

THE TESTIMONY OF A COFFIN IN EGYPT

Gen 50:24-26 "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 swore to Abraham..... and ye shall carry up my bones from thence. So Joseph died... and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

Sermons are not always preached by human beings. We are told that the heavens declare, preach, or proclaim the glory of God. Jesus referred to the fowl of the air and the lilies of the valley as a lesson on the providence of God. When a lamb was sacrificed in the Old Testament it was a sermon on and picture of the coming Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.

GENESIS IT IS RECORDED THAT JOSEPH KNEW THAT GOD WOULD TAKE HIS FAMILY OUT OF EGYPT AND ASKED TO BE TAKEN WITH THEM:

Gen. 50:24-26

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.

Today a coffin in Egypt, which held the body of Joseph, is going to preach a wonderful sermon to us.

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1. IT TELLS OF OUR FAITH.

The first casual glance at the coffin impresses us with the vanity of man and life. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanity, saith the preacher; all is vanity," [Eccl 12:7-8](#). Here lies a great man in Egypt who is now but dust and ashes. There is no indispensable man, **none of us are so important that the world will stop when we stop.**

Joseph married an Egyptian and lived among these people most of his life, yet his heart was set on a different land. He was, as his forefathers, but a stranger and pilgrim on earth.

No doubt, the brethren of Joseph would have gladly carried the bones of Joseph up to the cave of Machpelah in Canaan as they did with Jacob when he died. But Joseph wished to remain in their midst in the coffin as a constant reminder of their hope of entering the promised land. He wanted his coffin to testify of his faith and hope to his people who were remaining in this strange land.

We all know of Joseph and his wonderful life of faith and trust in the Lord. His was a life full of ups and downs, a life of sunshine and shadows, yet he always remained faithful to the Lord. Many of our children are disappointed when they learn that the Messiah did not come from Joseph, but from Judah. However, Joseph firmly believed in the coming Messiah, the "Seed of the woman", who would crush the serpent's head. It was because of his faith that he chose to be buried in the cave with his forefathers, rather than to be buried with the great and mighty of Egypt. Like Moses, he chose God's people instead of the Egyptians. [Hebrews 11:12](#) states, "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

This description of Joseph fits every true child of God in the Old and New Testament. We have become children of God by faith in the Redeemer, either that He will come, or that He has come. Through faith in the Savior we have forgiveness of sins and we are promised eternal life in Him. We are, therefore, people of hope, we live in hope, and we die in hope.

2. IT SPEAKS OF OUR HOPE

Why was Joseph not immediately buried and why did he want his bones to remain in Egypt? He wanted to tell the Egyptians by his ever present coffin that his faith and hope were different than their heathen views on this subject. The coffin spoke of confidence in the resurrection of the body and for that reason he wanted, eventually, to be buried with his own people. The coffin also said, "I am positive that God will keep all the promises which He made to our fathers." God had promised the Holy Land to the seed of Abraham, and Joseph never doubted that pledge of the Lord. But there was much more to it than just the promise of a piece of land, the children of God should settle in it and worship the Lord there. From their seed the Lord would send the Messiah who would redeem the world. All who put their trust in the coming Savior would be blessed by the Lord, not only in this life, but also in the life to come. Joseph did not merely wish to be buried in the promised land, he hoped to be raised up from the dead and then be gathered around the throne of God forever. These were the promises and hopes which the coffin preached to the children of God so long ago.



There is some more hope attached to the sarcophagus of Joseph. This is just about the last sermon which the children of Israel would hear

through all those long years of slavery, and when sad and dark days would come upon them the coffin could cheer them with the message of hope. In trying times the coffin could say, "Remember Joseph and his faith and trust as he accepted the promises of God for a better land to come. God will keep His word and someday we shall be delivered from this bondage, and shall march to the promised land together." The coffin could continue to comfort them with this thought, "Just be patient under afflictions; remember I, too, am waiting to go out of this land." The day finally came when Joseph's bones were carried out of Egypt and his faith and hope were fulfilled. Now those same bones await in hope the great resurrection day when we shall see Joseph on the right hand of the Messiah, to be glorified forever. What a powerful sermon preached by that silent coffin in Egypt!

It is evident that the Bible has only one saving faith and only one hope. As stated before, the people of God in the Old Testament did not have a different faith than we have, the sole difference is in point of time, they believed in the coming Savior, we believe that He has come. Saved by faith in Christ, saved by grace is the song of the Old and New Testament.

The faith of Joseph is even more remarkable when we consider what little revelation he had compared to ours. It was hundreds of years later when Moses wrote the first books of the Bible, but what Joseph lacked in revelation he made up by an outstanding faith and trust in his Savior and Redeemer.

Some day we shall all be lying in a coffin. What will our coffin say or preach to those left behind? Will it say, "Here lies a person who rejected the grace of God in Christ and is now awaiting the final judgment of the lost?" Or will our coffin say, "Here lies a true child of God who put his trust in Jesus Christ the Savior and now awaits the great day when he shall see his dear Lord face to face forever in glory?" If the latter is the case, then our friends and relatives can say of us as they lower us into the grave — "This body in the grave we lay,

there to await that solemn Day, when God Himself shall bid it rise; to mount triumphant to the skies," (hymn 598). AMEN.

PRAYER. O holy and blessed Trinity, we thank Thee that Thou hast given us the faith of our fathers. Be with us as Thou wast with them and leave us not not forsake us not. Keep us trusting in the Rock of Ages that when our time of departure arrives, we may close our eyes with the brightest of hopes. Let us live and dwell with Thee and all Thy holy saints and angels forever and ever. Hear us, for the Redeemer's sake.

AMEN.