

Genesis 50

1. After Joseph finishes mourning for his father, what does he have done?

What does it mean to you that these physicians were in Joseph's service?

What can you learn about the Egyptian's practice of embalming?

How long does it to embalm Jacob?

Following the period for embalming, for how many days did the Egyptians mourn for Joseph?

Why would the Egyptians mourn for Jacob seventy days?

Some scholars say that the standard mourning period for a pharaoh was 72 days. What does it tell us about Jacob that they mourned for him 70 days?

2. After the days of mourning are over, to whom does Joseph make his appeal?

Knowing Joseph's close relationship with Pharaoh, why did he not make his request to Pharaoh in person? (See Esther 4:1-2.)

What does Joseph ask of Pharaoh?

Look carefully at Joseph's words at the end of verse 5. What might be one of Pharaoh's concerns about letting Joseph go?

Why would Pharaoh believe Joseph?

What can we learn from this episode about the importance of our word?

What can we do to so that our word would stand even before a pharaoh?

What is Pharaoh's answer?

3. Look back at Jacob's life, especially chapters 27-31. How would you describe Jacob's reputation during this time?

Now we can see how God had honored Jacob. When Joseph leaves to bury his father, who goes with him?

What does it tell you that ALL of Pharaoh's officials accompanied Joseph?

Can you think of anyone living who would garner such respect?

Who are the only ones not to accompany Joseph when they return to Canaan?

This question is pure speculation. However, based upon verses 7 & 8, how many do you think are in this procession?

4. What is a threshing floor?

What can you learn about the location of Atad, near the Jordan?

Jacob was buried at the cave in Macphelah near Mamre. Can you locate this on a map?

Look at a map. Would a direct route to Mamre have required them to cross the Jordan?

What can we learn about their journey from this?

5. What does Joseph do once they cross the Jordan?

Why does Joseph observe a 7-day mourning period if they already mourned for 70 days in Egypt?

How do they mourn for Jacob?

What conclusion do the Canaanites reach after observing the procession?

What name is given to this place and what does it mean?

6. Verse 12 tells us that Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them. How important is it for your children to obey you? Please explain.

Why do you think his sons did all that Jacob had commanded?

Jesus equates obedience with love. What do you think Jesus meant by this?

After Jacob's burial, they all return to Egypt. We know the brothers have some doubts about Joseph. Do you think they have a choice as to whether they should return to Egypt or not?

7. Joseph's brothers now have some concerns. What is worrying them following the death of their father?

What does it tell us about them that they are still worried about Joseph?

Are their concerns justified? Please explain.

Look carefully at the word they sent to Joseph. What message do they send Joseph?

According to the brothers, what do they tell Joseph were Jacob's wishes?

Do you believe they are telling Joseph the truth? In other words, do you think Jacob said this? Please explain.

If these were Jacob's concerns, why did he not say something to Joseph personally?

8. The brothers' fears tell us much about how difficult it can be to believe we have been forgiven. Have you ever felt like the brothers when you approached God?

Why are the brothers having such a difficult time believing they are truly forgiven?

How was Jacob able to forgive his brothers so completely?

How would you explain God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ?

9. What was Joseph's reaction when he received his brothers' message?

Why do you think Joseph wept?

How do you think Jesus feels when we doubt His forgiveness?

What did his brothers do when they saw Joseph crying? Why do you think they did this?

10. Now comes one of the most amazing statements. What does Joseph tell his brothers in verse 19?

What do you think is the "place of God" to which Joseph refers?

What does Joseph say in verse 20?

What does this statement tell us about God's plans for our lives?

This statement shows a great deal of maturity on Joseph's part. In what way has Joseph grown the most?

Why does Joseph tell his brothers not to be afraid?

Joseph looks at God's plans instead of at his brothers' actions. Doing so helps him forgive them and move on. How can looking at situations from God's perspective help us forgive others?

What does Joseph tell his brothers he will do for them?

How do you think Joseph's words affected his brothers?

11. Joseph lives to be 110. What are some of the things Joseph witnessed in his lifetime?

Look at verse 24. As Joseph nears death, what does he tell his brothers?

How can Joseph be so sure God will come and take them to the promised land?

Joseph will no longer be there to help or protect them. How do you think the brothers were feeling?

What oath does Joseph have his brothers take?

Additional questions

12. What have you learned from this study of Joseph?
13. Many scholars see similarities between the lives of Joseph and Jesus. They say that Joseph is a forerunner of Christ, showing us what was to come. Assuming this to be true, list as many parallels between the lives of Joseph and Jesus.
14. Why would God give us someone like Joseph to point the way to Christ?