

On the Beginning

42. Jacob's Death

NOTE ESPECIALLY Genesis 49:33 - 50:13

The story of Jacob and his family is the main theme of the last half of the Book of Genesis. Then in the concluding paragraphs, he dies. In the simple account of Jacob's death we learn simple but important truths about dying and losing people to death. Perhaps the reason so much of Genesis is devoted to Jacob is the fact that he was the father of God's chosen nation, Israel. Of course Israel was his name! But every man is important in some way because God has a purpose for every life. And when a saint of God dies, it is a big event (Psalm 116:15).

1. He Died.

The simple facts about Jacob's death are given in Genesis 49:33 - 50:1.

"And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people. And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him."

- a. He *"made an end."* The end of Jacob's life meant the end of his job on earth. Before he died, the Apostle Paul said,

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:" (II Timothy 4:7)

In other scripture passages, Paul explained how it is that the Lord brings about our departure when our work is done.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;"
(Philippians 1:21-25)

At this time he knew that he would not die because God showed him that certain people still needed his ministry. Only the Lord knows when our work is done, and at that time, He will call us Home!

- b. He *"yielded up the ghost."* This is the way the Bible describes death (See Matthew 28:50). Physical death happens when the human spirit leaves the human body (James 2:26). And the spirit, man's innermost self, goes somewhere for a conscious existence

in that place (Look up Luke 16:19-25).

- c. He “*was gathered unto his people.*” He went to where his family-members who had already died had gone. This phrase does not mean that he was buried in the family burial-place. That didn’t happen for many weeks (Genesis 50:13), but this happened right at his deathbed (Genesis 49:33). It is said that Abraham “*was gathered to his people*” when he died (Genesis 25:8). The same thing is said of Isaac (Genesis 35:29). This means that the spirit of the one who died went to the place where his saved relatives went. Revelation 5:9-10 seems to indicate that people in heaven are grouped by “*kindred.*” There really is a family reunion in Heaven when a believer goes Home.

2. They **Mourned.**

Genesis 50:2-3 begins the story of the grieving after Jacob died (actually it begins in verse 1). As we learned in Genesis 23, mourning for a loved-one is important. It’s not about sadness for the loved-one. If he is saved, he’s in a better place. Grieving is about acknowledging the loss of a significant life. It is a tribute to such a life when we grieve over losing that person.

3. He was **Buried.**

Of course, verse 4 down through verse 14 is the section that gives details about the process of burying Jacob’s body. For believers, burial of the body looks forward to the resurrection of the body. The Christian will rise again.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1Thessalonians 4:15-17)

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1Corinthians 15:51-55)

