

Introduction

The Democrats held their first debates last week. I did not watch them, but I did read about them and watched the highlights. Joe Biden did not have the best debate. A representative from California named Eric Swalwell went after Biden in a big way. Thirty-two years ago Biden was running against an older candidate and told the older candidate, “It’s time to pass the torch.” Mr. Swalwell told Biden, now the older candidate, that “It’s time to pass the torch.” In order to get this or that passed, he needed to pass the torch. The phrase was used over and over again.

In our text today, we have the same message. It is time to pass the torch. Israel died, but before he died, he charged his sons. At the end of our text today, Joseph was about to die and he charged the next generation and he also passed the torch. Sandwiched between Israel passing the torch and Joseph passing the torch, Israel is embalmed and taken to Canaan to be buried. When Joseph and his brothers returned from burying their father, Joseph’s brothers lie to him about being asked to forgive them. They want to make sure that Joseph does not take vengeance on them. Joseph treats them with kindness. Our last section of the chapter is about the death of Joseph at the age of 110. He was embalmed and buried in a coffin in Egypt.

Israel's Final Days – Part 4

1. Joseph Embalms Israel (Gen 50:1-3)
2. Joseph and His Brothers Bury Israel in Canaan (Gen 50:4-14)
3. Joseph Deals Kindly With His Brothers (Gen 50:15-21)
4. Joseph Dies And Is Buried (Gen 50:22-26)

1. Joseph Embalms Israel (Gen 50:1-3)

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

Israel has just finished blessing each of his sons and declaring to them what would happen to each of them in the future. Then, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people. All of the brothers were there when he died. We do not have any record of the actions of his brothers, but Joseph fell on his father’s face and wept over him and kissed him. Joseph’s love for his father is very evident.

(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.”

When Lazarus died and Jesus saw all of his family and friends weeping, He also wept. So, the people commented on how much Jesus loved him. The loss of loved ones is a very emotional time. Jesus knew that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead and He still wept. He was moved in spirit and troubled. Joseph was also deeply moved in spirit and he wept and kissed his father.

(John 11:33-36) “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, {34} and said, “Where have

you laid him?" They *said to Him, "Lord, come and see." {35} Jesus wept. {36} So the Jews were saying, 'See how He loved him!'"

There is some time lapse here and the next thing we are told is that Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. Joseph is 2nd only to Pharaoh, so all the physicians and everyone else are his servants. The Egyptians were known for their expertise in embalming. Neighboring countries did not embalm and they did not use caskets. Lazarus was wrapped in linens and placed in a tomb. (See John 11:34.) Jesus was wrapped and placed in a tomb. (See Luke 23:53-55.) Generally, they had aromatic fragrances and ointments put on the body, which helped during the mourning and burial ceremonies. Even with that, after four days, the body would begin to smell. (See John 11:39.)

We find that it took forty days for the embalming process and that the mourning was for seventy days. The Egyptian mourning period started at death, went through the forty days of embalming, and continued through the seventieth day. Experts say that the body could not be buried until the embalming had dried or cured, so even though the embalming took forty days, it took seventy to cure. Therefore, the mourning period was set to the embalming and curing schedule. Even though an official mourning period of seventy days was observed, grieving over the death of a loved one may last several years.

Today, embalming is required for viewings. If there is not going to be a viewing, no embalming is required. It is relatively inexpensive, costing only a few hundred dollars. Today, more people are choosing to be cremated, and no embalming is necessary. The bigger costs are the casket and the gravesite. The average cost of a casket is around \$2,000.00. Caskets at Walmart are at the low end and start at \$1,109.00. But, for higher end caskets not found at Walmart, like ones made of mahogany, bronze, or copper, the prices may be as high as \$10,000.00. The cost for burial plots is between \$200.00 and \$2,000.00.

2. Joseph and His Brothers Bury Israel in Canaan (Gen 50:4-14)

(Gen 50:4-14) "When the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying, {5} 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am about to die; 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; then I will return.'" {6} Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear." {7} So 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, {8} and 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. {9} There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company. {10} When 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. {11} Now 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. {12} Thus his sons did for him as he had charged them; {13} 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 had bought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite.

{14} After 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.”

After the days of mourning were over, it was time for Joseph and his brothers to carry out the burial wishes of their father. He had charged them with taking him back to their burial ground at the Cave of Machpelah. Joseph did not just leave the country to go bury his father. Even though he was 2nd only to Pharaoh in the whole country of Egypt, he appealed to Pharaoh for permission to take his father back to Canaan to bury him. Joseph is a man who is submitted to authority.

There is a worldly saying today that many people, even in the church, use. They say that “forgiveness is easier than permission.” So, people go ahead and do things without asking for permission. That is not being submitted to authority; it is rebellion. A submissive heart does not do something that he knows that he will have to ask permission later. A submissive heart follows the directives of their authority. Submission is a big deal to God. Samuel told Saul that to obey is better than to sacrifice, and that insubordination is as the sin of witchcraft. This attitude of getting forgiveness rather than permission is an abuse of God's grace, and it amounts to witchcraft. God is not pleased.

(1 Sam 15:22-23) “Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *and* to heed than the fat of rams. {23} For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king.”

A few years ago some people in this neighborhood used our parking lot for a 4th of July fireworks show. That night, some of the fireworks set our trees and shrubbery on fire, causing thousands of dollars of damage. The insurance did not cover all the damage, and it was painful. It might have caused more damage if someone across the street had not called the fire department. They put out the fire before it spread to the apartments. They did all this without permission. Recently, someone from the apartments had a party for their child. They rented a moon bounce. As I came out of church the company with the moon bounce asked for directions. Then, I saw the person from the apartment and he asked me for permission to have his party on our parking lot. I gave him permission. But, he had ordered that moon bounce and was intending to use our parking lot without ever asking for permission. That is not how to do things. The proper thing is to get permission before having a fireworks party or ordering a moon bounce. Joseph was not like that. He got permission from Pharaoh before taking off for the land of Canaan.

Joseph was very humble and respectful. He spoke to the household of Pharaoh saying, “If I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh.” It sounds like he may not have even requested a personal appearance, but sent a message through one of the family members. Joseph had lots of favor with Pharaoh, so this was an understatement. Joseph also said, “Please let me go up and bury my father.” He is humble, respectful, and very polite in his request. He also reassures Pharaoh that he will return. The result was that Pharaoh said to honor his father's request and go bury him. Not only did Pharaoh give permission, he sent some of his servants and the elders of the land of Egypt with Joseph and his family. Pharaoh honored Joseph and Israel by sending his servants and the elders of Egypt.

So Joseph and his brothers and their households went to bury his father. They only left their little ones and their flocks. When they arrived at the threshing floor of Atad, the Canaanites saw the

mourning and lamenting and said, “This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians.” They named it Abed-mizraim, which means the meadow of Egypt. The NASB dictionary says it can also be translated as the mourning of Egypt, which makes more sense. Joseph and his brothers buried their father in the Cave of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought when Sarah had died. After they buried him, they returned to Egypt just as Joseph had promised Pharaoh.

Before moving on, I want to say a couple words about fulfilling promises. Joseph kept his promise that he made to his father. Joseph kept his promise to Pharaoh that he would return after burying his father. We need to be people of our word. In Psalm 15 David talks about those who can abide in God's tabernacle or tent, which means His presence. He said it is those who walk in integrity and work righteousness. He says that those who speak truth in their hearts and do not slander with their tongues. He also said that he swears to his own hurt and does not change. That means that when we tell someone that we will do something, we will follow through and do it, even if it costs us a lot to do it. People need to be able to trust us. I don't just want people to trust me to do what I say, but I want God to trust me. I want Him to know that I will be a faithful servant and will carry out the things He tells me to do. Joseph was a man like that.

(Ps 15:1-4) “ O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?
 {2} He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart. {3}
 He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; {4} in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; he swears to his own hurt and does not change;”

3. Joseph Deals Kindly With His Brothers (Gen 50:15-21)

(Gen 50:15-21) “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!" {16} So 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." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. {18} Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." {19} But 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's brothers were living in fear, fear of vengeance by Joseph. Joseph was a man of integrity. He had already wept over them and been very good to them. But, in the back of their mind they thought he might bear a grudge against them and take revenge. So, they fabricated a story about their father charging them to tell Joseph to forgive them of their transgressions. Joseph's brothers tell him a big lie. The text does not say they lied, but, most scholars believe they lied to their brother. They told him that before their dad had died, he charged them with asking Joseph to forgive them and not hold against them the wrong they had done to him by selling him as a slave to the Midianite traders. I think that Joseph knew that his brothers were lying to him. It is really hard when your brothers or children lie to you. You expect more from them. Lying destroys trust and relationships. We must stop lying and speak truth to one another. But Joseph's response to his brothers is beautiful. He wept and treated them with kindness. I

have a lot to learn from Joseph because that has not been my typical response to people that lie to me. I have never wept, but I have I have confronted many of them about their lies.

How many of you have been lied to? How did you respond? How did it make you feel? Do you like being lied to? When I first earned my PGA Tour card, I was here visiting my parents in Albuquerque, and I decided to go play at the Albuquerque Country Club. I had never played there so I thought I would go play it. As a PGA member or PGA Tour member, it is pretty standard in most places to be extended playing privileges to fellow professionals. In Cincinnati, for example, I could call Dick Plumber, the Head Professional at Camargo Club, one of the most exclusive clubs in America, and I could go play their course anytime. So, I called the Pro Shop at the Albuquerque Country Club and spoke with the Head Professional. He told me that they were really busy and he couldn't get me out that day. So, as I was driving to the UNM South course where I normally practiced, I decided to stop by the Albuquerque Country Club and introduce myself. I was not from Albuquerque and did not play college golf here, so I was not well known. As I walked from the parking lot to the Pro Shop, I could not help but notice that there was hardly a soul on the course. The Head Professional had told a big fat lie to me. It was obvious that I was not welcome there. I went ahead and went into the Pro Shop and introduced myself to the Head Professional. I did not call him a liar, but he knew that he had been caught red-handed in a big lie. After meeting him, I shook his hand, said good-bye, and left. I never bothered to call him again, as it was obvious that I was not welcome there. None of us like being lied to.

When his brothers spoke to him about this, he wept. He was very emotional about it. We don't know the exact reason that he wept. People weep for joy. People weep when they are sad or broken hearted. People weep when they get emotionally touched watching a movie. Joseph wept when he heard them tell them this story. I believe that Joseph wept because he saw how his brothers were still living in guilt and fear. I believe that he was also emotionally touched by their repentance for their actions. Joseph's response was far better than my response may have been. I may have forgiven them, but I might have confronted them for lying about it. Making up a lie was not the best way of going to Joseph to ask for forgiveness.

Speaking truth is a foundational principle to relationships. When people lie, it destroys trust and relationships. Paul told the church in Ephesus to stop lying to one another and to speak truth to one another. He also told the Colossians to stop lying to one another and to lay aside the old self with its evil practices. Lying is an evil practice, and we need to lay it aside and put on the new self. You would not think that he would have to tell Christians to stop lying to one another and to speak truth, but that is what he told them. We are all in the process of being sanctified, or made holy. Positionally, we have been declared holy, but that does not mean that we always act like holy ones. We are continually being transformed and being made more like Christ. That is called progressive sanctification.

(Eph 4:25) “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another.”

(Col 3:9-10) “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, {10} and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.”

I have found that it is easier for me to accept being lied to by unbelievers. I almost expect that kind of behavior. But, I don't expect that behavior from Christians; I expect them to be honest

and truthful. When Christians lie to me, I am really bothered. When leaders and pastors lie to me, it bothers me even more. I have much higher expectations for them. They are to be examples, not part of the problem.

In verses 19-20, Joseph says something to them that is one of my quotes in the book of Genesis. He said, *“Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? 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.”* Joseph knew that it was not his place to take vengeance. Joseph knew his role and He knew what God's role was. Therefore, he forgave them and left it up to God to do anything beyond that. Many people have a difficult time forgiving people. Forgiveness is a choice. We choose to forgive people. That is what God wants and expects us to do. You don't have to wait until you feel like forgiving. We must choose to forgive, even if we don't feel like it. It is not our place to hold back forgiveness or to take vengeance; that belongs to God.

Second, Joseph knew that God had allowed this to happen because He meant it for good. He knew that God was Sovereign and was in control of what had happened. When difficult times come, we can take great encouragement and comfort knowing that God is still on the throne and in control. Paul said something very similar in Romans 8:28. He said, *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”* God loved His people and He was working these things together for good. When you and I face difficult situations, it is helpful to know that God will work it out for good in our lives. It may not seem like good at the time. I am sure that Joseph did not enjoy the years he spent in the dungeon. But, he came to the realization that God meant it for good, and he was able to look beyond what his brothers had done to him. He was able to forgive them, and to love them with God's love. He told them, *“Therefore, do not be afraid.”* He comforted them and assured them that he would be good to them. He also told them that he would provide for them and for their little ones. Joseph comforted and spoke kindly to them. What a terrific response to people that had just lied to him, and asked for forgiveness under false pretenses.

4. Joseph Dies And Is Buried (Gen 50:22-26)

(Gen 50:22-26) *“Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. {23} Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees. {24} Joseph 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.” {25} Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.” {26} So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.”*

In this paragraph, time moves quickly. It covers about seventy years of time. Joseph and his father's household stayed in Egypt. Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons. He also saw the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, born on his knees. Scholars differ on what that means. Some say that this signifies that he adopted them as his sons. That does not make sense to me because they were in a good family and were already sharing in Israel's inheritance. Other scholars, like Adam Clarke, say that this signifies that they were educated by him, under his direction, acknowledging him as the patriarch of the family. Still others, like Matthew Poole, say that this signifies that he put them on his knees as a sign of affection, to show his love and delight in them. Of the various explanations, that makes the most sense to me.

Then, Joseph told his brothers that he was about to die. He encourages them by assuring them that God will take care of them and bring them up from the land which God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joseph is on his death bed and yet he is encouraging those around him to hold on to God's promises, and assuring them of God's faithfulness. His father, Israel, was the same way. He blessed all his sons with the appropriate blessings and then breathed his last. The Apostle Paul was the same way. Paul's second letter to Timothy is about passing the torch. He told Timothy that he had finished his course (2 Timothy 4:6-7), and now he was giving Timothy a final charge and encouragement. I believe that he was passing the torch to the next generation.

When Jacob was dying, he told Joseph that he was about to die, but God would be with him and bring you back to the land of your fathers. He is building up Joseph's faith. He was assuring him that God would fulfill the promises He had made to them. He was passing the torch to the next generation.

(Gen 48:21) "Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers."

Joseph is now in the same place in his life that his father had been. Now it is his time to die. Now it is his time to pass the torch. He tells his brothers and the next generation, "*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.*" That is exactly what his father had told him. He is also passing the torch. Jacob and Joseph were men of faith and they are encouraging the next generation to be men of faith. Both of them are mentioned in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews. We read in Hebrews 11:21-22, "*that by faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.*"

(Heb 11:21-22) "By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff. {22} By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones."

I was really glad to see Sarah, Jacob, Faith, and Chad at the Bible Intensive last Friday night. I get really excited about families and children coming to our church. They are the next generation. Let me say it directly to the children and youth. You are the next generation. At some point, I will be passing the torch. As some point all of us will pass the torch to the next generation. You are the ones that will carry it. You are the ones that God will be fulfilling His promises in. The time to become men and women of faith is not later; it is now. The time to train for the race is not later, but now. I started preparing for the PGA Tour before I was ten years old. You cannot wait until you are an adult to prepare; you have to get vision and direction in your life and start preparing now. Israel and Joseph have done their part and they are reminding the next generation of God's promises. I remind all of you that God's Will and Purposes will be accomplished and fulfilled. Get in the race now. Don't wait until the torch is passed.

Israel and Joseph encouraged the next generation while on their deathbed. Their encouragement did not start then. I believe that it was their way of life. I believe that they encouraged and blessed others as a way of life, so on their death beds, they were doing what they were used to doing. The Bible tells us to encourage one another daily. We all need encouragement. All of us need to be reminded of God's faithfulness. All of us need to assured that God will be with us and

take care of us. One of the purposes of assembling together is found in Hebrews 10:24-25. We are to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, and to encourage one another, especially as the day draws near. Things are going to get more difficult in these last days and we need encouragement. The church should be a place where people come and get encouraged and built up. You can watch a sermon on TV, but you won't get fellowship and encouraged by others at home watching TV.

After Joseph encouraged his brothers, he made the sons of Israel swear to him that they would carry his bones up from there. Then, Joseph died at the age of hundred and ten years of age. Then, he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Conclusion And Applications

Introduction

- 1. Joseph Embalms Israel** (Gen 50:1-3, Gen 49:33, John 11:33-36, Luke 23:53-55, John 11:39)
- 2. Joseph and His Brothers Bury Israel in Canaan** (Gen 50:4-14, 1 Sam 15:22-23, Ps 15:1-4)
- 3. Joseph Deals Kindly With His Brothers** (Gen 50:15-21, Eph 4:25, Col 3:9-10, Rom 8:28)
- 4. Joseph Dies And Is Buried** (Gen 50:22-26, Heb 10:24-25)

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