

Genesis Ch. 50

Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 “¹To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: ²A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; ³A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up. ⁴A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.”

V: 1 Just as God had promised Israel, Joseph was there to close Israel’s eyes at the time of his death.

- Joseph had been blessed to spend the last 17 years with his father, plenty of time to catch up and have fellowship.
- A painful loss to Joseph, and no doubt to his brothers, but gain to Israel.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

- We grieve, just as Joseph grieved – but not for the departed, we grieve for ourselves because we miss those who have gone ahead of us.

We are told in the Bible:

Psalms 139:13-16 “¹³For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. ¹⁵My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

- As a child is conceived and made a living being by God Himself, God’s intent is that the mother’s womb would be a safe place. A place where as the child grows and develops, they are protected.
- There in the womb they are nourished and able to sense emotion, hear sounds, even see elements of light. They are in a safe, comfortable environment intended to prepare them for life outside the womb.
- While in the womb there is no way to understand or comprehend what life outside the womb would be like. A child’s entry into this world is shocking, maybe difficult, but absolutely necessary – they cannot remain in the womb forever.
- The next stage doesn’t seem nearly as friendly or protected as once again we are prepared to enter into a whole different world; eternal life, the intent being that we would spend that life with our creator.

- Just as when we were in the womb, we get glimpses and hints of what is to come, God's word prepares us, gives us the essentials – B-I-B-L-E; yet our minds cannot fully comprehend what it is that we would enter into.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 ⁹“But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. ¹⁰But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

- As Israel spoke of his redeemer in **Genesis 48:16** we know that he understood these things, as did his father before him and most likely his sons after him.
- Israel truly went to be with his fathers.

V: 2-3 Joseph commanded his physicians to embalm Israel.

- To this day no one knows the exact process; how the Egyptians were able to mummify the bodies of their nobles and preserve them so well.
- If we were able to sneak into the burial cave at Machpelah and search for the bodies of the patriarchs, we would only find Israel, who had been embalmed or mummified. The other patriarchs would simply have returned to dust by now.
- The embalming process was not easy, it took 40 days – and no doubt was expensive being reserved for the wealthiest and most powerful, as the Pharaoh's themselves.
- The nation of Egypt mourned Israel for 70 days. Whether they were empathizing with Joseph or truly honoring Israel – this is extraordinary.

V: 4-6 After the mourning period was complete Joseph approaches Pharaoh.

- Joseph has been second only to Pharaoh for 26 years, and he still remembers his position as being subordinate. He's going to ask Pharaoh's permission to leave Egypt and bury his father.
- Joseph doesn't approach Pharaoh directly; he speaks to a servant who speaks to Pharaoh on Joseph's behalf.
- Joseph re-assures Pharaoh that he will return to Egypt.
- Pharaoh grants Joseph's request.

V: 7-9 Joseph, all the servants of Pharaoh, and Joseph's brethren all go "up" to what would later be called the land of Israel to bury Israel, a very great company.

- A royal entourage or escort.

V: 10 Once at the grave site, they mourn for another seven days.

V: 11-13 The Canaanites saw the great funeral procession all the way from Egypt.

Abel = meadow, Mizraim = Egypt

- Israel's sons did unto him as he had commanded, they were faithful.
- Israel is buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, near Hebron.
- Israel was buried in "richness" and "communion" with the Lord.

V: 14 True to his word, they all return to Egypt.

- Israel lived for 17 years after he and his family entered Egypt.
- There were only 5 years of famine left in the land after they arrived.
- At this time, for the last 12 years presumably things have improved.
- Why didn't they return to the land of Canaan? God's plans still being worked out. (God hadn't told them to leave yet.)
- God spoke to Abraham in a dream that they would be slaves for 400 years until the iniquity of the Amorites was complete. (Genesis 15:16)

V: 15 Joseph's brothers are concerned that Joseph might still harbor resentment towards them.

- They are acting like the "sons of Jacob" as opposed to the "sons of Israel".
- Faith & fear are mutually exclusive terms.

1 John 4:18 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

V: 16 There is an assumption of deception on Joseph's part, that he was just acting nice to please his father – that somehow he wasn't genuine.

- Instead of going themselves to speak with Joseph, they send a messenger. What about their relationship?

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

V: 17 Here again is the admission / confession of their sin against Joseph.

- They had already covered this ground back in Genesis Ch. 45; Joseph had already explained that he understood that God had sent him ahead to preserve life.
- A frequent tactic of the enemy is to remind us of our past failures and sin.
- So often the battlefield is truly the mind itself.

The Psalmist declares:

Psalm 103:12 “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.”

- If he'd said that as far as the North is from the South, so far has He removed our sins from us.
- The distance between the North Pole and the South Pole is approximately 12,500 miles.
- When you head North, there is a certain point when you are no longer headed North, but you're headed South – or visa versa.
- While it would be good to be 12,500 miles from our sin – it is a distance that can be measured, traveled, comprehended.
- On the other hand, no matter how far you travel Eastward, you are still headed Eastward and can do so into infinity and beyond.

God's Word tells us:

Isaiah 43:25 “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

Ephesians 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

Colossians 2:13-14 ¹³“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; ¹⁴blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.”

- Testimony / doubting God's forgiveness – doubting God's word – in essence calling God a liar.

Psalms 119:105 “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“Joseph wept when they spake unto him.”

As Jesus prepared to raise Lazarus from the dead:

John 11:35 “Jesus wept.” – for the same reason; lack of faith.

At His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, as the crowds were singing hosanna!

Luke 19:41 “And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it,”

Jesus asks the question:

Luke 18:8 “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”

- He just wants us to trust Him.

V: 18 Again Joseph's brothers threw themselves down before him, looking for his mercy – we will be your slaves!

- Even though their sin had already been dealt with in Joseph's mind, the previous verse constitutes the first complete confession.
- True repentance always includes a desire to make restitution, to make things right.
- Here Joseph's brothers acknowledge their sin and offer in a sense to make up for it by offering themselves as slaves as a gesture of true repentance.

V: 19 Joseph repeats the command that Jesus most often speaks: “fear not”.

- Joseph asks the question: “Am I in the place of God?”

Romans 12:19 “Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, I will repay.”

V: 20 Joseph doesn't sugar coat the circumstances: he faces them head on. You intended it for evil, but God – intended it for good.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

- Often times people do things with a bad motive, but God is able to use it for His glory – and Joseph knows it. God turns things around!
- Joseph fully sees that God used his circumstances and trials for the good of his family and eventually the nation.
- At the same time Joseph went through several years of real suffering and testing before the good came out.
- Thrown into the pit, sold as a slave, 7 years in Potiphar's house as a slave, falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. 2 more years in prison, forgotten by the Butler, separated from his father and brother that he loved.
- Joseph could have escaped, he could have resisted God's will, he could have given into the temptation of Potiphar's wife, or to use his power under Pharaoh to exact his revenge.
- When we are in difficulties and trials whether of our own making, or imposed upon us we need to seek God's will and to trust in Him all the more.

James 1:2-4 “²My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

Isaiah 40:31 “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Isaiah 49:23b “... I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me.”

- Tragically, perhaps typically we jump out of the fire, we squirm and pull away from God's perfect will – which at times does involve suffering for Him – and we flee from the pain.

“God hasn't delivered me; it's been two whole weeks!”

Isaiah 55:8-9 “⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways saith the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Philippians 3:10 “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.”

Hebrews 6:15 “And so, after He had patiently endured, He obtained the promise.”

Sometimes we just need to:

Psalms 46:10 “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”

V: 21 Joseph truly ministered to his brethren; he comforted them, he re-assured them, and spoke kindly to them.

Like Jesus, Joseph is a good shepherd:

Isaiah 40:11 “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

V: 22 Joseph live to be 110 years old.

V: 23-25 Joseph saw his grandsons, and his great grandsons – having been blessed with a long and prosperous life.

- Joseph made his children swear that they would bury him in Canaan, the land of promise.
- This was an act of faith which amongst other things landed Joseph in the hall of faith in Hebrews chapter 11:

Hebrews 11:22 “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.”

- Joseph knew what God had spoken to Abraham, and to Isaac, and to Jacob. Joseph knew that the children of Israel would be delivered from Egypt and would once again dwell in the promise land.
- Basically he made them swear, when you go, don't forget my bones!

V: 26 Joseph also was embalmed like his father and the Pharaoh's and placed in a sarcophagus.

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- Joseph had faith in the promises of God.
 - Joseph had wealth and great possessions in Egypt, but his heart was in the land of promise!