

# Unlocking The Mystery & Treasure Of My Inheritance

## Lesson #21 Joseph's Bones Speak From The Grave

Joseph was 17 when he was sold as a slave and taken to Egypt. He lived there 93 years; During this time, Joseph saw to it that the Jewish people were cared for and protected. He became a grandfather and great-grandfather.

Joseph was a man of great character who lived an extraordinarily faithful life during times of extraordinary duress. After a long period of suffering unjustly, yet never questioning, God vindicated him and raised him to an exalted position as Prime Minister of Egypt. Because of Joseph, many lives were saved during the famine, including the lives of his family. Therefore the future of the people of Israel was guaranteed.

In the end, Joseph had it all: incredible wealth, fame and power. His entire family joined him in Egypt and shared the best it had to offer. It would have been quite easy and natural for him and his extended family to feel very comfortable in that land, to not give the land from which they came another thought. Who needs Canaan when you have the best of Egypt at your command? But when Joseph was very near to the end of his life, he gave critically important instructions that would chart the course of his family for hundreds, even thousands, of years. In a bold act of faith, Joseph did something even greater than anything he had done during his entire life.

Joseph understood the importance of the covenant God had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob regarding the land of Canaan. Many actions of integrity could be cited as examples of his solid faith in God. Yet of all the events in his life, this sole action of his faith is what the Holy Spirit chose to record regarding the great faith of Joseph who was very concerned about his bones. This was cited as the most meritorious act of faith.

Hall Of Faith: "The Bones of belief" Heb. 11:22 "By faith Joseph, when he died, (1) made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and (2) gave commandment concerning his bones."

Question: What commandment concerned his bones?

The New Testament is the commentary on the Old Testament. Genesis 50 explains Hebrews 11.

Genesis 50:22-26 Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees. Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob."

Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here." So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

## *The Significance Of Joseph's Request For His Family And Descendants*

### I. How To Live Confidently

#### A. Faith Remembers The Unbreakable Promises Of God

Key Verse: 24 "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

1. Joseph, having received the same prophetic promise as his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, **KNEW** His Family Would Not Stay In Egypt.

Note: Divine Providence and the Protecting Hand Of God had brought them to Egypt.

Question: How Did Joseph KNOW God would bring them out? Promise ~300 yrs. earlier

Gen. 15:13-14 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. [Joseph's Instructions: Take Me With You!]

Adrian Rogers: Joseph said, "I wouldn't be caught dead here."

1. Joseph's request gives assurance these descendants will leave Egypt.

2. Joseph BELIEVED God's promise regarding the inheritance. His instructions to carry his bones to the Promised Land are distinguished by God as the greatest indication of Joseph's faith. Note: His bones rest as a silent reminder and a perpetual testimony to the faithfulness of God's abiding promise to Israel.

Consider: Faith is not a shallow emotion we work up by ourselves. It is not an optimistic "hope-so" attitude. True faith is grounded on the infallible Word of God.

Root of Joseph's faith = A Promise From Almighty God. I believe it and I am to act on it.

He had saturated his mind and will in the promises and word of God.

Rom. 10:17 Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Faith is getting a promise from the Word of God and "reckoning" it to be true.

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for

Hope = glorious assurance based on the Word of God. 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus = Blessed Hope

John 14:3 If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself.

Heb. 6:19 Our Hope is like an Anchor - Hope is the anchor of the soul.

Adrian Rogers: Your faith will not exceed your love, knowledge and understanding of the Word of God.

Dwight L Moody: The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge. It was given to change our lives. He took 2 continents and shook them for God. Moody said he prayed and prayed for faith. Then he found Romans 10:17. He stopped praying for faith and began to saturate himself in the Word of God. The Faith Came!

Joseph said: You are surely coming out! How did Joseph know after centuries they would be coming out? His faith is rooted in the Word of God and resting in the unbreakable promises of God. True faith always leads to obedient actions.

## B. Faith Relies On The Unshakeable Power Of God - Gen. 50:24

### 1. Faith displayed contrary to evidence

a. When Joseph said this, there was no reason they should leave. They have it made in Egypt. They are in a place of favor and in comfortable circumstances.

2. His faith was not shaken because of fickle emotions. Don't base our faith on how we feel about the situation.

Martin Luther: Satan > do you feel that Jesus has saved you? No, I KNOW he has saved me.

Consider: It is remarkable that Joseph had any faith at all.

1. He had lived apart from his family for many years.

2. A powerful false religion in Egypt surrounded him.

3. There was nobody in Egypt we know of who could encourage his faith.

4. If Joseph had resorted to excuses people use today for rejecting God's promises, he would have ended up a pagan.

5. His "believing" brothers had treated him cruelly.

6. God had allowed him to experience severe trials.

7. The people he helped forgot him in his hour of need.

Note: Joseph's faith, though tested, did not falter.

All he had to go on were his dreams, but he clung to the promises of God.

## C. Joseph's Faith Was Not Eroded by Long Delay

1. It had been ~300 years since God made that promise.

A. Joseph said take my bones: not my body!

Don't let circumstances, emotions or delay keep you from believing the Word of God.

Time cannot erode God's Promises:

Hab. 2:3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Ancient wicked city = Tyre = their ways were a stench in the nostrils of God.

God prophesied: I Am Going To Destroy Tyre.

Ezek. 26:3, 7-8, 12-14 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

And THEY shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and THEY shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and THEY shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD.

When God spoke this, Tyre was a mighty city. Time passed.

Nebuchadnezzar laid siege against Tyre [mainland city] for 13 years.

1. He cut off the flow of supplies into the city.
2. In 537 BC he finally succeeded in breaking the gates down, but found the city almost empty.
3. The people of Tyre knew he was coming, slipped out of the city and moved all their wealth and possessions by ship to an island  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away.
4. He destroyed the mainland city, but he gained no plunder.
5. He left the walls, houses, temple, etc.
6. The new city offshore continued to flourish for another 250 years.

God had said the stone, walls, etc. would be dust and cast into the sea, but there it stood.

Many discounted the Biblical account.

Note: 1. Ezekiel stated many nations would come against Tyre in 26:3.

2. Ezekiel stated Nebuchadnezzar would build a siege mound, slay with the sword and do numerous other things. [26:7-11] [Several elements of the prophecy were fulfilled.]

3. However, in 26:12, the pronoun shifts from "he" to "they."

4. Ezekiel predicts "THEY" will lay the stones and building of Tyre in the "midst of the waters." The action shifts from Nebuchadnezzar back to the many nations.

Ezekiel 26 predicted 250 years in advance How Alexander Would Conquer Tyre.

215 BC, Alexander The Great was coming through and marching in conquest. He had an army, but not a navy. He asked the seafaring people of Tyre to help him. They refused to help him. Alexander told his generals to build a causeway out to the island. With what are we going to build it? Take these walls, timbers and ruins and build the causeway. They scraped the former place like a bald rock - all thrown into the sea. Alexander marched his armies out against Tyre.

Historical records show that ~2,000 of the men in Tyre were crucified. >30,000 people were sold into slavery. Note: The secular, historical records coincide precisely with Ezekiel's prophecy. "For him to have accurately "guessed" this situation would be to stretch the law of probability, beyond the limits of absurdity. His acutely accurate record of the facts remains as outstanding and amazing proof of the divine inspiration behind his prophecy."

What had God said? 1. Many nations would come against Tyre.

2. The inhabitants of the villages and fields of Tyre would be slain.

3. Nebuchadnezzar would build a siege mound against the city.

4. The city would be broken down and the stones, timber and soil would be thrown "in the midst of the water."

5. The city would become a place for spreading nets.

6. The city would never be rebuilt.

"The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine."

God's Promises Are Not Eroded Away By Time, Emotion Or By Circumstances!

Do you believe God has the power to do what He says He will do?

Some are asking: Is Jesus really coming again? Bible predicts people will have this attitude. II Pet. 3:3-4, 8 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Joseph said: God will SURELY bring you out. Joseph had the promise & he knew the Power.

D. Faith Results In The Unmistakable Peace Of God: Joseph has his children and grandchildren with him. No hint of panic! Stepping into glory in perfect peace!

Ex. 13:18-19 But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

Not only were the bones of Joseph taken out of Egypt, but they were carefully guarded during the wilderness journey for forty years, the transition from Moses to Joshua, the crossing of the Jordan and the turbulent conquest of Canaan. As the Book of Joshua closes, after the Land was conquered, and the territory of Israel was parceled out to the tribes, Joseph's bones were ultimately buried in their final resting place by his descendants in the town of Shechem.

Joshua 24:32 And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Three times in scripture, Joseph's resting place, Shechem, is mentioned, adding to the significance in the Lord's eyes.

Note: Shechem is a very important place in Biblical history.

1. It was the first place Abraham stayed after arriving in Canaan from Haran. [Gen. 12:6]
2. It was the first place Jacob stayed after arriving in Canaan from Padanaram.
3. Jacob purchased a plot of land there, built an altar to the LORD and called it, "God, the God of Israel."
4. Today it is called "Joseph's tomb." Stephen provides additional detail from Acts 7:15-16 to tell us that Joseph and his brothers are buried in Shechem. [Sons of Israel]
5. Joseph's tomb in Shechem where his bones still rest is a silent reminder of God's abiding promise to Israel; an irrefutable witness to God's irrevocable covenant with Abraham.

*Joseph's Bones Are Still A Hot News Item Today!*

1. Since the Jews have once again returned to the land, the bones are under assault. Why? They verify and shout from the grave: This land belongs to the descendants of Abraham.
  2. This tract of land was legally purchased by Jacob.
- Joseph's bones = signature of God on the title deed of the entire land grant to Israel.

3. Nablus [=Biblical Shechem in Samaria] is a "cauldron of anti-Israel hatred and Joseph-haters. It continues to be violently challenged by a large population of Allah-crazed bloodthirsty hostiles."

4. Certain acts of contempt strike at the very heart of God's purposes. Nothing less than the integrity of God's word is being assailed by those attacking Joseph's tomb.

5. October, 2000 = Violent Palestinian uprising began.

a. Nablus became one of the flash points of Arab rioting.

b. The site of Joseph's tomb in Shechem had long been protected by the IDF but was now targeted by the Palestinians.

c. In an attempt to placate Arafat, the IDF naively came to an agreement with the Palestinian Authority that the IDF would withdraw from Joseph's tomb in exchange for an agreement that the Palestinian police would ensure its safekeeping.

d. The very next day, mobs of crazed Palestinians attacked the structure housing Joseph's tomb, wreaking great destruction.

e. Another assault followed during the same fall Jewish holiday period in October, 2003.

f. Jews attacked at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. Palestinian police beat group of worshipers during unauthorized visit to Nablus shrine. It was torched overnight Thursday, Oct. 2015.

6. The Palestinians do not realize who they are taunting, deriding and defying. What they are doing is "tantamount to spitting on the throne of God; challenging Him to a duel."

Why all this fuss about his bones? Joseph could have built a monument in Egypt, had himself embalmed, surrounded by pomp, for his remembrance.

You don't find Joseph in the great museums. Joseph wanted to be a part of what God was doing. He knew that success, wealth, power and everything the world offers is so temporary.

Joseph is buried in an obscure grave in Canaan. He doesn't want a monument to pride; he wants a monument of faith that he believed God and is identifying with God's promise.

Dan. 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

John 5:28-29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

All will be raised from the dead. A resurrection is coming! We will have an exodus.

Phil. 3:20-21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

I Cor. 15:54-58 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Consider: Joseph's bones rest resolutely in the face of the hostility as a "clarion call of faith that resounds over those hills." They are a perpetual testimony to the faithfulness of God's promises to Israel.

1. His coffin in Egypt was a constant reminder to the Jewish people to have faith in God.
2. When their situation changed in Egypt and the Jews found themselves slaves instead of resident aliens, they could look at this "box of bones" and be encouraged.
3. During their wilderness wanderings, as they carried this "box of bones" from place to place, Joseph ministered to them and urged them to trust God and never give up.
4. Even though Joseph was dead, his witness lived on.

Stand On The Unbreakable Promises Of God  
Believe In The Unshakeable Power Of God  
Long Delays Do Not Erode The Promises Of God  
This Faith Results In The Unmistakable Peace Of God

John Wesley: God buries His workman, but His work goes on.

I John 2:17 He who does the will of God abides forever.

G. Campbell Morgan: Commit your life to God and be engaged in His work. Die knowing that you have started delicate influences, dynamic forces which will proceed through succeeding generations until they gather up the harvest of glorious result about the throne of God. The man of God has not finished his work in the world when they put him in a coffin.

What will be the message from my bones?