



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

## The Book of Genesis 03/07/2014

### Lesson Number 77



**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

#### GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# JACOB PREPARES TO DIE

“Gen 47:27” And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. <sup>28</sup> And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. <sup>29</sup> And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: <sup>30</sup> But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. <sup>31</sup> And he said, Swear unto me. And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head. <sup>48:1</sup> And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. <sup>2</sup> And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. <sup>3</sup> And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, <sup>4</sup> And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. <sup>5</sup> And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. <sup>6</sup> And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. <sup>7</sup> And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.” ..... Gen 47:27-48:7

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Jacob and his household dwelt in Goshen, having possessions there, growing and multiplying – all according to God's purpose. Jacob dwelt there for seventeen years, until the time arrived when he “must die.” Calling for Joseph, he instructed him not to bury him in Egypt. He wanted to be buried with his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, in their “buryingplace.” Joseph agreed to do

this, and Jacob made him swear to it. Jacob grew sick, and it was apparent the time had come for him to die. Joseph was told, and started making his way to Jacob, bringing his two sons with him. Jacob was also told that Joseph was coming. Jacob mustered his strength, sat up in bed, and told Joseph of his pilgrimage. He rehearsed how the Lord had led him and blessed him. He particularly emphasized the

promises God made to him along the way. Learning of Joseph's sons, Jacob said they belonged to himself – that is, for the patriarchal blessing. He reminded Joseph how his mother, Rachel, had died beside him in Canaan when they were just a little way from Bethlehem.

### PERCEIVING THE HAND OF GOD

We must not fail to see the hand

Jacob dwells in Egypt, increasing in goods and growing exceedingly. The time grew near for him to die, and begins preparing for it – *Given O. Blakely*

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of God in the life of Jacob. His experience is indicative of the manner in which the Lord leads and directs His people.

One thing is glaringly evident: Although the people of God are in the world, it is not their *"long home"* (Eccl 12:5). Jacob, for example, as Abraham and Isaac, was promised the land of Canaan, together with his seed (Gen 28:4,13; 35:12).

### Jacob's Experience Along the Way

- ➔ Encountered competition with Esau.
- ➔ Encountered threats from Esau.
- ➔ Was handicapped in the wrestling match with an angel.
- ➔ Was deceived into taking Leah for his wife, when he thought he was getting Rachel.
- ➔ Worked for Laban without receiving wages.
- ➔ When he did receive wages, they were changed ten times.
- ➔ Spent twenty years in Padanaram with sundry inconveniences.
- ➔ Was led to believe his favorite son,

- Joseph, had been killed by a beast.
- ➔ Had to face Esau, thinking that he was still hostile.
- ➔ His daughter Dinah was raped.
- ➔ His sons overreacted, slaughtering the Shechemites.
- ➔ His eldest son lay with his concubine.
- ➔ Rachel died in Canaan when they were only a short distance from their destination.
- ➔ He endured three years of a five-year famine in Canaan.
- ➔ At 130 years of age he moved his entire household to Egypt.
- ➔ Died in Egypt.

### What Do We Learn from This?

We learn from the examples of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – to say nothing of Noah, Moses, the prophets, and Paul – that **those who are called and used by God are not summoned to a trouble-free life of ease and comfort.** Also, obtaining the promises of God requires commitment and consistency in the life of those who believe.

The patriarchs and other men and woman called into God's purpose lived out the doctrine that is taught by Jesus and the apostles. We must not be naive about this, disconcerted by every inconvenience that comes our way. Ponder the magnitude of the words that follow, and comprehend how they were lived out earlier by people of God.

- ➔ *"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world,*

- ➔ *"And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."* (Mat 10:22).

- ➔ *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household"* (Matt 10:34-36).

- ➔ *"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience"* (Rom 5:3)

- ➔ *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"* (2 Cor 4:17).

- ➔ *"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto"* (1 Thess 3:3).

- ➔ *"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."* (James 1:3)

- ➔ *"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you"* (1 John 3:13).

All of this is involved in God taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14). It is what results from actually becoming *"strangers and pilgrims"* in the world (1

**We learn from the examples of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – to say nothing of Noah, Moses, the prophets, and Paul – that those who are called and used by God are not summoned to a trouble-free life of ease and comfort.**

*therefore the world hateth you"* (John 15:19).

Pet 2:11). It is imperative that those in Christ live in this manner.

With the patriarchs, those who are in Christ *“desire a better country, that is, an heavenly”* (Heb 11:16). Whatever men may think about success, advantage, etc., it is still true for every person in Christ: *“here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come”* (Heb 13:14).

When perceived and embraced, all

of this enables us to respond quickly and satisfactorily to sudden changes in our lives – Like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob facing challenges Or Abraham having to deal with Hagar and Ishmael. Or Isaac having to deal with the herdmen of Gerar. Or Jacob having to contend with Esau, Laban, famine, and the move to Egypt. Or Joseph, and the unique trials he faced.

**This is something that cannot be taught in a classroom, but it must be learned.** We must not approach life as though this world was our primary habitation. Comfort is good, and inconvenience can be bad. However, comfort is not the best thing, and inconvenience is not the worst. **If those in Christ can learn that, their lives will be less complicated.**

## THEY HAD A POSSESSION AND GREW AND MULTIPLIED

“ Gen 47:27 ***And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.***”

It is vital that we remember this is not a mere history of men. This is the record God has given of the creation,

people.

- ➡ The development of a God-consciousness.
- ➡ The demonstration of the faithfulness of God.

from God, and rendering the knowledge of God impossible by natural means, a **supernatural interposition was required.** Men could not climb out of the pit into which sin had hurled them – in fact, none of them knew they were even in a pit. **God had to teach men about the predicament in which they were found.**

**The wandering life is, in fact, an unstable one. Perhaps you have known people who have been noted for never staying very long in one place. Such people are generally discontent, and not very profitable to anyone.**

Until this very day, no nation has every been able to invent a God that could deliver, raise, save, and perfect. No gods that were extant in the time of the patriarchs, or in Egypt, could do such things. **The world’s gods were really nothing more than erroneous ideas, crystalized in images of wood and stone.**

rise, and tutelage of Israel – the people to whom the coming Savior would be given. As it is written: *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this”* (Isa 9:6-7).

We are reading of *“the zeal of the LORD of hosts”* performing that promise. This is the preparatory phase of the project. It involves the following:

- ➡ Selecting and developing a special

- ➡ To confirm the rightness of Divine choice.
- ➡ To show the essentiality of what God says and does.
- ➡ The culturing and perfecting of faith.
- ➡ To show what is involved in being separated from the world.
- ➡ To distinguish between faith and works.
- ➡ The demonstration of the true nature of life in this world.
- ➡ The development of hope.

These are merely introductory, but they are enough to make the point. Since the whole of the human race had been plunged into sin, alienating men

This circumstance required the extensive involvement of God in the affairs of men. Early on, that involvement did not come by request, for God was not known sufficiently to even make a request for His help. However, by this time in the record of Genesis, men had some knowledge of God, knew of His works, had learned somewhat of His purpose, and had even learned to pray.

Now, with that as a background, let us peruse the further development of this special people, whose fathers were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

### IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, IN THE COUNTRY OF GOSHEN

*“ And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen . . .”*

Jacob and his household are in a

specific place – even as they were in Canaan (Gen 46:5). **From the broad perspective they were sojourners in both Canaan and Egypt.** But from another view, they had settled in a particular place – in the country of Goshen, which was in Egypt.

You may recall that later, when Israel was constantly moving about from place to place, they were wandering in the desert (Josh 14:10; Psa 107:4). However, when they settled in Canaan, they no longer roamed about from place to place.

**The wandering life is, in fact, an unstable one.** Perhaps you have known people who have been noted for never staying very long in one place. Such people are generally discontent, and not very profitable to anyone.

**However, when God commences to work extensively with a people, He generally settles them in one place.** This was true of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and now all of his offspring. I suppose there are exceptions to the rule, but it seems to me that this is the normal experience for the people of God.

#### THEY HAD POSSESSIONS THEREIN

*“ . . . and they had possessions therein . . . ”* Other versions read, *“they acquired property in it.”* <sup>NASB</sup>

That is, they did not occupy the entirety of Goshen. There were not enough of them to do so. However, they did find a place to call home there, and settled down.

#### THEY GREW AND MULTIPLIED

*“ . . . and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.”* Other versions read, *“were fruitful and became very numerous,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“soon the people of Israel began to prosper, and there was a veritable population explosion among them.”* <sup>LIVING</sup>

**This is the first record of unusual growth among the people of Israel. When they entered into Egypt, all totaled, there were only seventy of**

**This growth was by no means the result of a human strategy to increase the number of disciples. It was the result of the faithful and insightful proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, which was heartily embraced.**

**them** (Gen 46:20). Now that they were in peaceful surroundings, and their needs were being met by a single man, Joseph, God began to expand their number.

Prior to this He had expanded flocks, herds, and servants (Gen 24:35; 26:14; 30:43), but not progeny. **Until there had been the development of a consciousness of God Almighty, it appears as though God would not allow an exponential growth in the population.**

Additionally, as the text affirms, they experienced expansion in the place they had come to possess. When Jacob and his household were in Canaan, they did NOT possess the land. In fact, they were strangers in the land of promise, as affirmed in Hebrews: *“By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise”* (Heb 11:9). In Egypt, however, they had a possession, and that is where they began to expand.

Later revelations of the expansion of Israel include the following:

- ➔ *“And the children of Israel were fruitful, and **increased abundantly, and multiplied**, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.”* (Ex 1:7)
- ➔ *“But the more they afflicted them, the more **they multiplied and grew**. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.”* (Ex 1:12)
- ➔ *“Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and **the people multiplied**, and waxed very mighty.”* (Ex 1:20)

I want to again affirm that this expansion was in order to the possession for the land of Canaan. The land was large enough to require much people to possess and manage it.

#### A Parallel Thought

**Thoughtful believers have long marveled at the seemingly slow growth of the modern church.** The proverbial 10-40 window has remained an acknowledged formidable challenge for several decades. We are still hearing about vast areas of the world that have never been exposed to the Gospel – at least not in the last few centuries. On the other hand, around 60 A.D. Paul wrote, *“ . . . the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven”* (Col 1:23). Other versions read, *“which was preached in all creation under heaven,”* <sup>ASV</sup> *“has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“which was preached in all creation under heaven,”* <sup>ERV</sup> *“has been preached all over the world”* <sup>NLT</sup> and *“which has been preached [as being designed for and offered without restrictions] to every person under heaven.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

There is no question about what this text states. For me, it is also axiomatic that it is an inspired statement. **I do not know how it would be possible for such a fact to be known if it was not revealed from heaven.** All of this happened within three decades of Christ’s exaltation to the right hand of God. **Further, it was the result of godly spontaneity.** These were not the results of crafty appeals, or the people raising their hands, etc. This growth was by no means the result of a human strategy to increase the number of disciples. **It was the result of the faithful and insightful proclamation of the Gospel of Christ,**

which was heartily embraced.

As you can see, the kind of growth the modern church is experiencing, particularly in America, was certainly not the manner of the early church (Acts 2:41,47; 5:14; 6:7; 8:5-6,12,14; 11:24; 13:45; 14:1; 16:5; 17:4). **Why are the circumstances relating to the growth of the early church not true today?**

On a global scale, some will point to the underground church in China, now intelligently estimated to be 150 million – about one half of the total population of the United States of America. Estimated population of China is 1,344 billion. That means 3% of the Chinese population are professed

Christians. The population of the United States is estimated at 316 million, 76% of which claim to be “Christian” (240 million). That percentage is said to be decreasing.

**It is my opinion that the modern church is not strong enough to handle a great influx of believers.** It is too weak, too untaught, too casual, and too worldly. It is similar to seventy people (Gen 46:27) trying to inhabit and manage the land of Canaan. It simply cannot be done. In my opinion, the modern church is too weak to enjoy a legitimate expansion. That is precisely why nearly all of its efforts to grow are futile.

I strongly affirm things will remain as they are until the professed church grows up into Christ in all things, as it is intended to do (Eph 4:15). It is the appointed *“pillar and ground of the truth”* (1 Tim 3:15), and that position simply cannot be sustained by a weak and worldly church. God will not allow a corrupt tree to bear good fruit. As Jesus said, *“Make the tree good”* (Matt 12:33).

Until the modern church grows up, matures, and measures up to the standard God has appointed for it, believers like those in the book of Acts will be few, and expansion will be insignificant. That this condition is with us now is abundantly, yet grievously, apparent.

## JACOB LIVED SEVENTEEN YEARS IN EGYPT

*“<sup>28</sup> And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.”*

### SEVENTEEN YEARS

*“And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years . . . ”*

Joseph left Canaan, being sold into slavery, when he was seventeen years old (Gen 37:2). Now Jacob also leaves Canaan, owing to a famine, to spend the last seventeen years of his life in Egypt. Aside from being kept alive by the move, he was able to spend these years with Joseph, his favorite son, whom he thought he had lost.

### THE LENGTH OF JACOB'S LIFE

*“ . . . so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.”*

Jacob's life was lived out in three locations” Canaan, Padanaram, and Egypt. His time in Canaan

JACOB'S LIFE	
Years in Canaan.....	77
Years in Padanaram.....	20
Years in Canaan again....	33
Came to Egypt when.....	130
Years in Egypt.....	17
Total Life.....	147

was interrupted for the twenty years he spent in Padanaram with Laban. That was the place he obtained his wives, twelve of his children (eleven sons and one daughter), and all of his possessions until he returned to Canaan.

Observe how the age span is shortening as we progress through human history. Adam lived for 930 years (Gen 5:5). Noah, living on both sides of the flood, lived for 950 years (Gen 9:29). Shem lived 600 years (Gen 11:11). Abraham lived 175 years, dying *“in a good old age, and old man, full of years”* (Gen 25:8). Isaac lived 180 years, and died *“being old and full of days”* (Gen 35:28). Jacob lived 147 years (Gen 47:28). Moses lived 120 years (Deut 34:7). Joshua lived 110 years. David died *“in a good old age, full of days,”* being seventy years of age (2 Sam 5:4). Seventy was the average life span of which Moses wrote in the ninetieth Psalm: *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away”* (Psa 90:10).

Prior to the flood, average life spans ranged from 930 down to 595. The following men lived to be over nine hundred years old: Adam (Gen 5:5), Seth (Gen 5:5), Enos (Gen 5:11), Cainan (Gen 5:14), Jared (Gen 5:20), Methuselah (Gen 5:27). Immediately after the flood, the last man to live to be over nine hundred was Noah (Gen 9:29). After the flood, ages continued to decrease. Abraham's father, Terah, was the last man to live over two hundred years (Gen 11:32).

**The point is that death was imposed in the race of Adam.** Had it not been for the restraining power of God, death would have completely eradicated Adam's race. **However, the hand of God set a limit for the average life, and it was sufficient to develop the aptitudes necessary for profitable associations with the Living God.**

The *“power of death”* was given to Satan (Heb 2:14), **but not without limitations.** Just as he was also given to be the *“god of this world”* (2 Cor 4:4), having been given the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them (Matt 4:8-9). **His ruthless reign however, is not without limitations,** else no one could

be saved. He is a “god,” and yet is always under “*the true God*” (1 John 5:20). **He can never operate independently.**

We must learn that abilities God gives remain under His supervision.

Satan cannot establish the perimeter of death, and man cannot establish the circumference of either his ability or domain. All of this is intentionally woven into the records written in the book of Genesis. They are for our learning and spiritual adaptation.

However, men must be given eyes to see it, and a heart to accept it. I fear there is far too much philosophizing about these matters among professing Christians. That condition produces great limitations.

## THE TIME DREW NIGH THAT ISRAEL MUST DIE

“<sup>29a</sup> ***And the time drew nigh that Israel must die.***” Other versions read, “*the time for Israel to die drew near,*” NASB “*Israel’s death approached,*” CEB “*the time drew near for him to die*” CSB “*the days of Israel approached that he should die,*” DARBY “*Israel was about to die,*” GWN “*When Israel’s time to die drew near*” NJB “*When Jacob knew he did not have long to live,*” CEV “*when Israel knew he would soon die,*” ERV and “*Israel was about to die.*” GW

The words “*the time drew nigh*” speak of something that had been determined. David rightly confessed to the Lord, “*My times are in Thy hand*” (Psa 31:15). From the heavenly perspective, the span of our life is referred to as days that are “*fulfilled*” (2 Sam 7:12). Solomon said there was “*a time to die*” (Eccl 3:2) – and man is not the one who has established it. According to Scripture, it is possible for man, through foolish living, to die before his time. As it is written, “*Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before*

*thy time?*” (Eccl 7:17). David said there were men who “*shall not live out half their days*” (Psa 55:23). Solomon also wrote, “*the years of the wicked shall be shortened*” (Prov 10:27). **In such cases, God is the one who terminated the life early.** He also has the power to lengthen a man’s life, as he did in the case of Hezekiah, to whom God said, “*I will add unto thy days fifteen years*” (2 Kgs 20:6).

In the case of Jacob, God did not lengthen his days or cut them short. We are going to find that he was aware his time to die was approaching. The same was true of Paul (2 Tim 4:6), and of Peter as well (2 Pet 1:14).

It seems to me that the best thing to do is to live unto the Lord (2 Cor 5:15), walking “*worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing*” (Col 1:10). **Then, when our time comes to die, we will be able to depart in a commendable manner; having the proper perspective, saying the right words if we are**

**conscious, and leaving the world in a state of joyous expectation.**

There are a few scenes of death in the Scriptures. It will be profitable for you to review them. Note the state of their minds, and the propensity to blessing others as they departed.

- ➡ Isaac – Genesis 27:1-40
- ➡ Jacob – Genesis 49:1-33; Heb 11:21
- ➡ Moses – Deuteronomy 31:14-34:7
- ➡ David – 1 Kgs 2:1-10
- ➡ Zechariah – 2 Chron 24:21-22
- ➡ The Lord Jesus – Matt 27:34-53; Mk 15:23-38; Lk 23:27-49; John 19:16-30
- ➡ Stephen – Acts 7:56-60
- ➡ Paul – 2 Timothy 4:6-8

## BURY ME NOT IN EGYPT

“<sup>29b</sup> . . . ***and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:***”<sup>30a</sup> ***But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace.***”

Notice how Jacob is in possession

of his mental faculties. He knows whom to call, and what to say when he comes. Because he had lived in the citadel of Divine consciousness, he will conduct himself honorably and insightfully as he approaches his death.

### HE CALLED HIS SON JOSEPH

“*. . . and he called his son Joseph . . .*” Other versions read, “*He summoned his son Joseph,*” CEB and “*he*

*sent for his son Joseph.*” NJB

No one else in all Egypt could simply “*call for*” Joseph, anymore than they could call for Pharaoh. These were rulers, and they did not answer to the summons of their subjects. This, however, is a different matter. **This pertains to the holy lineage that is leading to Jesus, and to the covenant that God made with Abraham.** These

were not areas in which the ruler of Egypt, or any other earthly ruler, had any authority. As a resident of Egypt, Jacob was subject to Joseph. **But in matters pertaining to the covenant of God, Joseph was subject to him.**

#### An Application

It is still true that, in matters relating to God and our association with Him, worldly dignitaries have no authority at all. Their authority does not extend beyond civil life. Therefore, when Nebuchadnezzar required the three Hebrew children to bow before an image he had erected, he had extended himself beyond the border of his authority (Dan 3:15-17). The same was true of Darius and Daniel (Dan 6:7,12-24), Herod and Peter (Acts 12:2-11), and Pilate and Jesus (John 19:10-11). It was also true of the rulers of the Temple and Peter and John (Acts 4:17-20), and the high priest and Paul (Acts 23:1-5).

When religious or political authorities attempt to move us to live or speak contrary to the Lord's directives, we must reply, **"We ought to obey God rather than men."** (Acts 5:29). May the Lord raise up faithful and brave souls who will not cave in to the pressures of this present evil world.

#### DEAL KINDLY AND TRULY WITH ME

*" . . . and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me . . ."* Other versions read, *"deal with me in kindness and faithfulness,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"deal loyally and truly,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"out of consideration for me,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"deal mercifully and truly,"* <sup>GENEVA</sup> *"that you love me and are faithful to me,"* <sup>GWN</sup> *"execute mercy and truth toward me"* <sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup> *"act with faithful love towards me"* <sup>NJB</sup> *"treat me with unfailing love,"* <sup>NLT</sup> *"a charity and truth,"* <sup>ABP</sup> *"Promise that you will do what I say and that you will be truthful with me."* <sup>ERV</sup>

#### BURY ME NOT IN EGYPT

*" . . . bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt . . ."* Other versions read, *"Please do not bury me in Egypt,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"take an oath that you will not put me to rest in*

*Egypt,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"Please don't bury me here,"* <sup>GWN</sup> *"do not entomb me in Egypt,"* <sup>ABP</sup> and *"Do not bury me, I beg of you, in Egypt."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

For Jacob, Egypt was a place where he was graciously sustained during a famine. However, although he lived there for seventeen years, he did not consider himself an Egyptian, and he did not want to be buried there. He knew his body was a part of himself, and he did not want to be identified with Egypt even after he died. **He desired, so to speak, to make a clear statement concerning where he really belonged – something that was determined by His God.**

I have a keen interest concerning

*the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan"* (Gen 23:19).

➔ Abraham's *"sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre"* (Gen 25:9-10).

➔ *"Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth"* (Gen 35:8).

➔ *"Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem"* (Gen 35:19).

➔ *"And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his*

**When religious or political authorities attempt to move us to live or speak contrary to the Lord's directives, we must reply, "We ought to obey God rather than men." May the Lord raise up faithful and brave souls who will not cave in to the pressures of this present evil world.**

HOW people think, who have had profitable exposure to the God of heaven. In this text we are provided an example of how a man of faith – one chosen by God – thinks about the handling of his body after death. To this point in the Genesis record, We have been introduced to the concept of burial, as held by those who had personal connection with the God of heaven.

➔ God told Abraham he would be **"buried in a good old age"** (Gen 15:15).

➔ Abraham procured a place to, he said, **"bury my dead"** (Gen 23:4,8,13).

➔ *"Abraham buried Sarah his wife in*

*people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him"* (Gen 35:29).

The word *"bury"* means *"to inter."* The English word *"inter"* means *"to DEPOSIT (A DEAD BODY) IN THE EARTH OR IN A TOMB."* <sup>MERRIAM WEBSTER</sup> In the New Covenant writings we are told that after Jesus laid down His life, *"Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury"* (John 19:40). The Greek word translated *"bury"* in the above text means, *"TO PREPARE A BODY FOR BURIAL, BY THE USE OF EVERY REQUISITE PROVISION AND FUNERAL ADORNMENT, TO WIT, BATHS, VESTMENTS, FLOWERS, WREATHS, PERFUMES, LIBATIONS, ETC.; TO LAY OUT A CORPSE."* <sup>THAYER</sup>

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob buried their dead, and they themselves were buried. That is the way they viewed

handling the body when the spirit had departed from it. No other acceptable view of handling a dead body is revealed.

I have heard more arguments than I wish to recount stating that it makes no difference what we do with the body after death. However, that is not the way godly men of old thought. It is not even the way God Himself thought, for He personally *"buried"* Moses (Deut 34:4-6) – not to mention that one facet of the Gospel is that Christ Himself *"was buried"* (1 Cor 15:4).

#### I WILL LIE WITH MY FATHERS

*" . . . But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace."*

The *"buryingplace"* of reference was the cave of Machpela, part of the property Abraham purchased for the burial of Sarah (Gen 23:8-18). The following people were buried there: Sarah (Gen 23:19), Abraham (Gen 25:9), Isaac, Rebekah, Leah (Gen 49:29-31), and Jacob (Gen 50:13).

ANCIENT PAINTING OF THE ORIGINAL CAVE



CURRENT STRUCTURE BUILT AROUND THE CAVE



Although the make-up of man had not yet been clearly delineated, the *"fathers"* seemed to sense they were custodians of more than earthly goods. As indicated in this case, they made appropriate arrangements for the handling of their body after their death.

As I have already indicated, the average twenty-first century *"Christian"* does not think in this way. In my own judgment, this is owing to their lack of contact with, and consequently lack of familiarity with, the God of heaven. This situation, if I am right, has taken place during the era when the greatest light has been shined upon mankind – their nature, their responsibilities, and their destiny.

## WHAT ABOUT CREMATION?

By Given O. Blakely

### INTRODUCTION

Cremation, as a valid alternative to burial, is growing in popularity. Some decades ago, few believers in Christ considered it to be proper. Because of the pressure of the times, some professed believers are now uncertain about this procedure, while others are convinced it is proper.

### SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES

There are examples of the burning of *"corpses"* in Scripture (II Kgs. 19:35; Isa. 37:36; Nab. 3:3; Mk. 6:29). It is written of Achan, who coveted the forbidden treasures of Jericho, and his family. *"And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones"* (Josh. 7:25). This action was the culmination of a curse, and is by no means considered a precedent.

The bodies of King Saul and his sons were taken *"from the wall of Bethshan,"* and removed to Jabesh. It is said that the valiant men *"burnt them there."* They were not totally consumed, however, because *"they took their bones and buried them under a tree at Jabesh"* (I Sam. 31:12-13). Again, this was not a Divinely recommended procedure. Examination of the text suggests that this action was taken to insure that the bodies of Saul and his sons would not be subjected to further Philistine maltreatment. Josiah, reforming king of Israel, *"slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them"* (II Kgs. 23:20). Again, the burning of the bones was associated with a curse, and was not a revealed procedure.

On the other hand, God punished Moab because *"he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime"* (Amos 2:1). Other references to consumption by fire generally refer to the heathen custom of sacrificing their children to false gods (i.e. Jer. 7:31).

### THE HISTORY OF CREMATION

Throughout history, cremation has been identified with heathen nations. Historians tell us that *"with the rise and spread of Christianity, which taught belief in the resurrection of the human body, cremation was discontinued in those countries which embraced the new religion"* (The Universal Standard Encyclopedia). We find this to be a consistent response to the Gospel throughout the world. Cremation reflects a spirit of hopelessness, contradicting the *"hope of the resurrection."* In its implications, it is basically out of harmony with the revealed view of death.

It is further observed that after the Jewish exile, interment was the sole method of disposing of the dead among the Jews. In the Talmud, cremation is condemned as a heathen practice.

### WHY IS BURIAL PREFERRED?

Cremation is not categorically condemned in Scripture. Believers in Christ, however, have traditionally preferred burial. Of itself, of course, tradition is not a valid basis for custom. If, however, it has been based upon godly reasoning, we owe it to ourselves to consider it. We are not speaking of a view to be bound upon people, and that is not the purpose of this article. It is necessary, however, that our actions be performed *"unto the Lord"* and that includes the disposition of our bodies.

#### The practice of the godly

Among individuals and peoples having a covenantal association with God, burial has been consistently practiced. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, Miriam, Aaron, Joseph, and David were *"buried"* (Gen. 25:10; Num. 20:1; Deut. 10:6; Josh. 24:32; Acts 2:29). When leading Israelites died, it was often said they were *"buried with their fathers"* (I Kgs. 14:31; 15:24; 22:50; II Kgs. 8:24; 12:21; 14:20; 15:7, 38; 16:20).

#### God buries Moses

When Moses died, God Himself *"buried him in a valley in the land of Moab ..."* (Deut. 34:5-6). It is difficult to conceive of a stronger recommendation for burial.

#### The case of Stephen

When Stephen, the first martyr for Christ, died, his body was *"carried to his burial"* (Acts 8:2). Although there was a scriptural record of the burning of bodies, such a thought, in this instance, did not occur to early believers. We owe it to ourselves to consider why this circumstance occurred.

#### Jesus was buried

The Lord Jesus Himself was *"buried,"* according to the Gospel (I Cor. 15:1-4). During His earthly ministry, his *"burial"* was the focus of a timely deed



performed by a woman of discernment – a deed for which she was commended (Matt. 26:12). It is difficult to conceive of a similar action that could be associated with cremation.

Referring to His death and burial, Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground..." (John 12:24). When a key part of Christ's doctrine is based upon burial, why would anyone try and contend for cremation?

If there were no other considerations, these alone would be sufficient to convince me of the preference of burial. But there is more.

#### "UNTO DUST THOU SHALT RETURN"

When sin entered into the world, death also entered (Rom. 5:12). A description of the post-death activity of the body is vividly described by God Himself. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, til thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3:19).

It is not my objective to create a law in favor of burial. It is, however, difficult to consider any other procedure in view of this Divine pronouncement. I understand that finespun "scientific" arguments can be concocted to justify cremation, but such arguments cannot be justified by this text! I personally consider cremation as a standard means of disposing of the body, to have been originated by Satan. He doubtless intended to turn the hearts of men away from the Divine pronouncement. Both the origin and destiny of man's body is denied by the act of cremation whether intentional or not.

#### CONSIDERING THE RESURRECTION

In areas permeated by the Gospel, the "hope of the resurrection" has become preminent (Acts 23:6). Although his present tabernacle of clay is appropriately called a "vile body", we live in expectation of its change. It shall "be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:20).

In Paul's argument for the resurrection, he refers to the interment of our bodies as a sowing (1 Cor. 15:36, 37, 42, 43, 44). It is "sown" or placed into the earth from whence it came, knowing that "the earth shall cast out her dead" (Isa. 26:19).

Even before the risen and enthroned Christ began mediating the New Covenant, Martha knew of the hope of the resurrection. In response to our Lord's statement that "Thy brother shall rise again," she said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:23-24). Without imposing any law on our readers, it ought to be obvious that burial is more in harmony with the concept of resurrection than is cremation.

In burial – particularly that of believers – we sow the body in hope of the resurrection. We submit to the Divine pronouncement, letting earth claim its own once again. But, bless God, we also look for the removal of the curse! "There shall be a resurrection!"

I find it difficult to harmonize these observations with the act of cremation. The fact that

It is a sad day when professing Christians living over four thousand years after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have less sense about what should be done in this matter than they did. They knew where to stay and where to go – and they did so. They knew how to live, how to die, and what to do with the bodies of those who died. The

**Too much has happened since those early times to justify low levels of understanding and godly response. We are living in greater light, and more is required of us.**

such a custom is more prevalent among the heathen ought to tell us something. I personally could not approve of the act because it appears to me to conflict with God, Christ, and the Gospel.

As a final consideration, we are told that the body is for the Lord, and does not really belong to us (1 Cor 6:13-20). Both the resurrection of the dead, and holiness of life are mentioned in this text. The fact is that the Lord has purchased our bodies, and that they belong to him by no means suggests that ownership passes to the relative of those who die, who may make a decision to cremate the body. The fact that He will raise the dead indicates that He has not relinquished ownership when a person dies.

#### CONCLUSION

Early saints buried their dead. God Himself buried Moses. Jesus was buried. Paul argues for the resurrection in view of a burial. These considerations have convinced me of the preference of burial over cremation.

Notwithstanding these remarks, there is no law on the matter in the Kingdom, and we refuse to make one. We do, however, recommend to all believers the contemplation of what God has done and said in regards to this subject, fully persuaded that you will arrive at the same conclusion.

The real question that should be asked here is not, "Is cremation wrong?" It is rather, "Is cremation right? – particularly in view of the fact that men are handling something that really belongs to God."

#### A SAD CIRCUMSTANCE

record of some of them is provided in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and many are staggered by the superiority of their lives to those living in the blazing glory of the exalted Christ. Such things ought not be! **Too much has happened since those early times to justify low levels of understanding and godly response. We are living in greater light, and more is required of us.**

During the interim of about thirty-three years after the birth of Christ, and preceded by over four millennia – the following took place.

- ➡ Sin was put away (Heb 9:26).
- ➡ Satan was destroyed (Gen2:14).
- ➡ Evil principalities and powers were plundered (Col 2:15).
- ➡ A new and living way to God was opened and sanctified for men (Heb 10:20).
- ➡ A New Covenant was ratified and put into place that is a better covenant established upon better promises (Heb 8:6).
- ➡ Jesus delivered us from this present evil world according to the will of God (Gal 1:4).
- ➡ Jesus has been exalted to give

**Now, I ask you, how is it possible to justify, excuse, or explain away the glaring fact that spiritual ignorance is running rampant in the professed church? What has happened to cause those professing identity with God to retrogress?**

It is time for professed Christians who are wandering in the plain of “Ono” (Neh 6:2) to at least attempt to answer this provocative question: *“But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid”* (Gal 2:17). The NIV reads, *“If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!”* (Gal 2:17).

Further, if men are honest enough to acknowledge sin has not been promoted by Jesus, then who has promoted it? Let John answer the question: *“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”* (1 John 3:8). Men may not like to hear those words, but God will be publically justified for saying them. There really is no justifiable reason for sin – and ignorance in matters concerning which God has spoken is a sin. No believer has a right to remain ignorant – even more ignorant than those living during the time of lesser revelation. It is not right for those professing to be in Christ to have less faith, less knowledge, and less achievement than Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, the prophets, and even John the Baptist. As Jesus well said, *“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more”* (Luke 12:48). **God has provided for better results in the church, and He expects them to be there!**

repentance (Acts 5:31).

- ➔ In Christ there is a new creation in which old things pass away, and all things become new (2 Cor 5:17).
- ➔ Jesus is presently interceding for those who are coming to God through Him (Heb 7:25).
- ➔ The redeemed have access to the grace of God (Rom 5:2).
- ➔ The Holy Spirit has been given to those who are in Christ Jesus (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; 1 Thess 4:8; 1 John 3:24).
- ➔ The Holy Spirit leads the saved in the mortification of the deeds of the body (Rom 8:13-14).
- ➔ The grace of God brings salvation, then teaches those who receive it to reject ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, godly, and righteously in this world (Tit 2:11-12).
- ➔ The world has been reconciled to

God (2 Cor 5:18-20).

- ➔ In salvation, God works in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure (Phil 2:12-13).
- ➔ God has blessed His people with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3).
- ➔ God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3).
- ➔ The saved have been given exceeding great and precious promises through which they become *“partakers of the Divine nature”* (2 Pet 1:4).

Now, I ask you, how is it possible to justify, excuse, or explain away the glaring fact that spiritual ignorance is running rampant in the professed church? What has happened to cause those professing identity with God to retrogress? Is there something about salvation that allows for this to happen. Is there some needed resource that God has not supplied to His people?

## I WILL DO IT

<sup>30b</sup> *And he said, I will do as thou hast said.”*

There is no hesitancy on Joseph’s part. He not only honors his father, but also sees the sense of what he has said. I gather that the propriety of burying the dead, and the preference of

the promised land had been ingrained into Joseph’s thinking from the time he could be taught. Furthermore, this had been accomplished by the time he was seventeen years of age (Gen 37:2). His tutelage in the ways of the Lord had been so solidified in his thinking at that age, when he was sold into slavery,

that bitter experience did not wash what he had been taught out of his thinking.

Further, when he was in Egypt, a land wholly given over to idolatry, and where a single Jew could not be found other than himself, he maintained his

integrity and his faith in God.

- ➡ When he was made the steward of Potiphar's house, he worked excellently, and God was with him.
- ➡ When he was tempted by Potiphar's wife, he kept the faith, stood his moral ground, and abstained from fleshly lusts that war against the soul – even though it cost him a prison term to do so.
- ➡ When he was in prison, he knew how to conduct himself, and was soon made the head of the prisoners.
- ➡ When he was asked to interpret dreams, he knew how to give glory to God, and how to receive interpretations from God.
- ➡ When he stood before Pharaoh, he knew how to conduct himself, how to give glory to God, how to receive an interpretation from God, and how to reason upon it.
- ➡ He was sensitive enough to know how to manage what needed to be done during years of plenty, and years of famine.
- ➡ He knew how to manage the distribution of the grain that had been stored during the years of plenty.

**All of this was done with the instruction he had during the first seventeen years of his life.**

#### Something to Ponder

During the past century or so, Christian children's books have become quite popular. In my own judgment, they are often too shallow, and do not assist in embedding in the youthful minds fundamental thoughts. In the case of Joseph, this would have involved familiarity with the following:

- ➡ The creation of the heavens and the earth.

- ➡ The fall of man in the Garden.
- ➡ The consequences of Adam's sin.
- ➡ The distinction between Cain and Abel.
- ➡ The cursing of Cain.
- ➡ The flood.
- ➡ The judgment at Shinar.
- ➡ The calling of Abraham.
- ➡ The promises made to Abraham.
- ➡ The covenant made with Abraham.
- ➡ Isaac, the child of promise.
- ➡ The distinction between Isaac and Esau, both in character and in the manner of God's dealing with them.
- ➡ Promises related to the land of Canaan.
- ➡ The revelation of God to Abraham about Israel's tenure in a strange land, and their deliverance from it.
- ➡ The experiences of the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

We know that these were

- ➡ The reason man was created.
- ➡ The fall of man.
- ➡ The consequences of the fall.
- ➡ The revealed nature of God.
- ➡ Things that are learned from the example of Israel.
- ➡ The nature of man, and the need for salvation.
- ➡ The nature and effectiveness of salvation.
- ➡ Why Jesus came into the world.
- ➡ The significance of the earthly ministry of Jesus, and what was made known through it.
- ➡ A growing understanding of why Jesus died and rose from the dead.
- ➡ The significance of the resurrection of Christ.
- ➡ Why Jesus ascended back into heaven.
- ➡ What Jesus is doing in heaven.
- ➡ Why Jesus will come again, and what will happen when He does.

**Their teaching was not merely the recounting of "stories." These offspring grew up with a holy familiarity with the nature of God, the promises of God, the choice of Abraham's seed, and the promise of the land of Canaan.**

effectively communicated to the children (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc) because of the way they thought and acted when they became mature. Their teaching was not merely the recounting of "stories." **These offspring grew up with a holy familiarity with the nature of God, the promises of God, the choice of Abraham's seed, and the promise of the land of Canaan.**

In a similar, but on a significantly larger scale, the children of the saints are to be raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. **They are to become familiar with God's choice of His people, the promises given to them, and the nature of life in Christ Jesus.** By a relatively young age they should know something about the following:

- ➡ The resurrection of the dead.
- ➡ The day of judgment.
- ➡ What is involved in being forever with the Lord.

These are just some introductory thoughts on this subject. **I pass them along because of my own persuasion that too much Christian teaching for children is on a sentimental and unwarranted childish level.**

The Scriptures do not provide us details of how the patriarchs taught their children. But it is evident from the manner and thinking of Isaac that Abraham taught him well. It is also evident from the manner and thinking of Jacob, that Isaac taught him well. Now, it is also evident from the manner and thinking of Joseph, that Jacob had

taught him well.

In our time there is an approach to teaching children that does not lead them to spiritual maturity by the time

their children. It is good to also consider how Zacharias and Elizabeth raised John the Baptist, and how Mary and Joseph raised the youthful Jesus.

**This is what happens when the truth of God is deeply embedded in the heart. However, when children are raised in an environment that is cluttered with worldly activity, they are put at a great and debilitating disadvantage.**

they are seventeen. It is a most serious circumstance, and needs to be more carefully examined. **For myself, I believe the environment and obvious commitment to do the will of God was the preeminent trait in the homes of the patriarchs.** I also am persuaded that this is not being duplicated in the homes of professing believers. I am convinced that too many extracurricular activities are robbing the homes of professing believers. Too much of the home life is being built around the children, rather than including the children in a Christ-centered God honoring life. It appears to me that an inordinate number of children in professing Christian homes do not really have enough time to live lives devoted to God. I do not sit in judgment on such matters, for that is not a prerogative for me. I do, however, call upon the people to consider the manner in which the patriarchs raised

#### Joseph Stands Before Jacob

Now, Joseph stands before his father and hears his request. So far as his thinking is concerned, it is the same as if he had spend the last twenty-two years+ with his father in Canaan. He responded in precisely the same way as he did when he was seventeen, and his father sent him out to check on his older brothers who were keeping his flocks of sheep (Gen 37:14). **The effect of him being taught when he was young remained with him all the time he was in Egypt.** He still knew of the significance of Canaan, the promises made to Abraham, and the fact that their stay in Egypt was never meant to be anything but temporary. He knew they were being cultured for Canaan.

**This is what happens when the truth of God is deeply embedded in the**

**heart.** However, when children are raised in an environment that is cluttered with worldly activity, they are put at a great and debilitating disadvantage. I personally know of children who have been raised in a serious manner, home-schooled, and with good moral tendencies. Yet, these same children feel out of place in an assembly of the godly. They appear to have little interest in the preaching, teaching, and discussion of the truth of God. Let it be clear that they are unlike Jesus, who, at the age of twelve, sought out seasoned teachers of the Law in the Temple.

Why does such a condition exist? It is because principle and foundational things were not taught to them. The rich promises of God were not ingrained in their thinking, as well as matters like the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

While there is no method that can be taught that effectively addresses this situation (even though some are being marketed), it seems to me that there is an effective way for parents to address this challenge. It is for they themselves to be deliberately and effectively separated from the world, and wholly committed to the Lord.

Where this is not being done, all effort is neutralized, and the future of the children is questionable. Where it is done, there is hope, for wholesome instruction is blessed by God.

## SWEAR UNTO ME

*"<sup>31</sup> And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."*

#### SWEAR TO ME

*"And he said, Swear unto me . . ."*  
Other versions read, *"Give me your word!"*<sup>CEB</sup> *"Swear to me that you will do so"*<sup>NET</sup> *"Swear by an oath to me!"*<sup>ABP</sup> *"Will you give me your word?"*<sup>CEV</sup> *"Make a vow to me,"*<sup>ERV</sup> and *"Promise me."*<sup>ISV</sup>

Notice the total absence of casualness in this entire event. Jacob is dogmatic about the handling and interment of his body. It is not an inconsequential matter to him. Further, the fact that he is getting ready to die does not mean he will, at this time, cease to think about Canaan. **He wants to be associated with the promised land in his death as well as during his life on earth.** He has not yet possessed the land, but anticipates doing so.

It is not that Jacob doubts Joseph's intention, but rather he wants the gravity of this commitment to be formalized. In that formality, Jacob himself will be comforted, Joseph will be more aware of will of Jacob, and the deed is more apt to be accomplished.

I have noted over the years that casualness has a certain depleting quality about it. Fundamental matters are more easily forgotten in an informal

gathering, and mere opinions are more likely to be shared.

#### AND HE SWARE TO HIM

" . . . And he swore unto him . . . "

Other versions read, "he took an oath to him" <sup>BBE</sup> "gave his word" <sup>CEB</sup> "gave his oath," <sup>NLT</sup> "swore by an oath," <sup>ABP</sup> "Joseph promised," <sup>CEV</sup> and "vowed to him." <sup>ERV</sup>

**Vows were considered important in Scripture.** They were a way of formalizing what a person intended to do. Jacob made a vow to God (Gen 28:20). Israel made a vow to the Lord, and He hearkened unto it (Num 21:2). In pleading to the Lord for a child, Hannah made a vow to Him (1 Sam 1:11). David vowed unto the Lord (Psa 132:1-2). When Jonah was in the belly of the fish he said, "I will pay that which I have vowed," and the Lord spoke to the fish and it vomited out Jonah on the dry land (Jonah 2:9).

Under the Law of Moses there was a category of lawful expressions called "your vows" (Lev 22:18; 23:38; Num 29:39; Deut 12:6,11,17). David wrote of paying his vows (Psa 22:25; 50:14; 16:33; 116:124,18). Paul is described during his ministry as having "a vow" (Acts 18:18).

Not all vows were good. Solomon wrote, "It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows" <sup>NIV</sup> (Prov 20:25). Then there was the vow of Jephthah, who vowed that if the Lord would deliver the children of Ammon into his hands he would offer to the Lord whatever came forth from his doors to meet him. Much to his surprise and consternation, it was his daughter who came out to meet him (Judges 11:30-39). This did not confirm that men should make no vows to God, but that they should make them insightfully.

The point in this text is that this was a most serious matter to Jacob – one that he related to the Abrahamic covenant. Because of the promises of God, Jacob wanted to be remembered as one identified with the land of promise.

#### ISRAEL BOWED HIMSELF

" . . . And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." Other versions read, "bowed in worship at the head of the bed," <sup>NASB</sup> "Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff," <sup>NIV</sup> "Israel gave worship on the bed's head," <sup>BBE</sup> "Israel slumped down at the head of the bed," <sup>CEB</sup> "bowed in thanks at the head of his bed," <sup>CSB</sup> "worshiped on the bed's head" <sup>DARBY</sup> "Israel adored God, turning to the bed's head" <sup>DOUAY</sup> "bowed down in prayer with his face at the head of his bed," <sup>GWN</sup> "did reverence, leaning on the top of his staff," <sup>LXE</sup> "Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. {Or Israel bowed down at the head of his bed}," <sup>NIB</sup> "Jacob bowed humbly at the head of his bed" <sup>NLT</sup> "Soon afterwards Jacob took to his bed," <sup>LIVING</sup> "Israel did obeisance upon the top of his cane," <sup>ABP</sup> "Jacob bowed down and prayed at the head of his bed," <sup>CEV</sup> "Israel laid his head back down on the bed," <sup>ERV</sup> "Jacob gave thanks there on his bed," <sup>GNB</sup> "bowed down in prayer with his face at the head of his bed," <sup>GW</sup> "Israel collapsed on his bed," <sup>ISV</sup> and "bowed his head in submission and gratitude from his bed." <sup>MESSAGE</sup>

Once again, take note of the different ways in which the various versions represent this expression.

- ➡ "BOWED IN WORSHIP" <sup>NASB</sup>
- ➡ "WORSHIPED AS HE LEANED ON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF" <sup>NIV</sup>
- ➡ "GAVE WORSHIP ON THE BED'S HEAD" <sup>BBE</sup>
- ➡ "ISRAEL SLUMPED DOWN AT THE HEAD OF THE BED" <sup>CEB</sup>
- ➡ "BOWED IN THANKS AT THE HEAD OF HIS BED" <sup>CSB</sup>

- ➡ "DID REVERENCE, LEANING ON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF" <sup>LXE</sup>
- ➡ "ISRAEL WORSHIPED AS HE LEANED ON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF. {OR ISRAEL BOWED DOWN AT THE HEAD OF HIS BED}" <sup>NIB</sup>
- ➡ "JACOB BOWED HUMBLY AT THE HEAD OF HIS BED" <sup>NLT</sup>
- ➡ "SOON AFTERWARDS JACOB TOOK TO HIS BED," <sup>LIVING</sup>
- ➡ "ISRAEL DID OBEISANCE UPON THE TOP OF HIS CANE" <sup>ABP</sup>
- ➡ "JACOB BOWED DOWN AND PRAYED AT THE HEAD OF HIS BED" <sup>CEV</sup>
- ➡ "ISRAEL LAID HIS HEAD BACK DOWN ON THE BED" <sup>ERV</sup>
- ➡ "JACOB GAVE THANKS THERE ON HIS BED" <sup>GNB</sup>
- ➡ "BOWED DOWN IN PRAYER WITH HIS FACE AT THE HEAD OF HIS BED" <sup>GW</sup>
- ➡ "ISRAEL COLLAPSED ON HIS BED" <sup>ISV</sup>
- ➡ "BOWED HIS HEAD IN SUBMISSION AND GRATITUDE FROM HIS BED." <sup>MESSAGE</sup>

Nineteen different representations of this verse – all supposedly translated from the Hebrew text. It ought to be obvious that those who say the only way to understand the Scripture is to understand the Greek and Hebrew texts cannot possibly be more wrong.

I accept the Authorized Version as accurately stating the case. Upon hearing Joseph's vow to bury his body in the land of Canaan, he bowed on the head of his bed. I understand this to have been an act of gratefulness to, and the worship of God, to be assured that this would be done.

#### WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS

It was the manner of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)

**One of the dishonorable things about contemporary "Christianity" is that it disassociates the whole of life from the Lord.**

- ➡ "WORSHIPED ON THE BED'S HEAD" <sup>DARBY</sup>
- ➡ "ISRAEL ADORED GOD, TURNING TO THE BED'S HEAD" <sup>DOUAY</sup>
- ➡ "BOWED DOWN IN PRAYER WITH HIS FACE AT THE HEAD OF HIS BED" <sup>GWN</sup>

to associate every aspect of their lives with their identity with God. It determined where they lived, who they married, and how they conducted their daily lives. The promises of God were the preeminent utterances, and they

sought, as best as they could, to bring their total lives into compliance with them. When their desires, shaped by the promises of God, were met, they bowed before the Lord in humble gratefulness. The book of Genesis clearly demonstrates this from Genesis 12:1 through 50:26.

One of the dishonorable things

**there is no provision in Christ to live in any other way.** Jesus made this plain to a rich young ruler who asked Him what he could do to *"inherit eternal life"* (Lk 18:122).

This manner of thinking is sadly missing in the nominal church. **Of all of life, only a minimal amount is being given to God – and even that is given**

➤ *"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."* (Gal 3:7)

➤ *"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."* (Gal 3:9)

➤ *"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."* (Gal 3:14)

These texts being true, then those who do not have the faith of Abraham, or the same kind of faith that Abraham possessed, the following is also true:

➤ They do not possess *"the righteousness of faith,"* or the righteousness that comes through faith.

➤ They have not received grace, which comes through faith.

➤ They are not participants in the promise of Abraham.

➤ They have not received the promise of the Spirit, which is through faith.

Knowing these things, every believer must be alert when reading the accounts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In those accounts they are being exposed to the nature of faith, what it does, and what it does not do. **Real faith yields real results, while spurious faith yields spurious and delusive results.** Blessed are those who see this. Genuine faith is characterized by the absence of doubt, an instant response, and thorough obedience. It also produces thanksgiving and praise. Where these are missing, faith is also missing.

**Real faith yields real results, while spurious faith yields spurious and delusive results. Blessed are those who see this. Genuine faith is characterized by the absence of doubt, an instant response, and thorough obedience.**

about contemporary "Christianity" is that it disassociates the whole of life from the Lord. It teaches men to compartmentalize their lives; then, for the more serious, seek to harmonize those various compartments with their profession of faith. However, this is nothing more than a sinful imagination. Most of the time the harmony that is sought focuses on "what I cannot do," not "what should I do." Justification for a questionable action is often stated in this manner: "the Bible does not say anything against it." Rarely do we hear anyone say, "The Lord said to do it."

In Christ we are taught to have a single focus – a *"one thing"* mentality (Mk 10:21; Lk 10:42; Phil 3:13). As Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shaped their entire lives around the promises of God, so those in Christ order their lives in view of the exceeding great and precious promises of God, through which they become "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4). **Actually,**

**with some reluctance.** Who does not see this? Rarely is *"the faith of Abraham"* found in the professing church. The gravity of this circumstance is seen in the manner of the Spirit's speaking on this subject.

➤ *"And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."* (Rom 4:122-13).

➤ *"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all."* (Rom 4:16)

## THY FATHER IS SICK

<sup>48:1</sup> *And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took*

*with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim."*

IT CAME TO PASS

*"And it came to pass . . ." Other versions read, "it came about,"* NASB

Jacob dwells in Egypt, increasing in goods and growing exceedingly. The time grew near for him to die, and begins preparing for it – *Given O. Blakely*

*Jacob prepares to Die 14 of 19*

"some time later," <sup>NIV</sup> "after this," <sup>NRSV</sup> "After this happened," <sup>CEB</sup> "Awhile later," <sup>CJB</sup> "Again after this" <sup>GENEVA</sup> "Some time afterward," <sup>NAB</sup> "Now it came about," <sup>NAS</sup> and "One day not long after this." <sup>NLT</sup>

The literal translation of this phrase is, "and he is becoming after the things the these." <sup>INTERLINEAR</sup> The lexical meaning of the word translated "it came to pass" is: "FROM THE HEBREW WORD 'HAYAY': TO EXIST, I.E. BE OR BECOME, COME TO PASS . . . ACCOMPLISHED . . . CAUSE." <sup>STRONG'S</sup> I choose to think of this word, as used in this text, as presenting the planned work of God – His purpose. God was instrumental in bringing Jacob to the conclusion that he ought to be buried in Canaan. I see this as more than a mere natural preference of Jacob. Further, what follows is the blessing of Joseph's sons, which will be directed from heaven, for men cannot bless on their own, particularly when it is related to the Abrahamic covenant.

#### AFTER THESE THINGS

" . . . after these things . . . " The text does not say this took place immediately following Jacob's directive concerning his burial. I gather that the record reflects priorities rather than specific times. The text suggests that a considerable amount of time might well have passed between Jacob's discussion with Joseph about burial, and the message now received.

#### BEHOLD, THY FATHER IS SICK

" . . . that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick . . . " Other versions read, "is ill," <sup>NIV</sup> "is getting weaker," <sup>CEB</sup> "is weaker," <sup>CSB</sup> "is failing," <sup>NAB</sup> "is weakening," <sup>NET</sup> "has been taken ill," <sup>NJB</sup> "is failing rapidly," <sup>NLT</sup> "is troubled," <sup>ABP</sup> "had become very sick," <sup>CEV</sup> "was very sick." <sup>ERV</sup>

As used here, the word "sick" accents weakness, as compared to disease. This was the weakness that is a prelude to death. In it the body begins shutting down as the time of "departure" (2 Tim 4:6; 2 Pet 1:15) draws near. It is not always true that weakness immediately precedes death. It was said of Moses when it came time

for him to die: "And Moses was **an hundred and twenty years old when he died**: his eye was not dim, nor his

forget all my toil, and all my father's house." When Ephraim was born he said, "For God hath caused me to be

**There are still a few precious souls who do the right thing without having to be admonished to do so. They can hear news that has to be acted upon, and act upon it without having pressure applied to them.**

natural force abated" (Deut 34:7). Of course, Moses was twenty-seven years younger than Jacob when he died, being only one hundred and twenty years of age, whereas Jacob was one hundred and forty seven (Gen 47:28). **The thing that was common with them was that their work was completed.** The same was true of both Paul and Peter when it came time for them to die (2 Tim 4:6; 2 Pet 1:14).

Add to this the manner in which the eminent death of Jacob is described: "And the time drew nigh that Israel **must die**" (Gen 47:28). All of this is being divinely orchestrated.

#### HE TOOK WITH HIM HIS TWO SONS

" . . . and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim."

These were the two sons born to Joseph before the famine came (Gen 41:50). The famine now in its last year, this would make Joseph's, sons well over twenty years of age. They were born before the famine, and Jacob came two years after the famine, and had now been in Egypt seventeen years. It is significant that they were born during the years of plenty, as compared to the time of the famine. No sooner were they born than, according to the record, "the seven years of plenteousness . . . were ended," and "the seven years of dearth began to come" (Gen 41:53-54). When they were born, it was a time of blessing for Joseph. When Manasseh was born Joseph said, "For God hath made me

fruitful in the land of my affliction" (Gen 41:52).

Now Joseph brings his two sons with him to weakening Jacob. We will find that this was a most significant thing for him to do.

Notice that Joseph was not called to his father's side. However, upon hearing the news, he drew a proper conclusion and did the right thing – without having to be admonished to do so.

**There are still a few precious souls who do the right thing without having to be admonished to do so.** They can hear news that has to be acted upon, and act upon it without having pressure applied to them.

➡ This is what people did on the day of Pentecost. They heard a message they knew required a response. Peter had not told them what to do to be saved. He had not suggested some action that would address how they ought to deal with what they had done to Jesus. But they needed no further word to press in. They cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

➡ The Ethiopian eunuch conducted himself in the same manner. Upon hearing Christ preached, he asked Philip, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36). I do not doubt that he had just heard that Jesus, upon His

own insistence, was baptized. Wanting to be a follower of Jesus, he wanted to know if there was anything that hindered him from being baptized.

➔ Saul of Tarsus also responded in this way. Once he knew who had confronted him – Jesus, whom he was persecuting – he asked, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6).

➔ The Philippian jailor responded

similarly. When he found that Paul and Silas were still there, and probably after hearing them praising God at the midnight hour, he asked, “*What must I do to be saved?*” (Acts 16:31).

This appears to be the manner of the Kingdom, whether you are talking about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or those noble souls who followed them during both the old Covenant and New Covenant administrations. **However, in our day, this kind of response is**

**exceeding rare.**

Some people preach such a powerless message they have to continually apprise the people of a methodical means through which they can be saved. They even do this before there is any apparent interest in the hearers. Rarely, if ever, do we hear of speakers being interrupted with cries of what the people should do.

All of this is done without a single Scriptural word or example.

## JOSEPH COMETH TO THEE

***“<sup>2</sup> And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.”***

The stage is now being providentially set for the next phase of the nation of Israel in Egypt. This will be the place where, according to the Genesis text, they “*grew, and multiplied exceedingly*” (Gen 47:27).

### THY SON JOSEPH COMETH

*“And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee . . .”* Other versions read, *“Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“Your son Joseph is here now”* <sup>CEB</sup> *“Here comes your son Joseph,”* <sup>CEB</sup> *“Your son Joseph has come to you,”* <sup>ESV</sup> *“Your son Joseph is here to see you.”* <sup>GWN</sup>

The thing that continues to impress me during the Genesis narrative is the communication of the faithful with one another. I do not know how

far Joseph traveled to come to Jacob, or if he even traveled any significant distance. However, his approach was noted and reported. In this way Jacob could prepare himself, for the occasion. **To me, it is on the part of wisdom to live in such a manner as not to be constantly surprised and taken unawares by what takes place around us, or is directed toward us.**

### ISRAEL STRENGTHENED HIMSELF

*“ . . . and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.”* Other versions read, *“collected his strength,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“rallied his strength,”* <sup>NRSV</sup> *“summoned his strength,”* <sup>RSV</sup> *“getting all his strength together,”* <sup>BBE</sup> *“pulled himself together,”* <sup>CEB</sup> *“took his strength unto him,”* <sup>GENEVA</sup> *“regained strength,”* <sup>NET</sup> *“growing strong,”* <sup>ABP</sup> *“it took almost all his strength,”* <sup>CEV</sup> *“he tried hard,”* <sup>ERV</sup> and *“roused himself.”* <sup>MESSAGE</sup>

**Here a message enabled Jacob, otherwise in a weakened state, to gather all of his strength and sit up to**

**receive his favorite son.** The patriarch was revived, renewed, rekindled, reinvigorated, quickened, activated, energized, revitalized, and revived. It probably had not been very long since Jacob and seen Joseph, **but he loved him dearly, and every moment with him as precious.** Just hearing that he was coming brought “*health*” to his “*bones*” (Prov 16:24).

Those in Christ Jesus have a **similar experience when they hear of, or sense the presence of, their Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.** When they hear clear and concise thoughts about Him, they are able to gather their strength, be extra alert, and able to profit from the presence of the Lord. I experience this every day, and it does not grow old. Early in the morning, as I immerse myself in the things of God, I experience a renewal that is of a miraculous nature. I know I am not alone in this. It is a refreshing aspect of newness of life, and is to be greatly sought and maintained.

## GOD ALMIGHTY APPEARED UNTO ME

***“<sup>3</sup> And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, <sup>4</sup> And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I***

***will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.”***

Jacob now relates to Joseph

certain covenantal promises that had been made to him – promises that were first given to Abraham, then to Isaac. Abraham had done just as the Lord said He knew he would – “*command his*



**This was approximately seventy earlier, but the experience was still fresh and vivid in the mind of Jacob. It is spiritual epochs such as this, adapted for the times in which they are given, that keep the saints refreshed – life-altering insights and revelations.**

children and household after him” (Gen 18:19). He had raised his children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). Now, two generations and about two hundred years later Jacob is faithfully rehearsing those promises to Joseph. I do not doubt that he had also related them to his other sons – perhaps many times.

**GOD ALMIGHTY APPEARED UNTO ME**

*“And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me...”*

This appearance took place while Jacob was on his way to Padanaram to obtain a wife. It was the occasion when Jacob saw a ladder that reached up into heaven, upon which angels were ascending and descending – carrying out the mandates of the God of heaven and earth (Gen 28:12-19). The Lord Himself stood above this ladder and spoke the words to which Jacob now alludes (Gen 28:12-13). This was approximately seventy earlier, but the experience was still fresh and vivid in the mind of Jacob. **It is spiritual epochs such as this, adapted for the times in which they are given, that keep the saints refreshed – life-altering insights and revelations.**

**GOD SAID UNTO ME**

*“ . . . And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee; and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.”*

The precise wording recorded in Genesis 28 is as follows: “*I am the*

*LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have*

**The details are to be understood within the context of the summation, whether we are speaking of the promises made to Jacob, or telling people what they must do to be saved.**

*done that which I have spoken to thee of”* (Gen 28:13-15).

Jacob gave a summation of the word of the Lord, which means that he comprehended what was said. A valid summation reveals discernment of the components that make up that summation.

Traditionally, this kind of reasoning seems to have eluded contemporary Christian leaders. They have such an inordinate penchant for intellectual details that they cannot provide a valid summation of what the Lord has said. The apostles would often

speak in this manner – a manner that confuses surface thinkers. For example, Peter summed up the appropriation of salvation in these words, “*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*” (Acts 2:21). Paul said the same in Romans 10:13). On another occasion he said, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*” (Acts 16:31). Peter said, “*But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they*” (Acts 15:11).

All of these were summations that contained the whole of the required. Often they would require that further details be given, as on the day of Pentecost. However, these summations must not be ignored, nor ought they to be treated as independent steps of an over-all “plan of salvation.” **The details are to be understood within the context of the summation, whether we are speaking of the promises made to Jacob, or telling people what they must do to be saved.**

As Jacob made known to Joseph, the promises made to him narrowed down to this:

- The multiplication of his seed.
- His seed possessing the promised land.

The keeping power of God, and blessing of the whole world were wrapped up in Jacob’s testimony, even though he did not spell them out. Having been thoroughly tutored in these promises, Joseph could reason from the summation of Jacob to the revealed details.

## EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH SHALL BE MINE

***“<sup>5</sup> And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.”***

### EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH ARE MINE

*“And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine . . .”*

At this point Joseph’s sons must have been in their twenties. They were born before the famine commenced,

and Joseph had now been in Egypt for seventeen years. They were not little boys at this time.

Jacob was adopting these boys for his own sons, and they would not be treated as grandsons.

### AS REUBEN AND SIMEON

*“ . . . as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.”* These were Jacob’s eldest sons. Because he had committed incest with Jacob’s concubine (Gen 35:22; 1 Chron 5:1), the rights of the firstborn, Reuben, were transferred to Joseph, who received a double portion

(Gen 48:22), distributed to his two sons.

Observe that in making this pronouncement Jacob has no regard for what others might think of this reapportioning of his inheritance. **This is because he is speaking as a prophet of God, and not merely as a father of his children.** In this matter he will also address the sin of Reuben, which appears to have been forgotten by some – but not by Jacob. He also gives official recognition to the faithfulness of Joseph, even though he had suffered at the hand of his of brothers.

## THY ISSUE WHICH IS AFTER THEM

***“<sup>6</sup> And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.”*** Other versions read; *“as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.”* Other versions read, *“Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“But other*

*sons who may be born after them shall be your own; and they shall be called after the names of these [two] brothers and reckoned as belonging to them [when they come] into their inheritance,”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and *“But any children born to you in the future will be your own, and they will inherit land within the territories of their brothers Ephraim and Manasseh.”* <sup>NLT</sup>

We do not know if Joseph had any other children. If so, the Scriptural record does not mention them in Genesis, the Chronicles, or any other inspired writing. If he did, it would have had no effect upon the prophesy of Jacob. Further, in his word he addressed the sin of Reuben, which appears to have been forgotten – but not by Jacob (Gen 35:22; 1 Chron 5:1).

## AS FOR ME

***“<sup>7</sup> And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.”***

### RACHEL DIED BY ME

*“And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath . . .”* Other versions read, *“Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little*

*distance to go to Ephrath,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“your mother Rachel died after only two children when I came from Paddan-aram, as we were just a short distance from Ephrath,”* <sup>LIVING</sup> and *“Rachel died at my side in the land of Canaan on the way, when yet there was but a little way to come to Ephrath.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Rachel died while giving birth to Benjamin. It was shortly after God had appeared to Jacob after leaving

Padanaram. At that time the Lord reaffirmed that his name had been changed to *“Israel”* (Gen 35:10). He promised *“a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins”* (Gen 35:11), and that the land He *“gave to Abraham and Isaac”* would also be given to him (Gen 35:12). Jacob called the name of that place, *“where God spake with him, Bethel”* (Gen 35:15).

It was then, as they journeyed from Bethel, that Rachel went into *“hard labor,”* finally giving birth to Benjamin. Now, over twenty years

later, Jacob remembers the sadness of that moment. It was an experience that was included in his confession to Pharaoh, "*few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*" (Gen 47:9). Yet, even that experience did not cause him to cease to trust in the Lord and build his life around the promises that had been vouchsafed to him.

When Rachel died they were in Canaan, only a short distance from Ephrath, which was Bethlehem.

#### I BURIED HER

"... and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem." Other versions read, "*So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath*" (that is, Bethlehem), "NIV" *"I put*

*her to rest there on the road to Ephrath.*" <sup>BBE</sup>

Moses records that when Jacob buried Rachel, he "*set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto **this day***" [the time Moses wrote the record, about two hundred years later] (Gen 35:20).

Scripture records that Jacob set up four pillars.

➡ **Genesis 28:18** – Where he had the dream of a ladder reaching into heaven.

➡ **Genesis 31:45** – Where he made a covenant with Laban, and Laban finally departed from him.

➡ **Genesis 35:14** – When God met him coming out of Padanaram, and renewed His covenant with him.

➡ **Genesis 35:20** – When he buried Rachel.

All of these represented epochs in Jacob's life – things he wanted to establish as points of remembrance. Two of them were in remembrance of Divine appearances, confirmations, and directives. One of them marked the end of as grievous association. One of them testified of the love he had for Rachel, for whom he labored for fourteen years.

What a sensitive soul Jacob was! His heart was tender and insightful.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 3/21/14. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The seventy-eighth lesson will cover verses 48:8 thru 22: "JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH." Jacob tells Joseph to bring him his sons, and he will bless them. Joseph brought them, holding Ephraim in his right hand, and Manasseh in his left hand. Isaac laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, the younger. Joseph attempted to change Jacob's hands, but Jacob refused, saying he knew Ephraim was the youngest. He then pronounced the prophetic blessing on Ephraim. He announced that he was going to die, yet God would bring them into Canaan. He also told Joseph that he had given him a double portion, distinguishing him among his brethren. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.