

GENESIS 50:1-14 (THE BURIAL OF JACOB)

Introduction: Death is an inevitable part of life. And the rituals that are conducted which surround death vary from culture to culture, but most of them are grounded in a hope which transcends the grave. In the Chinese provinces of Tibet, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Mongolia a ritual known as "sky burial" is practiced.

Being Buddhists, they believe in the trans-migration of the soul and that the body is just an empty vessel which needs to be disposed of. And so they leave it out for the large predatory birds to nibble on until it's all gone. Some people within Christianity believe that one must bury the body and that cremation is a sin. Some even believe you can't be saved if you are cremated.

We usually embalm bodies in the US. I volunteered at a morgue in Japan when I was in the service and it was interesting to see the process of embalming and it was mostly done to keep the body from getting gross before a burial could be performed. This was especially so because of the long travel time back to the US.

Today's sermon will look at the most detailed record of care taken for a body in the entire book of Genesis. What is the importance of all the detail? Out of all of the other deaths recorded, *nothing* like this has yet been seen. Because of this, we can conclude that God is showing us a picture of something else, something in later redemptive history. And surely enough, this is the case.

Text Verse: "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 18:30, 31

God spoke to the house of Israel and told them that they would be judged according to their ways. He also promised them a new heart and a new

spirit if they would simply repent and turn to Him. However, if they didn't, the House of Israel would surely die. Was He serious? Would this happen? Yes and Yes.

Israel went from life to death. But in Christ, there is the hope of new life and even the resurrection to life from the dead. We'll see this pictured in today's sermon in another carefully placed passage which is intended to get us to wake up and pay attention to our surroundings, the world we live in, and our relationship with God.

It is all to be found in His superior word, and so let's go to that word now and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Worthless Physicians (verses 1-3)

We now arrive at the last chapter of Genesis. This amazing book has been divided into three principle sets of instruction for man -

- 1) From creation and the fall to the Flood of Noah.
- 2) From the time after the flood until the call of Abraham.
- 3) From the call of Abraham until the death of Jacob and Joseph which is the completion of the history of the chosen family.

After his blessings and final words to his sons about his burial, the last verse of the last chapter said, "And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people." With that, we enter into chapter 50.

¹ Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him.

Back in chapter 46, as Jacob was preparing to leave the land of promise for the last time, God called to Jacob in a vision in the night. Here is what he was told at that time -

"So He said, 'I *am* God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. ⁴ I will go down with you

to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up *again*; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes." Genesis 46:3, 4

As God promised, Joseph was there at his death to fall on him, weep over him, and to surely close his eyes. But it also notes that he kissed him. In all of the life of Joseph, he is only noted as kissing on two occasions. The first was when he revealed himself to his brothers in chapter 45 -

"Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵ Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him." Genesis 45:14, 15

And now, at the death of his father, he kisses Jacob's remains. There is a reason for the two kisses which are recorded. As always, when things are noted twice, there is a contrast and yet a confirmation of something. The first was when there was a *reunion* after a long separation. The second is when there is a *departure* for a long separation.

The first was *at* the surety of *life*; the second is the surety of *hope of life* even in *death*. The first was after a journey *from* the land of promise; the second is prior to a journey *to* the land of promise. The first resulted in a physical reunion and pictured a spiritual awakening in the brothers. The second resulted in a physical separation and yet in the hope of restored life to the father.

In the first, the brothers were given garments for covering. In the second, Jacob's soul was made bare without his earthly garment, his body. In these two kisses, there is a contrast and yet there is a confirmation. There is the physical and there is the spiritual. And yet they confirm the whole state of man.

Nothing is random in the Bible and even the kisses of Joseph give us insights into the nature of man in his spiritual and physical makeup. Joseph now weeps over the loss of the physical and takes his farewell of his father as people do. Sending him on his journey until they meet again.

² And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father.

The people being referred to here as "the physicians" are literally known as "the healers." In Hebrew *ha'rophiim*, or in the singular *rapha*. The word is used 67 times in the Old Testament and is translated as "heal," "physician," "purify," etc. One memorable use of the word is in the Suffering Servant passage in Isaiah 53:5 -

"But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His stripes we are **healed**." Isaiah 53:5

To us, using this word doesn't really make sense. Why would a healer be used on a dead body? But in considering the state of man, it begins to make sense. Almost nobody would dispute that there is a difference between the physical body and the soul.

There may be disagreement on what the soul is, but there is a physical body and there is something that animates that body. When that which animates departs, the body ceases to function; it dies. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5 that a soul without a body is naked. Here is how he describes it -

"For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
² For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³ if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked." 2 Corinthians 5:1-3

But still why would a "healer" be used on a dead body? The answer is that to the Egyptians, the soul - the *ka* as they called it - would return to inhabit the body. Once the mummification was done, it would be ready for occupation once again. Otherwise, it would rot away, and thus it would leave the soul naked.

This word, *rapha*, for healer implies to "mend" or to "sew together" and hence to heal, like a physician would after an operation. This same word corresponds to the Greek work *raphto* "to sew" which is then tied to the word "needle" or *raphis* which is found in Jesus' words in Matthew 19 -

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a **needle** than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁵ When His disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, 'Who then can be saved?'

²⁶ But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" Matthew 19:23-26

There is the universal desire to live forever. As Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 3, eternity itself is written on our hearts -

"He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end." Ecclesiastes 3:11

Because of this, the Egyptians embalmed the bodies of their dead, hoping for eternal life when the soul would reunite with the body. Estimates are that as many as 420 million bodies were mummified in this way during the years in which Egypt followed this custom.

But the problem with mummification was that it only treated the physical body, not the spiritual person. The problem with man and the reason man dies is sin. Without healing this condition, the disconnect between God and man remains.

Job 13, although not speaking about embalmers, uses the same word and applies it to his friends during their discourse. It is a sentiment which still beautifully reflects the state of the embalmers who sew the dead body, but do nothing for the soul. He says -

"But you forgers of lies,
You *are* all worthless physicians." Job 13:4

All of the work and cost involved in embalming did nothing to bring the person one step closer to true life. Instead of their worthless efforts is the glorious contrast in why Jesus came. That passage from Isaiah which used this word said that by His stripes we are healed. Peter explains what that means in his first letter -

"...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed." 1 Peter 2:24

Although that verse is very often incorrectly used to imply physical healing, Peter explains that it is the healing from sin that is being referred to. And that then ties directly into Jesus' words to His disciples about the "eye of the needle" or the *raphis*. With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. The healing is effected in Christ, and by His work we are restored to God.

This is what the embalmers of Egypt, the *rophim*, were hoping for, but it is that to which they could never attain. So, if embalming didn't accomplish the purpose for which it was intended, then why do we have these words which follow as verse 2 continues?

^{2 (con't)} **So the physicians embalmed Israel.**

This is the only time that the name Israel or Jacob is used of him in the entire chapter. Later both names will be used in relation to the family, but not specifically about him.

There are a couple of reasons that Joseph gave an order for his servants to embalm his father. The first is because it was the standard custom of the land. People generally follow the customs of the land around them in such instances.

The second reason is that the body would have to be taken all the way back to Canaan according to the promise Joseph made. The trip would be rather displeasing as the body degraded in the heat of the middle east and so the embalming was very much necessary.

The process of embalming in Hebrew comes from the word *khanat* which means to "make spicy." And this is exactly what occurred. The process was long and involved, but much of it concerned the use of spices. The word is only used five times in the Bible.

Three times it is speaking of Jacob and once it is speaking of Joseph and all four of these are in this chapter. The only other time it is used is in the Song of Solomon 2:13 -

"The fig tree **puts forth her** green figs,
And the vines *with* the tender grapes
Give a *good* smell.
Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away!" Song of Solomon 2:13

In the end, it is a testimony to the lowly state of our bodies that when the soul departs, it immediately begins to break down, smell, and become offensive to every sense of those left behind. It is *from* this world of corruption, not *to* this world of corruption, that the Christian looks.

The embalming of Jacob and Joseph were temporary measures in anticipation of their eternal state, not expected solutions to it. And the same is seen later in both testaments of Scripture. In 2 Chronicles we see that bodies were prepared for internment as a temporary measure for king Asa -

"So Asa rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign.
¹⁴ They buried him in his own tomb, which he had made for himself in the City of David; and they laid him in the bed which was filled with spices and various ingredients prepared in a mixture of ointments. They made a very great burning for him." 2 Chronicles 16:14

In the New Testament, Israel's greatest and true King was likewise buried in a mixture of spices according to the custom of the Jews.

"And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury." John 19

What the Jewish people did *was not embalming*, but preparation for burial. After the body degraded, the bones would be collected and placed in a stone box.

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

Ancient writers such as Herodotus and Diodorus both closely agree with the timeframe that the Bible mentions here. The embalming process took forty full days to complete and in conjunction with this for a royal person, as Jacob would be considered, there was a period of seventy days of mourning.

This would be comparable to what we do in the US when a president or some other highly respected person dies. The flag will be lowered to half staff for a given period as a reminder of the loss to the nation.

Later in Israel's history, there will be a period of 30 days of mourning for Aaron and Moses. After that, at the death of Saul, a period of seven days of fasting will be noted. From a biblical perspective, there is no set time of mourning for the Christian who loses a loved one. The duration will vary with the personal feelings and emotions of the ones left behind.

*Assuredly, it is hard I do tell
To enter heaven's kingdom, for a man who is rich
And again I say to you it is easier for a camel
To go through the eye of a needle, used to make a stitch*

*For a rich man to so enter the kingdom of God
Is a most difficult path in the shoes which he is shod*

*Who then can be saved!
This message to our heart, sorrow it brings
Worry not, My friends, with men this is impossible
But it is possible with God who can do all things*

II. To Fulfill a Vow (verses 4-6)

⁴ Now when the days of his mourning were past,

Only after the days of mourning were accomplished is any further action taken in regards to Jacob. To do what he intends to do in fulfilling the promise any earlier would be considered disrespectful to the people of Egypt, and thus to Pharaoh their ruler.

It would be comparable to one military base raising its flag back to full staff while all the other bases remained at half staff against the directive of congress or the president. In allowing the full time to pass, Joseph is ensuring that every protocol is met without causing anyone to later have a case against him.

^{4 (con't)} Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying,

Instead of speaking directly to Pharaoh, it says that he spoke to the "household of Pharaoh" in anticipation of them then going to speak directly to Pharaoh on his behalf. Many suggestions have been offered as to why he would do this.

Some say that it was because he was wearing mourning outfits and that no one in such garments would be allowed into the presence of the king. This was the case later at the time of Esther during the Persian Empire, but there is nothing here to even suggest that.

Further, the time of mourning had ended and so that seems unreasonable. The reason for going through the household is probably threefold. First, he was leaving his duties which would mean they would be unattended to while he was gone.

As a courtesy to them, he is passing it through them so that they know he isn't trying to lay unnecessary work on anyone else. The second reason is that the priests would be included in Pharaoh's inner circle.

As they were responsible for the religious beliefs of the people, especially the dead, to exclude them would be tantamount to saying that they were unsuited for the jobs they held. It would be a slap in their face. To avoid such a misunderstanding, he includes the household in the presenting of his desires to Pharaoh.

And thirdly, as we will see in a couple verses, most of these people will travel with him. Thus, by going through them, he is extending a courtesy that they know in advance of his desires and intentions. These seem all the more certain by his next words to them...

⁵‘My father made me swear, saying, “Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.”

In this, Joseph states the threefold obligation that he is under. He has sworn to his father; he has made a promise to a dying man who is now dead, so it cannot be amended; and his father explicitly commanded him concerning the details.

Because this is his father's will, and because it is in a spot that his father dug for himself out of the cave which was bought by Abraham, it would be unreasonable to think Pharaoh would say no. Pharaohs were known throughout their history for being more conscientious about their burial graves than they were about the palaces they lived in.

This would then be found reasonable to those who would have to stay behind and assume his duties while he was gone and also to the priests as well. He has meticulously worked to appease everyone involved in the

matter in order for there to be no misunderstandings, jealousies, or complaints against him.

⁵ (con't) **Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.”**

Finally, to reassure those who will have to attend to his duties, he lets them know that he intends to conduct the burial and return. He isn't planning on a site seeing tour afterwards, but to simply fulfill the request made by his now departed father.

⁶ **And Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.”**

The approval is given. An oath was made and the oath must therefore be performed. This is a principle which is explicitly stated throughout the Bible. When a vow is made, it is to be performed.

When an oath is made, it is to be fulfilled. Pharaoh understood this and was ready to ensure that Joseph would not be found guilty of negligence in this matter.

*I will go into Your house with burnt offerings
I will pay you my vows, my heart I will redouble
Those which my lips have uttered through my profferings
And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble
I will offer You burnt fat of animal sacrifices
With the aroma of rams, ever so sweet
I will offer bulls with goats pleasing as spices
For all of my needs You faithfully did meet*

*You have tended to me when in my time of need
I will pay my vows to You, and do so with speed*

III. The Funeral Procession (verses 7-9)

⁷ So Joseph went up to bury his father;

Seven times in this chapter, the term "up" is used to indicate travelling from Egypt to Canaan. This is not because Canaan is north of Egypt in the manner we use north today. It is also not because Canaan is at a higher elevation than Egypt.

It is because Canaan is God's land. No matter what direction one travels to get to Canaan, it is always up. And the same is true with elevation. As one moves toward Canaan and toward Jerusalem, the term "up" is used. It is the Bible's way of showing the preeminence of the land of Canaan, God's land, over all other places.

^{7 (con't)} and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

The details leave no doubt that not only did Pharaoh approve the request, but that he honored it, allowing and probably directing his servants, house elders, and elders of the land to go too.

These people would be comparable to the chief of staff and administrators at the White House, the Secretary's of the major departments, and the other Ambassador positions in our administration. In all, it showed the highest honor to Joseph, and the greatest respect for his loss.

⁸ as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house.

Everyone in the entourage who came to Egypt, plus any who had grown up in Egypt would have been included in this procession. The number, combined with the previous officials from Pharaoh's people, would have reached into the thousands.

^{8 (con't)} Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen.

The journey here is in excess of 300 miles and so the children and animals would be left behind in Goshen. This is the last time that the name Goshen will be used in Genesis. After this, it will only be used of this spot two more times in the book of Exodus.

The same place was previously called the "Land of Rameses" in Genesis 47:11. Again as always, God uses specific words and names to show details and pictures of later events in redemptive history. Goshen means "drawing near" or "approaching."

⁹ And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.

Along with the many mourners went a multitude of charioteers and horsemen to guard the procession. Because of the arrangement of those in procession, it would not be considered a military threat under normal circumstances, but because of the large number, there could have been a misunderstanding by the people in Canaan.

So sending along the chariots and horsemen was both a sign of military honor as well as a wise means of conducting the convoy.

IV. The Burial of Jacob (verses 10-14)

¹⁰ Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan,

Eventually, the procession arrived at the threshing floor of Atad, which is said to be "beyond the Jordan." This is only the fourth time the Jordan has been mentioned in the Bible. Its name means "descender" or "to descend." Atad means a "thornbush."

The problem with the phrase "beyond the Jordan" is that it doesn't explain from what reference point. So it could be on either side of the Jordan.

However, the terminology suggests that it was on the east side of Jordan, outside of the land of Canaan. The journey would have been longer going this route, but it would probably have been safer and easier.

¹⁰ (con't) and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father.

There at the threshing floor, the procession stopped to collectively mourn the honored patriarch one last time. In all, another seven days of mourning were observed before his body was moved to its resting place.

¹¹ And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.

There is in this verse a play on words. The Canaanites looked and saw the great mourning going on and they certainly heard it as well. The middle eastern funeral can be an exceptionally loud affair and with the number of people in attendance, it would sound like the noise heard in a large football game today.

The play on words then is the name given to the location. The word for "mourning" is the word *ebel*. But the word for "meadow" is *abel*. Both are spelled the same way, but carry different vowel points. And so as occurs often in the Bible and as we do in our own language with similar words, a pun is being made.

Ebel-mitzraim would mean the "mourning of the Egyptians" while Abel-mitzraim would mean the "meadow of the Egyptians."

This name however, *abel-mitzraim*, or the Mourning of the Egyptians, along with *goren ha'atad*, or the Threshing Floor of Atad, are only used in this story and nowhere else in Scripture.

¹² So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them.

This verse is given to show that what Jacob had commanded in the previous chapter was fulfilled exactly even though it is stated before the burial, not afterward. The same word for "command," which in Hebrew is *tsavah*, is used both times. Here is what Jacob commanded from our sermon last week -

"Then he **charged** them and said to them: 'I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ in the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. ³² The field and the cave that *is* there *were* purchased from the sons of Heth.'" Genesis 49:29-32

In fulfillment of his command and in acknowledgment of its accomplishment, we are given the next verse...

¹³ For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place.

We can assume that the Egyptians stayed on the other side of the Jordan and only the brothers bore the body of Jacob across to his resting place. Even if bodyguards or anyone else went along, they aren't mentioned. The honor of the final leg of the journey is reserved in recorded history only for the sons of Israel.

The detail here is a modified repeat from Genesis 23 and then the previous chapter. All of it, as we saw in the previous sermon, points to the work of Christ as he secured from this fallen world a sure hope for believers. If the names are translated into their meaning, this verse would say as follows -

"His sons carried him to the land of the humbled, and buried him in the cave that is in the field of double, in the face of bitterness, which (the)

Father of many nations bought with the field from the man of dust, the fallen man, as a property for a burial place."

It is to this place that the sons carry their father to be buried. It is a resting spot awaiting the day when Messiah will come and raise him to eternal life. It is a sign of hope in the promises of God and the faithfulness He displays to His word.

***14 And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.**

With the internment complete by Joseph - as he is the representative for all the brothers, they together returned to the land of Egypt along with the entire entourage who had accompanied him.

Like several other sections of Genesis, when I started typing this, I had no idea why it was here. After typing up the analysis of the words and verses, I still had no idea. And so, throughout the night and the next morning, I thought about it, talked to the Lord about it, and went back over the entire passage again and again.

There is so much detail that it must have some significance, but I couldn't imagine what. More detail is given to this burial than almost every other burial in Genesis combined. Other than the purchase of the cave in chapter 23, nothing like this comes even close in detail.

And then I realized, unless it is connected with the previous chapter it lacks sense, but when tied to that, it clears up. Jacob had just finished blessing all his sons, a set of blessings which looks forward to the entire scope of Israel's history. This story about Jacob's burial then isn't a chronological picture like most of Joseph's life has been. Instead, it is an insert of Israel's history, like Chapter 34 and chapter 38 were.

Jacob here pictures corporate Israel which has died. This occurred in 586BC when they were exiled to Babylon. Although they were brought back after 70 years, they remained under external control until their next dispersion in

AD70. The entire time is considered under the time of punishment detailed in Ezekiel 4.

But great detail is given concerning his embalming. He is the only person embalmed in the Bible other than Joseph, and only he is given this detail. This is showing us the care that God has taken for the corporate body of Israel, whom he pictures. Even though the spirit has left them, just like the spirit left Jacob, the body has been maintained in order to restore it to life. This is pictured in the Valley of Dry Bones passage in Ezekiel 37.

The care concerning the details of his burial place also look forward to the restoration and resurrection promised by God. This is why the term "Israel" is never used again in these verses when speaking of either Jacob or the people who descend from him.

They are living in gentile land and are still under the 400 years of servitude that was spoken by God to Abraham back in Genesis 15. Those 400 years picture the entire time of Israel's exile and affliction seen in Ezekiel 4; they are the "times of the Gentiles" spoken about in both testaments. Joseph and the other sons, listed individually, not as a whole, go to bury Jacob.

Along with them though "go all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt." The servants and elders of Pharaoh would be the whole heavenly host and the elders of Egypt would be the kings of the nations. Only the little ones and the flocks remain in Goshen, the land of "drawing near."

In other words, there is a spectacle that all creation should see. The spirit is supposed to return to the embalmed body according to Egyptian thinking, but only Christ can truly make that happen. When He was born the great heavenly host witnessed it. After His resurrection, all the nations heard of it.

And so they come to the threshing floor of Atad, "the thorn," across the Jordan, which means "descend." This is the time of Christ's visitation which is spoken of in Ephesians 4:7-10 -

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸ Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men."

⁹ (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

There the Canaanites note "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians." It is the *gentile world* who mourned over Christ and His crown of thorns, pictured by the threshing floor of Atad. Therefore, the place was called Abel Mizraim - the meadow of Egypt, which is beyond the Jordan. It is in gentile land; the land of double distress.

After this, it says his sons carried him to Canaan and buried him in the special cave which looks forward to the resurrection. It doesn't call them the sons of Israel though, just "his sons." And then it notes that Joseph and "his brothers" returned to Egypt. The significance of this is seen in Jesus' words to his disciples -

"Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. ²⁵ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and *in His* Father's, and of the holy angels." Luke 9:23-26

Those who are His brothers are those who have trusted him individually from Jew and Gentile. It is these who have stayed faithful to Christ even in the gentile lands and even after corporate Israel, pictured by Jacob, has died.

This is why the two kisses of Jacob were noted at the beginning. The first was when there was a *reunion* after a long separation. The second is when there is a *departure* for a long separation. The first was *at* the surety of *life*; the second is the surety of hope *of life* even in *death*.

The first was after a journey *from* the land of promise; the second is prior to a journey *to* the land of promise. The first resulted in a physical reunion and pictured a spiritual awakening in the brothers. The second resulted in a physical separation and yet in the hope of restored life to the father, who pictures corporate Israel.

It is looking to the long separation of Israel from God during the time of the Gentiles and yet in the hope of restored life to them in the future. This will continue to be seen in the next section of chapter 50, but it is exactly written about by Paul in Romans -

"For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are* my flesh and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead?" Romans 11:13-15

The story of Jacob's death and embalming, the mourning over him before his burial, his choice of burial place - all of it is a picture of the history of Israel during their time of rejection of the Lord who called them. And yet we see His meticulous care of them, even then, as He prepares to bring them back to life once again.

The hope of Jacob in his choice of resting place is the same hope that we believers have in Christ today, and the same hope that we have for Israel when they as a nation call on their Messiah. It is all about Jesus and what He is doing at different times in redemptive history. There is a time when all of the faithful will be raised to eternal life - both from Israel and from the gentile peoples. We are given this as an offer and as a choice.

We can accept it by calling out to Jesus Christ, the Messiah, in faith, or we can reject His offer. The choice is up to each of us.

Closing Verse: I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it*," says the LORD.'" Ezekiel 37:14

Next Week: Genesis 50:15-26 (Grace, Mercy, and Faith - The Final Words of Joseph) (130th and last Genesis Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you and He has a good plan and purpose for you. Call on Him and let Him do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Burial of Jacob

Then Joseph fell on his father's face
And wept over him, and kissed him there in that place

And Joseph commanded his servants, he did tell
The physicians to embalm his father
So the physicians embalmed Israel

Forty days were required for him
For such are the required days
For those who are embalmed
Lest the body decays

And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days
This is the time frame according to their ways

Now when the days of his mourning were past
Joseph spoke, he did apprise
To the household of Pharaoh, saying,
If now I have found favor in your eyes

Please speak in Pharaoh's hearing
The message I am now relaying
Words without any fearing
Are what my father made me swear, saying

Behold, I am dying you understand
In my grave which I dug, this is my plea
For myself in Canaan the land
There... you shall bury me

Now therefore, please up let me go
And bury my father, and I will come back, as you know

And Pharaoh said, "Go up to there
And bury your father, as he made you swear

So Joseph went up to bury his father
And with him went up all of Pharaoh's servants at hand
The elders of his house
And all the elders of Egypt the land

As well as all the house of Joseph
His brothers, and his father's house, all went along too
Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds
They left in the land of Goshen, and were not part of the retinue

And there went up with him as well
Both chariots and horsemen
It was a very great gathering, as you can tell

Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad
Which is beyond the Jordan's demarcation
And they mourned there
With a great and very solemn lamentation

Seven days of mourning for his father he observed
For this mourning these seven days were reserved

And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites
Saw the mourning at Atad's threshing floor
They said "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians
A mourning grievously sore

Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim
Which is beyond the Jordan, east it would seem
So his sons did for him
Just as he had commanded them
For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan
And buried him in the cave
Of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre
This place became his grave

This Abraham bought with the field, all the space
From Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place.
And after he had buried his father
Joseph returned to Egypt the land
He and his brothers and all who went
Up with him to bury his father, in a procession so grand

The hope of God in Christ is eternal life
From the moment we call on him, this we receive
And from that moment ends our enmity and strife
God forgives our sins and our burdens He does relieve
Some day, Israel will call on Jesus as a nation
And at that time will come life from the dead
There will be in heaven and on earth joyous celebration
When Israel receives Christ as their Head

Until then the gentiles will continue to proclaim
The wondrous gospel message of life in Jesus
It is in this exalted and glorious name
That salvation and eternal life is granted to us

Hallelujah and Amen...

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