

LESSON 12



JACOB'S DEATH AND BURIAL

Scripture Texts: *Genesis 47:29-31; Genesis 50:1-21*

Joseph had his family near him. Jacob and his family were living in security and comfort and peace. They had Joseph and Benjamin. Only God's loving care brought these good ends out of painful circumstances.

When sinners obey Christ and go to Him, He receives them (Matthew 11:28), gives them a spiritual home in Him and in His church (Acts 2:47), nourishes them spiritually (John 6:27), and supplies their physical needs (Philippians 4:19).

MEMORY VERSE: *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."*

Romans 12:19

Jacob's Last Request

Genesis 47:29-31 Jacob asked Joseph to bind himself by an oath to return him to Canaan for burial. Why did Jacob wish to be buried in Canaan? Because he believed God. He had God's promise that He would make of him a great nation and surely bring him up again to Canaan (Genesis 46:1-4).

When God has a purpose set, He accomplishes it. It was His purpose to take the Israelites to Egypt in order to use them as a type of His salvation plan which unfolded in their later history. He fitted many varying occurrences together to bring it about. We now see it as a fact.

Jacob must have understood it to mean the nation would be returned rather than himself personally. He wanted to be buried where they would live. His faith in the promise is shown by his acting upon it. Sometimes we say we believe something, then fear to act upon it. Faith that is real to the point of action is rewarded. God keeps His promises to those who will stand upon them.

After Jacob had Joseph's promise to bury him in Canaan, he fell sick. Calling his sons, he gave prophecies concerning the future of each and charged them to bury his body in Canaan. After Jacob had completed this last bedside meeting with all his sons, he got back into the bed and died (Genesis 49:33).

Joseph's Tender Heart

Genesis 50:1-6 In grief Joseph wept upon his father's face and kissed him. He ordered his embalming, in which Egyptians were expert and which took forty days. Joseph told Pharaoh of his promise to bury Jacob in Canaan and asked permission to go. Pharaoh granted it.

Joseph had a heart that was tender. Many times he wept in sympathy with his family. He forgave his brothers before they asked. He seems never to have held bitterness toward them or Potiphar's wife or any who had wronged him. It was as if he had forgotten those things. He forgot himself. This was because of love in his heart. We must be like that—and will be by the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

7-13 A long line of people made up the funeral procession—Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his house and of Egypt (leading men of government), Joseph's brothers, Joseph, their families, their servants and Jacob's servants. They took chariots and horsemen. **It was a very great company.** Entering Canaan, they stopped at the threshing

floor of Atad for seven days of mourning. The depth of their grief was noted by the people there. They went on to Machpelah and placed Jacob's body in the cave with those of Abraham and other ancestors.

14-21 returning to Egypt, Joseph's brothers realized that the influences of their father was now gone. With the fear of grieving him removed, would Joseph now avenge himself of the evil they had done him? It worried them. What a bitter thing is a guilty conscience! It held their sin always before them. They sent a message to Joseph recounting their father's dying request that he forgive them. They named their act a trespass and a sin. They asked forgiveness, calling themselves **servants of the God of thy father**. If they were now serving God, they had repented and left their former sins. They fell in repentance before Joseph, declaring to be his servants. It would seem that their repentance was real and that they were willing to make restitution to the best of their ability. Those dreams God had sent to Joseph nearly forty years before had been fulfilled many times. The brothers had bowed, yielded and obeyed, offered their servitude, and now were pledging it fully. Joseph did not take revenge. He had none in his heart. He felt his brothers were exalting him too far above themselves. It was not his place to punish them (Romans 12:19). He was not in the place of God. He told them not to fear, reminded them how God had turned their evil to a good end to save much people alive, and promised to nourish them and their little one.

The Reaping of Sin

In Galatians 6:7 we read a written guarantee of the out-growth of sins committed, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Sin always begins in the heart before it is an act. The seeds of sin bear bitter fruit. Seeds of sin planted in just a few minutes of time will take years to bring forth their complete reaping. Sin destroys time, talents, and lives. Sin cripples character that can never be completely restored. Sin never shows the true picture. It shows the bright side, the planting season. It leaves the dark side, the reaping time, to all to work out for themselves through tears and prayer. Sin gets us into trouble but sin never helps us to get out. The wages of sin is death. What pay for a life of dedicated service! But the gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23). When payday comes which will you receive?

JUST A THOUGHT

**"When you kill time, just remember
it has no resurrection."**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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