

Sermon Summary
2nd in Lent
4th March 2012

- Genesis 17 marks the second covenant which God makes with his people.
- It gives a promise by God that he will never want for descendants to carry on his memory. Such beliefs in continuity and the preservation of identity are common in traditions which revere ancestors.
- The substance of the promise changes with time
- Later the focus will be on the promised Land (Exodus- Joshua)
- When this is lost during the Babylonian Captivity 576 BC, alternatives are sought
- Ezekiel 37- the valley of the dry bones- looks forward to the restoration of the nation.
- Later the Maccabean writings will develop understandings of resurrection which focus on the post-mortem existence of the righteous. Such righteous people may save the nation through their deaths.
- Such are the seeds from which Christian belief in the resurrection granted by Jesus spring from.
- In response, the people of faith are expected to be a visible sign of God's presence, reminding the world of his love for all people and creation. That is what it means to be the royal priesthood: the visible sign of God's love.
- If we claim to be the people of God, we always should be checking whether and how we are revealing God's love to the world, or if we have replaced it with judgment or conceit about our own place.

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