

Genesis 47:27–31

“The Significance of Christian Burial”

What was so important to Jacob to have Joseph swear to him before his death? Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. Genesis 47:27–31 reviews for us yesterday’s morning sermon. In these five verses, we learn that even with all its blessings, this life is a short, hard sojourn by comparison to what we will have in the resurrection; that it should be important to us to be buried and that it be with believers; and that we ought to testify to the importance of this both before men and also in worship unto God.

Monday, March 15, 2021 • Read Genesis 47:27–31

Questions from the Scripture text: How long did Jacob live where (v28)? How long was his life? What time drew near (v29)? Whom did Jacob call? What did he tell Joseph to do? What did he want Joseph to promise? What does he call his prospectively dead body in v30? With whom does he wish to lie? What does he want Joseph to do with him? Where does he want Joseph to bury him? What does Joseph promise? But what does Jacob ask him to do in v31? And what does Joseph do? How does Israel conclude the conversation?

God had surely gone down to Egypt with Israel (cf. v27a, cf. 46:4a) and made of him a great nation there (v27b, cf. 46:3b). Yet for all of this blessing, v28’s tacking seventeen happy years onto the 130 of v9 hasn’t changed that these are the days of the years of a short, hard pilgrimage by comparison to what God has promised.

Indeed, Jacob has need of that precious hand that will close his eyes (cf. 46:4c)—but in this case for swearing an action (v29) in keeping with God’s own steadfast love and faithfulness in the greatest of the promises: that He would still be with Jacob to bring him up again, even after he dies (cf. 46:4b).

However God has blessed Jacob in this life (and, indeed, it has been great!), it still pales in comparison to the blessing to which he looks forward in the resurrection. There are bodies laying in a cave in Canaan awaiting that resurrection. And Jacob’s body, which will still belong to him but more importantly to the Lord, must be carried up to lay down and wait along with them (v30).

That’s why when he calls Joseph to him, to talk about arrangements, he isn’t focusing on the management of this massive wealth or multiplied family—surely logistical challenges and real concerns! No, his focus is upon what to do with his body, because it is his final testimony to his family and to the world about what he values and where his hope lies (cp. 49:29–33).

This solemn, swearing ceremony (v31a) is about making sure that they bow their head and worship (v31b) in response far more to what is going to happen with their bodies after they die than all of the good that they enjoyed before it.

God is with you to bless you now. Surely that is a great promise. But how you think about what to do with your body when you die should be a testimony that you consider it an even greater promise that He will be with you to resurrect you unto everlasting glory. More than any amount of wealth or position, this is the legacy that a believer should leave to his children and his church!

When you worship, to what blessings do you respond? What do your plans for your dead body say about this?

Suggested songs: ARP116AB “How Fervently I Love the Lord” or TPH159 “Abide with Me”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

Genesis 47 verses 27 through 31. These are God's words. So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt and the country of Goshen. And they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years.

So the length of Jacob's life was 147 years. When the time you're near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers.

You shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place. And he said I will do as you have said, Then he said swear to me. He swore to him. So is there about himself on the head of the bed.

So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent heart. They heard yesterday in the sermon.

That here in this passage the Holy Spirit is reminding us that God is fulfilled his promises to Jacob remember when Jacob was on the way down to Egypt and God appeared to him that bear shaver and he said he would go with him not to be afraid to go down to Egypt because he would go with him and he would make of him a great nation there and he would bring him up again and Joseph's hands and would close his eyes.

So the Lord has gone down with Jacob with Israel to Egypt verse 27 says, so Israel went down dwelt sorry says around the land of Egypt in the country of Goshen so God has gone down with him to Egypt there in the best of the land. That country of Goshen and the best of the land those two things have been joined together for the last couple of chapters so that part of the promises kept and then it says they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly so God has made of him a great nation there that to you that part has been kept and the other parts of the promise that remain are that God would bring him up again and that Joseph's hand would close his eyes.

So that is remaining and Jacob is looking forward to those two things now the order in which that's going to happen is actually reversed because sorry Jacob is looking forward to those two things the order in which those two things happen is reversed because first Joseph's hand will close his eyes when he dies and then after he dies his body is going to be brought up and his body will still belong to God God will bring him up again.

God will still be with him. And. Act when his body has laid in its grave in the cave of Mac Fila God will still be with him when God brings him up out of the earth. Of course in the day of resurrection God will still be with him. And so there's two parts of the promise left to be kept when God has finished keeping all of the promises to you that belong to this life that you'll never leave you in forsake you that he has begun the good work in you will.

Bring it to completion even until the day of Christ Jesus and the part of his making you more and more holy and applying to Christ to you that belongs to this life when your fruitful labor as we heard from Philippians 1:22 through 26 yesterday when that is completed and so the purpose for your life as has been fulfilled and the days written in his book for you are all completed.

He will not yet. Be done being with you. He will not yet be done keeping his promises to you. In fact, he will just have begun your body will still be united to Christ. God will still be with you. Your soul will depart I'd be perfected and pass into glory.

Your body will rest in the grave until the resurrection. And this is actually the greater part of the keeping of his promises to you. And even when you compare that perfect holiness in Seoul, To perfect holiness in soul and glorified body and when you compare the time between your death and resurrection to the everlasting time after your resurrection you find that the keeping of God's promises to you in his blessing you in Christ is actually much greater from the day of resurrection on even than it will be as wonderful as it will be but even then it will be from the time that you die until the resurrection when you join.

That congregation that assembly of the souls of the just made perfect that we hear about and Hebrews chapter 12. So it's because Jacob is still looking forward to the resurrection and he is looking forward to that as his the greater part the greatest part of God's blessing to him that Christ earns for us that the Holy Spirit can to proceed in verse 28 to say and Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years.

Seventeen wonderful years. With Joseph probably Jacob would say the best years of his life he said the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty seven years and supposing that he was brought into Pharaoh's presence at this point and supposing that they had the same kind of interview that they just had a 19 verses ago in verse nine.

Pharaoh might have said how old are you? And he might have said the days of the years of my pilgrimage are 147 years few and evil. Have been my days because by comparison to the days that are to come and everlasting glory. 147 years is not a free shibling longer than a hundred and thirty years by comparison to infinity and perfected in souls so that you are sinless and glorified in body and nobody able to sin against you because all that is sinful has been cast into hell and only all.

Days being in the immediate presence of God's glorious and favorable presence towards you in Christ and with the holy angels and with all of the other perfected and glorified in soul and body saints. What days on earth? Are to be compared to that our day there are best days in this life our painful and hard and difficult so verse 28 reminds us that even these 147 even after these 17 extra years that were probably the best years of his life so far few and evil are the days of this life by comparison to that which God has promised.

Wonderful promise that God would go with him down to Egypt wonderful promise that God would make of him a great nation there, but infinitely better and infinitely longer promise that God would bring him up again. And so he calls for Joseph and he calls for Joseph's hand when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand.

His hand is supposed to do up. Close his eyes when he dies that is part of the promise that is remaining but that's not what he asked for he says, please put your hand under my thigh that's a swearing ceremony that we saw earlier back in chapter. That was 24 when Abraham was sending the oldest servant in his house to go find a wife for Isaac and he was going to make him swear the to the mission and he had input his hand under his what the New King James translates as and most English translations translate as thy he wants Joseph to do something far more important than close his eyes.

Because after Jacob is dead and Joseph closes his eyes. Joe Jacob won't be done with his body yet. God won't be done being with Jacob and his body yet that body will still be Jacob and it will rise again on the last day and it is important to Jacob where the body will be until then and where the body will rise on that day and with whom his body will be until then and with whom his body will rise on that day, and so he says, please.

Do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in there burial place. This life however long it is however good it is however short it is, however hard it is is still just a pilgrimage a temporary journey in this world in which the Lord Jesus is with us and which he blesses us much in which he assigns us fruitful labor like Paul said if I remain in the flesh, it will be fruitful labor for me and yet it's still few and hard days by comparison to that which is to come.

And therefore it matters what is done with our body at our death those who have the hope of the resurrection and that's basically another way of saying Christians. For Corinthians 15 when the apostle is talking to them and he's concerned because some of them do not believe in the coming resurrection of our bodies and are not hoping in the coming resurrection of believer's bodies, he starts out.

I deliver to you first of all as a first importance. Christ, Jesus died for our sins, according to the scriptures and was raised again on the third day according to the scriptures. And was witnessed by many and so forth and then he goes on and he spends one of the longest chapters in the whole New Testament reasoning for the resurrection of the dead of the body the resurrection of the body for the believer because of the resurrection of the body of Jesus and that when our bodies will be resurrected, they will be like the resurrected body of Jesus and the glory of that and the hope of that and he says if you don't hope that way then you are to be pityed.

More than anybody else on earth and so he ties it directly to the Gospel. He says, this is what Christians believe this is what Jacob believed and because Jacob believed that way he wanted to be buried but he didn't just want to be buried he wanted to be buried in a particular place and he wanted to be buried with particular people now for us that particular place is primarily about the people because we know that in the in the

new.

Covenant administration of the covenant of grace under the Lord Jesus the church has found in all the nations of the earth and that the whole new heavens and new earth are inheritance with Jesus and so this passage does not teach us to find a plot in Palestine and to make sure that it's prepaid so that we can be buried in Canaan.

What it does teach us however is that it is important to be buried and that it is important to be buried with Christians that those with whom we hoped to rise again and those with whom we hope to enjoy and glorify God forever and ever in a new heavens and a new earth are those with whom we ought if we can to lie down and so first this life is just a pilgrimage second it's important that we be buried and with whom we are buried and third it's important to.

Give that as a testimony as a solemn serious joyous testimony that others would know that we want to be buried that others would know that we want to be buried with Christians that others would know that we are sure and glad that we will rise again with those believers and that this is the great part of the blessing that Jesus has earned for us and that's what Jacob is doing here, he not only has Joseph promised.

To him and it's a great testimony to Joseph that this is what Jacob cares about the most and is looking forward to the most but he doesn't just have Joseph promise which he does at the end of verse 30 he says, I will do as you have said he has Joseph swear it reminds us of a much Saturday when Jacob was stealing Esau's birthright and Esau promised and and Jacob said no no lentil soup until you swear to me or red stuff we don't.

Know if it was lentil soup, maybe this beat soup. No red stuff until you swear to me and he made him swear but here it's not that there was any doubt of what Joseph would promise it was Jacob adding this testimony of the seriousness the importance the weightiness of burial and not a burial in and of itself, especially of the hope of the resurrection of the truth of God's promises that he will be with us even after we die the truth of that promise not just that God would be with him.

As he goes down to Egypt but that God would bring him up again. And so as a testimony of the seriousness of the hope of the resurrection. And as a testimony, not just to Joseph as he makes Joseph Swear, but also a testimony before God so Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed and we know that that Hebrew word with other vowel pointings that come you know, more than 2,000 years after this is written would make the word staff and he.

Ill love in 21 tells us that actually Israel bowed his bowed his head about himself on the head of his staff and it ends and tells us what the bowing was about and worshiped. And so there's this testimony before his son of the the waitiness of the hope of the resurrection that is being displayed in the importance to be buried and where and with whom and then there's this testimony to God.

Of how great God's mercy and salvation and generosity is in the blessing of everlasting life with him in the new heavens and the new earth not just with perfected souls but with glorified bodies. So these are the three things that we need to come away from this passage with first that this life is just a pilgrimage.

Second the importance of being buried and with whom we are buried as a testimony to our hope in the resurrection and then third that the that we ought to give testimony of this importance both to those to others who are alive by the seriousness of the arrangements that we make and also to God as we come to him and worship in response to what Christ has earned for us.

In the everlasting blessedness of the new heavens and the new earth body and soul. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven we thank you for the teaching of this portion of your word, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to review it again from yesterday's sermon and especially for those who were ill and we're not able to gather.

But we thank you most of all for yourself and your son your spirit. How Christ has come and died for us because you loved us and gave him for us and you have sent your spirit to stir up our faith. Thank you. Lord for the certainty. Of the resurrection.

We're grateful for all of the other blessings that belong to this short life. We're grateful for the amazing blessings that belong to the short time between when we pass from this world and the day of resurrection Trulia God, these blessings are not small and we do not wish to be ungrateful for them.

But we pray oh God that you would help our minds and help our faith so that we would see how much how infinitely longer is the blessedness that comes from the day of resurrection. We pray that you would help us therefore to have a hope that is really bound up in that unending ages those unending ages of infinite blessedness in soul and body in the new heavens and the new earth.

We're so dull of mind and heart of God that we are not readily impressed and the right way by the greatness of that blessing help us a lot. We pray to rejoice and hope over especially that part of your promises that Christ is secured for us and help us Lord to be able wisely and graciously and joyously to give testimony to that hope by.

Our desire to be buried and our desire to be buried with believers. So we may come up with them in the last day. And we pray Lord that. That you would help us not only to have this testimony before men, but that you would stir up our hearts towards you that we would live with gladness and thanksgiving and confidence that is tied to our coming resurrection and that we would respond to you with worship like Jacob with his head bowed upon his staff worshipping you make us we pray whether in state and times of worship like this one or when we're offering our bodies as living.

Sacrifices to you to remember that those self-same bodies, you will make for us out of them resurrection bodies like Christ's. And so make us to live with that hope and with that gratitude unto you be asking Jesus. Amen.