

## Studies in Genesis, Chapter 50

### Introduction:

1. Our most recent study in Genesis dealt with the contents of chapter 49, a chapter which could be entitled “the last words of a dying man.” Jacob was the “dying man,” and he was speaking to his sons.
2. Specifically, chapter 49 deals with three major items:
  - a. Jacob blessed his twelve natural sons, Genesis 49:1-28.
  - b. Jacob specified where he wanted to be buried, Genesis 49:29-32.
  - c. Jacob died, Genesis 49:33.
3. Chapter 50 is the final chapter in Genesis; “without missing a beat,” it begins where chapter 49 concludes and continues the Bible story in an uninterrupted manner.

### Discussion:

#### I. Brief Outline of Genesis, Chapter 50.

- A. The Burial of Jacob, Genesis 50:1-14.
- B. Joseph’s older brothers sought his forgiveness, Genesis 50:15-21.
- C. The Death of Joseph, Genesis 50:22-26.

#### II. A Closer Look at Genesis, Chapter 50.

- A. The Burial of Jacob, Genesis 50:1-14.
  1. Jacob died, Genesis 49:33; Joseph “*fell on his father’s face, and wept over him...*,” Genesis 50:1.
    - a. There is “*a time to weep, a time to laugh; a time to mourn...*,” Ecclesiastes 3:4. Cf. Genesis 37:35; 42:24; 43:30; 45:2,14; 46:29; 50:17.
    - b. He wept, even though his father had died as a man of great faith, Hebrews 11:21.
    - c. Joseph was probably with Jacob, and closed his eyes at death, Genesis 46:4 (marginal reference).
  2. Joseph commanded “*the physicians to embalm his father,*” Genesis 50:2.
    - a. The first mention of “*physicians*” and “*embalming*” in the Bible.
  3. “*Forty days were required*” for embalming; “*the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days,*” 50:3.
    - a. Apparently Jacob, the father of Joseph, was highly regarded by the Egyptians!
    - b. In contrast, following Moses’ death “*the children of Israel wept for...thirty days,*” Numbers 34:8. Also, following Aaron’s death, “*all the house of Israel mourned..thirty days,*” Numbers 20:29.
  4. Joseph requested “*the household of Pharaoh*” to speak to Pharaoh in his behalf, Genesis 50:4,5.
    - a. Joseph alluded to Jacob having him swear that he would bury him in Canaan, Genesis 47:27-31.
  5. Pharaoh said “*go up and bury your father,*” Genesis 50:6.
  6. A great number went to Canaan to bury Jacob, Genesis 50:7-9.
    - a. There also went up with him chariots and horsemen, Genesis 50:9. Perhaps the horsemen were sent to make sure that Joseph returned to Egypt!
  7. They went to “*the threshing floor of Atad...beyond Jordan,*” where Joseph “*observed seven days of mourning for his father,*” Genesis 50:10,11.
  8. Jacob’s body was then carried to the cave of Machpelah where “*his sons did for him just as he had commanded them,*” Genesis 50:12-14, cf. Genesis 49:29-33; 47:27-31; 23:16-20.
- B. Joseph’s Older Brothers Sought His forgiveness, Genesis 50:15-21.
  1. After burying their father, Joseph’s brothers feared that he would then “*hate*” them and “*actually repay them for all the evil*” they did to him, Genesis 50:15.
    - a. Once again their consciences haunted them for their actions recorded in Genesis 37, actions which occurred 39 years prior to this!
    - b. Perhaps they reasoned as Esau had many years earlier after he had been defrauded of his father’s blessings, Genesis 27:41. From their perspective, they had reason to fear!
  2. They “*sent messengers to Joseph,*” reminding him of the words spoken by Jacob to “*please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin...*,” Genesis 50:17.
  3. The brothers “*fell down before his face, and they said behold, we are your servants,*” Genesis 50:18.
    - a. The last of five times they fulfilled Joseph’s dream recorded in Genesis 37:5-11! Cf. Genesis 42:6-9; 43:26,28;44:14.
    - b. Joseph’s brothers had sold him as a slave, Genesis 37:26-28; now they fall down before Joseph and volunteered to be his slaves!
  4. Joseph’s magnanimous response, Genesis 50:19-21.

- a. Initially, he *“wept when they spoke to him,”* v. 17.
- b. He said *“do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God,”* v. 20.
  - (1) He apparently knew that vengeance belongs to God, Deuteronomy 32:35. He refused to *“whittle on God’s end of the stick.”*
- 5. Joseph was mindful of the over ruling providence of God; he said *“you meant evil against me: but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive,”* Genesis 50:20.
- 6. Instead of repaying them for the evil they had done to him, Joseph promised to *“provide for”* them, and *“he comforted them and spoke kindly to them,”* Genesis 50:21. Cf. Ephesians 4:32.
- C. The Death of Joseph, Genesis 50:22-26.
  - 1. Joseph *“dwelt in Egypt;”* he *“lived one hundred and ten years,”* Genesis 50:22.
    - a. This means that Joseph lived another 54 years after the death of his father.
    - b. Abraham lived 175 years, Genesis 25:7; Isaac lived 180 years, Genesis 35:28; Jacob lived 147 years, Genesis 47:28. The life expectancy appears to have been diminishing.
  - 2. Joseph’s lived a full life; he *“saw Ephraim’s children to the third generation,”* Genesis 50:23.
  - 3. Joseph, when dying, reminded his brothers that God would ultimately bring them *“out”* of Egypt and *“to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob,”* Genesis 50:24.
    - a. Joseph evidently knew the promise given in Genesis 12:7, and Genesis 15:13-21.
  - 4. Joseph said *“God will surely visit you, and you shall carry my bones from here,”* Genesis 50:25.
    - a. Even as Jacob had Joseph to swear that he would not *“bury”* him *“in Egypt,”* Genesis 47:27-31, Joseph *“took an oath from the children of Israel,”* that they would carry his *“bones”* from Egypt when Israel departed from the land of Egypt, Genesis 50:25,26.
      - (1) They honored that request! Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32.
    - b. Genesis 50:24 is the last prophecy in Genesis; Genesis 50:25 is the last oath in Genesis.
  - 5. Joseph died, *“they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt,”* Genesis 50:26.
    - a. Thus ends Genesis. Contrast the beginning of Genesis with the ending, Genesis 1:1; 50:26!

### III. Observations:

- A. Faithful servants of God, regardless of circumstances, shine *“as lights in the world.”* Cf. Philippians 2:15.
  - 1. Consider Joseph. He was sold as a slave at age 17, Genesis 37. He was falsely charged by an evil woman and thrust into prison, Genesis 39:9-20. He was forgotten by the chief butler, Genesis 40:23. For 93 years he lived in a hostile, idolatrous environment. Joseph serves as proof that inward faith does not have to be destroyed by outward circumstances.
- B. There is a contrast between the dying words of Jacob and of Joseph.
  - 1. Jacob’s words looked to the past – *“bury me”* where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah were buried, Genesis 49:29-31.
  - 2. Joseph’s words looked to the future -- *“God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here,”* Genesis 50:25.
    - a. Joseph was not buried; his body was *“put in a coffin in Egypt,”* and served as a mute reminder to all Israelites that Egypt was not their home, and that one day they would leave!
    - b. However, our faith is not bolstered by a coffin, but by an **empty tomb**, Luke 24:5,6; Romans 1:4!
- C. Death is universal! Hebrews 9:27.
  - 1. Satan told Eve, *“You will not surely die,”* Genesis 3:4. Yet the book of Genesis, with the exception of Enoch (Genesis 5:24) records the deaths of all the great patriarchs up to, and including Joseph.
    - a. *“All his grandeur and riches and goodness could not save Joseph from the hands of the last enemy.”*
- D. God is a God of providence! Romans 8:28.
  - 1. The sins Joseph’s brethren committed against him were evil beyond our comprehension; yet God used it as a way *“to save many people alive,”* Genesis 50:19.
  - 2. The sins committed by those who crucified Jesus were even worse; yet God used His death as a means to bring about **our** salvation, Hebrews 2:9; Romans 5:8,10.
- E. Genesis began with *“the beginning,”* Genesis 1:1, and it ends at the right spot.
  - 1. It ends with Joseph’s body being *“put in a coffin,”* Genesis 50:26. But keep in mind that Genesis is a book of beginnings; where it ends is the perfect place for the message in Exodus to begin!

### Conclusion:

--Bobby Witherington, January 22, 2012

