

## Comments on Genesis 50

Jacob's funeral (v. 1-13), the aftermath of the funeral (v. 14-21), and Joseph's death as well (v. 22-26).

<sup>1</sup> And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. <sup>2</sup> And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. <sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear. <sup>7</sup> 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,

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company. <sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: <sup>13</sup> 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.

v1-13 Joseph greatly laments his father's death (v. 1). Joseph has Jacob's corpse embalmed and goes through the standard Egyptian death rituals (v. 2-3). Joseph then requests leave to bury Joseph in Canaan per his request, and the Pharaoh agrees, and all of Pharaoh's servants and leadership of Egypt join Joseph (v. 4-7). All of the house of Israel also attend (v. 8). The retinue is quite large, including a royal escort of cavalry and chariots (v. 9). They arrive and mourn for an entire week (v. 10). The locals are surprised at size and scope of the

funeral (v. 11). The sons of Israel do as requested and bury Jacob with his ancestors (v. 12-13).

Note there is nothing about any of the other sons lamenting the death of Jacob, aside from Joseph. Joseph and his attending Egyptians, but nothing about any of the other brothers. The Egyptian presence overwhelms Israel's family, so much so that the locals think this is an Egyptian event, not a local event.

v1 Joseph clearly has no problem expressing his feelings for his family, cp. ch. 45.

v4-5 Why would Joseph request permission from the Pharaoh to leave Egypt and return to their ancestral land with his family? Joseph wants to make sure the Pharaoh and other Egyptians know this is not a permanent relocation, it is only temporary for the funeral.

v8 Leaving the children and flocks behind would be a guarantee they are going to return.

v9 "chariots and horsemen", here the royal military escort follows Jacob's family as an honorary escort. However, as time passes and the relationship changes, the chariots and horsemen are chasing the Israelites to kill them, cf. Exod. 14:5-9.

The military escort granted to them would protect them from any potentially hostile locals, but also guarantee their return to Egypt.

v13 See 23:17-20, 25:9, 35:29 for the history on this family burial site. Returning to bury their dead is reinforcing to the locals their rite of ownership, no matter how small the parcel of land, it is Abraham's.

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. <sup>19</sup> And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for

am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

v14-21 After the funeral, all return back to Egypt (v. 14). With Jacob's passing, the other eleven sons are concerned that this now creates an opportunity for Joseph to take vengeance on them for the wrongs done to him (v. 15). So, they send a messenger to Joseph saying that before Jacob died (v. 16), he told them to ask Joseph to forgive them. Joseph weeps at the request (v. 17). His brothers then approach Joseph and bow down before him and confess they are his servants (v. 18). Joseph tells them they don't have to worry because it was all for the greater good as many people were saved because of it (v. 19-20), and he says he will take care of them (v. 21).

The brothers understand they are in a vulnerable position at Jacob's passing, owing to the special relationship between Jacob and Joseph. If Joseph were inclined, he was in a position to punish them. So, the brothers send a messenger to see where Joseph stands on the matter. The servant sees Joseph weeps at the question, interprets it favorably, and likely returns and reports to the brothers, who then approach Joseph and prostrate themselves before him to conclude the matter.

This interaction shows plainly there is significant distance between the brothers. Joseph has clearly maintained his residence among the Egyptians and lived separately from the rest of the family in Goshen. But, even aside from the geographic distance, they obviously haven't completely patched things up emotionally as a family. The differences between the brothers lingered through the years. Had they spent more time together and reconciled with each other, this kind of interaction would have been unnecessary.

v17 "servants of the God of thy father", their appeal to Joseph is as being fellow servants of the same God. They know full well that they did not treat Joseph as a brother when they were younger, and they are seeking to avoid punishment for that, so they avoid invoking the title of "brother" as a hostile Joseph could easily throw that back in their faces. However, they are all followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their fathers.

v18 A literal fulfillment of 37:7-10.

v20 Joseph reiterates the substance of 45:7-8, letting them know he still believes this is the case.

<sup>22</sup> And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

v22-26 Joseph and all of Israel continue to live in Egypt, with Joseph staying there until he dies of old age (v. 22). Joseph lives long enough to see great-grandchildren (v. 23). When Joseph knows he is going to die he tells his family they are to bury his bones in the land of his fathers, and they swear an oath they will (v. 24-25). When Joseph dies he is embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt (v. 26), awaiting return to Canaan (cf Exod. 13:19).

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