

# The Story of Joseph

## *Rest Assured*

Part 58 – September 1, 2013



When the time came for Israel to die, he called for his son, Joseph, and said ...

“... when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried.” ... and Israel worshiped as he leaned [*bowed* (Strong's H7812)] on the top of his staff. [*Also, head of his bed, a.k.a. headboard* (H7218 & H4296)] – Genesis 47:29-31 NIV

He then blessed each of his 12 sons in a manner that perfectly portrays the Messiah, even calling out the name of Yeshua/Jesus!<sup>1</sup>

Then he gave them these instructions: “I am about to be gathered [*Curious. In Joseph's dream, sheaves bowed as they were gathered* (Gen 37:7)] to my people. [*In the underworld, Sheol, the pit,<sup>2</sup> a 'holding pen' Jesus called Abraham's Bosom* (Luke 16:22), which is kind of funny, because ... *bosom*] Bury me with my fathers in the cave [*den, hole* (Strong's H4631) *Curious. It's how threshed grain was stored – kept in the dark – to keep it cool*] in the field [*Curious! It's where grain grows, dies, and is harvested*] of Ephron [*the man who sold it to Abraham* (Gen 23:16-18); Ephron means ‘fawn-like’ (H6085); *Curious. Naphtali's prophetic blessing was that he'd bear beautiful fawns (i.e. words) by the Sea of Galilee*] the Hittite, [*descendant of Heth' (H2850), which means 'fear' or 'terror' (H2845) ... how curious*] the cave [*not curious; because, we've already talked about the dark, cold-storage*] in the field of Machpelah, [*it means double or portion* (H4375). *Curious, because of Jesus' double portion identity as Son of God and Son of Man*] near Mamre [*strength or fatness* (H4471); and it's kind of funny, because ... *mammary* and *bosom* ... which is kind of curious, because Jesus said He longed to gather His children as a hen gathers chicks to her breast under Her wings (Lk 13:34)] in Canaan, [*Lowland* (H3667)] which Abraham bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field. – Genesis 49:29-30 NIV



Remember the old TV show, “What's Happening?”

I remember an emotional moment that ended with Big Mamma, Mabel, pulling her daughter, Dee, into her bosom, and squeezing her, and saying “I love you.” And, Dee goes, “Mmph”. Mabel leans back and says, “What's that, honey?” Little Dee says, “Air!” That's how I picture our reception in Heaven, except, we won't need air.

<sup>1</sup> “I look for your *deliverance*, [*yěshuw`ah* (Strong's H3444), Jesus' name in Hebrew] O Lord.” (Gen 49:18)

<sup>2</sup> “I will go down to the *grave* [*sheol* (Strong's H7585: underworld, grave, hell, pit)] to my son” (Gen 37:35)

[Jacob goes on about the cave] There Abraham [*father of a multitude* (Strong's H85)] I picture that as the Lord] and his wife Sarah [*noblewoman* (H8283)] were buried, [I picture Sarah as the Lord, too; male and female were created in His image (Gen 1:27)] there Isaac [*he laughs* (H3327)] I picture that as the Lord; but, why's He laughing in the grave? Well, He has a secret] and his wife Rebekah [*the ensnarer* (H7259)] were buried, [He's ensnaring the enemy, trapping death, and rescuing His chicks] and there I buried Leah. [*Weary* (H3812). Hmm. Curious] – Genesis 49:31 NIV

All her life, comparing herself to her 'perfect' sister, Rachel; and, *never* measuring up. Always lacking. Always looking at what she could'a been, should'a been, wasn't, didn't, doesn't, dead.



But, Rachel ain't in that tomb! **The weary one finally finds in death, the intimacy and security that so eluded her in life.**

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." – Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

Do you find it difficult to talk about, or even think about death?



The world offers us three basic ways to approach it.

1) **Defy it. Mock it. Dare it to do what it must.** Joe Versus the Volcano. **Play chicken with death.** Stare into the void and jump.

2) **Embrace it. Romanticize it. Idolize it.** Death Metal. New Age. It's all the same. "*Party with Satan!!*" "I'm coming back as a snowflake." "Well, you both have a snowball's chance."

3) **Ignore it. Sanitize it. Sterilize it. Turn your eyes and look the other way.** "Ignore the men with the scythes, dear; they just want attention." It's very American, an idiosyncrasy of modern culture and medicine.

**These are all deadly weapons of the enemy to distract us from considering our own mortality and the fourth approach that only Jesus offers: Defeat it!** Defeat *death!* It's all about *da'feat*.

"The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites." [*Descendants of fear and terror*] When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, **he drew his feet up into the bed,** [He curled up and went out the way he came in: fetal position, ready to be raised, restored, and reborn] breathed his last and was gathered to his people. [*What's missing here?*] – Genesis 49:33 NIV

He "finished", "drew his feet up", "breathed his last", and "was gathered". In a word: "death". No mention! You see, **defying death isn't hope. Embracing death isn't hope. Ignoring death isn't hope. It's all about defeat. There's only one hope, and He has a name!**

Ever curl up with a good book? Curl up with a good friend? This is what we have in Jesus. Right now. Today. **You can curl up with God’s Word, the friend of sinners, and you’ll never die.**

[When Jesus’ friend, Lazarus, died] Jesus said to [Lazarus’ sister] her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; [as Lazarus had] and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” – John 11:25-26 NIV

**Scripture teaches that death is a bad thing. Wholly unnatural. An evil foe to be feared, yet faced, and defeated in Christ.** An invasive, nightmarish reminder of brokenness and separation.

Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him and kissed him. Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. [Joseph used his personal physicians to avoid the magic and mysticism (and dedication to the spirits of the underworld) practiced by the professional embalmers] So the physicians embalmed him, taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. – Genesis 50:1-3a NIV

True, but a bit misleading; it took 40 days to drain and dry the body, which is all Joseph needed. But, the deluxe pagan package included washing, oiling, canning (the organs), stuffing, resin coating, cosmetics, and wrapping with charms. 70 days give or take.



Embalming and mummifying figurines form Dynasty 21 c. 1085 BC, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days. – Genesis 50:3b NIV

No ancient culture could preserve the dead like those Egyptians! They knew they’d need a body after death, but they thought they had to supply it. And, they did their best to conquer death.

But, they didn’t. Couldn’t. Death remains a bitter curse to the unbeliever. **Do you see death as a conquered enemy? For the believer, death is a door, and the door has a merciful name.**

**Death has been transformed and transcended by life and light!**

When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh’s court, [But, not Pharaoh. Joseph’s grieving clothes are probably inappropriate to wear before Pharaoh. And, he might need help convincing Pharaoh to let him leave, for fear that he won’t return] “If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, ‘My father made me swear an oath ...

[dynastic fathers and personal oaths were revered in ancient Egypt] and said, “I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan.” [Pharaoh is going to have a hard time grasping why Jacob would give up a glorious tomb in Egypt for an obscure cave in ‘lowland’] Now let me go up and bury my father; [watch how he throws in a little promise to ease Pharaoh’s anxiety] then I will return.” Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do.” So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh’s officials accompanied him — the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt [following Joseph back into the Promised Land, to honor a Hebrew, Semite, shepherd (typically despised by Egyptians); what *can’t* God do?!] — besides all the members of Joseph’s household and his brothers [who sold him into Egyptian slavery; what *can’t* god do?!] and those belonging to his father’s household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen. Chariots and horsemen also went up with him. It was a very large company. – Genesis 50:4-9 NIV

Imagine Joseph’s emotions. First time returning home to Canaan. Deja’vu. Back in a caravan. Heartbroken. Devastated. Crying out to God and knowing he won’t see his father again ... in *this life*.

When they reached the threshing floor of Atad, [*‘thorns’* (Strong’s H329)] near the Jordan, they lamented loudly and bitterly; [Curious. They’ve brought Jacob to the *threshing floor of thorns* to lament the curse of death as Jacob is gathered up, like a sheaf of wheat, in God’s arms; the harvest is at hand] and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father. [Who had ended his life, leaning on his staff, and worshipping the Lord] – Genesis 50:10 NIV

**How we approach death directly affects how we approach life. Death is so much more than a medical battle and a time to say goodbye; it’s your moment to shine, and share.**

When Jesus leaned on the top of *His* staff, He laid *our* yoke upon His shoulders, stretched out His wings, and became more than a door; **He became the *hatch* through which His chicks are reborn.**

**Are you preparing to die well?** We only get one shot at it, you know! **You need to rehearse it.** Mentally prepare. Because, **you can’t live a true life until you *defeat* death through Christ.**

And this is where we have to close God’s story for today.