

Genesis

Chapter 50



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McGee Introduction: This chapter tells of the burial of Jacob in Canaan and the death and burial of Joseph in Egypt. There is, therefore, a touch of sadness about this last chapter of Genesis. We have already called attention to the emphasis put upon death in the Book of Genesis. God had told Adam, "...For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Paul wrote later, "... so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). The Book of Genesis is a full example of the fact of sin and the reality of death. It opens with God and man in the Garden of Eden and ends in a coffin in Egypt. This book recounts the entrance of sin into the human family but also relates the faithfulness of God in providing a way of life for man.¹

Genesis 50:1

And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

Joseph fell upon his father's face, &c.—On him, as the principal member of the family, devolved the duty of closing the eyes of his venerable parent (compare Genesis 46:4) and imprinting the farewell kiss.²

Genesis 50:2

And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

[physicians] First mention of physicians in Scripture (2 Chron. 16:12; Job 13:4; Jeremiah 8:22; Matthew 9:12; Mark 2:17; Mark 5:26; Luke 4:23; Luke 5:31; Luke 8:43; Col. 4:14).

[embalmed] First mention of embalming (Genesis 50:2-3,26). The process was tedious and expensive. The brain and intestines were removed and the head and body were filled with costly spices. After being steeped in natron for seventy days, the body was then washed, wrapped in bandages of linen, covered with gum and placed in a wooden case (Genesis 50:3).³

Embalming Although it was the usual practice in Egypt for everyone who could afford it, embalming of Israelites is found only in this passage. This was an elaborate and ritual-filled procedure performed by a trained group of mortuary priests. It involved removing the internal organs and placing of the body in embalming fluids for forty days. The idea behind this is based on the Egyptian belief that the body had to be preserved as a repository for the soul after death. The bodies of Jacob and Joseph are embalmed, and while this may have been done to soothe the feelings of the Egyptians, it also served the purpose of preserving their bodies for later burial in Canaan.⁴

¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:196). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²JFB Coimmentary

³Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

⁴Bible Background Commentary

The ancient Egyptians possessed a secret of embalming that is a marvel to this present day. Early historians indicate that the embalmers banded together as a guild, but Jacob's body was prepared by physicians because he was not an Egyptian, and he would not be subjected to their native practices. Even the preparation of the body by physicians extended over a 40-day period (v. 3).⁵

Joseph directed that his father be embalmed so that he could be buried in Canaan. One day Joseph would also be embalmed (v. 26).

Genesis 50:3

And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days.

Embalming required 40 days! The Egyptians mourned for Jacob 70 days—2 1/2 months—just two days short of the normal time of mourning for a Pharaoh. This showed the great respect the Egyptians had for Joseph.⁶

[forty days were fulfilled for him] Forty days were spent mourning, but the one embalmed stayed in natron thirty more days—seventy in all. It was against the law to appear in mourning apparel in public, especially in the royal presence, because a mourner was looked upon as being defiled.

The embalming and the periods of mourning follow Egyptian rather than Israelite custom. Jewish law forbids embalming (and cremating). The body must, instead, be interred in such a way that it will “return to the ground from which [it was] taken” (Gen 3:19)⁷

Torah Class: What a heart-rending scene we have here, with Joseph breaking down upon his father's death, and crying and kissing this now empty shell that was Jacob. The, Joseph orders his father's body to be embalmed. This is not now, nor ever, going to be usual and normal Israelite custom, however it did happen from time to time.

As we all know, the Egyptians had perfected the art of embalming the dead. The reason for the embalming was all wrapped up in Egyptian beliefs about the after life. Physical preservation was key in the survival of death by the immortal soul, according to the long established Egyptian cult of Osiris, the god of the underworld.

However, that is not the reason or the circumstance that Jacob was embalmed. The reason was that Jacob's body had to be taken on a substantial and hot journey, to Canaan, to be buried with his forefathers, and if they did not embalm him....well....I don't think I need to paint a vivid picture for you. Now, part of the reason that I know that Jacob's embalming had nothing to do with the Egyptian death cult is that the Bible leaves us a subtle message: and it is that Joseph called the PHYSICIANS to perform the embalming.

⁵ Believer's Study Bible

⁶ Chuck Missler, Notes on Book of Genesis Commentary, Genesis Study, KHouse.org

⁷ The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

Physicians were not normally embalmers in Egypt; usually, it was the Priests of Osiris who performed this intricate and secretive task. And, this because embalming was a religious practice NOT a medical one, and so was always performed by professional mortuary priests.

Then, in the next few verses, we're given a series of numbers about the amount of days the embalming process and mourning period occurred, and at first glance they are a little confusing and seem almost at odds with one another. We have two periods mentioned: 40 days and 70 days. Forty days for embalming, 70 days for mourning. Actually, what we have here is the typical period of 40 days of embalming, followed by the customary 30 day mourning period Hebrews observe.....giving us a total of 70 days.⁸

Genesis 50:4

And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

[when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh]

He couldn't speak before because in mourning Egyptians didn't shave, and Joseph therefore was not presentable.

When Jacob died at the age of 147, Joseph wept and mourned for months. When someone close to us dies, we need a long period of time to work through our grief. Crying and sharing our feelings with others helps us recover and go on with life. Allow yourself and others the freedom to grieve over the loss of a loved one, and give yourself time enough to complete your grieving process.⁹

Genesis 50:5

My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, &c.—Care was taken to let it be known that the family sepulchre was provided before leaving Canaan and that an oath bound his family to convey the remains thither. Besides, Joseph deemed it right to apply for a special leave of absence; and being unfit, as a mourner, to appear in the royal presence, he made the request through the medium of others.¹⁰

⁸ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

⁹ Life Application Notes

¹⁰ JFB Commentary

Joseph had proven himself trustworthy as Pharaoh's adviser. Because of his good record, Pharaoh had little doubt that he would return to Egypt as promised after burying his father in Canaan. Privileges and freedom often result when we have demonstrated our trustworthiness. Since trust must be built gradually over time, take every opportunity to prove your reliability even in minor matters.

Genesis 50:6

And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

Genesis 50:7

And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

[servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt]
Officers or counselors of Pharaoh, elders, chariots, horsemen, and many others—a great company (Genesis 50:7,9).

Genesis 50:8

And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen.

This was Joseph's first time back in his homeland in 39 years (he had been in Egypt 22 years before Jacob moved there and Jacob had lived there 17 years). Centuries later the children of Israel would leave Egypt again, taking with them the bones of a patriarch, Joseph himself.

Genesis 50:9

And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.

Torah Class: And, so the brother's complied with their father's wish, and the entire clan, led by Joseph, and except for the smallest children, accompanied by royal charioteers and an armed guard as well, proceeded in what must have been a funeral procession fit for a king the 200 or so miles from Goshen up to the cave at Makhpelah in Canaan.

All of Egypt was, apparently, ordered to go into a period of mourning over Jacob..... a very great honor, indeed, usually accorded only to royalty.

Now, just as we were given a subtle message that Jacob's embalming had nothing to do with Egyptian religious practices, we're also given a hint that things were not calm and peaceful in Egypt at the moment. Because in verse 5, as Joseph goes to Pharaoh to ask

permission to journey to Canaan to bury his father (this would just have been a normal and respectful thing for Joseph to do), Joseph says, “.....let me go up and bury my father, THEN I WILL RETURN.” Obviously the Pharaoh was a little anxious over Joseph leading this procession of all his primary adult family members back to what was ostensibly their homeland; Pharaoh was concerned that Joseph might not return.

So, while we can certainly see that it was a funeral procession fit for a King, it was also a funeral procession filled with high Egyptian government officials and a sufficient military presence to both protect everyone in their journey but also to ensure that Joseph would return. Let me remind you of two things at this point: 1st, the current Pharaoh of Egypt was NOT an Egyptian he was a Semite. And 2nd, the 7 year famine was over. So, from that standpoint Joseph was not needed as the overseer of nation’s food supply. Rather, Joseph was Pharaoh’s right-hand man and a valued ally, of the same genetic stock as Pharaoh.¹¹

Genesis 50:10

And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

[beyond Jordan] This doesn't mean on the east of Jordan, for Hebron is south of Jerusalem and the Jordan is farther on. The phrase "beyond Jordan" must be understood from the standpoint of where the writer was at the time of writing Genesis. Here it must signify west of Jordan, for that was the true location. Thus, we must believe that Moses was on the east of Jordan when he wrote this.¹²

[with a great and very sore lamentation] Mourning among the Egyptians consisted of abstaining from customary ablutions, wines and ointment; in avoiding all luxury in eating, all comfort in garments; in covering the head with ashes; in allowing the hair of the head and beard to grow; and in lamentations twice daily, usually accompanied by paid mourners. This explains Genesis 50:10-11.

[seven days] Later, in the law, God provided for seven days of mourning and uncleanness (Numbers 19:11,19; 1 Samuel 31:13). On some occasions Hebrews mourned thirty days (Numbers 20:29; Deut. 34:8), but never longer.

they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, &c.—"Atad" may be taken as a common noun, signifying "the plain of the thorn bushes." It was on the border between Egypt and Canaan; and as the last opportunity of indulging grief was always the most violent, the Egyptians made a prolonged halt at this spot, while the family of Jacob probably proceeded by themselves to the place of sepulture.¹³

¹¹ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

¹² Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

¹³ JFB Commentary

It is unclear why the state procession approached Hebron by way of Transjordan. Perhaps vv. 12-13 do, but spoke of an interment at the otherwise unattested site of Goren ha-Atad. Whether this is the case or not, the itinerary foreshadows the route Israel takes after their miraculous escape from Egypt, when they entered Canaan from Transjordan (Num 33:1-49; Josh ch 3). As God had promised (46:4), Jacob, in short, is given his own personal exodus. The Talmud derives from this verse the institution of “shiv’ah,” the seven days of most intense mourning incumbent upon Jews who have lost close kin. Unlike the situation here, however, “shiv’ah” begins after burial.¹⁴

Genesis 50:11

And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which is beyond Jordan.

[**Abel-mizraim**] Mourning of the Egyptians.

[**threshing floor of Atad**] No exact location has been identified for this site, said to be east of the Jordan. It is strange that Jacob’s remains would be taken east through Transjordan instead of on a more direct route to Hebron. Having the seven-day mourning ceremony on a threshing floor is quite appropriate. This is a place associated with business, law and life and thus suitable as a place for memorializing a tribal leader (see Numbers 15:20; Ruth 3; 2 Samuel 24:16-24).¹⁵

Abel-mizraim. The renaming of the threshing floor of Atad provides a lasting memorial to Jacob and the remarkable seven-day mourning ceremony conducted there. The name itself contains a familiar element: *abel* means “stream” and appears in several other place names (Numbers 33:49—Abel Shittim; Judges 11:33—Abel Keramim). Here, however, there is a pun on the Hebrew word *ebel*, “mourning.”¹⁶

Genesis 50:12

And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them:

Along the way the mourning of the bereaved for seven days at a threshing floor near the Jordan River gave rise to naming the place Abel Mizraim, meaning “meadow (*’abel*) of Egyptians,” but by a wordplay it suggests “mourning (*’ebel*) of Egyptians.”¹⁷

¹⁴ The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

¹⁵ Bible Background Commentary

¹⁶ Bible Background Commentary

¹⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on Book of Genesis Commentary, Genesis Study, KHouse.org

Genesis 50:13

For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.

Abraham had purchased the cave in the field of Machpelah as a burial place for his wife, Sarah (Genesis 23:1-9). It was to be a burial place for his entire family. Jacob was Abraham's grandson, and Jacob's sons returned to Canaan to bury him in this cave along with Abraham and Isaac. Their desire to be buried in this cave expressed their faith in God's promise to give their descendants the land of Canaan.

Genesis 50:14

And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

Genesis 50:15

And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

[Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead] Joseph's brethren had surely reflected often on their past sins against him, and thought perhaps he had forgiven them only for the sake of Jacob. They feared what he might do now that Jacob was dead, so they sent a messenger asking Joseph to carry out the wishes of their father and forgive. This was unnecessary for Joseph had already proven his love to them in many ways.

[Joseph will peradventure hate us] Sinners expect this of each other but godly men are different and don't hold grudges (Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:21-35; Col. 3:13).

[requite us all the evil which we did unto him] This was allowed under law but not under grace (Matthew 5:38-48).

Genesis 50:16

And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

[command before he died] Perhaps Jacob in his foresight had seen it was best to give such a command, not because he was afraid that Joseph would do the wrong thing, but to comfort and strengthen his other sons concerning true repentance and confession.

Genesis 50:17

So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

No such words appear on the lips of Jacob himself. On the basis of this, a rabbi in the Talmud ruled that “it is permissible for a person to modify a statement in the interest of peace.” Another rabbi maintained that one was required to do so. The brothers’ lie is defensible because of the good relations it ensured – a result that Jacob, on a plain-sense reading, surely desired.¹⁸

Genesis 50:18

And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we *be* thy servants.

[fell down before his face] The last of five times they fulfilled his dreams of Genesis 37:5-11. See Genesis 42:6-9; Genesis 43:26,28; Genesis 44:14.

Genesis 50:19

And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God?

Genesis 50:20

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

Now that Jacob (or Israel) was dead, the brothers feared revenge from Joseph. Could he really have forgiven them for selling him into slavery? But to their surprise, Joseph not only forgave them but reassured them, offering to care for them and their families. Joseph’s forgiveness was complete. He demonstrated how God graciously accepts us even though we don’t deserve it. Because God forgives us even when we have ignored or rejected him, we should graciously forgive others.¹⁹

God brought good from the brothers’ evil deed, Potiphar’s wife’s false accusation, the cupbearer’s neglect, and seven years of famine. The experiences in Joseph’s life taught him that God brings good from evil for those who trust him. Do you trust God enough to wait patiently for him to bring good out of bad situations? You can trust him because, as

¹⁸ The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

¹⁹ Life Application Notes

Joseph learned, God can overrule people's evil intentions to bring about his intended results.

Genesis 50:21

Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

When Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, &c.—Joseph was deeply affected by this communication. He gave them the strongest assurances of his forgiveness and thereby gave both a beautiful trait of his own pious character, as well as appeared an eminent type of the Saviour.²⁰

From Joseph's dreams in 37:5-11, one might have suspected that the enslavement of Joseph's brothers to him would indeed occur and be, in fact, the last word in this complex and suspenseful novella. As they sold him into slavery (37:25-28), so would he (who had already enslaved the Egyptians, 47:13-26) enslave them. In fact, Joseph adheres to the ethic that forbids an Israelite to "take vengeance or bear a grudge" (Lev 19:18). His rationale rests on the idea that the malignant intentions of human beings can realize the benign intentions of god. The people Israel, ironically, survives the worldwide famine because Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery (50:19-20; cf. 30:2).²¹

Genesis 50:22

And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years

God does not want us to retaliate for wrongs done to us. Vengeance belongs to Him (Deut 32:35; Rom 12:19). The plots of his brothers, and even Potiphar's wife, turned out for good for "those who love God, who the called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28).²²

[dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.] Joseph lived in Egypt ninety-three years and his father's descendants lived there 215 years. See Chronology of Abraham's Seed, Exodus 12:40; Galatians 3:17. One hundred and ten years appears in Egyptian sources as the ideal life span (cf. 6:3; Ps 90:10).

²⁰ JFB Commentary

²¹ The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

²² Chuck Missler, Notes on Book of Genesis Commentary, Genesis Study, KHouse.org

Genesis 50:23

And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

Born upon Joseph's knees implies adoption (cf. 30:3; 48:12). Not surprisingly, therefore, in Judg. 5:14 Machir appears as a tribe of Israel.²³

The listing of the children of Ephraim before the children of Manasseh is a step in the fulfillment of Jacob's blessing. The younger son of Joseph was elevated over his older brother (see 48:8–22).²⁴

Genesis 50:24

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Last prophecy in Genesis. Third and last prophecy by Joseph. It concerns God leading Israel out of Egypt to the promised land, and his own body being taken out of Egypt. All was fulfilled in Exodus 13:19–Joshua 24:32. Joseph had the gifts of prophecy and interpretation. Others before him had the Holy Spirit, but he is the first to be spoken of as having the Spirit in him (Genesis 41:38).

Joseph was ready to die. He had no doubts that God would keep his promise and one day bring the Israelites back to their homeland. What a tremendous example! The secret of that kind of faith is a lifetime of trusting God. Your faith is like a muscle—it grows with exercise, gaining strength over time. After a lifetime of exercising trust, your faith can be as strong as Joseph's. Then at your death, you can be confident that God will fulfill all his promises to you and to all those faithful to him who may live after you.

This verse sets the stage for what would begin to happen in Exodus and come to completion in Joshua. God was going to make Jacob's family into a great nation, lead them out of Egypt, and bring them into the land he had promised them. The nation would rely heavily on this promise, and Joseph emphasized his belief that God would do what he had promised.

Ramban, Nachmanides: “and Joseph said to his bretheren, I die.” All of his brothers were still alive for they all survived him, as you see in the case of Levi. And Joseph made the children of Israel swear. Upon seeing that his brothers were old, he made their children and all his father's household swear that they too would command their children's children [to take up his bones with them] at the moment of redemption, as they all knew of the impending exile.²⁵

²³ The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

²⁴ The Nelson Study Bible

²⁵ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

Genesis 50:25

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

[Ephraim's children] Joseph was probably thirty-one when Ephraim was born.

[children also of Machir] Also the third generation of the other son, Manasseh (Numbers 26:29).

[oath] The last oath in Genesis.

[God will surely visit you] Second time stated (cp. Genesis 50:24).

[ye shall carry up my bones from hence] His body was not taken to Canaan at death as was that of Jacob. It stayed in Egypt about 144 years (Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32).

Will surely take notice / has taken notice (both are “pakod yifkod” in Heb.) came to fulfillment in Exod. 3:16, when the Lord instructs Moses to declare to the “elders of Israel” that “I have taken note” of “you and what is being done to you in Egypt.” In fact, it is none other than Moses himself who carries out Joseph’s charge. The Mishnah finds in this an illustration of the important rabbinic principle, “By the measure by which a person metes out, it shall be meted out to him.” Because “Joseph went up to bury his father (50:7), Moses, generations later (as reported in Exod. 13:19)) “took with him the bones of Joseph”. Ultimately those bones were buried in Shechem (Josh 24:32), the very city to which Jacob had sent Joseph, then a brash teenager, at the beginning of this astonishing tale of discord and reconciliation in the family that bears God’s promise (37:13).²⁶

an oath: Joseph had buried his father Jacob in Canaan (50:7–14). Now he had the Israelites swear that they would take his bones to the Promised Land when the entire nation of Israel returned to Canaan. In this oath Joseph expressed his complete belief that God would keep His promise to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites (Heb. 11:22). Hundreds of years later, Moses would keep the Israelites’ oath by taking Joseph’s bones with the people into the wilderness (Ex. 13:19). Finally, Joshua would bury the bones of Joseph at Shechem after the conquest of Canaan (Josh. 24:32).²⁷

²⁶ The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

²⁷ The Nelson Study Bible

Genesis 50:26

So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Joseph died at 110 and, like Jacob, was embalmed. (Abraham lived to be 175; Isaac, 180; and Jacob, 147 .) The Book of Genesis closes with the promise of the land yet unfulfilled but with the expectation of a visitation from on high. The words of Joseph, *given twice*, amazingly summarize the hope expressed throughout the Old Testament as well as the New: *God will surely come to your aid* . The Book opens with “In the Beginning God...” It closes “...in a coffin in Egypt.” Man’s failure brought a curse. God’s Plan of redemption will be presented through a nation that will be born in the caldron of Egypt...²⁸

[hundred and ten years old] Sixty-five years younger than Abraham (Genesis 25:7); seventy years younger than Isaac (Genesis 35:28); thirty-seven years younger than Jacob (Genesis 47:28); seventeen years younger than Sarah (Genesis 23:1); twenty-seven years younger than Ishmael (Genesis 25:17); and ten years younger than Moses (Deut. 31:2) at death.

[embalmed him] Second mummy of Scripture (Genesis 50:3-4).

[coffin] First and last mention of a coffin in the Bible. Coffins were not in use among the Jews as in Egypt (2 Kings 13:21; Matthew 27:59-60; John 11). Genesis begins with God and ends with man; it begins with creation of the heavens above and ends with a coffin in Egypt. The *coffin* may be also referred to as a mummy case.

Joseph’s age. Joseph dies at the age of 110, considered the ideal age for an Egyptian. Examination of mummies has demonstrated that the average life expectancy in Egypt was between forty and fifty years. The use of the coffin or sarcophagus in mummification was an Egyptian, not an Israelite, practice.²⁹

The book of Genesis gives us rich descriptions of the lives of many great men and women who walked with God. They sometimes succeeded and often failed. Yet we learn much by reading the biographies of these people. Where did they get their motivation and courage? They got it by realizing God was with them despite their inadequacies. Knowing this should encourage us to be faithful to God, to rely on him for guidance, and to utilize the potential he has given us.³⁰

Torah Class: Now, it is interesting that this chapter not only end the saga of Jacob’s life but of Joseph’s as well. And, so, it was necessary to tidy up matters with Joseph’s brothers. After the burial ceremony in Canaan, we’re told all returned to Egypt. But, on the way back, the brothers realized that in the chance that their powerful brother Joseph

²⁸ Chuck Missler, Notes on Book of Genesis Commentary, Genesis Study, KHouse.org

²⁹ Bible Background Commentary

³⁰ Life Application Notes

still held a grudge against them for their offenses against him in the past, their father was no longer a hedge of protection against any revenge. Obviously, they STILL didn't understand the condition of Joseph's heart.

When they confronted Joseph with their worries, he gently and mercifully assured them that he not only had no intentions of doing anything but caring for them, that in fact they were but instruments in the hand of God as was he. Wow. I pray that God will make me like Joseph, that I can fully understand that the offenses committed by others upon me could ONLY happen if God allowed them. How often I have looked back upon the trials and sins of my own life, and realized that the blessed place God has led me to could NOT have happened any other way than the way it did. Now, if I can just feel that way for the unresolved things..... things that still hurt, things that I still can't make any sense of, that only God knows why it was necessary.

What a blessed life were Joseph's remaining days; he lived to see his own sons grow and mature, to see his grandchildren born and mature, and to see his great-grandchildren born. When the Bible says that a child was born on someone's knees, as it does here, it simply means that those children were considered that person's own: sometimes symbolically, other times it was literal. In this case, it just meant that Joseph was still the leader of his clan, and those children fell under his familial authority.

Fifty-four years after his father died, Joseph expired at the age of 110 years. It would be good to understand that despite the fact that Joseph had been so well treated and highly thought of in Egypt, he made it clear that Egypt was still just a foreign land to him. So, he made his family promise that when that day came that Israel would finally leave Egypt for the Promised Land, they would take his bones with them. Joseph was then embalmed as per Egyptian custom, and his body placed in a coffin, to await that day he, too, could join his ancestors in the land that God had promised to the Hebrews.

BTW: several scholars have noted that it is likely to impossible that it was actually Joseph's brothers who heard him say "I am about to die.....you shall carry my bones from here..." Joseph was the 2nd youngest of the 12, and died as a very old man. It is unimaginable that his older brothers all survived him. Rather, we find the use of the Hebrew for brother, ach, which can mean anything from an actual sibling, to a fellow countryman. But, as often as not, it was term directed at a close male family member. Almost for certain at least some of those who were present for Joseph's command to take his bones back to Canaan were grandchildren and Nephews.

One final thing: numbers used in the Bible have much significance. Often they are NOT literal, but symbolic. Particularly when we see round numbers.....like here with Joseph's death at 110.....we need to be aware that it is likely that this is a symbolic number. That said, I also have no doubt that many round numbers were simultaneously literal AND symbolic. So, it's not to say that Joseph didn't die very old, I'm sure he did.

The mention of his living to see his great grandchildren born indicates this. But, in Egypt, the traditional number of a full life span was 110 years. For Hebrews, the traditional number was 120 years. In other words, if a person attained that many years, or more, then they had lived a long life, blessed by the gods. Of course, few people actually did.

And, thus ends our study of the Book of Beginnings.....the book of Genesis.³¹

³¹ Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

Spiritual Decline in the Patriarchal Age			
First Generation	Second Generation	Third Generation	Fourth Generation
Abraham	Ishmael and Isaac	Esau and Jacob	Joseph and his eleven brothers
Abraham: man of faith believed God	Ishmael: not son of promise Isaac: Called on God believed God	Esau: unspiritual little faith Jacob: at first compromised, later turned to the Lord	Joseph: man of God showed faith Brothers: treachery, immorality, lack of separation from Canaanites
Abraham: built altars to God (Gen 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9)	Isaac: built an altar to God (Gen 26:25)	Jacob: built altars to God (Gen 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7)	No altars were built to God in the fourth generation

Edersheim History: And now, having spoken these his last blessings, Jacob once more charged his sons to bury him in the cave of Machpelah. Then he gathered up his feet into the bed, laid him peacefully down, and without sigh or struggle yielded up the ghost, and was "gathered unto his people."

Such was the end of Jacob - the most pilgrim-like of the pilgrim fathers. His last wishes were obeyed to the letter. The first natural outburst of grief on the part of Joseph past, he "commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father" - either to do the work themselves or to superintend it. Forty days the process lasted,* and seventy days, as was their wont, the Egyptians mourned.

* Everything here is truly Egyptian: the number of physicians in Joseph's service, since in Egypt every physician treated only one special kind of disease; the mourning, which always lasted seventy days; and the process of embalming, which took from forty to seventy days. There were two modes of embalming, besides that for the poor - the most elaborate costing about two hundred and fifty pounds, and a simpler one about eighty-one pounds. The brain was first taken out through the nostrils; then an incision made in the left side, and all the intestines extracted, except the kidneys and the heart. The body was next filled with various spices - except frankincense, - sewed up, and steeped in natrum, which is found in the natrum lakes of Egypt, and consists of carbonate, sulphate, and muriate of soda. We here purposely omit a great number of particulars, such as the use of palm-wine in washing the internal parts, the occasional staining of the nails, the elaborate wrapping of the body in byssus, and other varying details. It is remarkable how well all parts of the body, and even the features, were preserved by this process. The body was

laid either in an oblong case, or more frequently in one that had the shape of the mummy itself. Our description applies chiefly to the costliest mode of embalming.

At the end of that period Joseph, as in duty bound, applied to Pharaoh, though not personally, since he could not appear before the king in the garb of mourning, craving permission for himself and his retinue to go up and bury his father in the land of Canaan. The funeral procession included, besides Joseph and "all his house," "his brethren, and his father's house," also "all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt," - that is, the principal state and court officials, under a guard of both "chariots and horsemen." So influential and "very great a company" would naturally avoid, for fear of any collisions, the territory of the Philistines, through which the direct road from Egypt lay. They took the circuitous route through the desert and around the Dead Sea - significantly, the same which Israel afterwards followed on their return from Egypt - and halted on the Eastern bank of Jordan, at Goren-ha-Atad, "the buckthorn threshing-floor," or perhaps "the threshing-floor of Atad." The account of the funeral, as that of the embalming, and indeed every other allusion, is strictly in accordance with what we learn from Egyptian monuments and history. The custom of funeral processions existed in every province of Egypt, and representations of such are seen in the oldest tombs. As a German scholar remarks: "When we look at the representations upon the monuments, we can almost imagine that we actually see the funeral train of Jacob." At Goren-ha-Atad other mourning rites were performed during seven days. The attention of the inhabitants of the district was naturally attracted to this "grievous mourning of the Egyptians," and the locality henceforth bore the name of Abel Mizraim, literally "meadow of the Egyptians," but, by slightly altering the pronunciation: "mourning of the Egyptians." Here the Egyptians remained behind, and none but the sons and the household of Jacob stood around his grave at Machpelah.

On their return to Egypt an unworthy suspicion seems to have crossed the minds of Joseph's brethren. What if, now that their father was dead, Joseph were to avenge the wrong he had sustained at their hands? But they little knew his heart, or appreciated his motives. The bare idea of their cherishing such thoughts moved Joseph to tears. Even if bitter feelings had been in his heart, was he "in the place of God" to interfere with His guidance of things? Had it not clearly appeared that, whatever evil they might have thought to do him, "God meant it unto good?" With such declarations, and the assurance that he would lovingly care for them and their little ones, he appeased their fears. Other fifty-four years did Joseph live in Egypt. He had the joy of seeing his father's blessing commence to be fulfilled. Ephraim's children of the third generation, and Manasseh's grandchildren "were brought up upon his knees." At the good old age of one hundred and ten years, as he felt death approaching, he gathered "his brethren" about him. Joseph was full of honors in Egypt; he had founded a family, than which none was more highly placed. Yet his last act was to disown Egypt, and to choose the lot of Israel - poverty, contempt, and pilgrimage: to renounce the present, in order to cleave unto the future. It was a noble act of faith, true like that of his fathers! His last words were these: "I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." And his last deed was to take a solemn oath of the children of Israel, to carry up his bones with them into the land of promise. In obedience to his wishes they embalmed his body, and laid it in one of those Egyptian coffins, generally made of sycamore wood, which resembled the shape of the human

body. And there, through ages of suffering and bondage, stood the figure-like coffin of Joseph, ready to be lifted and carried thence when the sure hour of deliverance had come. Thus Joseph, being dead, yet spake to Israel, telling them that they were only temporary sojourners in Egypt, that their eyes must be turned away from Egypt unto the land of promise, and that in patience of faith they must wait for that hour when God would certainly and graciously fulfill His own promise.

When at the close of this first period of the Covenant-history we look around, we feel as if now indeed "the horror of great darkness" were fast falling upon Israel, which Abraham had experienced as he was shown the future of his descendants. (Genesis 15:12) Already personal intercourse between heaven and earth had ceased. From the time that Jacob had paid his vow in Bethel (Genesis 35:15), no personal manifestation of God, such as had often gladdened his fathers and him, was any more vouchsafed, except on his entrance into Egypt (Genesis 46:2-4), and then for a special purpose. Nor do we read of any such during the whole eventful and trying life of Joseph. And now long centuries of utter silence were to follow. During all that weary period, with the misery of their bondage and the temptation of idolatry around constantly increasing, there was neither voice from heaven nor visible manifestation to warn or to cheer the children of Israel in Egypt. One mode of guidance was for a time withdrawn. Israel had now only the past to sustain and direct them. But that past, in its history and with its promises, was sufficient. Besides, the torch of prophecy, which the hands of dying Jacob had held, cast its light into the otherwise dark future. Nay, the fact that Joseph's life, which formed the great turning-point in Israel history, had been allowed to pass without visible Divine manifestations to him and to them was in itself significant. For even as his unburied body seemed to preach and to prophesy, so his whole life would appear like a yet unopened or only partially opened book, - a grand unread prophecy, which the future would unfold. And not merely the immediate future, as it concerned Israel; but the more distant future as it concerns the whole Church of God. For, although not the person of Joseph*, yet the leading events of his life are typical of the great facts connected with the life and the work of Him who was betrayed and sold by His brethren, but whom "God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior."

* It deserves notice that the person of Joseph is not mentioned in the Old or the New Testament as a type of Christ. This, of course, does not apply to the facts of his life in their bearing on the future, as these were unquestionably typical. ³²

³² Bible History, Old Testament, Eidermein

JOSEPH AS A TYPE OF CHRIST

(After A.W. Pink; see bibliography)

Genesis	Type	Fulfillment
1) 30:24 41:45	Meaning of his name: Joseph (“adding”) Zaphnathpaaneah (“Revealer of Secrets”) [Heart of God, Jn 1:18; Heart of brethren)	Jn 12:24; 14:3 Lk 2:34, 35
2) 37:2	Occupation: Shepherd (Abel, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David...)	Ps 23
3) 37:2	Opposition to evil	Jn 7:7
4) 37:3	His father’s love (Solomon: Prov 8:22,30) Son: Name:	Mt. 3:17 Mt 17:5 Jn 10:17 Phil 2:9; Rev 3:21
5) 37:3	Relation to his father’s age Jesus: Son of Father’s Eternity	Jn 17:5 Col 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16 Mic 5:2
6) 37:3	Coat of many colors (distinction) Long robe with sleeves	Judg 5:30 2 Sam 13:18
7) 37:4	Hatred of his brethren Because of Who He Was	Jn 1:11 Jn 5:18; 6:41;10:30,31;1 Cor 16:22; Ps 2:12
8) 37:4,5,8	Hated because of his words	Jn 7:7;Jn 8:40
9) 37:11	Prophetic future	Isa 9:6,7; Lk1:31-33
10) 37:7, 9	Future sovereignty foretold Earthly & Heavenly	Mt 26:64 Rev 12:1, 5; 2 Pet 3:4
11) 37:4, 11	Envied by his brethren	Mt 27:17, 18; Mk 12:6, 7; Jn 12:18, 19; Acts 7:9
12) 37:13	Sent forth by his father	1 Jn 4:10; Heb 10:7
13) 37:14	Seeks welfare of his brethren Definite object of mission	Jn 1:11 Mt 15:24; Jn 3:17; Rom 15:8
14) 37:14	Sent forth from the vale of Hebron Servant; fellowship, communion	Phil 2:6, 7
15) 37:14	Came to Shechem Shoulder, saddleback (divide waters: Jordan and Mediterranean) Place of sin (34:25-30)	Gal 4:4
16) 37:15-16	Became a wanderer in the field (No place to lay his head)	Mt 13:38 Jn 7:53; 8:1
17) 37:17	Seeks until he finds his brethren (in Dothan = law, custom)	Mk 9:8
18) 37:18	Conspired against	Mt 12:14
19) 37:19-20	Words disbelieved	Mt 27:39-43; Jn 3:18, 36
20) 37:23	Insulted; stripped	Mt 27:27,28;Jn 19:23
21) 37:24	Cast into a pit (no water)	Zech 9:11; Mt 12:40
22) 37:28	Bodily lifted up out of the pit	I Cor 15
23) 37:25-27	Hypocrisy mingled with hatred (Brothers heard cries: 42:21)	Mt 27:35, 36 Jn 18:28

24)	37:28	Sold (Judah negotiates bargain) (Judas = Anglicized Greek equivalent)	Zech 11:12, 13 Mt 26:14-16
25)	37:31-32	Blood presented to father Sin offering. Cf. Deception of Isaac Chapter 38: In Canaan. Chapter 39: In Egypt. Cf. Hos 11:1;	Heb 9:12, 23 Mt 2:15
26)	39:1	Becomes a servant Bondservant (Ex 21:5,6)	Phil 2:6, 7 Ps 40 (ears digged)
27)	39:2, 3	Prosper as a servant	Ps 1:3; Isa 53:10; 52:13
28)	39:4	Master was well pleased with him	Jn 8:29
29)	39:5	Made a blessing for others	
30)	39:6	A goodly person, well favored	Mt 27:54
31)	39:7-12	Sorely tempted, yet sinned not In Egypt (world).	Lk 4 2 Tim 2:22 Ps 105:19
32)	39:16-19	Falsely accused	Mt 16:59, 60
33)	39:19	No defense presented	Isa 53:7
34)	39:20	Cast into prison, without verdict	Jn 18:38
35)		Suffers though innocent	Acts 7:9,10; Ps 105:17,18; Isa 53:7-9
36)	39:20	Suffers at the hands of Gentiles	Acts 4:26, 27
37)	39:21	Won respect of his jailor Potiphar = Captain of the guard	Lk 23:47
38)	40:1-3	Numbered with the transgressors (Two)	Isa 53:12
39)	40:13, 19	Means of blessing to one; judgment to the other 3 days; hung on tree as cursed	Gen 49:10-12 Gal 3:13
40)	40:8	Knowledge of future from God Every believer obligated to set forth the truth he has	Jn 12:49 1 Jn 1:3 1 Pet 4:11
41)	40:20-22	Predictions came true	Mt 5:18
42)	40:14	Desired to be remembered This do in remembrance of me.	Lk 22:19
43)	41:14 :20	Delivered from prison, in due time Pharaoh's birthday; 3rd day	Jn 20:6, 7 Acts 2:24 2 Cor 1:9
44)	45:7-9	Delivered by the hand of God 2 years later: patience	Acts 2:24, 32 Acts 10:40
45)	45:16, 25 45:28	Seen as a Revealer of Secrets [Whole counsel of God, Acts 20:27]	Jn 12:49 Jn 8:28; Isa 46:10; Amos, John 17:8; Rev 1:1
46)	41:25-36 :32	Warnings of Danger: urged provisions Doubling: Verily, Verily; Amen, Amen	Mt 24 & 25 Gal 1:8,9
47)	41:33-36	Wonderful Counselor	Col 2:3

- “Discrete”: only here in OT
- 48) 41:37-39 Counsel commended to officers Mt 7:28, 29; 13:54
Jn 7:46
- 49) 41:39, 40 Exalted and set over all Egypt 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 5, 20
- 50) 41:40-43 Seated on the throne of another Rev 3:21
[Distinction between Father & Son’s thrones]
- 51) 41:38 Exalted because of personal worthiness Phil 2:6-9
- 52) 41:42 Invested in positional insignia Acts 5:31; Heb 2:9; Rev 1:13
- 53) 41:43 Authority and glory publicly owned Acts 2:36; Phil 2:10
- 54) 41:45 Received a new name Phil 2:9, 10; Mt 1:21;
Rev 3:12
- 55) 41:45 Has a wife (Gentile) given to him Rev 19:7, 8
Tamar - Canaanite; Rahab - Amorite
Ruth - Moabite; Bathsheba- Hittite
- 56) 41:45 Marriage arranged by Pharaoh Mt 22:2
(Cf. Jer 3:14,20; Ezek 16:3, 31,32; Jer 2:3) Jer 31:31-34
Two sons: “forgetting” N. Kingdom, past Ezek 16:62, 63
“fruitful” S. Kingdom, future Hos 2:19-23; Isa 54:5-8
- 57) 41:46 Thirty years old when began work Lk 3:23
- 58) 41:46 Went forth from Pharaoh’s presence Lk 3:22
- 59) 41:46 Service was active and itinerant Mt 4:23; 9:35
- 60) 41:47-49 Exaltation followed by season of plenty 2 Cor 6:2; Jn 12:24
- 61) 41:53 Exaltation followed by season of famine Rom 11:25
[7 years: Jacob’s Trouble: Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1;
Mk 13:19,20; Isa 55:6; Jer 8:20; Amos 8:11,12;
Isa 55:6; Jer 8:20; Rev 3:10]
- 62) 41:55 Dispensing to a perishing world Jn 14:6; Rom 11:11
- 63) 41:55 Alone dispenses the Bread of Life Acts 4:12;
Jn 6:26-59; 14:6
- 64) 41:57 A Savior to all peoples Jn 3:16
[Every tribe...] Rev 5:9
- 65) 41:49 Unlimited resources to meet the need Eph 1:7; 2:7; 3:8
Col 2:9; Rom 10:12
- Dispensationally Considered:**
- 66) 42:1-3, 5 Brethren driven out of own land Gen 15:13;
Deut 28:63-68
- 67) 42:6, 8 Unknown & unrecognized by brethren Jn 1:11
[20 years later] Rom 11:25
- 68) 42:7 Brethren seen & recognized Jer 16:17; Hos 5:3
Ps 103:14
- 69) 42:7, 17 Brethren punished Hos 9:17
[v13: thought dead, but still in family] Mt 23:38
[Simeon ringleader?] Gen 49:15] Mt 23:35,36
- 70) 42:17-19 Made known to them a way of deliverance Acts 2:21-41;
42:24 through substitution
- 71) 42:25 Made provision for his brethren while they Jer 30:11;

	were in a strange land	Ezek 11:16
72) 45:1	Made known to his brethren at the 2nd time [Always at 2nd time:]	Acts 7:13; Isa 65:1
	Moses	Ex 2:11,12/Ex 2:14 Lk 19:14
	Joshua	Num 13/Deut 34:9
	David	1 Sam 17:17-18/1 Sam 17:28
73) 44:16	Brethren confess in the sight of God [Israel to repent before He returns]	Ezek 20:42,43 Hos 5:15 Acts 3:19, 20
74) 45:3	Brethren initially troubled in his presence	Zech 12:10
75) 45:4, 5	Demonstrated marvelous grace	Zech 13:1; 45:15; Isa 54:7, 8
76) 45:1-2	Revealed as a man of compassion Wept seven times:	Jn 11:35
	When brethren confessed	42:24
	When he beheld Benjamin	43:30
	When he made himself known	45:1,2
	When brethren reconciled	45:15
	Over his father, Jacob	46:29
	At the death of his father	50:1
	When his love was questioned	50:15-17
77) 45:1	Revealed to Judah & brethren before rest of Jacob's household	Zech 12:7
78) 45:18	Jacob then sent for	Isa 66:20
79) 45:9, 13	Brethren go forth to proclaim his glory	Isa 66:19; Mic 5:7
80) 46:29	Goes forth in his chariot to meet Jacob	Isa 66:15
81) 47:27	Settles brethren in land of their own	
47:6	(The best land)	Ezek 48
82) 50:18-19	Brethren prostrate themselves before him as a representative of God	Isa 9:6,7; 25:9 Phil 2:10,11
Evangelically Considered:		
83) 42:5	Brethren dwelt in a land of famine...	Jn 6:33, 35
42:2	That we may live and not die...	
84) 42:3	Brethren wished to pay for what they rec'd.	Gal 2:16
85) 42:7-11	Brethren assume a self-righteous attitude before the lord of Egypt	Gal 2:20, 21
86) 42:17	Cast into prison 3 days	Isa 42:6, 7; 61:1; Ps 142:7
87) 42:21	Smitten of conscience (Cf. Ex 9:27, Ezra 9:6; Ps 40:12, Dan 5:6)	Jn 8:9
88) 42:25	Makes known that deliverance is by grace	Eph 2:8, 9
89) 42:26	Enjoys a brief respite	
90) 42:27-28	Superficial peace disturbed (Replenished: 43:1, 2)	Heb 12:6-11
91) 43:11,15	Brethren continue to manifest legal spirit (Doubled the money)	Gal 3:3 Lk 14:17
92) 43:16	Brethren dine with him and make merry	43:33, 34 Mt 13:20, 21

93)	44:1, 2	Joseph to bring brethren into the light	Jn 1:4,7-9; 2Pet 3:9
94)	44:4, 16	Brethren take their true place before God	1 Jn 1:7-9
95)	45:1	Makes himself known (alone)	1 Cor 13:12
96)	45:4, 7	Invites brethren to come near to him	Mt 11:28-30
97)	45:10, 11	Brethren told of full provision for them	Phil 4:19
98)	45:15	Gives proof he is fully reconciled to them	Rom 8:31-39
99)	45:16	Joy shared by others	Rev 5:9-13
100)	45:9-13	Brethren now go forth seeking others (“Haste” twice)	Acts 1:8
101)	45:24	Admonition as they go forth	2 Tim 2:24 ³³

³³ Gleanings on Genesis, Arthur Pink