

# The Family of Abraham - Part 40—Disposing of the Bodies

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Preacher: Alastair Roberts

[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome back to this, the 40th in my series on the story of the family of Abraham. We have arrived at chapter 50 of the book of Genesis, the final chapter. We are nearly there folks, only a couple more episodes to go after this in which I sum up some of the themes of the book.

But let's get into the final chapter. The final chapter of the book of Genesis concerns the burial of Jacob in the land of Canaan. Then there's a reconciliation scene again between Joseph and his brothers, summing up some of the larger themes of God's providence within that situation. And then finally, we have an account of the rest of Joseph's life and his embalming in the land of Egypt. Once again, this chapter may seem to be devoting a lot of attention to superfluous matters. Now, we might think that the final scene with Joseph and his brothers is in some ways an important one. That maybe makes the cut for us. Maybe because we have that famous verse, chapter 50, verse 20, where God meant it for good and you meant it for evil.

And this sense of God's providence, even in situations where there is wicked intent, that that maybe has a place in the chapter. But why all this other stuff?

[ 1 : 21 ] Well, I want us to consider that. If we look at this initial scene with Jacob being buried in the land of Canaan, it's a very interesting passage.

There has been, on two occasions in the narrative leading up to this, a promise that Jacob has required his sons to make to him concerning his burial.

At the end of chapter 47, he says to Joseph, But let me lie with my fathers.

You shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their place. And he said, I will do as you have said.

Then he said, Swear to me. And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of his bed.

And then again, at the end of chapter 49. Then he charged them and said to them, I am to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham brought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place, etc.

[ 2 : 32 ] And this is a solemn charge. This is the last words of Jacob recorded to his sons. So there is that solemn charge to Joseph earlier on.

And in that solemn charge, Joseph is expected to put his hand under his father's thigh. This is a very solemn oath that he is taking. And he is expected to take that oath.

And then the brothers are charged as a group to bury him in the land of Canaan. Why this emphasis upon burying him in the land of Canaan? Because they have been given great property within the land of Egypt.

They have been given the land of Goshen. And they have been given it as a possession. They have been given ancestral holding there. This is not just a place for settlement for a period of time, that they can settle in the land for a period and just live as sojourners there.

They have been given possession in the land, the highest form of possession. This is something that enables them to live as people who belong to the land, not just as people who are staying there for a few years.

[ 3 : 41 ] Now, taking that into account, they have an increasing investment in the land of Egypt. And Jacob is concerned that they do not end up just getting lost and assimilating that.

They need to recognize that they have been given a promise concerning the land. And that is where their future lies, not in Egypt, but in the land of Canaan. Another thing to bear in mind here is that Joseph has two father figures in his life.

He is sent by his father, Jacob, after telling him his dream. He is sent to Shechem to find his brothers. And it is a dangerous mission, as certainly as it proves to be. And he is given special authority by his father and all these other things. But then he ends up going down to Egypt. He is taken into the house of Potiphar, ends up in prison, and then he is brought out of prison, and he is asked to interpret a couple of dreams. This kind of brings him back, the father theme returning. But the new father now is Pharaoh. Pharaoh gives Joseph a new name, Zaphonath-Paneah. [ 4 : 53 ] He gives him a new job. He becomes the firstborn of Egypt, the one who is second in command to Pharaoh himself. He is even given a wife by Pharaoh. So Pharaoh becomes the father figure.

And it would seem that Pharaoh is the chief father in Joseph's life. Now, his father, Jacob, has been left behind in the land of Canaan.

He doesn't seem to send him any word concerning his state. And it might be that he presumes that Jacob was, in some sense, conspiring for him to be taken by his brothers because of his ideas above his station on account of his dreams.

But now he has a new father. He's settled in the land of Egypt. He forgets the land that he has left behind. He calls his sons Ephraim and Manasseh because of the fruitfulness in the land of his oppression.

And then he's been caused to forget all his father's house. Think about that. When Jacob saw these sons, he would recognize in the name of these sons something about the alienation between Joseph and him and the land that Joseph had been brought up in.

[ 6 : 05 ] Joseph was seeming to put down his roots primarily in the land of Egypt. He had left behind the land of Canaan and was now at home in Egypt.

Likewise, his brothers, they've been given an ancestral holding. And they can settle down there. They can become quite comfortable. They can become part of Egyptian life. They can even have high positions of authority.

They can be the chief herdsmen of Pharaoh. They can be people who have positions of authority in his court like Joseph. And yet, Jacob knows that their destiny does not lie there.

And so he makes them solemnly swear to bury him elsewhere, to bury him in the land of Canaan with their fathers. And that is a declaration of the true place to which they belong.

Now, what else happens here? When we see this particular account, we should recognize that there are two sets of interests competing. And the two sets of interests are those of Pharaoh and those of Jacob.

[ 7 : 14 ] Now, Jacob is an important figure.

He's the father of the saviour of Israel. He's being given a state funeral. This is the best treatment you could imagine. There is 40 days of preparation of the body for embalming.

This is an important figure. This is like some royal figure that's being buried or that is being embalmed. And then there are 70 days of mourning.

Presumably, the days of embalming are part of those 70 days. 70 days of mourning. This is a huge event. And the whole destiny of Egypt is related to what Joseph has done for them.

And Jacob is the father of Joseph. And so this is a very important figure. But what is Joseph asking? What does Joseph have to ask of Pharaoh?

[ 8 : 17 ] Well, you know this guy, my father, who you've been preparing his body for embalming 40 days, having 70 days of mourning. Well, you know, before he died, he asked me and my brothers to bury him in the land of Israel, in the land of Canaan.

Now, we don't quite see the events of mourning having begun yet. That still awaits. The funeral hasn't yet happened. We're still waiting for this real event to occur.

And although you may think that he is the father of the saviour of Israel and all that sort of meaning, ultimately, he belongs to Canaan. He doesn't belong to Egypt.

He belongs to this foreign country. Now, imagine in some ways, for instance, if Prince Philip were to die and we're told that he has to be buried in Greece, some people might have their nose put out of joint a bit.

Well, surely he's the Duke of Edinburgh. He's someone who belongs to this country. And we should bury him here. He belongs in this country. Hasn't all these years that he's lived in this country, hasn't he really settled in?

[ 9 : 28 ] Doesn't he belong here? All the things that we've done for him. Doesn't he try and recognise, doesn't he recognise that this is his place? No. In the case of Jacob, there is that statement that Joseph is making to Pharaoh that is a challenge to Pharaoh's wishes.

The other thing to bear in mind is he wants to be buried in the land of Canaan. What's the purpose of embalming? Embalming is a very different sort of process from burial. It's in many ways the exact opposite.

It's designed to protect your body as a vehicle for the afterlife. Now, burial is designed to speed up the process of decomposition. It seems that they're at complete odds.

And so it's not surprising that Joseph approaches this rather gingerly. He doesn't talk to the Pharaoh until the end of the time of the days of mourning, the 70 days of mourning.

And he doesn't even speak to Pharaoh directly. Now, he's gone to Pharaoh directly on other occasions concerning his brothers settling in the land. But here he does not do so. Rather, he goes to the household of Pharaoh.

[ 10 : 41 ] It's as if the prime minister goes to the queen through some secondary figures in her household rather than actually talking to the queen directly in her consultation with the queen.

And so this indirect indirection and approach probably illustrates just how nervous Joseph is about this. He's asking for his father's body to be let go and to return to the land of Canaan.

It just seems like a pretty tall request considering all the things that the Egyptians have done. And in this, he has a certain thing to help him.

He has the oath that his father made him swear. Now, that oath put him in the position of having to do this, but it also gave him a statement that he could cling on to and bring towards Pharaoh, saying that this is not just something I feel my father would like.

He made me solemnly swear an oath. And so I'm bound here too. This isn't really my choice. This isn't really something that I just think is the best thing to do. This is something that I'm bound here.

[ 11 : 53 ] I really should do this. I've been told by my father that this is what I must do and it must go ahead. Now, Pharaoh's response is to permit this to take place.

Go up and bury your father as he made you swear. Now, it's probably a reluctant response.

Pharaoh isn't really keen about this, but it kind of defeats the purpose of embalming.

It casts some sort of shadow over the 70 days of mourning in Egypt. Aren't those sufficient? Is this somehow not adequate for this father of Joseph?

Why would Joseph want, my right-hand man, want to bury his father back in the land of Canaan? Hasn't he truly found a home here? These sorts of questions might be going through the mind of Pharaoh, but Pharaoh goes ahead with it.

He's fine with it in the end. And so Joseph goes up to bury his father and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house and all the elders of the land of Egypt, as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers and his father's house, only their little ones, their flocks and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen.

[ 13 : 04 ] So they all go up. Now, this may not involve absolutely every one of the adults. The little ones could include, it could be women and children left behind.

We don't know. Elsewhere, we have something similar, and we'll get to that in a moment, that suggests it might just have been the men. But, one way or another, they have this large funeral procession that leads to the land of Canaan.

And the way they go about it is an interesting one. They go up with chariots and horsemen, with a great gathering, and they come to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan.

Again, why beyond the Jordan? That's a long way round. That's not the way that you'd expect them to go. You'd expect them to go straight up towards Hebron, and you wouldn't go on the far side of the Jordan, because Egypt is on the nearest side of the Jordan, and Hebron is on the nearest side of the Jordan.

Why go the long way round? And then they mourned there with great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning of the Egyptians.

[ 14 : 16 ] Therefore, its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. So his sons did for him just as he commanded him. 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 bought with the field from

Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place.

And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who went up with him to bury his father. Now notice what happens. They go up with a grand funeral procession to the far side of the Jordan.

They wait there for seven days and then they cross over the Jordan. And the ones that cross over the Jordan are into the land of Canaan are Joseph and his brothers.

So it doesn't seem as if the Egyptians accompany them. It's only Joseph and his brothers that go to the land of Canaan and actually do the burial there. That might be because the Egyptians didn't want to be involved in the process of burial.

Whatever it is, there is a distinction made between the two parts of the funeral procession, the Egyptians and then the people of Israel.

[15:30] That they take this route, the same route pretty much as they'll take later on in the Exodus, suggests that there's more going on here. This is a foreshadowing of the Exodus journey, a foreshadowing of their entry into the promised land many years hence.

But yet this entry into the promised land has other things attached to it that are surprising. They have an honour guard that goes up with them. Egyptians with horses and chariots.

Now, this is something that we see later on in the story of the Exodus as they're pursued by the Egyptians, by these 600 chariots and horsemen.

But here they come as an honour guard. Here they accompany the body of Jacob as it's brought towards the land. And then they part ways, presumably, at the banks of the Jordan.

They cross over and... Joseph and his brothers cross over into the land and then they bury Jacob there. It seems as if there is a significant parallel here.

[16:43] Now, what could the meaning of this parallel be? The parallel and suggests this is the destiny of Israel, that they will ultimately be brought back to the land.

Their father, the one that bears their own ancestral name, Israel, is buried in the land. They must return there someday. That that is their true site of belonging. And one day they will have to go back.

Another thing that it suggests is that Egypt's role in the Exodus could have been different. And this is something that Rabbi David Foreman has argued at length.

If you read the account of the Exodus, at various points there are different requests made. So they were asked to go up to three days into the wilderness to have a feast, to celebrate, and yet he will not let them go.

At other points, after the eighth plague of locusts, Pharaoh's servants said, Pharaoh's servants bring Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and they say, Go serve the Lord your God.

[17:50] But who are the ones that are going? And Moses said, We will go up with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the Lord.

Then he said to them, The Lord had better be with you when I let you go and your little ones go. Beware, for evil is ahead of you. Not so. Go now. You who are men and serve the Lord, for that is what you desired.

So earlier on, they had asked to go up to sacrifice to the Lord in the wilderness. And at that point, it seemed as if it was only going to be the men.

And they weren't going to take their herds. They weren't going to take anything else. It was just going to be the few of them that were going to go up. But yet, later on, it appears that they're all going to go up, every single one of them, without exception.

And that change is a noteworthy one. It may seem that God's just tricking Pharaoh, but there seems to be a progression here.

[18:55] There is another way that the Exodus story could have turned out. They could have been accompanied by the Egyptians in much the same way as the Egyptians do here. Israel is God's firstborn son.

The point about that is not that Israel is God's only son, but rather that the firstborn son should lead the others, that Israel should go up out of Egypt, be led up by this honor God of Egyptians who prays with Israel, that they become part of the procession, they become part of the celebration.

Later on, we'll see that they are accompanied by a great mixed multitude, but that was not ultimately what could have been. It could have been that the Egyptians, Pharaoh himself and his

horsemen and his chief servants would accompany them and that they would all be part of this procession towards worship.

As you look through the plagues, you'll see in the events of the plagues that God is trying to get through to Egypt, that he is God. And that series of events is one that should persuade Egypt, not just Israel, that this is a true God, that this is the God above all and that they should serve him. Not just their gods of their petty domains within the land. One God of the amphibians, one God of the Nile, one God of the sun, etc.

[ 20 : 28 ] This is the God who's above all, who can control all these forces with power and precision. And yet, they do not respond. And so, a story that could have turned out very differently ends up having a negative ending as the honor God that goes out is not actually an honor God, but a pursuing party and they end up being drowned in the Red Sea.

So, this is a story that foreshadows the Exodus. Israel will ultimately be brought out of the land of Egypt and they will go into the promised land and they will be there much as their father was buried there.

But it also presents us with, in that foreshadowing, an alternative ending that could have been that Egypt could have joined them, that Egypt could have been part of this party.

Here is a Pharaoh who was asked a difficult request, a request that involved a son who had to prefer his true father over one that had acted as his father.

So, Jacob's wishes had to be preeminent over the wishes of Pharaoh. And Pharaoh submits.

Pharaoh recognises that Jacob, that Joseph is Jacob's firstborn son and that he should let that son go and bring his father up to bury him in the land of Canaan.

[ 21 : 52 ] And he submits. But yet, the later Pharaoh who does not know Joseph will not let the people go. Now, we can maybe see here some parallels between Moses and Joseph.

Moses is someone who becomes part of Pharaoh's household. He's taken in by Pharaoh's daughter. And yet, he, considering all the riches of Egypt, considers them of less value than being marked among the people of God.

These are competing claims. Whose firstborn is he really? Is he really going to be the firstborn of God? Is he going to be the one that leads the people up? Or is he going to be the one that sees his destiny as lying in Egypt?

These are the questions that are playing out in the Exodus story. But they're also playing out here. The challenge between two fathers competing for the firstborn son's loyalty.

And in this case, Joseph goes up. And Joseph provides a model for Israel later. And Joseph's Pharaoh provides a model that the later Pharaoh could have learned from.

[ 22 : 59 ] But he did not. He resisted. They go up and they mourn. And he's buried in the field, in the cave in the field of Machpelah. When Joseph's brothers see that the father is dead, they say, perhaps Joseph will hate us and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him.

So they sent messengers to Joseph saying, again, these are indirect exchanges, just as Joseph has sent messengers to Pharaoh, so they, the brothers, send messengers to Joseph.

In both cases, there are delicate dealings that need to take place. They feel that there is danger in this relationship could go wrong. Even at this late point, after all this reconciliation, there are certain requests that need to be made at the time of Jacob's death that could it all unravel once that linchpin of Jacob himself has been removed.

We saw in the story of Jacob and Esau that Esau planned to kill Jacob after his father Isaac's death. That was what he was plotting in chapter 27.

And so it would not be entirely surprising that with the father out of the way, the honour done to the father and the funeral taking place, now the father is out of the way, the coast is clear for vengeance to take place.

[ 24 : 17 ] Joseph can actually enact vengeance upon his brothers. And they send messengers! They send messengers to him saying, before your father died, he commanded, saying, thus you shall say to Joseph, I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin for they did evil to you.

Now please forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father. And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Again, this brings up painful history. Painful history that is clear has not truly been set to rest.

There is still some lingering fear and division within the family. But yet, Joseph wants to put this to rest. If we look at that statement that is made, it's interesting that they talk about your father. Not our father, your father. And please forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father. That he has in some way a closer connection with Jacob than they do.

He also has a closer connection with the God of Jacob than they do. They have a relationship that in some ways works through him. He is the firstborn. He is also that prophetic figure that has the blessing that has the blessing of the God of Jacob.

[ 25 : 36 ] That God has formed his covenant, the covenant destiny of the people primarily lies upon Joseph's shoulders. And so they must deal with him. He is in some ways their Moses.

And that presents a painful situation for Joseph. This history is brought up again and it has not been fully resolved. But Joseph says to them, Do not be afraid for am I in the place of God?

But as for you, you meant evil against me but God meant it for good in order to bring it about as it is this day to save many people alive. Those verses maybe remind us of what we see earlier on in the book of Genesis.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil there is good and evil mentioned. There is taking the place of judgment, the place that belongs to God and there is death and life involved.

Now the purpose of Joseph is not to play God, not to repeat Adam's sin, not to take the forbidden fruit.

[ 26 : 37 ] Rather, he submits to God and he knows that God meant it for good even if they meant it for evil. And the whole purpose of God's work was that life might be the result.

And so this is a very important scene. These things are set to rest. They're also set to rest in a way that reminds you once more that God was behind all of this, that this was not something that just happened.

God had this purpose throughout. And we see similar statements in chapter 45. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here for God sent me before you to preserve life.

And three more times. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you and the earth. And again, so now it was not you who sent me here but God and he has made me a father to Pharaoh.

And then to say to the father Jacob, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me, do not tarry. God's involvement throughout all of this. And at this late point in the story, we're also seeing a summary of greater themes of the book.

[ 27 : 50 ] Of greater themes of divine providence. Now, the book of Genesis does not contain after its earlier chapters many events of grander miraculous character.

Certainly not to the degree that we might see later on in the story of the Exodus or in the story of the Gospels. What we do see is God's sovereignty in history.

And the way of experiencing history that recognises that God is in charge of what takes place. That no matter the evil intent of the people around you, that God holds the events of history in the palm of his hand.

And these are miracles of a kind that are viewed primarily retrospectively. That as you look back on this history, you can see that God was involved throughout. And all the intents of human beings as they worked themselves out and tried to drive history forward in their chosen direction, were all ultimately under the sovereignty and overruling of God himself.

And so Joseph, as he takes that posture, he is able to first of all act in a righteous way that puts his life in God's hand, recognising that he is not ultimately the primary author of his destiny.

[ 29 : 06 ] God is. God is. And so as he serves God, he can be faithful even when it would seem to lead his story into a dead end. Ultimately, God is the one who is going to write this story.

The other thing it enables him to do is to forgive his brothers, to recognise that there is a higher hand involved in everything that has taken place to him, that he is not ultimately a victim of malicious forces, but he is one who is held in the hand of a heavenly father who has guided him through all these treacherous waters, through all these plans and conspiracies of the people around him, all these people that tried to bring him down, all these events that befell him.

Every single one of those were ultimately overruled by God. God is involved in every single one of those events. And so he recognises God's involvement and that enables him to forgive.

Now, we mentioned in the previous chapter that Joseph, the events that happened to Joseph were probably known to Jacob. And he speaks of these as he speaks about Joseph holding on to his bow, holding the bow firm and not releasing the arrows against the archers that shot at him. And this expresses some of the will that Jacob had towards Joseph, that he would not avenge himself. That willingness not to avenge himself is something that ultimately comes from the fact that he knows that God is in control of things, that this is God's story, not ultimately one that depends upon him.

[ 30 : 45 ] Now, I don't believe that Jacob actually said these words to the brothers. Rather, they are trying to do anything to save themselves at this point. And they come to Joseph and they bow down and say, you're servants and everything like that.

But that's not how Joseph wants to relate to them. They're his brothers. And that relationship with his father is one for them to enjoy now as well. That he is the firstborn who is going to bless, they're going to be blessed with him.

In the same way as ultimately, Israel is the firstborn of the nations and all the nations should be blessed with them. At the end of this book, we're also seeing a theme that we saw at the very beginning of our study in the story of the family of Abraham.

All the nations would be blessed in Abraham. Now, here we see Egypt that has been blessed in the seed of Abraham and Joseph and Jacob and his family.

And they follow Jacob out of the land of Egypt and celebrate his funeral and they mourn for him. And they lead him in an honour guard to his burial place.

[ 31 : 51 ] This seems that it's an initial fulfilment of what God will ultimately do. As the nations that have been torn apart by the events of Babel, the nations that we see in chapter 10 and 11, the 17 nations that have formed after Noah's children, from Noah's children, ultimately these people will become united and they'll become united around the seed of Abraham.

Abraham. So this is again drawing our minds back to earlier themes within the book. Now therefore do not be afraid, I will provide for you and your little ones. And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

So he dwells in Egypt, he and his father's house and he lives 110 years. Now living 110 years, there seems to be some sort of numerical significance here.

So as we look through the ages of the patriarchs, there's Abraham who's 7 times 5 squared, 175. Then there's Isaac who's 5 times 6 squared, 180. Then there's Jacob who's 3 times 7 squared, and so he's 147.

[ 33 : 15 ] And now Jacob is 1 times 5 squared plus 6 squared plus 7 squared. And so we see an order of 5 squared associated with Abraham, 6 squared associated with Isaac, 7 squared associated with Jacob, and then all of those numbers together associated with Joseph.

And this is something that we see more generally in the book, that there is a progression from one to another and they build upon each other stories. The destiny of Abraham is being played out in Isaac and Jacob and Joseph in the same way as the destiny of Isaac is played out in his son Jacob and then later on in Joseph.

These are cumulative stories that they build upon each other. We also see a different progression. Abraham is 7 times 5 squared.

Isaac is 5 times 6 squared. Jacob is 3 times 7 squared. And then naturally, 1 times 5 squared plus 6 squared plus 7 squared is Joseph's age.

110 is also a significant number in Egypt. So these are all numerical significances that probably a number of the initial readers of this text might have noticed if they looked deeper.

[ 34 : 38 ] He saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The children of Machia, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on his knees. The suggestion being that he adopts those children, his grandchildren, his great grandchildren, as his own, much as the grandchildren of Jacob, Ephraim and Manasseh, were adopted as his own.

Joseph said to his brothers, I am dying, but God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land, 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 110 years old and they embalmed him and he was put in a coffin in Egypt. So he's put in a coffin in Egypt, he's embalmed, but his body is waiting to be brought out.

One day he will be led out of Egypt, much as his father was, and he will be brought into the land of promise. This is something his father enacted in Exodus event beforehand.

The burial of Joseph will take place in the actual Exodus. So in chapter 13 verse 19 of Exodus we read, 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 here with you.

[ 36 : 08 ] Now, that reference to a solemn oath, taking an oath from the children of Israel, again, this is similar to what Jacob did to Joseph and his brothers.

He took a solemn oath from them and so Joseph takes a solemn oath from his brothers. He will go in the same direction. He truly belongs to the land of Canaan and after he was separated from there in chapter 37, he's not gone back but he will go back one day and he will go back as all the people go back.

And so as we read the story of the Exodus, the story of the Exodus is the story of asking for Joseph's bones to be released, of that firstborn son, Joseph himself, that he should return, that that firstborn son of Joseph might be allowed to go back to the land.

This maybe helps us to see more of what's taking place in the story of the Exodus. And so there are elements of this story that casts light back onto the whole of the narrative that proceeds.

There are themes of leaving a particular location. It started off the story of Abraham with him leaving his father's house and going to a land that was promised.

[ 37 : 24 ] And here we have being in a land outside of the land of promise, but bearing that promise and in hope, giving instructions that he would one day be brought up.

Again, as we read the book of Hebrews, this is referenced in the great accounts of faith. By faith, Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel and gave instructions concerning his bones.

This is the event in Joseph's life that stands out as an account of faith. And once again, we need to pay attention to it for that reason. He knows that the exodus is one day coming.

All the events that have happened to him in the land of Egypt, all the way that God has blessed him there, he still recognises that this is not his true home, that he belongs in the land of Canaan and that one day Israel and his bones will arise up from that.

And this is a statement, Israel is the body of Jacob, that body of people that belong to Jacob one day they'll be brought. They are called the children of Israel and now the children of Israel will one day be reunited with their father as they are brought up to the land of Canaan.

[ 38 : 39 ] There is a lot more that we can explore here but this sets up the story for what happens next, the story of the exodus. Maybe in a future series I'll get into that but in the next couple of days I'll sum up some of the themes and then this will conclude the series.

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