

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

GENESIS 46-50

When the recent tsunami crashed into Indonesia it separated families, and created thousands of lost children. One of the missing was the little girl of a truck driver, Mustafa Kamal. For four weeks Mustafa has been combing his country in search of his five year old daughter. Last Sunday his persistence was rewarded.

He found his daughter, Rina, at a *Save the Children* refugee camp.

A BBC article reported the emotional moment that occurred at their reunion, “(The father) screamed when he saw her and cried as he fell to his knees to hug his daughter... *“By the grace of God! I knew you were alive! I knew it!”* Kamal screamed as they embraced... Rina grabbed her father and began crying...”

Genesis 46 records another emotional reunion between father and child.

Joseph and his father Jacob had been victims of a tsunami of circumstance. Their close relationship was torn apart by jealous brothers, and by the slave trade of Egypt... But after 20 years of separation, a reunion is about to take place...

Let me recap the story... A famine drives Joseph’s brothers to Egypt searching for food. Joseph recognizes them immediately, but they don’t recognize him. It’s only after he’s sure they won’t do to his brother, Benjamin, what they did to him, that he reveals to them his identity... Joseph tells his brothers to fetch their dad, and bring him to Egypt... And

that's where we *pick up the story in chapter 46...*

“So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.” Beersheba is the southernmost point of the land of Israel before you cross the hot sands of the Sinai Peninsula.

And it was in hot sand that Jacob got cold feet. When Abraham faced an earlier famine he fled to Egypt. It was a mistake. He should've trusted God and stayed in the land God had given... I'm sure Jacob is wondering if he should do the same.

“Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." And He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.” Closing the eyelids was the last act of kindness done for a dying man - and it was an honor usually reserved for the man's closest relative.

It's interesting that for Abraham, his trip to Egypt was *a lack of faith*. For Jacob it was *a show of faith*. God assures him that his journey will be a round trip. **What was wrong for Abraham was right for Jacob.** The difference was God's will, and God's timing, and the man's motivation. Abraham was *fearful*. Jacob is *faithful*.

Verse 5, “Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their

wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.” He moved his whole household.

“Now these were the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt...” Here he gives us the trip’s manifest... the passenger log...

He lists his 12 sons – his daughter, Dinah – 52 grandkids - 4 great-grandsons.

Dan had the fewest kids – only one son. Benjamin had the most – ten sons.

Simeon had a pagan wife – *typical of the hard-hearted fellow he was.*

One of Issachar’s sons is named *Job*. It’s possible this is the namesake of the book of Job. He would’ve been a young man when he migrated to Egypt, and left to settle in Uz. Its possible Moses knew him personally and penned his story.

Verse 26 tells us, “All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, were 66 persons in all. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. (Manasseh and Ephraim) All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were 70.”

Joseph and his two sons are already in Egypt. Add those three, and Jacob himself, and you get the 70. “Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way

to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen.”

The grand reunion takes place in verse 29, “So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.” Notice, they cried for “a good while” – *they had a good long cry together*. They shed some happy tears.

“And Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive.” Remember as we’ve pointed out, Joseph is in many ways a type of Jesus. Here, Jacob treats him as if he was dead and is now alive.

Verse 31, “Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, ‘My brothers and those of my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. And the men are shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.’

“So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’”

“that you shall say, ‘Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,’ that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.”

Here’s a quizzical note... Joseph instructs his family to tell the pharaoh they’re shepherds - then adds “for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.”

Many historians believe that at the time Egypt was under the control of foreigners - the *Hyksos Dynasty*, or “*shepherd kings*”. Native Egyptians hated shepherds - but the royal family would be sympathetic.

And this was part of God’s purpose for sending His people to Egypt – to keep them from marrying unbelievers. The Egyptians wouldn’t marry folks they hated.

Chapter 47, “Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, “My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they are in the land of Goshen.”

And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.

Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?” And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers.”

And they said to Pharaoh, “We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.”

Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock.”

Pharaoh is no *dummy*. He’ll be a *mummy*, but he was no *dummy*. He’d found a gem in Joseph, and he’s thinking there may be more in the family like him.

Verse 7 “Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.” Hebrews 7 tell us that the blessor is greater than the blessee. Here Jacob, the man of God, assumes authority over the ruler of Egypt.

It proves that it’s a greater honor to be a child of God than an earthly king.

“Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Abraham lived to be 175. Isaac died at 180. Jacob will live 17 more years in Egypt, and die as a baby - at 147.

But notice how Jacob refers to life on the earth? It’s a “pilgrimage”. *Life is not a port of call, but a voyage.* It’s not a destination, but a journey. This world is not our home. We’re all just passing through. Our permanent residence is in eternity.

Verse 10, “So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in their families.

Now there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.

And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed." The famine was so severe the entire economy collapsed. Inflation devalued the money.

Verse 16, "Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you bread for your livestock, if the money is gone." So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year." Obviously, Joseph enhanced the pharaoh's supremacy and power. After the famine every Egyptian was a crown tenant of the pharaoh.

"When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land?"

Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate."

“Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end. Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations allotted to them by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands.”

I'm sure Joseph hoped to gain control of the pagan priests. Over time he could put them out of business - but they received special treatment from the pharaoh.

Verse 23, “Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give 1/5 to Pharaoh.

Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones.”

So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have 1/5, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's.” A 20% tax was levied on the Egyptians.

“So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly.” If the 70 Hebrews who entered Egypt grew at just 6% a year – after 430 years the family would

number several million people. That's exactly what we find at the time of the Exodus.

Also this is the first time the family is called **Israel**. In Egypt a nation is born.

Verse 28 “And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years. So the length of Jacob's life was 147 years. When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh,” This was a custom for taking a vow.

Circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with the family of Israel. To place your hand under a man's thigh – *near his circumcised part* – was the equivalent of placing your hand on a Bible and taking an oath. You were invoking God to hold you accountable for the promise you made. It was a way to prove your sincerity.

Jacob tells Joseph, “Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” He wanted his body taken back to the Promised Land.

And (Joseph) said, “I will do as you have said.” Then he said, “Swear to me.” And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.”

Chapter 48, “Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, “Indeed your father is sick”; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And Jacob was told, “Look, your son Joseph is coming to you”; and Israel

strengthened himself and sat up on the bed.”

Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz (or Bethel) in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' He's recalling the Abrahamic Covenant – *the sod, the seed, the salvation*. The covenant was first made to Abraham, then to Isaac, and finally to Jacob and his 12 sons.

"And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours, and will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance.”

This is a big deal.

Jacob officially adopts Ephraim and Manasseh – essentially giving his family 13 tribes. Joseph is replaced by his two sons... It's fascinating though, that whenever the Bible lists the tribes of Israel they're always twelve, never thirteen. *Different tribes* get left out of *different lists* for *different reasons*. It's like a shell game.

“But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).”

Verse 8, "Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?" And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place." And he said, "Please

bring them to me, and I will bless them."

Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!" So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him." Joseph knows his father is as blind as a bat, so he lines up his sons – the older son, Manasseh, in front of Jacob's right hand - and the younger, Ephraim, in front of his left hand.

Joseph expects his father will follow custom and give the birthright - the preeminence in the family - to the older son over the younger son.

He doesn't realize this family doesn't follow custom.

Verse 14, "Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his

father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' When he names Joseph's two sons he places Ephraim first. "And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh."

Understand Israel's actions here were not small matter in the eyes of God.

What he does actually earns him a place in God's *Hall of Faith*. Hebrews 11:21 summarizes Genesis 48, "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff."

Jacob crosses his hands to bless the boys - and blesses the younger son over the older. And in doing so the writer of Hebrews says *he worshiped God*. I'm sure in his mind he was recalling God's grace toward him. Jacob was appreciative. He too, was the younger son, yet he was blessed above his older brother, Esau.

One of the peculiarities of all three Hebrew patriarchs is that the custom of the firstborn was violated in their families... Abraham honored Isaac, not Ishmael. Isaac blessed Jacob over Esau. Now Jacob blessed Ephraim over Manasseh.

It's God's way of saying that His favor is not awarded

according to natural advantage, or man's endowment, or through any earthly custom and tradition – *but by grace through faith!* God's favor doesn't go to the folks we might expect.

If you're *the runt of the litter*... if you feel unwanted, and looked over, and unqualified... take heart! God crosses his hands at the cross of Jesus, and through His sacrifice bestows the greatest blessings on the least deserving!

Verse 21 “Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.” In essence, Israel's blessing on his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, doubles Joseph's share of the family honor. It's another coat of many colors. It was a special gift from Jacob to his favorite son, Joseph.

But in chapter 49 Jacob blesses all 12 of his sons. He's in the Spirit, peering into the future, prophesying over each son. Some of his words though are more curses than blessings. Jacob doles out a few tough pills to swallow...

Verse 1, “And Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days: “Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, and listen to Israel your father.” Jacob's is on his deathbed and all his sons have gathered around him. His *bedroom* is about to become a *courtroom*...

He begins with the oldest, "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, you shall not excel (Water always flows to the lowest point, and this was Reuben's spiritual history. Rather than rise up spiritually Reuben always gravitated to the lowest point morally), because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it - He went up to my couch." Jacob mentions an example...

Genesis 35:22 tells us Reuben committed incest with Jacob's concubine. It was a sin that cost him dearly. He forfeited his rights as the firstborn. He will not excel.

Reuben ends up not even entering the Promised Land. They settled for a spot east of the Jordan, and were the first tribe scattered by the Assyrians.

Verse 5, "Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place." These were the lead guys in the brutal slaughter of the men of Shechem in chapter 34. "Let not my soul enter their council; let not my honor be united to their assembly; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."

The Levites were the priestly tribe. Rather than land they were given cities scattered throughout the other tribes. Simeon ended up blending in with Judah.

Verse 8, "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise;" The word "Judah" means *praise*. "Your hand shall be

on the neck of your enemies; your father's children shall bow down before you.” Judah will receive the birthright.

He becomes the royal line and receives the pre-eminent place in the family.

“Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him?” Judah is depicted as a lion - and it's from this idiom that Messiah gets His nickname, “*the lion of the tribe of Judah*”. Jesus descended from the tribe of Judah.

Verse 10 records a fascinating prophecy. “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.” The word “Shiloh” means “*He whose right it is*”.

Since the ultimate right to the throne of God's kingdom belongs to the Messiah, the rabbis always took “Shiloh” to be another name for the Messiah.

This prophecy says the scepter, or the right to self-rule - which was commonly associated with the right to capital punishment - would not pass from the kingdom of Judah until the Messiah had come. This is why the rabbis in Jerusalem wept in 19 AD when the Romans stripped them of their right to capital punishment... And this is why later the Sanhedrin had to seek Pilate's approval to execute Jesus.

In AD 19, when the edict was issued by the Roman authority the Jews were crestfallen. The Babylonian Talmud records their remorse, “Woe unto us, for the scepter has been taken from Judah and the Messiah has not appeared.”

In the rabbis' minds the scepter had passed from Judah, and Messiah had not come. God's prophecy had failed. But what they didn't realize is that Shiloh had come! At that moment He was working in a carpenter's shop in Nazareth.

The prophecy continues, "Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk."

Verse 13, "Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea; he shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall adjoin Sidon." In Old Testament times Zebulun was land-locked. This seems to be a prophecy for the last days.

Look at Issachar in verses 14-15, "Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between two burdens; He saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant; he bowed his shoulder to bear a burden, and became a band of slaves."

You've heard of the Georgia Bulldogs and the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets – well, here are the *Issachar Strong Donkeys*. The tribe of Issachar was strong – they were endowed with numbers and resources. They had great potential.

When Israel returns to the land it should be easy for Issachar to drive out the Canaanites. But in the end they become "a band of slaves". *The Strong donkeys were lazy. Jacob sees them lying by the load, rather than lifting the load.*

One of the potential problems we face in the Christian life is laziness.

We need to realize that **we can't do God's part - but God won't do our part.**

As we've learned from the patriarchs of Israel, our part in our covenant with God is faith. But faith is not passive, it's active. Faith requires effort and diligence.

To grow in faith you have to apply yourself to God's Word, and apply the Word to your life. Renewing the mind requires a concentrated effort to replace old ideas with new truth. It takes a little *brain drain* to rethink unbiblical assumptions, and change the way you approach certain situations. The Christian life takes effort.

Hey, lazy believers wind up like the *Issachar Strong Donkeys*, **"a band of slaves"**. It's been said, **"Laziness grows on people; it begins in cobwebs and ends in iron chains."** If you don't work at shaking off sin... it ensnares you.

Verse 16 **"Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels So that its rider shall backward. I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!"** Dan is like a poisonous snake. He's the tribe that bites Israel and injects the venom of idolatry.

One of the two golden calves that later contaminate Israel is set up in Dan.

"Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him, but he shall triumph at last." The tribe of Gad is like an army. He will prevail. The tribe of Gad supplied troops for David.

"Bread from Asher shall be rich..." Asher was the land below

Mount Carmel. Even today it remains fertile farmland... And, **"he shall yield royal dainties."** or literally, *"he will dip his foot in oil"*. Today, the port city of Haifa is in the borders of Asher, and is the terminal point for the pipelines that bring petroleum to Israel.

"Naphtali is a deer let loose; he uses beautiful words." Naphtali bordered the Sea of Galilee where Jesus did most of his teaching. Thus the **"beautiful words."**

Verse 22, **"Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; his branches run over the wall."** He's prosperous. He's a bulging cluster of grapes. Ephraim and Manasseh will become two of the most populace tribes in Israel.

"The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him." For the first 30 years that was the story of Joseph's life. **"But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), by the God of your father who will help you, and by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers."** Joseph will be fruitful, strong, and blessed by God.

Verse 27, **"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he**

shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." Here's good advice, *"Don't let your daughter date a Benjamite."* Benjamin was Joseph's brother, but he's ancestors were like wolves. The cruelty of the Benjamites is documented in Judges 19-20.

Verse 28, "All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing. Then he charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. The field and the cave that is there were purchased from the sons of Heth."

"And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people." Note the reference to life after death. His people were still alive – *just on the other side of the grave.*

Chapter 50, "Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel." The Egyptians were famous for the embalming process they invented known as *mummification. Here's how it works...*

First, the brains were removed by a crooked wire inserted through the nose.

Second, an incision in the flank allowed for the removal of the vital organs.

Third, the body was washed outside with water and inside with palm wine.

Fourth, the head and the person's abdominal cavities were stuffed with myrrh, cinnamon, and other aromatic spices.

Fifth, the body was soaked for 40 days in a solution of saltwater.

Sixth, the body was wrapped with strips of cloth – sometimes 700 feet long. The strips were smeared with gum and cooked onto the body with extreme heat.

Seventh, cloth layers plastered on the inside with lime were wrapped around the body, forming a hard encasement. A mask was made to resemble the face.

I suppose you could say, Jacob was a *daddy* who became a *mummy*.

Verse 3, “Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.”

Here we're told they mourned for Jacob 70 days – that's over two months. I've always thought it cruel that we mourn two or three days for a loved one, then we're expected to go back to work and pick up as if nothing had happened. *Life goes on!*

But I don't think God designed the human heart to heal in a matter of just two or three days. Yes, *life goes on, but we*

can't... until we take time to mourn and purge ourselves of our grief – and have time to turn loose of the person we love.

It's interesting to me they mourned for Jacob a full seven weeks.

Verse 4, “And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.'" And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear." Joseph has a promise to keep - to bury his dad next to Leah.

“So 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, as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.”

Joseph arranges a state funeral - with a full military escort.

Verse 10 “Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians.”

Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.” Or “*mourning of Egypt*”.

“So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

Verse 15 “When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him.” With Jacob dead, Joseph’s brothers get worried. *Maybe, the only reason Joseph has been nice is for dad’s sake. Is he about to grow fangs?*

“So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, “Before your father died he commanded, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph: “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.”’ Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.” It probably broke his heart that they didn’t trust him. They assumed Joseph would turn on them the way they had turned on him.

“Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we are your servants.” Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people

alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones."

"And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." Guys, always remember, the key to overcoming bitterness is a strong trust in the providence of God.

From the *pit* - to *Potiphar's* - to the *prison* – at any point God could've stepped in and rescued Joseph from his troublesome circumstances... *but He didn't!*

Here's another "*P*" to add to Joseph's list of *Ps*... "*perfecting*".

God's purpose was *not only to position Joseph's career, but to perfect His character*. God uses our circumstances to *position us and perfect us*.

His concern is both *where we need to be* - and *what we need to be*.

Verse 22 "So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived 110 years. Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the 3rd generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees.

And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." Joseph makes the same request as his dad. He wants his bones returned to the land God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And in Exodus 13:19, 300 years later, Moses and

the Hebrews comply with his request, and exit Egypt with the bones of Joseph.

It's interesting, of all the exploits that could've gotten Joseph into the Bible's Hall of Faith the one that's mentioned is his command concerning 'dem bones.

Hebrews 11:22, "By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones."

Despite his faithfulness to God, his purity, his moral courage, his forgiving spirit he gets special mention because of his faith in God's covenant. *God values our purity, courage, and devotion... but it's faith alone that makes us right with Him.*

Genesis closes, "So Joseph died, being 110 years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

John Phillips writes, "Thus ends Genesis. It begins with creation and ends with a coffin. It begins with glory and ends with a grave. It begins with the vastness of eternity and ends with the shortness of time.

It begins with the living God and ends with a dead man. It begins with a blaze of brightness in heaven and ends with a box of bones in Egypt. That is the Holy Spirit's final comment in the book on the nature and tragedy of human sin..."

When the devil told Eve that if she ate of the fruit, "Thou shalt *not* surely die." It was a lie. The wages of sin is death... Physical – or the termination of our bodies. Spiritual – or separation from God. And eternal – or forever in the lake of fire.

Genesis ends with death, but the good news is that Exodus follows Genesis.

The book of Genesis ends with Israel in Egypt, but deliverance is just around the corner. The book of Exodus begins God's wonderful plan of redemption!