

### **“...and Joseph wept.”**

We come to the end of the time-span covered by the Book of Genesis, from before the first earth-day, to about 1630 BC, when Joseph died.

From start to finish this Book contains information that is historical fact. It is despised by unbelievers because of this – for if the information is fact, it means God is real and actually exists! The enemies of God cannot allow this to be so, and they concoct many lies to combat the truth. In the millennium starting 2000 this includes films, books and movements that try to crush the truth, from the mythical ‘De Vinci Code’ to homosexuality, socialism rife, to political correctness; schools taking churches to court for teaching creation, to films like ‘the Passion of the Christ’. All have the sole purpose of carrying out Satan’s will, to remove God’s word from the world’s consciousness, or to make it look foolish.

This opposition to God is gaining momentum and shows us that the end must be coming closer. It has been prophesied that toward the end there will be an increase in such godless activity, when perversity, violence, and human inventions try to bury Christian, godly faith and teaching. No sane man or woman can deny this is now happening!

One thing has pervaded the Book of Genesis from start to end – God’s Almighty and all-powerful predestination. Every chapter depicts the elective authority of God the Creator. Nothing can remove that, not even the vilest of movements invented by men and Satan.

The later half of Genesis in particular reminds us time and again that God is in control, not mere men and their half-witted, often vile and violent desires. Yes, we might suffer the consequences of their awfulness, but God is still our God and He still elects us to this or that present and future... all of which are taking part continually in eternity, where time does not exist and what we do tomorrow has already occurred in the eternal heavens.

God is never surprised by what we think, say and do. He knows everything. The terrible time we had yesterday, the disgusting things done to us today, and the evils attacking us tomorrow, are known to Almighty God. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph... all found this to be true in their lives. They knew God intimately simply by believing His word. By believing they came to meet with Him in person. Abraham even saw the Lord Jesus Christ face-to-face along with two angels!

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This is the reward of all who truly believe and accept the yoke of the Lord!

Genesis is true. Get that fact impressed in your mind. It is history, not myth. It is a record of God's dealings with early men, and those He chose to be His sons on earth. We might call their faith primitive – but they did far more than most of us ever do. They believed and talked with God. They met Him. They spoke with angels and walked with the Lord. If that is primitive then I will request a transfer back in time!

We see in this Book how Adam and his small family divided up quite quickly into tribes and nations, all of whom had to be killed by God because of their multiple and multiplying sins – all except for Noah and his family. On the earth at that time were millions of people, but only a handful were allowed to survive. The Old Testament speaks of the people of God as being a remnant. This is true, even today. Very few are believers and will enter heaven. Many cannot accept this truth, but it remains the truth nevertheless. Most of the people you have ever met and continue to meet will not enter heaven. *You* were chosen, elected, predestined, to survive the final Judgement intact. You, from amongst all those around you, will reach God's home. The rest will perish.

This is the message of Genesis – God the Creator controls all men, whether good or bad, saved or not. The majority of people will not just die; they will resurrect and go to a place devoid of God and peace, and will remain there forever and ever. As you read this, remember the immense and eternal privilege you now enjoy, for most of us, even the saved, continue in this life as if it were our only habitation! We work and play and tend to forget the God Who is behind everything. Like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, you will one day come to the end of your natural life. Not because your body says so, or science, or illness, or age, or even death. Your breath will stop at precisely the time set by God, not before or after. Then comes the Judgement, when even believers must explain their sinful actions to a holy, all-powerful God.

Reflect, then, on this Book of Genesis. It is hard fact, and remains so, despite the machinations of evil and corrupt men who try to reject it. Does belief in Genesis make you look foolish in front of your peers? So what! Why are you bowing to fellow human beings and their stupid theories? God is in control and when you accept that fact you will soar!

### Verses 1-3

1.

“And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

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2.

And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

3.

And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days.”

Joseph’s response to his father’s death was natural. He clasped and kissed him and wept. That day, there seems to have been no consultation with his family – he ordered his Egyptian doctors to embalm Jacob with the necessary spices and ointments.

The Egyptians took 40 days to embalm Jacob, and a further 30 days mourning, making 70 days in total, such was the Egyptian regard for the great son of Jacob, Joseph. Only after this period did the gruelling 500 mile funeral journey back to Mamre take place.

### Verses 4-6

1.

“And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

2.

My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

3.

And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.”

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After the 70 days, Joseph sent word to Pharaoh with a request, to accompany his father's funeral retinue to Mamre for burial. He promised to return to Egypt and so Pharaoh readily gave him permission.

### Verses 7-9

1.

“And Joseph went 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,

2.

And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen.

3.

And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.”

Joseph prepared for the journey... this was no ordinary caravan, but a company consisting of family, servants, and royal Egyptian officials: “all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt.” This was, without doubt, a state funeral procession, with a huge number of official mourners! “It was a very great company.”

The smaller children were left at home in Goshen, with the flocks and herds. Oddly, some commentators think this was a requirement of Pharaoh, as a kind of guarantee that Joseph would return. This, however, is an unwarranted interpretation of very straightforward arrangements. Small children could hardly be expected to travel 500 miles across barren land, for a funeral. And whoever heard of thousands of sheep, goats and cows accompanying a funeral procession?

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The caravan included a large number of royal soldiers on horses and in chariots. It is also likely that foot-soldiers would have marched with them, too. The sight must have been awe-inspiring to all who saw it, especially those in the Middle East, who, possibly for the first time, witnessed Egyptian soldiers and chariots crossing their lands, albeit in peace.

### Verses 10-14

1.

“And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

2.

And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond Jordan.

3.

And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them:

4.

For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.

5.

And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.”

The huge caravan of family, soldiers, horsemen and charioteers finally reached “the threshingfloor of Atad.” This was located between the Jordan and Jericho, to the west of the river; a flat area of ground outside the city walls of Atad (‘bramble’ or ‘thorns’), used for threshing grain. It was probably chosen because of this feature, enough to accommodate so many people.

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Once settled, the mourners began to mark the occasion. The mourning would have been led by official mourners or *caphad*. In early times these *caphad* were 'professional' mourners who were hired to wail continually over the dead as the words "sore lamentation" indicate.

(Lamentation, *micepd*, is rooted in *caphad*). It was 'sore' wailing, *kabed*

– 'heavy' and plentiful to the point of being burdensome or even oppressive. It would have combined high-pitched blood-curdling yells and screams, and very low bass groaning, all uttered for hours on end, for seven days.

The Canaanites in the city above, and in the surrounding area, all realised this was no ordinary mourning. They discovered what it was all about and gave it a special name, such was its importance – Abelmizraim ('Abel Mitsrayim, or 'meadow of Egypt'; which could even be loosely translated 'fertile valley of the Copts').

Jacob had obviously given more instructions than we have recorded in Genesis, for we read that "his sons did unto him according as he commanded them." From the threshingfloor, the great company travelled on to Mamre to find the family sepulchre, the cave in the field of Machpelah. The burial over, Joseph returned to Egypt, along with all who had come with him to Mamre. But it was not without trepidation on the part of his brothers.

### Verses 15-21

1.

"And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

2.

And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

3.

So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

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4.

And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

5.

And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

6.

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

7.

Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.”

The brothers must have deemed Joseph to be a very good actor, for they thought his kindness toward them previously was only a superficial thing employed to impress Jacob. Thus, the brothers all waited for Joseph to show what they thought was his true hand of vengeance. Filled with anxiety, they sent a message to Joseph, who had returned to his state duties. They reminded him of Jacob’s request, that he should forgive the brothers, though they had done such harm. (A fact not recorded earlier in scripture).

Unlike his brothers, though, Joseph was genuine. The message upset him to the point of tears, not because he disliked them, but because they should think he would harm them after the death of their father.

At last the brothers, whose own guilt made them think as they did, came to Joseph and finally fulfilled the dreams of young Joseph: they bowed to the ground in obeisance and said “Behold, we be thy servants.” They were not now bowing to their brother, but to the pontiff of all Egypt. Yes, a pontiff, but also a brother! He could have been smug, but he was immediately touched

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by their show of reverence, and dismissed their statement. 'Do not fear me – I am not God!' He told them that only God could demand such obeisance. He was their brother, who loved them though they had done him harm. It was now time to get on with their lives, free of the fear of retaliation!

Joseph reminded the brothers that their act of treachery was not a product of their own minds and hearts, though low. No, their actions were determined for good by God, and led to the physical salvation of nations. 'I will now feed you,' he said, 'and your entire families.' Then he reassured them and spoke in gentle words.

As I have discovered in my own life, many have done me harm – even fellow Christians – but, I cannot rest in the knowledge that their attacks were personal or even directed. Their badness was used by God for my good, and for the furtherance of the Gospel and doctrine. Sometimes, such badness was used by God to force me to get on to the right path! So, all circumstances must be welcomed as ultimately from God, for if we do not give such welcome we are admitting to random forces in charge of our lives. This cannot be for the sons and daughters of Christ! Our lives are in His hands, not in our own, or in the hands of those committed to do us ill and damage. (This is why our plans for the future must be God's plans, not our own).

### Verses 22-26

1.

"And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

2.

And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

3.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

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4.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

5.

So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.”

After that, Joseph and his family lived long lives – he in his city as Pharaoh’s pontiff, and his brothers in Goshen, building a new life of plenty and wealth, in peace and harmony. Joseph died at the age of 110. Though we are not told, we may safely assume that when he died his funeral must have been mourned throughout Egypt. He was the wise and good man of God whose planning and work saved them all from destruction. Now he was gone, but his legacy carried on.

Joseph lived to be a great-great grandfather, seeing his two son’s children and their children growing up. The son of Manasseh, Machir (‘sold’), is mentioned. His mother was an Aramite or Syrian concubine.

When it came to the time for Joseph to die, he reminded his sons and their families that one day their descendants would once again leave Egypt to occupy the land promised to them by God. Like his father before him, Joseph made his family swear that when he died his body would be taken to Mamre to be buried with the patriarchs, at some time.

When Joseph died he, too, was embalmed. This process, as with Jacob, lasted 40 days. Then he was placed into a coffin in Egypt, to be returned to Mamre at a later date.

Joseph was one of those rare men. He was truly good. We read how his brothers thought otherwise. They did so not because Joseph did anything wrong, but because they had guilty consciences. One of the quirks of guilty men is that they think everyone else is just like them –

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perverse and sinful.

In modern days, the cess-pit known as Freudianism says that good men find perversity distasteful because they secretly love the thing they hate. What garbage! Unsaved men and women cannot fathom that good men hate sin because they have a new nature. They are new creatures in Christ, and hatred of sin is now part of that new nature. Can you say this? Can you agree that you hate sin? If not, seek help from your great God. Remember that the love, or even the secret allowance of even the smallest of sins, is the start of moral and spiritual cancer in your soul. Many evils have been made 'normal' in our world today, and the majority of Christians remain silent in the face of gross indecency, filth and violence. Christians remain silent, in the hope it will just go away. But, it never does.

The patriarchs were no namby-pamby goodies! They were hard-nosed men of character and backbone. They lived in peace, but knew how to stand and fight battles when they had to. Today's Christians are seemingly weak-kneed and jelly-spined. They hide until the perceived evil passes. But, it never just passes – it grows in strength and hits out even harder.

Genesis is a book of tough facts. Accept them as they are, for they are true. Unsaved men will always try to dissuade you of this, but do not let them. Behind *you* is the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. Behind those who lie are the millions who died in the Flood, and who are hell-bound, including Satan. So, who is on God's side?

Genesis is a call to witness to God's truth and to salvation. Salvation for a very few was determined in eternity, before God made the world. It is therefore fixed and cannot be changed. That being so, no man can choose his own salvation. And this is exactly what we find in Genesis – predestination and election, either to heaven or to hell. That is why the Book of Genesis must be taught as it is, regardless of the cost.

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