

Scripture Reading: Genesis 50

“22 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father’s household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. 23 Joseph saw Ephraim’s children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph’s knees. 24 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.” 25 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.” 26 So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.”

## "Joseph's Vision for Israel"

Lord willing, we have come to the final message from the Book of Beginnings. The Book of Genesis ends with the death of Joseph and so we will give some quick attention to the details of the text, focus on our final lesson about the hope of the Resurrection and then I would like to share a few closing comments about our journey through this important foundational book. Last week we learned the important lesson about how God is in complete control of His story, which He is telling, and now it is time for us to consider the final years of Joseph’s life.

“22 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father’s household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years.”

We are told Joseph’s age at his death, not once but twice and so we know that he lived about fifty years after his father’s death there in Egypt. I think it is significant that the few details we are given relate to his brother’s and his own family rather than all the pageantry of Egypt or his role as a very influential man there. The Egyptians saw him as the one who saved them from sure death by famine, but Joseph has always understood his major role in providing for God’s people during their sojourn to Egypt.

➤ It is a good lesson for modern civil magistrates when it comes to their priorities!

We often sing Psalms 127 & 128 here at Church of the King which remind us about the blessings of children and grand-children which is what we see God has given Joseph:

23 “Joseph saw Ephraim’s children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph’s knees.”

As most of you know, the Stoos family has had FAR to many grandchildren move far, far away in 2017, so Linda and I are looking forward to our day to be surrounded with great grandchildren! Next, we see Joseph doing what his own father did in making sure that the proper plans are in place for his burial.

24 “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.”

Here again we will see Joseph speak of them being visited by God, not once but twice because he wanted them to have the same confidence in God keeping His promises that he had! The Body of his father Jacob had been returned and buried in the Land of Canaan as one of the Patriarchs that God had made this promise too. Covenant promises have been a central part of what we have learned here in Genesis and Joseph now reminds us that we should remember and believe God’s promises to us! Joseph is not one of the patriarchs, but he knows that God will keep His promise and thus his request is quite different from his father’s...

25 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.” 26 So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.”

Joseph repeats the promise of a visit and the Spirit reminds us again that Joseph had been in Egypt for many years and now that is where his body would rest, but NOT be buried. Joseph knew that he belonged with his people now, but he also knew that his people were going to be delivered and when they were they were to take his bones with them and bury them in the Land of Promise. And that is just what we see in the books of Exodus & Judges.

Exodus 1:13: “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.””

Judges 24:32 “The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.”

- Now of course in our journey in Genesis we have always looked for what it teaches us about the person or ministry of Jesus and we should do so here as well.

We should see this rest for the bones of Joseph as foreshadowing the work of Jesus as He gave His own life to save His people from their sins... We are reminded of this in Psalm 16: “

7 “I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons. 8 I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. 10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

The bones of Joseph laid to rest in Egypt, under the penalty of death, and were later taken up to the Promised Land to await the coming of Messiah.

- Jesus, the greater Joseph also had His body laid in a tomb... A tomb that could not hold Him because He had defeated death.

Jesus was raised in power on the third day and has ascended to His Father’s right hand where He rules as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Egypt could not hold God’s people nor keep Joseph from reaching the Promised Land...

- And death cannot hold God’s people because Jesus has set us free...
- That is the Good News, the story of salvation!

The Apostle Paul goes into great detail about this in the 15th chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians which I want to quickly survey as we did Romans 8 last week... But before we do that I want us to think about and compare how the last two books we have studied together here at Church of the King have ended... Genesis, as we would have expected, ends with death:

Death came through the one man Adam and over and over again we have read genealogies where so and so died or have focused on burials and tombs.

- There are promises, covenants and talk of hope, but it is not yet realized because Jesus has not yet come.

The Book of Acts on the other hand ended with hope... With the exception of James in the early days of the Church in Jerusalem, we are given no information about the deaths of any of the Apostles. At the end, the Apostle Paul, even as he sits under Roman bondage preaches the Kingdom with no one hindering him and sets the course for the advance of that Kingdom which we can clearly see almost two thousand years later!

The story is no longer about failures and remnants as we saw over and over and over again in the Old Testament accounts leading up to the coming of Jesus.

- The story is now one of advances and victories as we see in the parables of Jesus, the prophesies of the Old Testament prophets.
- As we often say, the coming of Jesus has changed everything!

And we see this in the Book of Acts but probably no more clearly anywhere than in what Paul shared with the troubled Church at Corinth.

- He begins with the Good News!

**I Corinthians 15:1** “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.”

- Death could not hold Jesus and because the New Adam has gone before, death will not be able to hold us!

Paul gives his personal testimony and then addresses those who had doubts:

**12** “Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. **14** And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.”

Paul here stresses the lesson we have tried to learn over and over here in the Book of Beginnings... The Christian faith is based on REAL history!

The events given here at the beginning are real and the work of Jesus was real.

- He came as a real man, lived as a real man, died as a real man and was raised from the dead as a real man as these men gave witness to.

Those who doubt the events here in Genesis, soon begin to doubt more and more of the historical events in the Bible.

- And sadly, as we have seen far too often in the past two or three hundred years, they soon doubt the historic Jesus!

This is why the Apostle stresses this point again in verse 15:

“Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. **16** For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. **17** And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”

- Paul then clearly shows that if these events are not true events we have lost all hope!

**18** “Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. **19** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”

However, just as Joseph could confidently tell his brothers and family that God would visit them, Paul assures us that we do have hope:

**20** “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. **21** For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.”

- Paul takes us back to this Book of Beginnings where we learned about the man who brought death, but then shows how the coming of Jesus has changed everything:

22 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. 24 Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”

- Just as Joseph could trust the promises God had given his fathers about this journey to Egypt, so we can trust Paul’s summary of current history.

Then in verse 35 the Apostle addresses some of the questions that people often ask about the hope of the resurrection, just as I am sure some did about why Joseph’s bones were kept there in Egypt.

“But someone will say, “How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?” 36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain.

38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.”

- As usual, the Scriptures give us an illustration to help understand this complex issue, that is simple enough for a child to understand and yet profound enough to study for our entire lives.

[illustrate with an almond]

The Apostle gives a few illustrations of his own and then clearly teaches us what our hope is...

42 “So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

- Here we should remember our lesson on just how serious the separations caused by Adam’s fall into sin really are and how in contrast Jesus is now making all things right again!

49 “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

[and most cannot read this without the music of Handel ringing in our ears...]

55 “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

- This is our final lesson from the Book of Genesis and central to the Gospel:
- We have the hope of the resurrection!

So, what else have we learned from our journey through Genesis, the Book of Beginnings.

- I trust we have learned a great deal as we sought to see Jesus here in the pages of the Old Testament!

And yet as should be appropriate with this important Book, I trust it is only the beginning of our journey to learn, to understand and to live in the knowledge of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

We look forward to spending eternity in the grand Garden-City that John reveals in Revelation because we have learned here that God intended this earth to be filled with righteous people from the very beginning.

We look forward to that great Day of Judgment when God will perfectly balance the scales of justice and put all things right because we learned here about the sinfulness of sin and the promise of salvation!

And yes, we look forward to living our lives now in obedience to Jesus for whatever time He has allotted to us here, because we have learned that God moves in covenant with His people just as He did with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- And we know that God will bless our efforts and take us through those trials and tribulations as we saw in the example of Joseph.

I hope this series will be a good reference or study help that we can return to many times as we seek to further understand the many lessons we learned in our journey...

They would be too numerous to list, but we know the great battle raging today about the question of origins...

We learned that God created the universe by His spoken Word and made man in His image which gives them and us great purpose and meaning as opposed to the cold reality of time & chance that our modern world tries to dress up.

We learned about man's great mission to fill the earth and have dominion over this creation and sadly we learned about the fall of man.

We learned about the Dragon in God's Garden and how God works all things out for the good of His people so we do not have to despair about the evil in the world around us even today.

We saw that sinful man left to himself could destroy the entire earth in just nine generations and yet at the same time we saw advances in music, workmanship and agriculture reminding us that fallen man is still man made in the image of God as well as the image of Adam.

But most importantly we learned about Jesus, just as He instructed us to do through His admonitions to the Pharisees and His own disciples.

- We saw the first promise that Jesus would come as the one to crush the head of Satan.
- We saw God laying out His covenant with His people with His calling of Abraham.

There we learned much about covenant and a greater understanding of baptism and the Church.

We saw God lay the foundation of the Nation of Israel "to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God." As we are told by the Apostle Paul in Romans 9.

- We learned about the importance of sacrifices and the Priesthood which of course find their fulfilment in Jesus as well.
- The bottom line of course is that it is all about Jesus, and as His people it is all about us as well!

**Sadly, today there are many who largely reject what we learned last week about God's Grand story and tell us that there are two stories about the Nation of Israel and the Church.**

**While both are part of God's story, We know it is one grand story and it is a story of faith, which is why we can declare that Genesis and all the Books of the Bible are written for us!**

**Those who want the Old Testament to be about Law and works while the New Testament is about grace and faith, should ponder long and hard the hall of Faith given to us in Hebrews 11:**

**All of those Saints were Old Testament Saints and more than half of the discussion centered on the characters we have studied right here in Genesis!**

- **Yes, it is about Jesus and I trust it will become a Book that you come to love!**
- **A Book that informs us and steels us for the battles raging today both outside and inside the Church.**

**A book that can help us learn to walk by faith just as Joseph did:**

**Hebrew 11: "22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones."**

**Communion Meditation: Genesis & Hebrews**

**Genesis 14: "18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.**

**Hebrews 6: "19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**