

“Safely in the Hands of God”
(Psalm 105)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. This morning, we’re returning to our study on the History of Redemption.
 - a. This is what the Bible is: a record of God’s plan to redeem fallen man through His Son and for His glory.
 - b. The History of Redemption begins with the Fall of Adam – with the need of redemption – and concludes with the consummation or conclusion of redemption – the redeemed of God inheriting the New Heavens and the New Earth, there to live with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the angels, forever in glory.
2. So far, we seen:
 - a. God’s purpose in this work: to subdue His enemies, restore the creation, gather His elect, and bring glory to His name.
 - b. The beginning of Christ’s mediation in His three offices of prophet, priest and king at the Fall.
 - c. How the Lord advanced this work through revival at the time of Enosh.
 - d. The glimpse of the Second Coming and the translation of the saints into glory at the time of Enoch.
 - e. The great spiritual decline and the preservation of the church in the time of Noah.
 - f. How the Lord divided the world at the tower of Babel, with a view towards future evangelization.
 - g. The call of Abraham and the separation of the church from the world.
 - h. Finally, we saw several things the Lord showed Abraham about the promised Seed: that He would be born supernaturally of a promise, suffer and die as a substitute for His people, be raised again to life, be given authority over the whole world, and have the ability to change hearts.
 - i. Through these things, the Lord was revealing His Son to His people; they saw Him through the eyes of faith; and they were saved.

B. Preview.

1. This morning, we return to this theme – God’s continuing work of redemption.
 - a. Implied in His promise to bring the Messiah into the world through the godly line was the promise of protection.
 - (i) Of course, the Lord foreloved His people and loves them in time – and He would have protected them for this alone.
 - (ii) But if He intended to bring His plan to pass through their offspring, He had to make sure they lived to have these children.

- b. We see this blessing at work in the lives of the patriarchs: that they were safely in the hands of God.

2. We'll look at three things:

- a. First, that God protected His people from the people living in Canaan.
- b. Second, that He protected them from everyone else as well.
- c. Finally, what this means for us.

II. Sermon.

- A. First, God protected His people from the people of Canaan. He preserved the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob: those from whom Jesus would come – for a long time in Canaan from all their enemies. He separated them from the world so that the church would continue. Now He preserves them from the people of that land.
 - 1. The people of Canaan were wicked in Abraham's day, but they were not as bad as they would become.
 - a. The Lord said to Abraham that his children would be oppressed and enslaved by another nation for 400 years.
 - b. But then He went on to say, "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16).
 - c. The Canaanites were bad, but they would become worse – their iniquity would be complete, and then the Lord would send His people into the land to destroy them.
 - d. This was one of the reasons neither Abraham nor Isaac would allow their sons to intermarry with the daughters of that land.
 - (i) When Abraham sent his servant to get a wife for Isaac, he made him swear not to take him a wife from these people, but to go to Paddan-aram to take a wife for him from his relatives (Gen. 24:1-4).
 - (ii) Isaac and Rebekah also sent Jacob to the same place to find a wife (Gen. 28:1-5). Esau's marriage to two Canaanite women had been a grief to them.
 - e. Let's also not forget that Sodom and Gomorrah were cities in Canaan.
- 2. The people of Canaan were a threat to God's people not only because of their wickedness, but for other reasons as well.
 - a. Remember the enmity, or hatred, that existed between the two seeds, between the two kingdoms.
 - (i) Because of their wicked hearts, these people hated each other.
 - (ii) But they hated God's people even more because they were the seed of the woman.
 - (iii) Their standard of life – their conduct and worship of the true God – would have been a continual rebuke to the Canaanites' idolatry.
 - b. The fact that they were strangers in the land only made matters worse.

- (i) It's one thing to receive a rebuke from someone you know; but to receive one from someone you don't is even more difficult.
 - (ii) When the Lord determined to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, He first sent two angels into the city to bear witness to their evil and to rescue Lot.
 - (iii) When they arrived, Lot welcomed them into his home. But when evening came, the men of the city surrounded Lot's house and demanded that the men be turned over to them so that they might "know them." Lot went out to plead with them not to do such a wicked thing, but they wouldn't listen.
 - (iv) Moses notes that the men of Sodom despised Lot even more when he tried to stop them because he was an "alien": "They said, 'This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.' So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door" (Gen. 19:9).
- c. One final aggravation had to do with how the Lord used them to judge the people of Canaan.
 - (i) When Dinah went out to visit the daughters of the land, and Shechem found her and violated her, Shechem wanted to marry her – something the Lord wouldn't allow for obvious reasons.
 - (ii) Jacob's sons told them that if the men were circumcised, then they would intermarry with them and become one people. The men agreed. But on the third day, when the men were sore, Simeon and Levi came and killed them all. The result was that the people surrounding them became outraged and Jacob feared for all their lives (Gen. 34).
 - (iii) The Canaanites were already disposed to hate God's people because of their wicked hearts; they were further provoked by the witness of God's people and the fact they were strangers in the land; but this was even more aggravating: the Lord used them to bring judgment on these Canaanites.
- 3. But in the midst of these difficult circumstances, the Lord protected them.
 - a. In the case of Sodom, the two angels blinded the men and took Lot and his family out of the city before the Lord destroyed it.
 - b. In Jacob's case, the Lord put fear in the hearts of the Canaanites, so they wouldn't take revenge on Jacob: "As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob" (Gen. 35:5).
 - c. Though things looked bleak, they were safely in God's hands.
- B. Second, God protected His people from every other threat, as well.
 - 1. The Lord preserved Jacob and his family from Laban's anger.
 - a. Jacob went to Paddan-aram for a wife. He agreed with Laban to work for seven years for his daughter Rachel. When the time of their wedding came, he substituted Leah instead. The result was that he agreed to work for another seven years for Laban's younger daughter Rachel.

- b. But during that time, the Lord blessed Jacob, so that no matter how many times Laban changed Jacob's wages to his own benefit, Jacob prospered.
 - c. When Jacob finally decided to leave for Canaan without telling Laban – with his wives, children and all their livestock – Laban went after them to bring them back. But the Lord met him on the way and threatened him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad" (Gen. 31:24).
 - d. The result was the covenant of Mizpah (vv. 48-49).
 - 2. He also preserved Jacob from Esau, his brother (Gen. 32).
 - a. Just before Jacob had gone to Aram, he had deceived his father into giving him Esau's blessing, the blessing of the firstborn. Esau hadn't forgotten about his theft or the blessing his father gave him in its place.
 - b. So when the Lord told Jacob to return to his home country, Jacob sent messengers ahead, who returned with the news that Esau was on his way to meet him with 400 armed men.
 - c. Jacob divided his family and servants into two companies and sent them ahead, while he wrestled with the Lord that night in prayer.
 - d. The result was that the Lord turned Esau's heart from his anger to embrace his brother again as a friend.
 - 3. The Lord preserved them – Abraham, Lot, Isaac and Jacob – and their families from wicked men.
 - a. The psalmist writes, "When they were only a few men in number, very few, and strangers in it. And they wandered about from nation to nation, from *one* kingdom to another people. He permitted no man to oppress them, and He reproved kings for their sakes: 'Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm'" (Psalm 105:12-15).
 - b. Though God's people had left the ark, the ark had not left them: the Lord Jesus Christ was continuing to protect them from the tempest of the seed of the serpent.
 - c. They were safely in God's hands.
- C. Finally, God also promises to protect you as He moves His work of redemption forward through the Church.
- 1. The church has grown over the centuries, but it's still a small community surrounded by the seed of the serpent, with just about the same aggravations.
 - a. You are the seed of the woman, strangers in this world, who are called to live lives that provoke the wicked. It's no wonder that Jesus said the world would hate you (John 15:19; 1 John 3:13).
 - b. In spite of the world's hatred, God still intends to move His plan forward through you: He intends to use you to gather His sheep from the world.
 - 2. From what the Lord has shown us this morning, you need to realize that He will also keep you safely in His hands until this work is done.

- a. You and your families live among the seed of the serpent, but they have not harmed you. God is protecting you; He is a wall around you; He has surrounded you with His angels.
- b. Don't take the fact that things have gone well for you for granted: God is fulfilling His promises.
 - (i) Don't be tempted to think that it's because of your own wisdom or foresight that you've been safe.
 - (ii) If the Lord wasn't protecting you, you would have been destroyed by the world a long time ago.
- c. On the other hand, don't be afraid of the fact that the Lord commands you to aggravate the situation even further by being salt and light.
 - (i) No, the world won't enjoy salt in the festering wounds of their sins or a bright light in their darkened eyes – they will hate you even more for it.
 - (ii) But the Lord said He would be with you, "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).
 - (iii) As you go out to do Christ's work of advancing the work of redemption, He will be with you; He will protect you, even as He protected the patriarchs.
 - (iv) You don't have to be afraid, if you are a believer: you are safely in God's hands.
- d. On the other hand, if you don't know Christ, then you should be afraid, because this promise doesn't apply to you.
 - (i) The One who has pledged to protect His people has also promised to judge those who aren't – this is what hell is all about.
 - (ii) If you would be one of God's people and have His protection, you must first come to Him through His Son – you must believe He is who He claimed to be, and trust Him to save you, in the same way Peter trusted Christ to save him when he was drowning in the Sea of Galilee.
 - (iii) Look to Him for His safety from judgment, and if you are sincere, He will reach down and save you.
 - (iv) If this is where you are today, trust in Christ, and you will be safely in God's hands. Amen.