

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-1090

Prophetic Blessings & Birthright

August 12, 2010

In case you missed it, the last fifteen issues have been interrelated. Although not a series per se, they either build upon or support one another. Further, certain themes or terms have been defined and reinforced throughout these issues. The last issue began to explain the ancient struggle between Jacob and Esau, and future issues will take up the modern-day struggle of Jacob and Esau and others that is being played out in the Middle East today. However, before moving on in this subject, it is necessary to digress a bit and look at the blessings and the birthright of firstborn sons, for these lie at the heart of not only a struggle between two brothers but also the first and second comings of the Lord Jesus.

Adam, who was formed from the soil of the earth, was created in the image and likeness of Elohim and given two blessings. In past issues, I have referred to the blessings as mandates but have since dropped this term, for the Word of God calls them blessings, not mandates, which means God bestowed them on Adam and Eve. It is true they had to take action to fulfill the blessings; nevertheless, the blessings were given to indicate they, in fact, would be fruitful and have dominion.

And God [Hebrew: *Elohim*] said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over [rule over] the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26 ASV)

And God [Hebrew: *Elohim*] blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:28 ASV)

First, Genesis 1:28 is the key to our understanding, for it specifically states that Elohim blessed them. Thus, what God said or, rather, gave to them was a blessing. In fact, it was a double blessing: 1) Be fruitful and multiply, and 2) Have dominion.

Second, Adam and Eve were first blessed to be fruitful and multiply, which refers to procreation. The **blessing of fruitfulness** is a **progenitive blessing** (capable of begetting offspring), without which Adam would not have become the **progenitor** (forefather) of the human race. Everything for mankind starts with this blessing, for without it, Eve's womb would have remained closed. Essentially, this was a blessing to open her womb so that Adam could beget and Eve could birth many sons and daughters.

Offspring are called the fruit of the womb. We see this with Rachel from whose womb fruit (i.e., children) was withheld and, later, with the sons of Israel when the Lord promised to bless the fruit of their womb if they would obey Him.

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 in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" (Genesis 30:1-2 NASB)

"He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb...." (Deuteronomy 7:13 NASB)

Third, Adam himself was a type of fruitfulness, for, in respect to man, he was **the first fruit of the womb** of the earth, since he was formed out of the soil of the earth, which intimately connected Adam and his entire race to the earth. In addition, as the first fruit, Adam also was the **firstborn of the sons of man**.

Fruitfulness is also connected to the land. When the twelve spies went into Canaan to scope out the land and its fruitfulness, they were told: **“Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land”** (Numbers 13:20 NASB). Later, under Moses, some of the national feasts involved the first fruits of the soil (e.g., Exodus 23:16, 19; 34:22, 26).

Fourth, Adam and Eve also were blessed to have dominion over all the earth; that is, they were given **the blessing of dominion or ruling**. Elohim could have given the right to rule over earth to any of the animals that He also formed out of the earth, or even to the angels, but He did not. Instead, He chose man. This is why man was created in the image and likeness of God. He was created to rule over His creation as **a son of God** (Luke 3:38). Sons rule in the kingdom of God.

Fifth, at first, the blessing of dominion was in relation to every creeping or moving thing on earth; it did not include dominion over one another of mankind. We know that God’s heart, as revealed through the **New Covenant**, is for the law to be written on all hearts and for all to know Him (Hebrews 8:8-11). Thus, the original dominion blessing was for ruling over the earth and the things of the earth (i.e., plant and animal life). However, after Adam’s one transgression, this obviously changed and man began to have dominion over man as well. This was all part of God’s plan, which leads to the next point.

Sixth, fruitfulness and dominion (ruling) go hand-in-hand and speak of the **Kingdom of God**. **Fruitfulness** speaks of the **kingdom**, for without a people, there is no kingdom. I like to think that people are the fruit of righteous government. **Dominion** speaks of **leadership or kingship** over the kingdom. One cannot be a king without a kingdom, so, in a sense, the kingdom or the makings of a kingdom must come first. This was the order in the beginning. Essentially, when He blessed Adam, God blessed him first with a kingdom and then with a kingship over the kingdom that was to be passed down to his sons and their sons, in particular, to firstborn sons, which leads to the birthright.

The birthright is not quite the same as a blessing. In a sense, **the birthright is a legal term**, not a blessing per se. In the broadest sense, the *birthright* refers to “the rights that a person has because he was born in a certain family, nation, etc.” In a narrower sense, the *birthright* refers to “the rights of the firstborn.” The firstborn had certain rights that were not usually given to his or her siblings.

Biblically, the *birthright* is narrowed further to refer to “the rights of the firstborn *son*.” Thus, the first son to come forth from a womb or the first fruit of the womb was given a special advantage or right over any subsequent siblings by virtue of him being the elder son. It included the right of ownership of his father’s estate or a greater portion of the inheritance [i.e., double portion (Deuteronomy 21:17)], both of which often referred to the land. It also could include having a greater leadership role in the family while the father was alive and becoming the head or king of the family or tribe or nation upon the father’s death. However, as history proves, this right could be lost [e.g., Reuben (1 Chronicles 5:1)], or could be sold [e.g., Esau (Genesis 25:31-33)], or part of it could be reassigned, as in the case of Judah, a fourth-born son who, prophetically, received the scepter [kingship] (Genesis 49:10).

Back to Adam; as the first son from the womb of the earth, he set the pattern (type) of a firstborn son through the blessings he received from the Lord. Adam was given the birthright by virtue of him being the first fruit of mankind, which, in turn, is more aligned with the blessing of fruitfulness. Consequently, the birthright is more connected to the fruitfulness blessing than to the dominion blessing, something that is proven through Joseph and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were blessed by Jacob-Israel. They were adopted by Jacob and blessed with his name *Israel* and with fruitfulness: **May they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth** (Genesis 48:5, 16). But Scripture also says they received the birthright that should have gone to Jacob’s firstborn son, Reuben (1 Chronicles 5:1). To add to this, Israel also prophesied that Joseph would be **a fruitful bough** and the **blessings of the breasts and of the womb** would be upon him (Genesis 49:22-26). Thus, prophetically speaking, Joseph holds the name *Israel*, possesses the birthright, and has the fruitfulness blessing upon him, but he does not have the dominion blessing. This is upon Judah.

Jesus, the Son of God, is the **firstborn of all creation** [birthright] (Colossians 1:15). Judah is a type of Jesus coming the first time to take the scepter as the **King of Judah** [dominion], and Joseph is a type of Jesus coming the second time to establish **His Kingdom** [fruitfulness] by bringing forth His treasure hidden in the field (Matthew 13:44), the lost house of **Israel**. All of this is prophetic.