

Let The Bible Speak Series

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A Coffin In Egypt

Good morning and welcome to our program today. It is good to have you with us. I hope that wherever you are today, it's a good day. It is always good when we can open the inspired pages of God's book and study it. Today we direct your attention to Genesis 50:24-26 "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." So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

So closes the book of Genesis. All of its recorded dealings of God with Israel, all of the promises and the glories of the patriarchal line, end with a "coffin in Egypt." Today we want to study with you the significance of this "coffin in Egypt." The person whose body was in the coffin was born in Haran 110 years before, he was the firstborn of his beloved mother Rachel, who died at the birth of her second son Benjamin. A motherless lad among the sons of other mothers felt the jealousies of the situation. At the age of seventeen he was "envied" by his brethren. Jacob loved him more than all his children. He was partial to him, the son of his old age. Made for him a tunic of many colors. His brothers hated him, could not speak peaceably to him. Joseph had dream--told his brothers--"Please hear this dream" Binding sheaves "my sheaf arose and stood upright" then "yours bowed down to mine"

The hated him even more. Had another dream "Sun, moon and eleven stars bowed down to me" an indication that his brothers would bow to him. One day when his Brothers were feeding flocks--Joseph sent to them--found them at Dothan. When they saw him, they conspired to kill him--Reuben said no. So they Threw him in a pit and sold him to band of Ishmaelites--then took coat and dipped it in blood of a goat and took it to their father, in shreds. He said "a wild beast hath devoured him." Joseph was Taken by the Arabs to a slave market in Egypt---sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. Entrusted his whole house to him--didn't even know what he had, except the bread he ate. His wife sought to seduce him. He refused and said "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" One day she caught him by the garment and he left it in her hand and fled. Scorned she called the men of the house and charged him with trying to force her. When she told Potiphar he had Joseph put in prison. (The fact that he did not have him immediately killed might indicate that he did not fully believe his wife.)

Joseph was placed over all the prisoners. The butler and baker of the king offended him and he had them placed in prison. They were under Joseph.

They both had a dream: Told Joseph of the dream but there was no interpreter of it.

Butler: Vine--in the vine three branches--- budded and blossomed--brought forth clusters

of ripe grapes. Had Pharaoh's cup in my hand and I pressed the grapes into the cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. Interpretation: in three days you will be restored to your former position and place the cup in Pharaoh's hand. BUT REMEMBER ME.

Baker: three baskets on my head in the uppermost basket all kinds of baked goods for the king. The birds came and ate them out of the basket.

Interpretation: in three days Pharaoh will behead you and hang you on a tree and the birds will come and eat your flesh. So it all happened, but the chief butler did not remember Joseph. Two years pass and Pharaoh has a dream: he stood by a river, seven cows come up out of the river, looking fat and they feed in the meadow. Then seven other cows come up ugly and gaunt. The gaunt cows eat the fat cows. Then he awakened.

When he went back to sleep he dreamed again: seven heads of grain on one stalk, plump and good. Then seven thin heads blighted by the east wind sprang up. The seven thin heads devoured the seven plump heads. The next morning troubled, called for his magicians, but no one could interpret. Then the Butler remembered Joseph. He sent and called for Joseph. Pharaoh recounts the dreams and Joseph tells him that the dreams are one and indicate what God is about to do. Seven years of great plenty will come, followed by seven years of famine. The plenty will be forgotten.

Now let the king select a discerning wise man and set him over the land of Egypt.

Joseph was selected to be over the land and care for the food so that there would be enough during the famine. Joseph had a place of prominence throughout the land. He was revered and respected. The famine finally came and was world-wide in scope. People from other lands were coming to Egypt for food.

Jacob sends his sons to buy grain. Joseph recognizes them and accuses them of being spies. They deny. Tell him that they are twelve brothers, one is at home and one is no more. Joseph proposes to keep them all in prison while one returns home and brings the younger brother with him. Puts them in prison for three days. Then he proposed: leave one here and you go and take grain and return with your younger brother to verify your word and you shall not die. When they heard this they said "we are verily guilty concerning our brother, we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us and we would not hear. Now this has befallen us. Joseph has their sacks filled with grain, even puts the money back in each sack and sends them on their way. They discover the money and are afraid. When they get home they recount to their father all that has happened and that they must take Benjamin back when they return. Jacob says no. I have lost Joseph, Simeon, and cannot give up Benjamin. However after the grain runs out and they need more food, it is agreed that they will return with Benjamin. They arrive and are greeted by Joseph, he sees Benjamin and goes into his chamber to weep. Through a process of events, he finally reveals himself to them. Joseph dismissed all the servants and makes himself known to his brothers. "And he wept aloud and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it." "Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them..."

They return to Jacob and tell him that Joseph is alive. Jacob and all the family return. What a family reunion they had. "When Joseph met his father he fell on his neck and

wept on his neck a good while.” Joseph and the entire family settle and live peacefully in Goshen. In Gen. 50:24-26 we have the account of the death of Joseph. Joseph’s body is embalmed and put in a coffin.

In the art of embalming, the Egyptians excelled all nations in the world.

Three ways embalming was done. It took them 70 days to embalm someone. They were then wrapped in fine white linen and placed in the coffin.

A space of approximately 300 years intervened between the last events of Genesis and the opening of Exodus. During all that time, Israel was left with a mummy and a hope. The elaborately embalmed body of Joseph lay in its case somewhere in Goshen in the care of the Israelites. During that period that “coffin in Egypt” preached its impressive messages.

I. **Mortality** Without doubt the coffin spoke of mortality.

The Egyptians were much occupied with death--tombs--etc.

Joseph’s coffin had not been buried, it was in sight--and was a constant reminder of death “I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swear to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

Note “God will surely visit you...” In other words, Israel could survive the loss of one of her greatest patriarchs---GOD STILL LIVES. HE WILL SURELY VISIT YOU.

1. We all die, the great, the small, the popular, the insignificant.
2. The world will go on after we die, So also the kingdom of God.
3. The church survived the death of the Apostles, the early leaders, the restorers etc.
4. On one so great but what death will reach us. Heb. 9:27 “It is appointed unto man...”

II. **Hope**

1. The coffin in Egypt was a herald of hope.
2. Joseph’s final instructions were encased in the hope of deliverance.
3. His preserved body, was laid where it could be lifted and carried away.
4. He had confidence in the Promise of God. Note v. 24 “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.”
5. He believed that in death he was not beyond the promise of God. Death was not an end. Heb. 11:22 “By faith Joseph when he died made mention of the departing of the children of Israel and gave commandment concerning his bones.”
6. Through the slow creeping years the silent preacher in the coffin said “have hope, God is faithful, He will keep his word.
7. As the years passed by, the promises must have seemed farther and farther from fulfillment. i.e. a king arose that knew not Joseph...
8. Israel was in a state of bondage, horrible and cruel conditions children slain etc.
9. The inheritance will never come.
10. But through all the darkening course of Israel in these sad centuries there stood a coffin, the token of a triumphant faith which believed that one day God would visit them and deliver them home, to the land of promise.

Today:

1. We have a better herald, an empty tomb, the Son of God

2. Our Joseph said "I will come again..." Jno. 14:1-2

3. The world continues to detach us from the hope that anchors our souls.

The Israelites must have been swayed by the many temptations to forget the dreams of Joseph and settle down in the land of Goshen. **It still happens today.** The world says forget heaven, settle down and live for now.

4. When hope died down and desire for deliverance dulled that coffin must have shouted **"this is not your rest, arise claim your inheritance."** This world is not our home.

III. **Patience** The coffin in Egypt was also a preacher of patience.

1. Three hundred years passed between the time Joseph's body was placed in it and the night it was carried away.

2. No doubt many asked When? Where? How?

3. The coffin was saying through all those years, be patient "God will surely visit you..."

4. We need the same Lesson:

Life is short, we are anxious for events to happen now.

Unbelievers mock the promises of God. 2Pet. 3:3-8

We need to learn patience to wait on God and never lose sight of the fact that He does not operate according to man's timetable.

5. It has been nearly 2000 years since he walked the earth.

Men of strong emotion and shallow faith constantly apply a timetable to such events and speak of His second coming as something that must soon occur. We grow impatient with the world, looseness etc.

6. God lifts his foot slowly and plants it firmly in his march through this world.

IV. **Possession** The coffin in Egypt was a pledge of possession.

1. Cared for in Egypt for more than three centuries.

2. Carried and guarded during 40 years of wilderness wanderings. "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath saying God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you." Ex. 13:19

3. Finally laid to rest in the burial cave at Machpelah beside the tombs of the fathers of the nations. Josh. 24:32 "The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph."

4. Thus it became to the nation, and remains for us, a symbol of the truth that no hope based upon God's word is ever finally disappointed.

5. Joseph rested and risked everything on this plain promise of God.

Today we stand on the Promises of God: Salvation—Faith, Repentance, Confession and Baptism. Mk. 16:15-16 Life after death---If ye believe in me ye shall never die."

Abiding presence of Jesus "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee..."

Home in heaven--Jno. 14:1-2

6. There is no nobler example of victorious faith, prolonged confidence, and expectation than Joseph's dying commandment concerning his bones.

7. Is our faith this strong? This man who sought an earthly inheritance was able to fling his anchor clean across the gulf when he said "Carry my bones..."

8. We have a better inheritance We have better promises We have clearer and fuller facts What a shame if we have a **feebler faith** you can complete in your own home. If you are interested in that, let me know and I will send it to you along with instructions on how to complete it. It has been good to have you with us today. Until next time, may God richly bless you.