

STUDY NUMBER TWELVE - Genesis 50:1-26

INTRODUCTION:

We have been studying together the life of one of the Scripture's greatest men. After several years of delay, Rachel finally gives birth to Joseph; and because he is the firstborn of Rachel, he is much-loved by his father Jacob. Because of this special relationship with his father, the other brothers have a great deal of hatred and bitterness in their hearts toward him.

It is because of this hatred that they hit upon a plan of selling him into the land of Egypt.

Over and over again we see God's providential hand upon all of the circumstances that touch Joseph. For first of all, he is sold into the house of Potiphar, who is the captain of Pharaoh's guard. Because Potiphar discerns that Joseph is someone who can be trusted, and because the results of his work are prosperity and blessing, Potiphar turns everything in his household over to Joseph.

Joseph is tempted by Potiphar's wife to have an affair, but he resists this temptation by saying he "could not sin and do this great wickedness against God." However, Potiphar's wife lies about the circumstances that surround this experience, and as a result, Joseph is placed unjustly in prison.

These were difficult years for Joseph because everything that was happening to him was so inconsistent with the dreams that he had had in his earlier childhood about exaltation and having a place of prominent leadership.

Pharaoh has two dreams, and as a result of Joseph's interpretation of the dreams, he is elevated instantaneously from the prison to the palace and placed second in command to Pharaoh. During the famine which occurred after the seven prosperous years that had been spoken of in the dream, Joseph had an occasion to once again meet his brothers as they came to Egypt to buy grain. On their first visit they do not recognize him and Joseph deals quite severely with them.

On the second visit he lets them know who he is and requests that they might return and bring their father down to dwell in Goshen for the remaining five years of the famine and however long they would like to stay.

It is a glorious reunion as Jacob and Joseph see each other once again after 22 years of separation, and Joseph makes good all of his promises in settling the whole family there in the land of Egypt and caring for their personal needs.

It is after 17 years of this residence that Jacob realizes that he is going to die and calls Joseph and makes him commit himself to taking his body back to the land of Canaan when he dies.

In Genesis 48 we were at the bedside of Jacob with Joseph and his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. Jacob adopts the two boys and pronounces a blessing upon them, and they are to ultimately represent their father in the twelve tribes of Israel.

Remember now, it is twelve tribes because it is minus Joseph, plus Ephraim and Manasseh equals thirteen, but Levi has no land--so it comes out to twelve.

In Genesis 49 it says, "Jacob called for his sons and said, 'Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in the days to come. Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel.'"

We now have the very tender and dramatic bedtime scene as all of the sons are gathered to hear the final words of their aged father.

He speaks to Reuben,
And then to Simeon and Levi together,
To Judah, and prophetically speaks of the coming of the
Lord Jesus Christ through his line.
He then turns to Zebulun and to Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali,
And finally Joseph and Benjamin.

"Then he gave them these instructions: 'I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, the cave in

the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field. There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah."

"When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people."

With the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4 he could say,

I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day--not to me only, but unto all those also that love His appearing.

Needless to say, this is a real sad time.

We are going to have a funeral in the front of the passage, and a funeral in the back of the passage.

Joseph is 56 years of age when all of this happens.

Robert Foster gives an interesting tribute to Jacob in his letter to businessmen called *"The Challenge"*

Our hero from Haran was almost continually in the crucible, whether through his faults or those of others. Here, I want you to meet the master schemer, the manipulator of men and events.

At birth, Jacob grabbed his twin brother by the heel, and then spent the rest of his life trying to trip anybody who hindered his plans. This man that God loved was forever straining, struggling, striving, sinning, stumbling, but yet always rising on the stepping stones of his dead self to higher things.

Jacob was a man of indomitable purpose, and so in the hour of extremity he would scheme first and pray later.

With Jacob struggling to hold on to his own way, his own plans, his own will, God touched Jacob just on that spot where self was entrenched; and it wasn't until his pride went that his Jacob-nature weakened.

We win when we yield. When I am weak, then am I strong. Don't settle for less than God's very best. Jacob burned his bridges behind him. God touched the socket

of his hip, now things really began to happen in this man's life.

When we think about death and face that possibility, we always face the three P's:

1. The PAIN of the experience.
2. PREPARATION of our own souls for our eternal destiny.
3. PRIORITIES that will line up with that ultimate goal and objective.

(Growing Through Mid-Life Crises by John Sterner)

That still, small voice of guilt ought *not* be "therapized" away. We are guilty because we have been sinful. "What did you do with the one talent I gave you?" asks our Master. "Well,..." we say, "I had a real good time."

(Necessary Losses by Judith Viorst)

There are other, less frenetic mid-life reactions which reflect the chaos and anguish of this stage, when, although we may be at our prime, we know that we're in the grip of time, that "our ground time here," as a poet and many airline hostesses warn us, "will be brief." Thus we may--many do--become severely depressed. Or embittered--"is this all there really is?" Or achingly disappointed at having failed to meet our ideals, to achieve our goals. Or bored and restless--"so now what?"--if we've achieved them. Or self-destructive--drinking, pill-popping, driving too fast or directly attempting suicide. Or envious of the young--even our own young flourishing sexual sons and daughters. Or guilt-stricken at the bad we have done and the good we have left undone.

(Always too Soon to Quit by Robert D. Foster)

The apex of success . . . "I have finished the course."
There is no tolerance in life for the spiritual quitter. David Livingstone, the famous African traveler and explorer, had as his goal: "I am determined never to stop until I have come to the end and achieved my purpose."

v. 1 Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him and kissed him.

I am sure each of the brothers stood stunned in silence as they watched their father take leave of them, and how their hearts had been touched by the prophetic words that had been spoken about each of them, and what they could expect for the future.

For Joseph this experience in verse 1 meant that his father, his guide, and his best friend was no longer among the land of the living.

Millions of lips have been chilled by kissing the marbled brow of death.

As the mantle of his father drops upon his shoulders, he cannot help but be reminded of a lifetime of love and friendship with this dear old man, who had come to mean so much to him personally. He had to be reminded of the coat which expressed his father's love in childhood, and then the most recent years when he in return could express his love for his father by caring for him in these final years while he was here on earth.

We tend to overlook the bad times and cherish only the good in the face of physical death.

It was the COAT, his father's COMING after 22 years of separation, and Joseph's CARING for him during these last 17 years that probably were uppermost in his mind at this time.

v. 2 Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him,

Joseph had ready access to all of the professional men in the course of his duties in the land, so he turns his father over to them to prepare him for burial in the land of Canaan.

v. 3 taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

The period of mourning for someone in royalty and leadership was 72 days, so they have really treated Jacob as someone next to royalty in their mourning for his death.

v. 4 When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh's court, "If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him,

v. 5 'My father made me swear an oath and said, "I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan." Now let me go up and bury my father; then I will return."

Because Joseph is in mourning and during this time he has not shaved or taken care of himself personally, he is sending a representative to Pharaoh with the request.

Having sent the message to Pharaoh of the obligations and commitments that he has made to his father before his death, verse 6 gives us Pharaoh's response:

v. 6 Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do."

v. 7 So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him—the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt--

v. 8 besides all the members of Joseph's household and his brothers and those belonging to his father's household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen.

This is quite a funeral procession leaving Egypt to go to the land of Canaan, a lot of the representatives from Pharaoh's household, as well as the household of Joseph and his brothers.

They are making the 250-mile trip north and east to Hebron to fulfill Jacob's final wishes.

With all these elaborate preparations, we can certainly get a little feeling for how the Egyptians felt about Joseph and his leadership. He was certainly a much-loved leader and faithful administrator. And when he is sorrowing over his father's death, they want to be involved with him, and thus we have all of this great company going together in procession toward the land of Canaan.

v. 9 Chariots and horsemen also went up with him. It was a very large company.

Back in the '60s when they had the John F. Kennedy funeral it was such a huge, elaborate affair, and this must have been something similar to that.

I am sure Jacob had no idea that these tremendous things would be done in memory of him and in honor of his son Joseph.

All the record tells us is that it was a very large company.

v. 10 When they reached the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan, they lamented loudly and bitterly; and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father.

This week of mourning in the land of Canaan was to follow the Hebrew custom before the actual burial.

v. 11 When the Canaanites who lived there saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning." That is why that place near the Jordan is called Abel Mizraim.

The Canaanites have been affected by this large company and the grievous mourning that is going on on this occasion.

It has been 17 years since Jacob left Hebron, and probably a lot of his friends and contemporaries died during that five years of famine and economic collapse.

v. 12 So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them:

Joseph and the brothers had been faithful to carry out the final charge which he had made individually to Joseph in chap. 48 and to the full company in chap. 49 just before he died.

v. 13 They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field.

Jacob ends up being buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, where it was his desire to be buried, along with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and now Jacob and Leah are also buried here.

How interesting it is that Jacob ends up being buried next to Leah rather than to Rachel, who was buried in the land of Ephrath near Bethlehem.

Rachel had him while he was living, and Leah has him resting next to her in death.

v. 14 After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father.

Once the task has been completed, Joseph remains true to his word and goes back to Egypt.

This has to be a very emotional time for Joseph not only in the death of his father, but returning to his home for the first time in 40 years.

I am sure it is probably a difficult time for both he and his brothers to leave what they considered as their homeland and to go back down into Egypt at this time.

The seed will be coming later, but not now. It is the Father's purpose for them to reside in Egypt these years, and when the time comes God will free them from the tentacles of that land and bring them back to Canaan.

v. 15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?"

Now the brothers of Joseph have a recurring sense of guilt over what they had done in the past when they sold Joseph into Egypt.

It was Esau who said that he was going to wait until the days of his father's mourning were past, and then he was going to take the life of Jacob. So the boys felt that Joseph would probably now change his attitude toward them upon the death of their father.

So many of our fears can be explained in a little phrase: WHAT IF. The mind can conjure up all kinds of circumstances and situations where it can bring anxiety and fear into the heart of the person who ought to be trusting the Lord.

It is interesting to note that the brothers do accept the full responsibility for that which they have done to Joseph in the past.

v. 16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died:

This could be the boys acting a great deal like their father in working up a message to send to Joseph, or it could have actually been the experience of the boys to share with their dad in the final years of his life here on earth the fears which they were facing. But if this would have been the case, I am sure Jacob would have spoken directly to Joseph about it.

This is like signing your own report card or signing an excuse from home so that you can justify your absence.

Jacob certainly did give specific directions with regard to his burial before departure, and so it is in the realm of possibility that he could have given them these words when they came to him with their problem.

v. 17 "This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

The message which they sent to Joseph was in the following words: "I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly. Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father."

How slow the human heart is to recognize grace and to experience forgiveness.

"And now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

Here they are begging for a forgiveness that is already theirs, as far as Joseph is concerned, and so he weeps in response to their plea for forgiveness that they should already be enjoying.

Joseph is weeping over their unbelief and their inability to trust him.

How much it must cause grief to our Savior because of our inability to enjoy the freedom of His forgiveness for the times that we have failed Him in the past and the joy of knowing that we can be truly free in His presence because He holds no grudges. His forgiveness is from the heart, and there will be no retaliation.

How oftentimes do we preach the cross of Jesus Christ and His ability to forgive but deny the continuity of His grace and the fact that we have eternal salvation.

John 10:28, 29

I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them to me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

(*Genesis* by Donald Grey Barnhouse)

In our own day the same spirit is abroad within the church. Those who think that God gives eternal life, but that He might take it away because of failure in us, exhibit the spirit of these brothers. One of the saddest things in Christendom is for people to preach the cross but deny the continuity of grace. Lord, love us in spite of ourselves.

(*Joseph: God's Man in Egypt* by Leslie Flynn)

How like people who confess their sins but then continue to drag them out, pull them up, spread them out, weep over them afresh, somehow forgetting that God has declared them forgiven. When Christ pardons our sins, He buries them. Let's leave them buried, and do like our Lord--remember them no more.

Joseph knew how bad their sin had been, and forgave them fully. So Christ knows the rottenness of our past, and freely forgives.

v. 18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

Here again is another fulfillment of the dreams which Joseph had in his youth some 40 years earlier. The brothers are bowing before him and now are speaking with the recognition of his authority. "Behold, we are your slaves."

v. 19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?"

God is the great avenger of sin, and I am not taking his responsibility upon my shoulders. Am I in a position to interfere of my own accord with the purposes of God and not be rather bound to submit to them myself?

Romans 12:18-21

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

v. 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Joseph points up to the brothers that the act which they had performed against him was meant as an evil act but from God's point of view He meant the selling into Egypt for good. This reminds us of the fact that the world poured out its hatred against Jesus Christ, and yet God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

God is involved in all of this! The thing that is so thrilling about Joseph in this experience is that now, even 17 years later, after he had first met his brothers and spoke to them in Genesis 45, he is still saying the same things to them now as he had said to them then.

Genesis 45:5-8

And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

Joseph is so faithful and consistent.

In Genesis 45 he said, "You sold me but God sent me."

And here in Genesis 50, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

Romans 8:28

And we are knowing that for those who are loving God all things He is working together for good for those who are the called in accordance with His purpose.

The key to Joseph's faithful and victorious life was his ability to see God as the sovereign administrator over all of the circumstances in his life and to use them to the full accomplishment of His purpose.

(Lord, You Love to Say Yes by Ruth Harms Calkin)

Personal Hurt

O God--
In this personal hurt
That pierces so deeply
Give me, I pray
The high and holy privilege
Of proving to the one
Who initiated the hurt
That the love of Jesus
Can withstand it.

(Joseph: God's Man in Egypt by Leslie Flynn)

Martin Luther wrote,
For feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving;
My warrant is the word of God,
Naught else is worth believing.
Though all my heart should feel condemned
For want of some sweet token,
There is One greater than my heart
Whose word cannot be broken.

1 John 5:11, 12

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

God said it; I believed it; that settled it!

v. 21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Isaiah 41:10

Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Now Joseph makes a commitment to his brothers for the future: "I will provide for you and your little ones." I've been doing it for the past seventeen years and will continue to do so." Our text tells us, "He reassured them and spoke kindly to them."

v. 22 Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years.

Joseph is approximately 56 years of age when his father dies and the experience he has with his brothers recorded in the previous verses.

There is now a 54-year gap described in this 22nd verse.

For the next 54 years Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived 110 years.

Isn't it amazing how the Bible passes over with such a brief swish of the pen so many years that are not even recorded as to what happened during that time? I guess these are part of the questions that will be answered when we get to glory. We'll have a lot to talk about as the content of these years will be filled in for us.

v. 23 and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees.

Joseph got to see the third generation of Ephraim's sons and also the sons of Makir the son of Manasseh who were placed at birth on Joseph's knees.

Joseph, like his forefathers, had the glorious privilege of seeing God begin to fulfill some of the promises that were made to him in the birth of the sons of his two boys, Ephraim and Manasseh.

v. 24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Whereas the chapter began with the death of Jacob, it ends with the death of Joseph. And as Joseph is preparing to die, he says, "God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land He promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Our lives are like a shadow that appears for a little time and then passes away.

James 4:14-17

Yet, you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that, but as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

God buries His workmen and carries on His work. He knows that God will take care of them and that He will ultimately bring them as a nation from the land of Egypt to the land of Canaan which He had promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and to Joseph.

How beautiful it is to see Joseph as a simple, God-fearing Hebrew in the hour of his death. He has been so faithful to just walk with God, and now even in his death he has the confidence that God will take care of his family; and not only will He take care of them, but He will ultimately bring them to the land of promise which was given to Abraham initially in the Abrahamic Covenant.

v. 25 And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."

Just as Jacob had asked that his body be taken and buried in the land of Canaan, so he made the sons of Israel swear, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."

Joseph in no way saw himself as indispensable in caring for his brothers, that God would take care of that and when the time came for them to leave Egypt and go to Canaan, Joseph wanted his bones to go with them.

This act is the act that the writer to the book of Hebrews records as the act of faith on the part of Joseph:

Hebrews 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.

Ronald Dunn in his book *The Faith Crisis* says,

The faith described in Hebrews 11:1 believes beyond "God can" and "God will." It believes God has. This kind of faith declares it already done. Instead of waiting for God to create the provision, it steps into the provision already available. Isn't this what Jesus means in Mark 11:24? He says, "Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them." The word "receive" is a Greek aorist tense which implies you receive it before you actually have it.

Williams translates it like this: "So I tell you, whenever you pray and ask for anything, have faith that it has been granted to you and you will get it." Jesus literally is saying, "Believe you have already got it and you'll get it. That is just another way of saying, Faith is substance.

R. A. Tory said that he worried for years over the grammar of that verse until one day he stopped worrying about the grammar and started enjoying the promise. Anyone can believe he has something after he receives it. That's walking by sight, not by faith. Biblical faith is believing you have something before you have it. You believe you have it because God says you have it, and not because you see it in your hand.

Exodus 13:19-21

Moses took the bones of Joseph with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel swear an oath. He had said, "God will surely come to your aid. And then you must carry my bones up with you from this place." After leaving Succoth, they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

v. 26 So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

With the coming to the end of the life of Joseph, there are four things that really stand out in his life:

1. He was a man who feared God. He was one who respected God's sovereign authority and right to His worship.
2. He was a man, because of his fear for God, who had a deep desire to please God in the way he lived and conducted himself.

3. He was a man with a heart toward God. The Word of God tells us in many places that the Lord was with Joseph. The Lord was with him to direct, to guide, to bless and prosper.

4. The fourth indelible lesson that comes to our minds is seen in the phrase "all things work together for good to them that love God and to them that are the called according to His purpose." We have seen God take circumstances which have seemed impossible from the human point of view and weave them together into something beautiful. This has been a source of great blessing and encouragement to us as we have studied the life and biography of Joseph.

He is truly a man of FELLOWSHIP and FAITHFULNESS.

(Joseph: From Pit to Pinnacle by Charles R. Swindoll)

III. What about our final years?

We come to the end of a story and the end of a book (Genesis), but not the end of a nation. From Joseph's life remain two permanent lessons that we can adopt as priorities for our own lives. Joseph's example serves us well.

A. To grow old free of bitterness is the finest gift we can leave humanity.

B. To face death right with God and man is the finest way we can enter eternity.

(Genesis by Donald Grey Barnhouse)

There is something unspeakably solemn here. Not merely does this verse describe the preparation of the body of Joseph as the Egyptians prepared their dead, but there is great solemnity in ending the book of Genesis on this note. How sad that a book which begins, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," should close with "a coffin in Egypt"! Let God be true and every man a liar. Adam was warned against disobedience, and was told that if he disobeyed he would surely die. He ate the forbidden fruit and death passed upon him and all the race. Let every soul who departs from God in the slightest degree know that sin when it is finished brings forth death (James 1:15). Lord, Thy Word is all true.

(Joseph: From Pit to Pinnacle by Charles R. Swindoll)

Our scriptural sojourn with Joseph has passed all too rapidly. We've sighed, wept, smiled, and rejoiced with him. We've also hurt for him, pitied him, and admired him. He has drawn from us the full spectrum of emotions. Our respect for him has continually risen. In this final study on his life, we will witness his afternoon and twilight years, as age and his dad's death come upon him. Jacob died almost twenty years after moving to Egypt, and Joseph, the son he'd thought was dead for seventeen years, died approximately fifty-four years after that. As midnight arrived in Joseph's life, he spoke his final words of encouragement and forgiveness to his brothers. What a remarkable man! He modeled the magnificent message of grace, whether by life or by death.

Whereas when we come to the death of Jacob in the beginning of the chapter, he is thinking of the past and wants to be buried in the cave of Machpelah where Abraham was buried; and when Joseph comes to the end of his life, he is looking to the future. He wants his bones taken with the sons of Israel as they leave the land and go to the promised land which the Lord has given to them by right through the Abrahamic Covenant.

CONCLUSION:

There are a number of lessons that we can learn from this particular study:

LESSON #1: Death for the man who walks with God is just a simple conclusion to a well-ordered life of service here on the earth. The Lord is saying, Come on home, I have some new assignments for you.

LESSON #2: The greatest things we can do for those who depart from us is to fulfill their final wishes.

LESSON #3: Oftentimes the guilt of past sins comes back to haunt us. God expects us to forget those things which are behind and press on toward those things which are in front.

LESSON #4: We grieve our Savior by our inability to believe Him and that His forgiveness is legitimate.

LESSON #5: The validity of Joseph's forgiveness is seen in his consistency of attitude.

LESSON #6: Joseph is looking to the future with confidence when it comes for him to die.

LESSON #7: Joseph was a good man who walked with God. He did what he could.

LESSON #8: All things work together for good.

LESSON #9: Joseph was a man who feared God, desired to please God, fellowshiped with God, and saw God in people and events.

He FEARED,
he FOLLOWED,
he FELLOWSHIPED
and he was FAITHFUL to his God.

(Who Speaks for God? by Charles Colson)

The *New York Times* asked the founder of McDonald's what he believed in. "God, my family, and McDonald's hamburgers," he replied, but then added, "and when I get to the office I reverse the order."

You would ask Joseph the same question and he would tell you that he believed in God and His eternal purpose for mankind, and that the secret to happiness and fulfillment in life is to link up with that eternal purpose.

We would do well to sing with the hymnwriter:

Lead on, O King Eternal, the day of march has come.
Henceforth in fields of conquest, your tents shall
 be our home.
Through days of preparation, your grace has made us
 strong.
And now, O King Eternal, we lift our battle song.

Lead on, O King Eternal, till sin's fierce war
 shall cease.
And holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.
For not with sword's loud clashing nor roll of
 stirring drums
With deeds of love and mercy, the heavenly kingdom
 comes.

Lead on, O King Eternal, we follow not with fears,
For gladness breaks like morning, where'er your
face appears Your cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its
 light.
A crown awaits the conquest, lead on, O God of
 might.