being clothed with power.

You who still the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the peoples. They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of your signs. You make the outgoings of the morning and evening rejoice.

You visit the earth and water it. You greatly enrich it. The river of God is full of water.

You provide their grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its ridges abundantly. You settle its furrows.

You make it soft with showers. You bless its growth. You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths drip with abundance.

They drop on the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks. The valleys also are covered with grain.

They shout for joy. They also sing. You'll notice that there is great prosperity and great abundance described in this psalm.

But what precedes it? Praise is awaiting you, O God, in Zion. To you the vow shall be performed. You who hear prayer, to you all flesh will come.

He talks about a time when iniquities were prevailing, but God provided atonement for them. Blessed is the man you choose and cause to approach. This would be a favorite place for a Calvinist or someone in Reformed theology to come and say, now see, it's God that causes them to come.

But what precedes this? Someone is already praying. Someone is already claiming God's atonement for sin. And this is pictured by what the Scriptures say over in Isaiah.

Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear. This is a believer who has been separated from God by iniquities. And this has been described in modern times in our past training in some cases by talking about being out of fellowship.

Losing fellowship with the Father because we sin. And to recover from that condition, acknowledging our sins, claiming God's grace and forgiveness and cleansing so that we can be restored. The man who is chosen by God is the one who has claimed atonement for sin.

And the one who was afar off is brought nigh. This is both at the point of our initial salvation from the lake of fire, and then when we have failed, when we have sinned, when we have given in to the lust of the flesh or the temptations of the world or whatever else it may be, how are we restored? How can we walk again in the light? We come to God. We pray.

We acknowledge the fact that for our transgressions He has provided atonement. And at that point, God says, Come near. Approach.

And we are restored to that chosen status, to the place where we can dwell in His courts and be satisfied with the goodness of His house. That's why we always pause at the

beginning of our worship through the study of the Word of God to clear our minds and prepare our hearts by making sure that there is no obstacle to walking in the light where God dwells and of seeking insight and understanding of His Word. If we have unacknowledged sin, if there are those in our periphery that we have failed to forgive ourselves, then we are not forgiven.

And our progress is put on hold until we pay attention to that very necessary cleansing. The picture that we've alluded to many times of God's instruction to David. David comes to God and says, I want to build a house for you.

I'm dwelling in a palace and you're still in a tent. I want to build the temple. And God says, Your job is to purge out the enemies, to cleanse the land of the Amorites, the Canaanites, all of those other ites that Israel had been charged with driving out and destroying before them.

They were still in the land. And God says, I'm not going to come and dwell in the land until it is purged of these individuals that represent evil and iniquity. So you are the man of the sword.

You are the man of blood. You go out and hack and slash and drive these enemies out of the land and your son will build the temple. And the principle that we derive from that is that we need to purge out the leaven.

We need to drive out the enemies in our souls so that it can be a dwelling place for God. Jesus told His disciples in the upper room that the one who has His words and keeps them, He is the one that has love for God. Love for God the Father, love for God the Son.

And they in turn will come and make their home in His soul. So that's what's being pictured here. At the beginning of the Psalm, all the rest of this blessing and prosperity that is pictured here is conditioned on deliverance from transgression.

The one who comes to God and performs His vow. What does it mean to perform a vow? It means that this is your priority. This is uppermost in your mind.

To be pleasing in God's sight. To come before Him even in failure and claim His forgiveness, claim His atonement so that we can approach, so that we can dwell in His courts and be satisfied with the goodness of His house. And you'll notice in verse 5, when He comes in prayer, when He claims atonement, He says, By awesome deeds in righteousness, You will answer us.

He doesn't say, You will court us. You will come and get us. You will initiate a relationship with us.

He says, You will answer us. This is the answer to someone who has approached. O God of our salvation, You who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth.

It doesn't matter where you are, what your situation is, where you're coming from. The seas, which are consistently a picture of evil in the Old Testament. The wicked are like the troubled sea.

God establishes His throne upon the flood. God is the confidence of all the ends of the earth and of the far off seas. There's no place we can go.

There's no depth to which we can fall where God cannot reach and lift us up because He established the mountains by His strength. Mountains are a picture of power. The top of the mountains is as close as you can get to the divine.

And yet God is the one who established those mountains by His strength. He's clothed with power. There's nothing that's too hard for Him.

You who still the noise of the seas and the noise of their waves and the tumult of the peoples. And you see the linking there of the wash of humanity that we find ourselves engulfed in. Whatever society brings by way of pressures, by way of contact with evil, God is great.

God is powerful. He can deliver us. Those who dwell in the farthest parts fear God's signs.

They see God's signs. They know that He's there. And they are afraid.

You make the outgoings of the morning and the evening rejoice. Whether something is just beginning, whether something is ending, we can rejoice. We can rejoice on the way into the day.

We can rejoice on the way out of the day because of God's bounty and His blessing. He visits the earth and waters it. He enriches it.

The river of God is full of water. There's no lack of provision. There's no lack of blessing.

You provide grain. You water the ridges. You settle the furrows.

You soften it with showers. You bless its growth. And we think of the parable of the soils and the opportunity that we have to be fruitful fields.

It's God's power. God waters. God softens.

God does everything that results in the fruitfulness of our particular field. But we have to be those who choose to be a fruitful field. We have to be the ones who want to perform that vow, if you will, who want to observe that priority.

And we come to God and expect that He will hear our prayer and that He will forgive and cleanse and that He will bring us to that place of prosperity, the dwelling place of His

holy temple. And when we are in that place, He will crown the year with goodness. His paths drip with abundance, dropping on the pastures of the wilderness, the little hills rejoicing on every side.

You know how it is with a mountain. You have foothills all around. And when the mountain is blessed with rain and so on, it trickles down.

And this is a picture of blessing by association. Just being near the mountain of blessing, the little hills are going to rejoice on every side. And the pastures are going to receive that water.

In a lot of places, the mountains stick up so high into the atmosphere that that is a place where you have temperature inversions and it produces rain and clouds. There are mountain ranges that are always enshrouded in clouds. And there is a constant moisture that either results in snow capping those and then the melting of that feeds the streams and rivers and everything flows downhill by way of blessing.

We usually think, well, it all flows downhill in terms of cursing. But blessing also flows down to the pastures which are clothed with flocks in the valleys, covered with grain. They shout for joy and sing.

And rather than dwelling on failure or sin or those things that caused us to come to God and claim His atonement for transgression, we concentrate on the blessing that is ours because He forgives, because He cleanses and because He restores us to that place of blessing and fulfillment where we are fruitful and where our lives reflect His glory. So this is a great psalm that gives us that balance. We have the acknowledgement of the fact that there was a problem that we needed to approach, we needed to pray and claim.

And because of that, God chooses and causes us to approach so that we can dwell in His courts. Let's turn back now to Genesis where we resume our study. Right at the end of chapter 48, we last visited this time in history to see Jacob on his deathbed calling for Joseph to bring his sons.

And when they approach, he blesses them. There's going to be a blessing on all the sons of Jacob, but this happens first. Joseph is the 11th of 12 sons and his sons Manasseh and Ephraim are grandsons of Jacob.

And yet, the first blessing to be given by Jacob just before he leaves this life is to his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh. And there is a strong example here of the theme of reversal bypassing the firstborn, the expected target of things to choose and single out the younger son. And in this case, even the sons of that son.

So he came, he crosses his hands and places his right hand on the head of Ephraim and his left hand on the head of Manasseh. The expected outcome would have been the reverse, that the right hand would go on the eldest son Manasseh, but that doesn't take

place. And so Joseph saw that his father in verse 17 of chapter 48 had laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim and it displeased him.

And he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said, Not so, my father. This one is the firstborn.

Put your right hand on his head. But his father refused and said, I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people and he also shall be great.

But truly, his younger brother shall be greater than he and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations. So he blessed them that day, saying, By you Israel will bless, saying, May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh. And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

He does it in two ways. First of all, he puts his right hand on Ephraim. And secondly, when he pronounces the blessing that Israel is going to use in the future, he doesn't say, May God make you as Manasseh and Ephraim.

He puts even the name of Ephraim first. Then Israel said to Joseph in verse 21, Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. Moreover, I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.

When you get this close to chapter 49 and the blessings on each of the sons, the prediction of how their future course is going to run, it's easy to sort of skip over those last two verses, 21 and 22 of chapter 48. I almost did that myself, but then I got to thinking, each of these verses is here for a reason, everything that is recorded. If you think about the span of time in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph's lives, it covers dozens and dozens of years, hundreds of years, literally.

And yet we have so few episodes recorded, so few conversations and words recorded. The ones that are here have been preserved for thousands of years, close to 4,000 years, these things have been preserved for our instruction. And so anything that is here has been carefully preserved by God the Holy Spirit so that we can be instructed.

So I am trying to be careful not to leave any stone unturned. We may not be able to get everything that's there, but to at least look for the reason that God left us this testimony. So when he says in verse 21, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers.

This is a prophecy that Joseph is going to return to the land of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. This is not fulfilled in Joseph's lifetime, is it? And yet Jacob said that he would return. So what is the only conclusion we can draw from this divinely inspired oracle from the lips of Jacob? Joseph has to be resurrected for this to come true.

You either have to say that Jacob was wrong. You can say, well, they brought his bones back. Well, that doesn't count.

His bones were a symbol. Jacob said, God will bring you back to the land of your fathers. The only way that can be fulfilled is for Joseph to be resurrected because he dies in the land of Egypt.

He only sets foot in the land one more time and that's when he goes up to bury Jacob. He goes up and Pharaoh, they have a big retinue. They take a long time.

We'll see that here close to the end of the book. But Joseph himself, in terms of coming back to the land and having possession of it, in case you have doubts about this and you think, well, it's his bones or something, look at the next verse. Moreover, I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.

If you want something entertaining, get some commentaries on Genesis and see what they say about this verse because it is wildly scattered. Nobody seems to be able to make heads or tails out of this verse because there's no record of Jacob seizing anything from the Amorites with his sword and his bow. Think about his career.

He starts out in the tents of Isaac. The episode with Esau. His mother says, you've got to go.

Isaac says, you've got to go. Head north. Go to Paddan Aram.

He lives up there 40 odd years. Comes back down to the land. Comes through Bethel and goes and lives outside of Shechem.

He gets some land from the Amorites there, the Shechemites, but he buys it with money. And then you have the episode of his sons going and revenging the rape of their sister. And then he has to flee and go far south from there.

And he dwells the rest of the time way down south and then he's eventually brought into Egypt. But there's no record of any conquest of land by Jacob with his sword and with his bow. So what is it that he's giving to Joseph here and why is he giving it to him? Well, it gets even more interesting when you look at this in Hebrew because he says, Moreover, I have given to you, and in the New King James it says, one portion above your brothers.

Well, the word portion here is Shechem. S-H-E-C-H-E-M The word one is Achad. A-C-H-A-D One of the first things you learn in Hebrew just like you do in any language is how to count.

Achad means one in Hebrew when you start to count. But this is Achad which is the construct form and this is a problem because you do not expect the construct form of

one here to modify one portion. It shouldn't be in the construct.

And the word order is peculiar in Hebrew as well because in the Hebrew it says, Moreover, I have given to you, Shechem, one above your brothers. And that's the way this ought to be translated. I have given to you Shechem, and I would insert O because I think Achad is in the construct here because he's addressing Joseph.

O, one above your brothers. I'm giving you Shechem, O, one above your brothers. So the one refers to Joseph, not to the portion.

And Shechem is a noun as well as a place name. It means shoulder or ridge or mountain slope. And so this is where some of the commentators say, Well, I've given you a mountain ridge.

This is where the translation portion comes from. It's a part of a mountain. It's a shoulder.

A driver says it's the nape of the neck, literally. But it is spelled exactly the same as the town name. So if we take it that way, moreover, I have given to you Shechem, O, one above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.

Well, first of all, why would he not just say O, Joseph? Or why does he mention anything about him being one above his brothers? There's an interesting parallel in the Code of Hammurabi which is nearly contemporaneous with this time coming out of the same area of the ancient Near East where a father, as he is dividing up his inheritance, would choose a son, one of his sons. It didn't have to be the firstborn. It could be, but it might not be.

But he would choose one son and give him a special gift. That gift had to be non-movable property. It had to be an orchard or a tract of land.

And this was his privilege. This was his right. There were laws governing primogeniture that the father would pass things down to his firstborn son, but the father could reserve the right to give a special gift to a son that was not his firstborn but was his favorite, the one that he wanted to bless in a special way.

He could give a non-movable piece of property as a sign of his favor. And Jacob recognizes Joseph as the greatest man of faith among his sons. And you get the idea that this is what he's doing.

He's giving Joseph a non-movable piece of property, a tract of land, in recognition of the fact, just as he did at the beginning, the story opened with Jacob favoring Joseph with a gift that marked him out as the son of his favor, the son that he loved, the firstborn son of the wife that he loved. And he gave him the coat of many colors. Here, at the

conclusion of his life, he's giving Joseph once again a gift indicating that he favors him above his brothers.

And this also refers back to the dreams that Joseph had where the sheaves were bowing and the stars and sun and moon were bowing. And he says in this divine oracle of blessing that he's pronouncing here that you are the one above your brothers indeed. He's acknowledging that the dreams have come true.

And it's his sign of favor that he's going to give Joseph this tract of land. The remaining problem is what is it? Where is it? Is it Shechem? In what sense was Shechem taken from the hand of the Amorites with his sword and with his bow? Because the episode we remember up at Shechem was Simeon and Levi and the other brothers going in and by a very ignoble deception in making the men be circumcised and being weak and unable to fight going in and just slaughtering them right and left. And Jacob denounces them for that and says you've made me a stench in the nose of my neighbors and he has to move away.

So that doesn't sound like Jacob going in with his sword and his bow and taking this land as a prize of conquest. So is he referring to Shechem? And if so, how can he say I took it from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow? Well, again going back to Hebrew and once again if you look at commentaries and things that are just scattered all over the map and they say well there must have been some unrecorded battle that's only mentioned here and it's not in the earlier pages of Genesis. A lot of them like to think that all of these oracles were done retrospectively.

Of course this is not the actual words of Jacob that people weigh down in the times of David and Solomon and the divided kingdom. Edited Genesis and added a lot of stuff into it and in looking back at the history of the tribes made up this blessing and put it in the mouth of Jacob. Obviously that's patently ridiculous from our point of view.

So we're back to the original question. How does this sort out with what we know? Well, this is what I think and everything I'm telling you about these verses I don't know if anybody else thinks this or not. But, I have given you Shechem, O one above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.

Again, with the word order in Hebrew, this with that you see in the New King James there seems to be the means. I got it from the Amorites using my sword and my bow. But this is the Hebrew preposition Bah, which is just the letter Beit prefixed to the word for sword and bow.

Sword is Kerev and bow is... I'm not sure I can remember the word for bow. I can't. But it starts with SH and ends in T. I can't remember the middle consonant.

But anyway, the letter Beit or the preposition Bah can mean in, by, or with. And with is in

the sense of along with. I think that he is referring to the episode with Simeon and Levi and the destruction of Shechem, the taking of Shechem.

It wasn't Jacob's desire. He didn't favor it. He didn't condone it.

In fact, he condemned it. He's going to condemn it again when he talks about those sons. Jacob did not take Shechem with his sword and with his bow.

Jacob, this is my proposal to you, Jacob received his sword and his bow as well as Shechem. He receives Shechem, he receives his sword, and receives his bow all at the same time at the hand of the Amorites. Because it's his contact with the Amorites at Shechem that's the only place where we have any military conflict at all associated with Jacob.

Think about his entire career. He's a man of peace. He's a man of flocks and herds.

He's a businessman. He manipulates and schemes, and he gets everything by his wits and by his blessing from God ultimately. But he receives here, he takes in the sense of something being handed to him, Shechem.

He didn't ask for Shechem. He didn't purchase Shechem. That hundred pieces of money that he gave was for land outside of Shechem where Joseph is ultimately going to be buried.

But Shechem comes to him, whether he wants it or not, by right of conquest. His sons went out and took it. They conquered it, and it is now theirs.

It's theirs by right of conquest. And it is now a possession of Jacob. Are those sons who took it going to keep it? No, the one son who did not go is the son who's going to possess it.

Jacob takes it and says, I'm going to give you Shechem. You're the one above your brothers. Take this thing that came by way of evil and turn it into something good.

It came by deceit. It came by murder. And Jacob is taking it away from the sons and giving it to Joseph, the one above his brothers, along with the sword and the bow.

Jacob didn't own a sword. Jacob didn't own a bow. Even Abraham went out and fought the kings of the north, the coalition.

He delivered Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. He went out. He knew how to fight.

Abraham had a sword. But Jacob did not. But Jacob acquired a sword and a bow as a result of his sons going in and attacking Shechem.

So everything associated with that, he says, I'm giving you Shechem. He doesn't say I'm giving you my sword and my bow. He's just saying all of that that came to me as a result of that episode, from that I'm giving you Shechem, which I received along with my sword and my bow.

I didn't used to have a sword and bow, but I became a man of war. I became opposed to the neighbors. I became a stench in their nostrils and entered into the realm of armed conflict where force has to be used, violence has to be used.

All of that came about through Shechem. And so he's giving him that territory and saying this is now yours. Take something that came from evil and turn it into something good.

So that's my take on this. And you see this in the later history of Israel when you look at the blessing on these sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. This is Joseph.

Joseph gets doubled. You don't have a tribe of Joseph in Israel. Instead, you have Ephraim and Manasseh.

And initially, Manasseh is more numerous than Ephraim. Even though Jacob blessed Ephraim and said he's going to be the most multitudinous, that's not what happens. If you look at Numbers 26, verses 34 and 37, this is the physical headcount of those tribes in the time of Moses.

Numbers 26-34 says that the families of Manasseh were numbered at 52,700. That's Numbers 26-34. When you go down to verse 37, the families of the sons of Ephraim, those who were numbered with them are 32,500.

So who is more numerous? The ones that are 32,500 or the ones who are 52,700? Well, Manasseh is far more numerous than Ephraim at this numbering of the people in the days of Moses. So what about the words that we just studied in chapter 48 regarding Ephraim being more multitudinous? Didn't Jacob just say in verse 19 that Manasseh will also become a people and be great, but truly his younger brother will be greater than he and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations. Well, at the time of Moses, this had not yet been fulfilled.

But by the time you get down to the period of the judges, you find that the sons of Ephraim have outstripped the Manassehites and they become the influential ones. They become the powerful ones so much so that a synonym for northern Israel in the later history of the nation is going to be Ephraim. They'll talk about Ephraim meaning the whole ten northern tribes.

The name of Ephraim will be applied to it. Just as a point of interest here, if you'll turn to your maps in the back of your Bible, I think any good Bible has got a map of the twelve tribes in Canaan. My New King James map number 4 shows the twelve tribes in Canaan.

Take a look, if you will, up between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Kinnereth there and to the west, and you'll see Ephraim and then you'll see Manasseh up above it. The territory of Ephraim starts just north of the Dead Sea and well to the west. And on my map, there's a little blue-green blob there labeled Ephraim.

Up above that, you have the territory of Manasseh in orange and it's huge. It goes all the way up to Mount Carmel along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea extending even with the Sea of Galilee and then it goes diagonally in a southeasterly direction over to Beth-Shan at the Jordan. And then if you'll look on the other side of the Jordan, straight east from the Sea of Galilee, on my map, there's a huge area in green called East Manasseh.

So the territory of Manasseh is huge. Look at all the territory to the west of the Jordan and to the east of the Jordan that is assigned to the tribe of Manasseh versus that that's assigned to Ephraim. At the time that they enter the land, Ephraim is a minority.

They don't need very much territory. Manasseh is huge and he's got these two big tracts on both sides of the Jordan. Manasseh and East Manasseh.

However, even with all of these advantages as the firstborn, Manasseh dwindles away and disappears and Ephraim grows in strength and in numbers and becomes the most influential so that when you get down to the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah, a synonym for Israel is Ephraim. It's not called Manasseh anymore. In fact, East Manasseh winds up going back to the Syrians.

They possessed this land for a short time after they went into Canaan, but the only time they actually possessed it and controlled it is under David and later under Solomon. But at the time of the divided kingdom, the Syrians come down and capture all of that land. And if you look at your divided kingdom map, you'll see that all of that East Manasseh is gone.

It belongs to Syria. And in Israel, the Manassehites seem to virtually disappear and that's all called Ephraim. So you find that the prediction of Jacob does in fact come true.

We also have some references to Ephraim and Manasseh later on in the Old Testament. We don't have time to look at them all, but let me just direct your attention to a few. Take a look, for example, at Psalm 60 and verse 7. Psalm 60.

This song is actually repeated in the Psalter, in the hymnal here once again. But it begins in the first five verses, "...O God, You have cast us off, You have broken us down, You have been displeased. O, restore us again.

You have made the earth tremble, You have broken it. Heal its breaches, for it is shaking. You have shown Your people hard things.

You have made us drink the wine of confusion. You have given a banner to those who

fear You that it may be displayed because of the truth. That Your beloved may be delivered, save with Your right hand and hear me.

Then in verse 6, God has spoken in His holiness, I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem and measure out the valley of Sukkoth." Gilead is mine and Manasseh is mine. Ephraim also is the helmet for my head. Judah is my lawgiver.

Moab is my washpot. Over Edom I will cast my shoe. Philistia, shout in triumph because of me.

Who will bring me to the strong city? Who will lead me to Edom? Is it not You, O God, who cast us off? And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble, for the help of man is useless. Through God we will do valiantly, for it is He who shall tread down our enemies." So even in a time of disaster, in a time of national discipline, where they are broken down and full of breaches and are drinking the wine of confusion, He says, we are the people of God. You've given us the banner that needs to be displayed because of the truth.

So that Your beloved may be delivered, save us with Your right hand in here. And He claims the promise of God. I will rejoice, God says.

I will divide Shechem. This means to apportion. I will give out Shechem.

Shechem belongs to Me. I'm going to give it to who I want to. Jacob gives Shechem to Joseph.

And if you look once again on your map, you will see that Shechem in the division of land amongst the twelve tribes is in Manasseh. It's right on the border between Ephraim and Manasseh. And this, of course, is square in the territory assigned to Joseph.

And so He is apportioning it to Joseph. If you want to think of it being divided, you can almost think it's one of these border towns like Texarkana where part of it belongs to one and part belongs to another. But it's not so much that Shechem is divided as Shechem is apportioned.

Shechem is given out. And the valley of Sukkot is measured out. And Sukkot is over on the other side of the Jordan.

It's due east of Shechem in the land of Gilead. And so He goes on to say, Gilead is Mine. I can measure out the valley of Sukkot because Gilead is Mine.

And Manasseh is Mine. Shechem is in the region of Manasseh. He says, These belong to Me.

I can give them to whoever I want. I can measure out the valley of Sukkot. I can give Shechem to whomever I want to because they belong to Me.

Ephraim is the helmet for My head. And Judah is My lawgiver. And so then He begins to talk about the fact that these other realms belong to Him as well.

And this is not so much talking about the tribes as talking about the land that belongs to them. God says, This land belongs to Me and I can give it to whom I will. And that is the promise, that is the principle that is claimed by this person who is in distress and being attacked.

And this is military conquest. They're suffering defeats and they've been broken down. Their walls have been breached.

And they're being conquered. And He says, God, didn't You say that these things belong to You and that You're going to apportion and measure them out to us, Your people? Well, we're claiming that promise. Deliver us.

Give us victory. Let us be the standard bearers of the truth once again. And so that's the principle there in that psalm.

You can see this again in Psalm 80. Psalm 80. Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock, you who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth, before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come and save us.

These are all the peoples that come from Rachel, aren't they? Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. These are the Rachel tribes. This is called the house of Joseph.

And Benjamin is sort of associated and subsumed into Joseph in this case. Restore us, O God, cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved. O Lord God of hosts, how long will You be angry against the prayer of Your people? You've fed them the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in great measure.

You've made us a strife to our neighbors and our enemies laugh among themselves. Restore us, O God of hosts, cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved. You've brought a vine out of Egypt.

You've cast out the nations and planted it. You've prepared room for it and caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with its shadow and the mighty cedars with its boughs.

She sent out her boughs to the sea and her branches to the river, talking about the extent of land that's been assigned to this vine that God has plucked up from Egypt and planted in Canaan. Why have You broken down her hedges so that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit? The boar out of the woods uproots it, and the wild beast of the field devours it. I read something this past week about somebody who put their vegetable garden up on top of their freestanding garage because there were so many animals coming and eating all their vegetables.

So they made a flat platform on top of their garage roof and they're growing their vegetable garden up there. Return, we beseech you, O God of hosts. Look down from heaven and see and visit this vine.