

## CHAPTER 50 – God’s Vision 50/20

THEME: Burial of Jacob in Canaan; Joseph allays the fears of his brethren; death and burial of Joseph in Egypt.

This chapter tells of the burial of Jacob in Canaan and the death and burial of Joseph in Egypt. There is, therefore, a touch of sadness about this last chapter of Genesis. We have already called attention to the emphasis put upon death in the Book of Genesis. God had told Adam, "... For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen\_2:17). Paul wrote later, "... so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom\_5:12). The Book of Genesis is a full example of the fact of sin and the reality of death. It opens with God and man in the Garden of Eden and ends in a coffin in Egypt. This book recounts the entrance of sin into the human family but also relates the faithfulness of God in providing a way of life for man.

### **BURIAL OF JACOB IN CANAAN**

***Gen 50:1-2 Then Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel.***

Naturally, he sorrowed. He loved his father. We know that the Egyptians were quite expert at this sort of thing. We hear of the mummies of Egypt. They had a method of preserving bodies that we have not learned yet today. So Joseph called in the physicians to embalm his father. We don't laugh at a funeral, but I can't help but smile when I think of their making old Jacob up into a mummy, and I am of the opinion that his mummy is in Hebron today.

Remember, it had been his request to be taken and buried in the cave of Machpelah because his hope was an earthly hope. When he is raised from the dead, he will be there in the land with the nation Israel. The hope of the believer today, the member of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, is to be caught up with the Lord in the air and to go to a place called the New Jerusalem out in space. There are two different hopes, and they are both glorious. - McGee

***Gen 50:3 Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.***

It took them forty days to embalm. Evidently there are several processes involved. And we note that the Egyptians mourned for him. I don't think this was professional mourning. I think he had become a real saint in the land of Egypt and was probably respected as the father of Joseph. Joseph was the deliverer, but I believe that his father Jacob was at this time a real saint of God.

***Gen 50:4-6 Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.' " And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear."***

Then Pharaoh gave Joseph permission to accompany the body back to Canaan, with a great procession of officials, relatives, and servants. – Believers' Bible Commentary

***Gen 50:7-8 So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, as well as all the house of Joseph, his***

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**brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen.**

You can see how this man was greatly respected, loved, and honored in the land of Egypt. This is probably the longest funeral procession that the world has ever seen. It went all the way from Egypt to Hebron in Canaan.

One wonders whether Pharaoh required that they leave their little ones and their flocks so that he could be sure they would come back. Pharaoh didn't want to lose Joseph because he still needed him. – McGee

**Gen 50:9-14 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering. Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.**

You may wonder why Jacob wasn't buried with Rachel in Bethlehem, which was probably not more than twenty miles farther north. I think the reason is stated here. Abraham had bought this cave, and Jacob wanted to be buried with his fathers in a place that was bought and paid for to make sure that he would stay in the land. So, he was buried with the other patriarchs. They all had the same hope of resurrection. – McGee

They stopped east of the Jordan and mourned for seven days so deeply that the Canaanites . . . called the place Abel Mizraim, the meadow (or mourning) of Egypt. Following the burial in the cave . . . of Machpelah at Hebron, Joseph and his entourage returned to Egypt. – Believers’ Bible Commentary

### **God's Good Purposes**

**Gen 50:15-17 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.**

Evidently the brothers had gone to Jacob before he died and had expressed their fears regarding what would happen to them after he was gone. They were afraid that Joseph would turn on them and be against them once the father was gone. So Jacob had given them a message to tell to Joseph, and he was sure that Joseph would not persecute them to attempt to get even with them. When the brothers do come to Joseph with this confession, Joseph breaks into weeping because of it. Now they are repenting because of their sin. - McGee

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**Notice: It is never too late to ask for forgiveness. These brothers carried that guilt way too long. Possibly, Jacob knew that prompted them to repent to Joseph and mend the relationships. Do you have relationships that you need to give forgiveness, so you can move on as well and let go of guilt or bitterness?**

***Gen 50:18-19 Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants." Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?***

You see, the prophecy of their falling down before him has repeatedly come true. Joseph gives God the glory in every case. - McGee

**Do you put God in perspective before making decisions in all things? Obviously, Joseph did, and I think we could all learn from that example.**

***Gen 50:20-21 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.***

Friend, God has a far-off purpose that you and I do not see. I must confess how human I am about this because I can't see any further than my nose when trouble comes to me, and I ask, "Why does God permit this to happen?" We need to remember that He has a good purpose in view. He is not going to let anything happen to you unless it will accomplish a good purpose in your life. - McGee

How significant that sentence: "God meant it for good!" There are meanings in life. Things do not happen by chance, and what happens is meant for good. All things work together for good for them that love God. Ninety-three years had passed since he was lifted from the pit; sixty since he buried his father. Finally, Joseph's end came. His bones were not buried, but awaited the summons for the Exodus. That coffin seemed to be the end of all. Nay! it was the seed of the coming harvest. – F. B. Meyer  
Commentary

***Romans 8:28-30 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.***

### ***The Death of Joseph***

***Gen 50:22-23 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasse, were also brought up on Joseph's knees.***

Joseph was apparently the first of the twelve sons of Jacob to die. This was fifty-four years after his father's death. His faith that God would take the people of Israel back to Canaan is eulogized in Heb\_11:22. He gave instructions that his bones be buried in that land.

It has been pointed out that Genesis opens with God's perfect creation and closes with a coffin in Egypt. It is a book of biographies. Whereas two chapters are devoted to an account of the creation of the heavens and earth, forty-eight chapters are largely concerned with the lives of men and women. God is

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interested primarily in people. What a comfort and challenge to those who know Him! – Believers Bible Commentary

***Gen 50:24-26 And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.***

This is the way the Book of Genesis ends. It began with God creating the heaven and the earth, and it ends with a coffin in Egypt. What had happened to the human family? Sin had intruded into the creation of God.

Why was not Joseph taken up to Canaan and buried there at this time? I think it is obvious that Joseph was a hero in the land of Egypt and his family would not have been permitted to remove his body from Egypt at that time. I think he was one of the outstanding patriots whom the Egyptians revered. Probably they had a monument raised at his grave.

But Joseph says to his own people, “When you go back to Canaan, don't leave my bones down here!” In Joseph we see the same hope that we saw in Jacob; that is, a confidence that God would give them the land of Canaan as an eternal possession. And they wanted to be raised from the dead in their own land. Joseph believed that God would raise up His earthly people to inherit the land of promise.

The Book of Hebrews mentions this as the crowning act of faith in the life of Joseph. “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones” (Heb\_11:22).

In Exodus 13 we will see how wonderfully God honored Joseph and answered his request. Moses and the children of Israel took the bones of Joseph with them when they left Egypt. - McGee