



Future Hope in God's Promises Genesis 49:29-50:26

Introduction

Jacob's last words to his sons were a combination of blessing, curse, promise and judgment. Each son received the words which were appropriate for him (Genesis 49:28). Although some sons received harsh words which may not seem like blessing at all, each son was certainly blessed by being heir to the promises which had been given by God to Abraham, Isaac and their father, Jacob. Each was blessed as standing among the progenitors of the Twelve Tribes of Israel: "Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises" (Romans 9:4).

After blessing his sons, Jacob's thoughts were full of God's promises and the land which would belong to his descendants. By faith, he had extracted from Joseph a vow to bury his body in the Promised Land (Genesis 47:29-30). His final act, before departing in peace, would be to extend the charge to all his sons.

OUTLINE of GENESIS 49:29-50:26

I. Jacob's Last Request - Genesis 49:29-32

II. Jacob's Death - Genesis 49:33-50:3

III. Jacob's Burial - Genesis 50:4-14

IV. Joseph's Last Days - Genesis 50:15-2

V. Joseph as a Type of Christ

I. Jacob's Last Request - Genesis 49:29-32

Jacob's final charge to his sons revealed that his hope and his homeland were not in Egypt but in the land of Canaan. He expressed faith in God and His promise (Genesis 13:15) by insisting upon burial in the Cave of Machpelah where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah were buried. That is also where he had buried Leah.

II. Jacob's Death - Genesis 49:33-50:3

Jacob's checkered life came to a close peacefully and quietly. He was 147 years old (Genesis 47:28).

A. He "*breathed his last*" - Genesis 49:33

The phrase "*breathed his last*" is translated "*yielded up the ghost* (spirit)" in the King James Version. This gives a meaningful picture of Jacob, who had struggled so long, finally and fully committing his spirit to God.

B. He was "*gathered to his people*" -
Genesis 49:33

Although this phrase was an ancient euphemism for death, it also expresses a continuance of life and reunion beyond death. At death, Jacob's spirit was relinquished to God and reunited with his loved ones who had gone before.

Hundreds of years later, God, speaking to Moses, stated "I am the God of your Father --- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). Jesus later used this passage to explain, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:32). Being "*gathered to his people*" did not have reference to the grave, but to life beyond the grave with the faithful who had gone before him.

Pastor Alan Carr (The Sermon Notebook.org) further explains this: "They were all waiting for another One Who came into their midst with some glorious news one day! When Jesus died on the cross, He descended into Paradise with the glorious news that redemption had been purchased for all those who had died in faith! With that news, He lead them out of Paradise and into Heaven in a parade of triumph and victory" (Ephesians 4:8-10; 1 Peter 3:19)!" Jacob, and the faithful who had gone before him, were looking forward to that event, but we look backward. It is finished! The way is opened and all those who die in faith are immediately gathered home to the presence of the Lord in Heaven!

C. Joseph's Weeping - Genesis 50:1

In great sorrow, Joseph wept over the loss of his father. During his years as a slave and prisoner, when he experienced loneliness, hardship, misunderstanding and disappointment, we never read of Joseph giving way to tears. But Joseph's tears over his father, just as his tears upon meeting his brothers after many years, were an expression of deep and tender feeling. Joseph had always been a devoted son, but now he would no longer be a son and his life would be completely different for the rest of his days on earth.

Application

Perhaps you can relate to Joseph's loss of his father. Perhaps you have lost someone dear to you, someone you have loved and cared for, and now you are no longer a son or daughter, mother or father, wife or husband.

This passage in Genesis shows us that grieving is not only acceptable, it is needful. Tears are natural and tears are healing. Eventually, as the tears begin to dry, we come to remember that ours is not an irretrievable loss. The day will come when we are gathered to our people for joyful, eternal reunion. *“Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning”* (Psalm 30:5).

D. Egypt’s Mourning - Genesis 50:2-3

Joseph and his family were not the only ones who mourned their father. The Egyptians mourned Jacob for seventy days, just two days less than the customary time for mourning the death of a Pharaoh. Forty of those days were required for embalming Jacob’s body. Embalming would preserve the body for the journey to Canaan. Joseph designated *“physicians”* to embalm his father rather than the religious cultic embalmers.

III. Jacob’s Burial - Genesis 50:4-14

Dr. Constable ([Notes on Genesis](#)) notes that Jacob’s was “the grandest state funeral recorded in the Bible” and this was appropriate “since Jacob’s story spans more than half of Genesis”.

A. Joseph’s Request - Genesis 50:4-6

After an extended period of mourning, Joseph’s appearance was probably not considered suitable to approach Pharaoh personally so he made his request to bury his father through members of Pharaoh’s household. Pharaoh gave Joseph permission to go and bury his father in Canaan.

B. The Funeral Procession - Genesis 50:7-11

A *“great gathering”* accompanied Jacob’s body to the land of promise for burial. The impressive list includes: Joseph and his household, Joseph’s brothers and their households, Jacob’s household, all the servants of Pharaoh and the elders of his house and all the elders of the land of Egypt along with chariots and horsemen. “This grand funeral procession and this exaltation of Jacob as a king by the Egyptians foreshadows Israel’s exodus from the world and gives a foretaste of the time when the nations hail a son of Jacob as King” (Bruce K. Waltke, [Genesis](#)).

Upon entering the land of Canaan, the funeral procession stopped to observe seven days of mourning at the threshing floor of Atad. The Canaanites were duly impressed with the *“deep mourning of the Egyptians”* and named the site Abel Mizraim which means “Mourning of Egypt”.

C. Vow Fulfilled - Genesis 50:12-14

Joseph and his brothers fulfilled their vow to their father by doing *“just as he had commanded them”* (Genesis 49:29-32). Their obedience shows how promises were cherished by the patriarchs and their families. They had faith that God would fulfill His promises, if not in their lifetimes, then to their descendants. God had proved Himself faithful to them in the past and they trusted in His future faithfulness. With his body buried in the Cave of Machpelah, Jacob had staked his claim in the Promised Land.

Application

You and I are also called to put our trust in God’s faithfulness. We are to follow the examples Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. God’s faithfulness in the past has been proven and God never changes. He is the same today as he was in the days of Jacob and he remains faithful even when we are not. See John 8:58, Romans 3:3-4 and Hebrews 13:8. What step of faith do you need to take today, trusting in His faithfulness?

“Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— the LORD, who remains faithful forever” (Psalm 146:5-6).

IV. Joseph’s Last Days - Genesis 50:15-26

After burying their father in Canaan, Joseph and his brothers returned to Egypt.

A. Fear of Joseph - Genesis 50:15-18

Back in Egypt, the consciences of Joseph’s brothers began to bother them. As is often the case, when evil has been active, so are imaginations and the brothers began to wonder if Joseph might seek retribution for what they had done to him? They sent messengers to Joseph saying that before his death their father had pleaded on their behalf for forgiveness. It is impossible to know if Jacob had actually done such a thing or if the brothers had invented another lie. In any case, they based their request for forgiveness on being servants of God.

One of the messengers sent to Joseph was probably Benjamin for he had not been involved in the evil plot against Joseph. When he saw that Joseph’s reaction was favorable, all the brothers approached, bowed before Joseph and offered themselves as his servants. Again, Joseph’s dreams described in Chapter 37 found fulfillment.

B. Forgiveness from Joseph - Genesis 50:19-21

In Joseph's response to his brothers, he:

- (1) reassured them twice, telling them not to be afraid;
- (2) promised to provide for them;
- (3) spoke kindly to them.

But even more than that, he humbled himself under the authority of God and demonstrated his faith in God's absolute sovereignty. He knew that although his brothers' intentions had been evil against him, God's purposes were meant for good. As the years had revealed, many people's lives had been saved through all that had transpired since that fatal day when Joseph had been sold to Ishmaelite traders. As Joseph had told his brothers over seventeen years earlier when he first revealed himself to them: yes, they had sold him as a slave into Egypt, but *"God sent me before you to preserve life And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God"* (Genesis 45:5-8).

Application

Joseph's words of forgiveness to his brothers are a beautiful expression of faith in God and His sovereignty. Joseph saw God's providence in the evil intent of his brothers and trusted God to right all wrongs. Joseph repayed evil with forgiveness and kindness instead of retribution. Whom do you need to express forgiveness to today? How can you show the kindness of God to that person? See Romans 12:17-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Peter 4:19.

C. Faith of Joseph - Genesis 50:22-26

Joseph lived to the age of one hundred and ten, a number the Egyptians considered to be an ideal lifespan. Joseph lived to see his children's children and to place them on his knees and bless them.

1. Joseph's request - 50:24

Joseph demonstrated his faith both in the way he lived and in the way he died. Trusting that God would be true to His promise to take the family of Israel back to the land of Canaan, Joseph requested that his bones be carried out of Egypt and buried in the Promised Land. A solemn oath was sworn to honor Joseph's request. When he died, his body was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

2. Joseph's request honored - Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32-34

Almost four centuries later, Moses and the Israelites carried Joseph's bones out of Egypt in the great exodus.

Then after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, *"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"* (Joshua 24:32-34).

Application

Joseph's life shines as a beacon of patient faith, loyalty and trust in God regardless of the circumstances. In the depths of suffering he continued to trust God and serve wherever God placed him. How are you serving in your suffering? What complaints and self-pitying will you put aside so you may step up, serve God and glorify Him where you are right now?

V. Joseph as a Type of Christ

In the Old Testament, there are certain individual persons and events which symbolically anticipate or foreshadow various aspects of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Such an Old Testament illustration of the coming Christ is known as a "type" of Christ. Often the New Testament looks back and refers to an Old Testament "type". For example, in Romans 5:14, Adam is referred to as a "type" of Christ. Although Joseph is never specifically identified as a type of Christ, there are many parallels to be seen between their two lives. Following is a partial list of major analogies:

- Both were shepherds of their father's sheep (Genesis 37:2 and John 10:11);
- Both were dearly loved by their father (Genesis 37:3 and Matthew 3:17);
- Both were hated by their brothers (Genesis 37:4 and John 7:4-5);
- Both were sold for the price of a slave (Genesis 37:28 and Matthew 26:15);
- Both were falsely accused and tried (Genesis 39:1-20 and Matthew 26:59-60);
- Both suffered; Joseph in prison and Jesus on the cross (Genesis 39:20 and Matthew 27:35);
- Both were later crowned with glory and honour (Genesis 41:39-45 and Hebrews 2:9);
- Both forgave those who wronged them (Genesis 45:1-15 and Luke 23:34);
- Both delivered men from death (Genesis 45:7; 47:25 and Matthew 1:21);
- The evil that was done against them was turned to good by God (Genesis 50:20 and 1 Corinthians 2:7-8).

(For a more complete list, see www.apocalipsis.org/Joseph.htm)

Final Thoughts

Our study of Genesis has been the study of beginnings. Although there are many “firsts” recorded in the Book of Genesis, there are three main “firsts” by which the book may be summarized.

- Genesis 1:1 marks God’s first act of creation: “*In the beginning God created*”.
- Genesis 3:1 marks the first entrance of evil into the world: “*Now the serpent*”.
- Genesis 12:1 marks God’s first regenerative outreach to mankind “*Now the Lord said to Abram,*” with the promise to bless “*all the families of the earth*”.

From the moment God called Abram in Chapter 12, the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament) begins recording God’s regenerative outreach to man. This is seen in His preparations for the ultimate coming of the Messiah through His dealings with individuals, families and nations. All relationships with God were based on faith. The outstanding lesson which may be learned through the lives of the men, women, families and nations in the Book of Genesis is that failure is always overruled by faith. As you think back on the lives of the patriarchs, notice how faith valiantly overcame every human failure as God worked out His purposes in the lives of those He had called.

Hebrews Chapter 11, the Hall of Fame of the Faithful, stresses the necessity of faith and the power of faith in the lives of the patriarchs. Faith was the greatest source of power in their lives: “*For by it the men of old gained approval*” (Hebrews 11:2). Even before Abraham, Hebrews 11:4 and 5 reveals that it was “*by faith*” that Abel offered a better sacrifice to God (Genesis 4:4), it was “*by faith*” that Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24) was pleasing to God and it was “*by faith*” that Noah obtained salvation for his household (Genesis 6:13-22).

Hebrews Chapter 11 honors the faith of the patriarchs, declaring that it was “*by faith*” Abraham obeyed God when he was called and when he lived as a stranger in the land of promise (11:8-9). It was “*by faith*” Abraham offered up Isaac (11:17), “*by faith*” Isaac blessed Jacob (11:20), “*by faith*” Jacob blessed each of the sons of Joseph and worshiped God (11:21) and “*by faith*” Joseph mentioned the exodus from Egypt and gave instructions to carry his bones to the Promised land (11:22). Furthermore, it was “*by faith*” Sarah received the ability to conceive when she was an old woman, far past the age of childbearing, and Abraham was “*as good as dead*” (11:11-12).

Hebrews Chapter 11 records that all of these died “*in faith*” without ever receiving the promises. But they had glimpsed them and welcomed them from afar. They confessed that they were merely sojourners on this earth and what they were truly seeking was a better country, a heavenly country. And what they were seeking by faith, God has prepared (Hebrews 11:16)!

Application

Truly, these men and women with whom we have walked through our study of Genesis were empowered by faith. The greatest source of power in their lives was faith in God and His promises. What is the greatest source of power in your life? What have you done lately “*by faith*”? Using the faithful men and women of Genesis as your example, will you boldly step out in faith this week and in days to come to honor and glorify God as you dwell as a “*stranger and pilgrim*” (Hebrews 11:13) on this earth?

“*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him*”.