

## A Saint Dies with Honor (Genesis Conclusion)

August 27, 2017

(Scripture Reading: Genesis 50:15-21)

### Introduction:

There is an important Scripture verse in the Bible, and we must all memorize it, ponder over it always!

Hebrew 9:27 .....it is appointed for men (people) to die once and after this comes judgment.

But for the believers, there is a special step of preservation of saints before judgment and this is mentioned in the following verse of that same Hebrew passage!

Hebrew 9:28 “so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (Hebrews 9:28 NASB)

First time when Jesus Christ, our Lord came, He came to die on our behalf for our sins, but the second time, when He comes, He is bringing salvation to only those who eagerly await Him and judgment to those who willfully reject Him! Those whose names are written in the book of life will be given the salvation, and those whose names are not found will be punished.

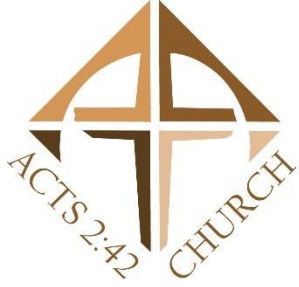
The point we must remember is that we must all die, and then come before judgment. But there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, and for those who eagerly await Him.

It is true that we must all die one day, but how we die is the biggest question mark! Those who are in Christ, commit their spirit unto Christ. But those who reject God in Christ, die in panic, sorrow, and confusion. For them, their life ends up in condemnation. But for Christians, it is the beginning of a new eternal life in Christ! To be absent from the body is to be present in the Lord. When the soul of a saint is released from the body of death, it goes straight to the bosom of Christ Himself! You will understand it clearly in this story.

### I. The death of Jacob!

Here in this story today, both Jacob and Joseph demonstrate such conquering faith over death! Jacob was ready to die. Yet he pulled his strength one last time, sat up, and blessed all his twelve children. Scripture says in Genesis 49

Gen. 49: 29, 33. Then he charged them and said to them, "I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,



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I am about to be gathered to my people!! There are clearly two different metaphors here. One is Jacob to join his people, the living people. And not the dead. Our God is God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He is the God of living, and not the dead, and Jacob is ready to join them. The Same story is with those who are in Christ! When we are in Christ, and when we die we will be gathered with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Paul, Peter, John, and of course our loved ones, who are already above. In other words, our souls will be gathered with other saints.

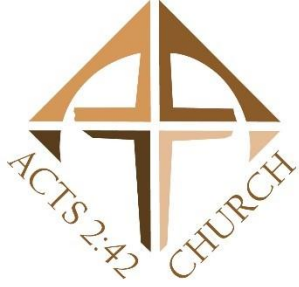
And then Jacob gives instruction clearly what they should do with his dead body. They must bury his body besides his parents, and grandparents.

**Gen. 49:33** When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

After giving all the instructions, he went back to lie down. Bible uses a picturesque language: he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last. What a great life! He was in control of his children till the last breath. He had the energy to sit and talk and give instructions till the last breath. That is a rarity! Most dying people will not be conscious. Even if they are conscious, they will not be able to talk. But here Jacob was fully conscious of his last breath! He not only breathed his last but the Scripture says that he was gathered to his people! Let me repeat again clearly. Jacob breathed his last breath, died, but he was gathered to his people! Instantaneous union with God's saints! What a joyful news! We as Christians, must enjoy every day of our life and rejoice in the Lord, and we must also rejoice when we are about to die because we will be gathered with God's people instantaneously! You are going to see all your favorite saints in heaven the minute you die! What a joy to be with God's saints! We ought to celebrate life with a lot of excitement, in this life as well as next life!

Jacob was to be gathered to his people! Jacob was confident of joining his dead relatives alive. He demonstrated a strong faith that there is life beyond death! To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord! What a glorious life! God's grace was upon Jacob, while he lived, and even in his death. That is what we should be aiming for! Do not shed many tears when a saint dies. We must actually rejoice when they die, because they are gone to be with the Lord, and they are gathered with God's saints! What a great joy is it!

**Gen. 50:1-3.** 1Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him and kissed him. 2Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. 3Now forty days were required for it, for such is the period required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days.



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Joseph loved his father so much! He wept over him, and kissed him. Then the Egyptians embalmed Jacob for forty days, and they wept for him seventy days!

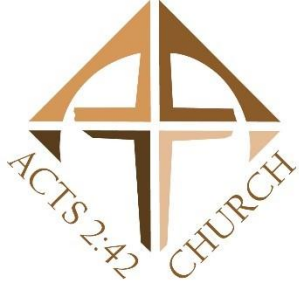
Joseph then asked the permission of Pharaoh to bury his father. The Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear."

II. Royal funeral procession!

Gen. 59:7-11. "7So Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household and all the elders of the land of Egypt, 8and all the household of Joseph and his brothers and his father's household; they left only their little ones and their flocks and their herds in the land of Goshen. 9There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. 10When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he observed seven days mourning for his father. 11Now when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians." Therefore it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.

The elaborate funeral procession took place from Egypt to Canaan. Scripture says that it was a very great company of people. Pharaoh did not go but all his top officials and elders went along with Joseph and his family members!

A detailed and highly interesting account of the funeral procession of an Egyptian grandee, enabling us to picture to the mind's eye the scene of Jacob's burial, is found in Wilkinson's 'Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians,' vol. 3. p. 444, ed. 1878. First servants led the way, carrying tables laden with fruit, cakes, flowers, vases of ointment, wine, and other liquids, with three young geese and a calf for sacrifice, chairs and wooden tablets, napkins, and other things. Then others followed bearing daggers, bows, fans, and the mummy cases in which the deceased and his ancestors had been kept previous to burial. Next came a table of offerings, fauteuils, couches, boxes, and a chariot. After these men appeared with gold vases and more offerings. To these succeeded the bearers of a sacred boat and the mysterious eye of Osiris, as the god of stability. Placed in the consecrated boat, the hearse containing the mummy of the deceased was drawn by four oxen and by seven men, under the direction of a superintendent who regulated the march of the funeral. Behind the hearse followed the male relations and friends of the deceased, who either beat their



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breasts or gave a token of their sorrow by their silence and solemn step as they walked, leaning on their long sticks; and with these, the procession closed.

The Egyptians were exceedingly demonstrative and vehement in their public lamentations for the dead, rending their garments, smiting on their breasts, throwing dust and mud on their heads, calling on the deceased by name, and chanting funeral dirges to the music of a tambourine with the tinkling plates removed (Wilkinson's 'Ancient Egyptians,' vol. 3. p. 440, ed. 1878).

When they came to the burial place, they lamented again for seven more days! Their lamentation was so great, the local Canaanites were stunned to see this event unfolding right in front of their eyes! Just imagine, suddenly a bunch of foreigners come inside their land with a bunch of chariots and horses as though they are ready to take over the land, but instead of fighting, they are all crying loud like little babies! Just imagine those professional Egyptian mourners crying without any deep feelings for the person who died. It must have been a somber scene as well as a comical scene! This is the kind of time, if you were in that place, you would not know whether to cry or to laugh!! They said, "This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians. Therefore it was called Abel-Mizraim.

Abel-mizraim.—There is a Word play in this Word. The word for "mourning" is êbel, while abel means a meadow, and is often found prefixed to the names of towns. When the Versions were made no vowel points were as yet affixed to the Hebrew consonants, and they all read Ebel-mizraim, the mourning of Egypt. The Hebrew text alone, as at present pointed, has Abel-mizraim, the meadow of Egypt.

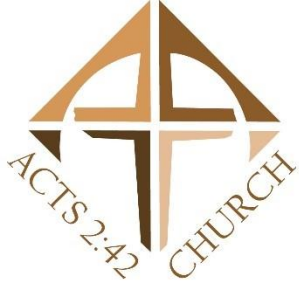
What an honor for Jacob! When a righteous person dies, the whole heavens and earth actually rejoices over his faithful life!

**Isaiah 55:12.** "For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands. (Isaiah 55:12 NASB)

III. The forgiveness!

**Gen. 50:14** 14After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

When Joseph and his brothers returned back to Egypt, the brothers were overwhelmed with fear! Suddenly they realized that their security blanket or their shield (that is their father) was gone. Now Joseph could do anything he wanted to!



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Gen. 50:15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!" 16So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father charged before he died, saying, 17'Thus you shall say to Joseph, "Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father."

The brothers at first did not have the courage to come and talk to Joseph straight about their concern. They sent a messenger first. They also used their father's name. They told Joseph that their father told them in this manner, "Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong." We are not sure if they lied to Joseph or Jacob did indeed say these words. Why did Jacob not tell Joseph straight? The guilt of old sins can drive everyone crazy. Even though Joseph forgave them and totally accepted them and taken them into his own arms, yet the brothers were suspicious!

And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. 18Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." 19But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? 20"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. 21"So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

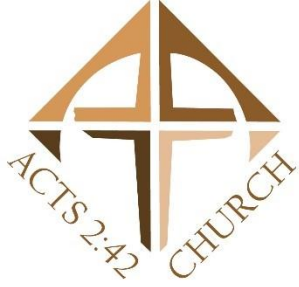
Joseph wept! He must have wept because of their lack of trust! Also, he must have wept because it must have brought the old ill feeling of what they did to him. Now the brothers came and fell at his feet and said that they are his servants!

Joseph replied so gracefully.

First of all, he said, don't be afraid? Am I in God's place? In other words, God is the one to judge you. God is the one to take revenge on people. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord! I will repay!

Then Joseph said, you meant evil for me but God turned it out good in his favor! Why? In order to save many people as well as his own family. Also in order to bring the family to Egypt so that God's sovereign plan may be accomplished in future.

Again he emphasized, don't be afraid. I'll watch over you. I'll provide for you, I'll take care of you!



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Joseph did not get angry over his past. He spoke kindly and comforted them! Can we be like that to those who did evil against us?

**Gen. 50:22, 23.** Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. 23Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees.

There were about 12 chapters to talk about first 54 years of Joseph's life. But after that, there are only 5 lines to describe rest of Joseph's life! Probably he accomplished everything that he needed to accomplish, and the rest of his life, he was just cruising on his success. Another Amazing fact! Joseph lived only for 110 years! His life span reduced compared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That is almost like our life span.

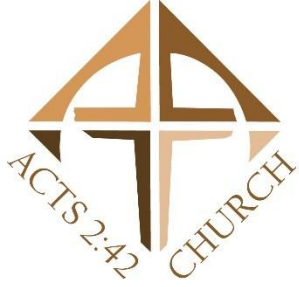
But Joseph was faithful to God all the days of his life, he was fruitful also. He was enjoying his children, and children's children, and great grandchildren!

**Gen. 50: 24-26.** 24Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." 25Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here." 26So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Joseph knew about the promises of God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He held on to those promises and lived by faith every day. He knew about the Promised Land. He knew about the promised seed through Jacob, and that promised seed is Christ, the Messiah! He must have known about the prophecy that was given to Abraham about his descendants becoming slaves and be oppressed in Egypt for four hundred years, and then they will return to their promised land.

By faith, Joseph told his brothers to take his bones to the land of Canaan when they return (after four hundred years!). That is some kind of faith! Such faith can come only when we completely believe in the Word of God. Joseph was in Egypt. He was next to Pharaoh. If Joseph did not take control of his own bones, Pharaoh would have taken his body and raised a huge pyramid over Joseph's body! But Joseph did not allow it! Hebrew author says it very eloquently.

**Hebrew 11:22.** By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones. (Hebrews 11:22 NASB)



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There is something about a dying man's wish and the ones who live must strive hard to carry out such wishes. But it must be reasonable wishes, and it should not be insulting or humiliating wishes to other people. Let us not write vindictive wills. Nowadays we can see so many insulting tomb stones about their spouses! We should not carry out such wishes.

Joseph did not ask anything from his brothers. All he asked was a very reasonable request: carry my bones to the Promised Land. Joseph's life was an immense blessing to others, and at the same time, he was not a burden to anyone. Do not lean on others heavily. Try to carry your burden as much as possible.

Jacob's life was filled with deception, lies, and scheming! But yet God was gracious toward him and blessed him abundantly. On the other hand, Joseph almost lived a flawless life! He was favored in the eyes of God, he was also favored in the eyes of men! What a dynamic person to ever live on the face of this earth! Joseph moved forward in spite of all the adversity in his life. He was a forgiving person! Joseph was a humble person. He was Christ like in many ways. Can we be like him?

Praise God! We have completed our journey through the book of Genesis!

Genesis is a very complicated book! Over 4000 years of history there. But if you go to Genesis 1, we may see many more (millions) years of history. The most important part of Genesis is the story of Abraham! Through him, the promised seed of Christ the savior came through. We enjoy the glorious gospel story because of Abraham's seed! Genesis teaches us a lot about having a strong faith in God's Word, and His promises. Let us continue to walk the path of Abraham!

You can see the outline here, what we went through!

- The beginnings of all mankind (Genesis 1:1-11:32)
- The beginnings of the world (Genesis 1-2)
- The beginnings of sin, death, and judgment (Genesis 3-9:17)
- The beginnings of the nations (Genesis 9:18-11)
- The beginnings of Israel (Genesis 12-50)
- Abraham (Genesis 12-25:18)



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- Isaac (Genesis 25:19-26:35)
- Jacob/Israel (Genesis 27-36)
- Joseph (Genesis 37-50)

I am excited about next week. I will be starting Exodus. Let us look carefully into the law of God, and what it means to us!

*Pastor Daniel Israel*