

Jacob's Advent Expectation

Rev. D.W. Tuinier - Genesis 49:18

(Advent)

Sing: Psalter 151: 4, 5

Read: Genesis 49: 1 – 18

Sing: Psalter 292

Sing: Psalter 107: 1, 4

Sing: Psalter 134, 1 - 3

Congregation, with God's help we wish to draw your attention to our text which you can find in the portion that we read, Genesis 49 verse 18. God's Word and our text reads as follows:

“I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD.”

I ask your attention for ‘*Jacobs Advent Expectation*’ and wish to consider three thoughts:

1. The time of this hope.
2. The Fountain of this hope.
3. The substance of this hope.

Once again, we will consider Jacob's Advent expectation as the Lord gave him dying grace. First we will think on the time of this hope by considering the context of our text. Next we will consider the Fountain of this hope as Jacob speaks of *Thy* salvation and mentions the Name *LORD*. He is the Fountain! In the third thought we will consider the substance of this hope as we will especially consider the word *salvation*.

1. The time of this hope.

Congregation, in our imagination we visit a man in his death chamber. The old man, Jacob, is 147 years old and is lying on his deathbed. It will not be long before he will breathe out his last breath. However, before he may lay down his body of

sin and death and enter into the joy of his Lord, he calls his twelve sons just once more to his deathbed. His twelve boys are now grown-up, adult men. They too are now fathers and grandfathers. There they come and stand around the deathbed of their old father. How their thoughts must have multiplied!

There they stand, from the oldest to the youngest. You know their names, don't you boys and girls? You have probably just learned them at school. Come, help me! The oldest is Reuben, followed by Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher and Naphtali. And lastly follow the two youngest: Joseph and Benjamin. These twelve represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

We read in verse 1: *“And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.”* Jacob wants to speak to his sons one more time. He still has something he wants to say to his boys. In verse 2 he says, *“Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob!”* Do you hear that? *“Ye sons of Jacob!”* Do you remember what the name Jacob means? Indeed, ‘deceiver’, ‘cheater’. So Jacob calls his children ‘sons of a deceiver’, ‘sons of a cheater.’

Yes, Congregation, that is all that is left of a child of God, after all the grace he received, after all the exercises of his faith. Jacob knows very well Who God in Christ has become for him at Bethel and Peniel. Yet, what is left now? A ‘Jacob’, a deceiver. Such he has been all his life. Such he has come to know himself by the discovering light of the Holy Ghost. And it has never become any better than that, even not now that he has come to the end of his life. There he lays on his deathbed. In and of himself he remains a poor and wretched man.

When looking on himself and on his boys, on all that has happened in their lives, there is nothing to boast of. Indeed, in them there is nothing to boast of. There can only be boasting in the faithfulness and lovingkindness of the Lord. That is also apparent when Jacob continues in verse 2, *“and hearken unto Israel your father.”* ‘Israel’ means ‘mighty Prince.’ So in himself he is and remains a ‘Jacob’, a deceiver. But God, in His eternal love to unworthy sinners, has looked upon him in mercy. By the wonder of His grace, the God of grand-father Abraham and the God

of father Isaac has turned this 'Jacob' into 'Israel.' That is the reason why he testifies here of God's lovingkindness and of His infinite mercy and grace in Christ. All boasting in 'Jacob' and in others is utterly excluded. Jacob received undeserved salvation from his God and therefore he boasts in free grace alone.

Before he will enter the heavenly realms, the place where there will be no more sin and where no-one will say "I am sick", Jacob wants to speak to his boys just once more. He wants pronounce the blessings unto them. But are they actually blessings? Are the words which Jacob, the dying father, speaks to his sons indeed words of blessing?

Just read verse 3. Jacob starts with Reuben, his eldest son, his pride. *"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power."* Jacob had always set his hope and expectation on Reuben. But verse 4 sounds very sad, *"Unstable as water."* In the original, a word is used here which refers to a pan which is boiling over. This illustrates Reuben's life. How he had disappointed his father! Jacob says, *"Thou shalt not excel."* Why not? *"because thou wentest up to thy father's bed."* Reuben had lain with Jacob's concubine. And so it becomes deadly quiet at the side of father Jacob's bed. Reuben has every reason to bow his head in shame.

In verses 5 and 6 it is the turn of Simeon and Levi. Their father calls them, *"instruments of cruelty. In their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall."* In verse 7 Jacob cries out, *"Cursed be their anger!"*

Sin has caused so much misery in Jacob's life. He is very honest and open about it. Jacob is made honest here as the Lord gave him eyesalve. Here he has a cutting view of himself and his boys. No, Jacob has not always been honest in his life, and this is a great sorrow to him. But now he is honest! He clearly sees who he is and how sinful his life has been, but also the life of his twelve boys. He sees them as God sees them. If there ever was a time that Jacob had to experience, *"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"* (Job 14:4), that is now.

Disappointed in Reuben, not being able to say anything good of Simeon and Levi, causes darkness to cover the old pilgrim's soul.

But then, suddenly, the Holy Ghost enters his soul. Then Jacob springs up! He sits up straight and says in verse 8, *"Judah!"* His eyes begin to sparkle, *"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee."* And then follows the well-known text in verse 10, which our boys and girls will also know, *"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."* Through faith, Jacob testifies that God will fulfill His Word and His promise of mercy and that He will establish it in the tribe of Judah. *"Judah, thou art he!"*

Jacob continues. The next one is Zebulun (verse 13). *"Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea."* Then follows Issachar (verse 14). After that his seventh son. His name is mentioned in verse 16: Dan. *"Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel."* What more does Jacob say of Dan, in verse 17? *"Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward."* Jacob sees his son Dan as a serpent. A serpent that hides in its camouflage at the side of the road. And when a horseman passes by, he suddenly appears and squirts his venomous poison in one of the horse's back legs, so that the horse and its rider both fall backward.

Jacob heart is saddened when he has to utter these words and his soul becomes distressed. Why? Because he recognizes in his son the poisonous venom of the serpent of the lost Paradise. He sees the seed of the serpent, which will do all it can to destroy the promised Seed of the woman.

The Devil does not sit still! Jacob clearly recognizes the enemy from Paradise. And so darkness hovers over his soul. Will the Devil win after all? Will there be no expectation, no future, no hope for himself and his posterity?

Oh, he feels that he cannot die like this! And it is all his own fault! For what he has to say of Dan, the same also lives in his own evil, corrupt heart. And that is all his own fault. Eternity lies ahead of Jacob. Looking at himself, and at his twelve boys stand around him, there can be no expectation.

But congregation, although matters can get very desperate, God's children will

never be consumed. For then, suddenly, the Lord Himself visits His child, encouraging and comforting him. God is faithful and true! He was the First One in the life of Jacob and He is still is! He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the Faithful One, who started a good work in Jacob, and will finish it to the end. He will never forsake the works of His hands. Also not when Jacob is in such distress and when darkness is upon him.

The sun breaks through! The Holy Ghost becomes zealous in the old pilgrim's soul. God gives him dying grace. It is as though the Lord lifts him above all things and his faith is exercised and is revived. And so we hear Jacob cry out prophetically in verse 18, *"I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD!"*

Congregation, do you know what is so sad? That there are expositors who comment at this text, "This is the language of a confused person. Here Jacob is suffering from dementia and has lost the thread." How terrible! How do they arrive at such a conclusion? This is the mindset of modern textual criticism. Congregation, what Jacob cries out here is the language of faith! It is Jacob's advent expectation. The Lord enlivens and comforts his soul. And through faith, Jacob is favored to know what God will do for him. God testifies of His own work. The Lord puts these prophetic words in his mouth and in his heart: *"I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!"*

We have been considering the time of Jacob's hope. We will now turn to the Fountain of his hope.

2. The Fountain of this hope.

Suddenly, in between all Jacob's blessings, our text appears. Verse 17 contained all darkness and anxiety and in verse 19 he continues with Gad. But in between those two verses the Lord sheds light on His own work. He is the Fountain of Jacob's advent expectation.

When Jacob looks upon himself and his children, it is a hopeless case. Then there is no hope. The same is true for us today. Have you discovered that yet, congregation? Looking at yourself, on your circumstances and on those you love, then there is no hope or expectation.

Jacob has a long life behind him. A life of sin. And it will be no better with his children and with his posterity. But the Lord remembers His own work. The Lord will fulfill His promises, which in Christ are yea and amen. The Lord remembers His own word. And through faith, Jacob sees and witnesses that redemption, salvation and mercy for him and his posterity can only come through the promised Messiah.

Up to this moment it was so dark, but now it has become light! A great longing and craving fills his soul, a deep feeling of homesickness for the Lord Jesus, the promised Seed of the Woman. Through faith he can see beyond his own time and into future ages. He sighs: *“I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!”*

Note the word *Thy*. Salvation comes from the other side. It can never come from him. That door is closed forever. He has come to the end of any expectation of himself. It does not say: "I have waited for my salvation". O no, in and of himself he is lost and condemned. There are no merits whatsoever with him. But, O eternal wonder of merciful love for sinners, *“I have waited for Thy salvation!”* For Thy Saviour! In Him is salvation, mercy, deliverance and redemption. Salvation comes from above.

This old, dying father, this old patriarch, must condemn and disapprove of himself. If he looks on his boys, from the oldest to the youngest, then it is a lost case. If he looks on himself, who he has been before the Lord and who he should have been, then there is no expectation. But: *“I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!”* If Jacob is to be saved then it is because God wills it. He will be saved on the grounds of the offer, the blood and the merit of Another. In himself he has nothing left but sin and guilt. *“Thy salvation...”* In His salvation there is room, there is expectation. There lies Jacob’s hope and his confidence. God Himself provided a Saviour. Salvation is of God. God Himself is the Fountain and the Source of salvation.

He has remembered His mercy.

His truth declared to Israel (Psalter 424:2)

Salvation flows from His good pleasure. From eternity, God had not thoughts of evil, but thoughts of peace. And that for a generation of ‘Jacobs’, for lost sons of

Adam. The angels sang of it: *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!”* (Luke 2:14) God had good will toward men. Not evil will, but good will. God had compassion in Himself for lost mankind. From eternity He chose a people unto salvation. In due time He will draw them through His Word and Spirit. Already in eternity He provided a Saviour. He ordained His only begotten Son to be Surety and Saviour. And the Son offered Himself in the quietness of the Council of Peace.

Jacob saw this, therefore he exclaimed, *“I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!”* It comes from Him. It comes through the work of God the Father in His gracious predestination. It is possible through the work of God the Son, Who gave Himself. The certainty of the application lies in the work of God the Holy Ghost, Who has promised to apply the merits of Christ in the hearts of lost sinners. Jacob was privileged to see this. The Lord sheds light on it. That is why he cries out: *“I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!”*

The name LORD is written with four capital letters. He is the God of the Covenant of Grace, whereas Jacob belongs to the broken Covenant of Works. He has tried in all sorts of ways to mend that covenant, but he is a lost son of Adam. He is incapable of restoring the relationship with God. That is also today's message. We are forever incapable of restoring our relationship with God. Restoration however, comes from the other side! There is a Covenant of Grace. God thought out that covenant and works it out. He revealed that covenant to Adam and Eve, but also to grandfather Abraham and father Isaac. The LORD also remembered that covenant in Jacob's life, in Bethel and in Penuel. He is the Faithful One and the True! He is the immutable One! He is the *“I AM THAT I AM.”* *“I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!”* Jacob glories in God's good pleasure. He begins with it and he ends with it. Everything of man is excluded. We all must learn this principle. It crucifies the flesh, having to learn that the Lord can use absolutely nothing of you. Also not of Jacob. And so he becomes a poor and needy sinner. One broken down to the foundation, having nothing left, except a lost, sinful life. His sins have reached unto heaven, and he has nothing with which to pay. But in this way of Jacob’s impossibilities God will glorify His grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way the Triune God receives all the glory. *“I have waited*

for Thy salvation, O LORD!" Salvation is of the Triune God. That is Jacob's only hope, his sole expectation. In this alone he looks for, and finds, life.

And that for a 'Jacob', for a deceiver, for a serpent. May I say it thus, congregation? Or do you find that too cutting? For we are all bitten by that cunning and crafty serpent from Paradise. That deadly venom is also in our heart, in our life, in our veins. Sooner or later that which lives inside of us will come out. Jacob's life, and that of his boys, fails the standard. What about your and my life? No, do not look at someone else, Congregation. Look at yourself! You have your hands full with your own self! I hope that the Lord grants you discovering light. That it will shock you what has become of you, who you actually are and who you continue to be, also after receiving grace.

Still today you are privileged to hear about the room there is with God for lost children of Adam, for a 'Jacob', for vipers. There is yet hope for you and for your children. Not on basis of something in yourself, but: *"I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!"* Young people, this God is the God of your baptism. You have been baptized in the Name of the Covenant Jehovah: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. The Lord was moved to bind His thrice holy Name to your name in baptism, boys and girls. Now you may plead upon this before the Lord, saying, "Lord, I am a child of Jacob, a deceiver. I have such an evil, unclean and sinful heart. But today I have heard that there is salvation possible for such people. O Lord, do not look upon the evil that I have done. Though my sins are so many, cleanse me of them, for Jesus' sake."

Jacob's deathbed was like a pulpit. He preached to his sons, saying, "Oh my sons, there is no expectation in us, nor is there any hope. We are in the midst of death. Yet there is expectation and hope in God! For He has provided grace. He has thought out a way of grace and He will accomplish it. God's good pleasure is the fountain of my hope!"

And so today we are privileged to hear that salvation is still possible. You can still be saved. You can still be converted. Children, you can still receive a new heart. Whoever you are. It is possible for children of Jacob!

"I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!" Jacob does not point at Reuben or at one of his other sons. No, his finger points upwards, to heaven. And parents, educators, preachers, office-bearers, you must do just the same thing time and again: point upwards and away from yourself! God Himself is the Fountain. With Him, the Fountain of life, there is room. With Him it is possible. With Him is the comfort and certainty of salvation.

Though everything rocks Jacob's life to its foundation and Satan desires to sift him as wheat, shaking him back and forth, yet the Lord holds him fast! Jacob's hope is not in himself, but: *"I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!"* He expects it from the God of the oath and of the covenant. It is as though he sings a song, while his boys sit around him at his bedside, "Boys, Jehovah's truth will stand forever, His covenant-bonds He will not sever."

We will first sing Psalter 107: 1, 4

Verse 1

*My end, Lord, make me know,
My days, how soon they fail;
And to my thoughtful spirit show
How weak I am and frail.*

Verse 4

*I am a stranger here,
Dependent on Thy grace,
A pilgrim, as my fathers were,
With no abiding place.*

This sermon is about Jacob's advent expectation. We have said something of the time of Jacob's hope. In that regard we have considered the context of our text. After that we said something of the Fountain of Jacob's hope. Finally we will consider the substance of this hope.

3. The substance of this hope.

Now we come to the word *salvation*. What is salvation? Our young people know that from catechism. The word *salvation* refers to the Saviour. Salvation is inseparably connected to the Saviour. We are in need of Him. Jacob is in need of Him as his dying hour has come. He could not live without the Saviour, nor can he now die without Him.

Salvation refers to deliverance and blessedness. Salvation actually means: ‘full of happiness.’ *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD”* (Psalm 33:12). Salvation refers to communion, to a broken relationship that has been restored. Yes, that is essentially the meaning of salvation: a broken relationship that has been restored. The breach has been healed, the separation bridged. That tremendously deep gulf, caused by sin, has been closed. The late Rev. A. Vergunst used to always say to his students: “Brothers, you must keep on digging in God’s Word, digging and searching, until you get to Jesus.” I had to think of that when I was reading our text in Hebrew. There the word *salvation* is rendered with the word “Yeshua”. That is another name for Joshua.....Jesus!

What a wonder when one learns to know himself as a Jacob! Lying on his deathbed it will be impossible for a child of Jacob to ever be reconciled with God. But what a wonder then when you are favored to look unto “Your Jesus”! *“I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD.”* What a treasure is God’s Word! What a gold mine!

If you know your need for deliverance from your distress and death, then you know that you need a ‘Jesus,’ a Saviour. Although Jacob knew very well that he had been reconciled with a triune God, because he knew of Peniel in his life, nevertheless it was also true for him what we read in Luke 16 verse 22, *“And it came to pass, that the beggar died.”* And what we read in Zephaniah 3:12, *“I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.”*

There lies the old pilgrim: “Give me Jesus or I die!” There is no life outside of Him. If there is no Jesus, if there is no Saviour, then only a ‘Jacob’ remains. Then everything is lost. Then there is no hope left for Jacob.

Congregation, how precious is this word ‘salvation’ when you compare Scripture with Scripture, and you read in Luke 2 how Simeon came to the temple and took the Lord Jesus in his arms! He too could only die with the Lord Jesus in his arms and with the Lord Jesus in his heart. He could only die if he was privileged to embrace and kiss the Lord Jesus through faith.

Simeon was really the Jacob of the New Testament when he sang, *“Lord, now*

lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation” (Luke 2:29-30). Thy salvation..., that is: Thy Saviour! Thy Jesus!

That is also today's message. That is the glad tiding of the Gospel. Salvation is possible for you also, because there is a Saviour! And that for a 'Jacob' like you and me. Right up to his last hour, Jacob has to spell his name 'Jacob', 'deceiver', to his great grief and sorrow. God's children will never rise above that. Being saved is impossible with us.

But it is God's Spirit who enlivens the expectation. He gives hope. He pours out love in the heart. Then faith turns to Jesus. As a flower turns to the sun and the light, so faith turns to the Saviour. Faith hungers and thirsts for Him. Faith forgoes everything and sighs and flees to Him. Faith sees all in Him. Faith expects all from Him. Faith leans and relies on Him. Faith believes God's promises, which in Christ are yea and amen.

That is why that old, dying pilgrim cries out: *“I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!”* For Thy Jesus! For Him, Who was to come. He will come in order to carry away Jacob's punishment. He will come to pay for his guilt. He will come to provide complete satisfaction to God's violated law; to save Jacob from the greatest evil, namely sin; to deliver him from himself, from Jacob; to bring him to the highest good; to restore him once more into God's favor and loving communion. That is why Jacob has comfort in life and can also die a blessed death; because of the Comforter and Saviour that is to come.

Grandfather Abraham and father Isaac had told Jacob about the first promise of mercy, *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed”* (Genesis 3:15). The Holy Ghost had worked this mercy in his heart and applied it to his soul. Abraham and Isaac will also have told him of the promise of mercy which was symbolized in circumcision.

And now Jacob is waiting for the fulfillment of those promises. That is what he

is looking forward to. That is his expectation. He is waiting for the Saviour. Only through the coming of the Lord Jesus will the promises be fulfilled. Waiting for the Lord does not happen with folded arms. Instead, you do that with folded hands. *"I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!"* With this salvation in view, there is something to long for, or not? Then you will be busy with it. If you are promised something very valuable, then you look forward to its fulfillment don't you? The Lord had promised Jacob that the Saviour would come, the One who has become everything for Jacob. The One he had sought and found in his life. And now that he is going to die he strongly desires the fulfillment of these promises. Because He is worthy of all his love.

Waiting for Him, expecting Him, longing for Him - you do that on your knees, congregation. With folded hands. You do that by digging in the Word, by searching it, until you find Jesus. For only with Him can you go through this life and eventually leave this life.

It will not be long before Jacob will enjoy God's perfect salvation in Christ. Then his faith will turn into beholding. That is what he is anticipating, that is what he is longing for.

*When I in righteousness at last
Thy glorious face shall see,
When all the weary night is past,
And I awake with Thee...*

Then Jacob will be fully satisfied - with the Saviour, through the righteousness of Christ. Then Jacob will no longer struggle with his being Jacob. Then sin will be no more, then he will no longer be a burden to himself.

"I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD!" This expectation rests on a solid foundation! But that foundation does not lie in him. It lies in the Triune God. He and all those Jacobs, who as an Israel may die in the Lord, will glory in the Triune God, *"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!"*

Young people, are you not jealous of that blessedness that the Lord has laid up for those that fear Him? Of Jacob it can be said: *"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord"* (Revelation 14:13). For Jesus' sake. How is it with you? Do you

understand Jacob? Do you understand his longing, his hoping, his complaint about himself? Do you understand him in his lively expectation of the Lord Jesus? That is what is most important in our lives.

Have we learned to know ourselves as a deceiver, a 'Jacob'? Do we know the wretchedness and death from which we need to be delivered? Or do we not need Jesus, do we not need a Saviour? Or do we boast of Jesus with our mouth, while we do not know from what and how we are saved?

Remember this: Jacob dies with Jesus' Name on his lips and Jesus' Name in his heart. That is for him the only comfort, both in life and in death. That is for him the foundation, the ground and the comfort of salvation. This gives him hope for his posterity.

Jacob didn't know Psalm 48, but he would have agreed with the poet when he sings:

*This mighty God forever lives
Our God and Saviour to abide,
And till our pilgrim days shall end
Will ever be our faithful guide.*

Amen.

Concluding : Psalter 134, 1 – 3

Verse 1

*Within Thy temple, Lord
In that most holy place,
We on Thy loving kindness dwell,
The wonders of Thy grace.
Men sing Thy praise, O God,
Where'er Thy Name is known;
By ev'ry deed Thy hand hath wrought
Thy righteousness is shown.*

Verse 2

*Let Zion now rejoice,
And all her children sing;
Let them with thankfulness proclaim
The judgments of their King.
Mount Zion's walls behold,
About her ramparts go,
And number ye the lofty tow'rs
That guard her from the foe.*

Verse 3

*Observe her palaces,
Mark her defenses well,
That to the sons that follow you
Her glories you may tell;
For God as our own God
Forever will abide,
And till life's journey close in death
Will be our faithful guide.*

This sermon was previously published in the collection of sermons entitled "If ye believe" of Rev. D.W. Tuinier (Pub. De Banier, 2009).