

The Death and Burial of Jacob and Joseph

Genesis 49-50

Introduction

- In Genesis 49, God inspires Jacob to give prophetic insights into the nature and future of his twelve sons.
- At the close of his prophetic utterances, Jacob gave final instructions for his burial (Gen. 49:29-32).

Instructions for **Jacob's** Burial

Genesis 49:29-33:

²⁹ Then he [Jacob] commanded them and said to them, "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which

Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah-- ³² the field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites."

33 When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

Joseph Buries His Father

Genesis 50:1-12:

¹ Then Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him and kissed him. ² And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. ³ Forty

days were required for it, for that is how many are required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days. ⁴ And when the days of weeping for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, ⁵ 'My father made me swear, saying, "I

am about to die: in my tomb that I hewed out for myself in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me." Now therefore, let me please go up and bury my father. Then I will return.'" ⁶ And Pharaoh answered, "Go up, and bury your father, as he made you swear." ⁷ So Joseph went up to bury his father. With him went up all the servants of

Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,⁸ as well as all the household of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's household. Only their children, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. .⁹ And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen. It was a very great company.¹⁰ When

they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and grievous lamentation, and he made a mourning for his father seven days. ¹¹ When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning on the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a grievous mourning by the

Egyptians." Therefore the place was named Abel-mizraim; it is beyond the Jordan. ¹² Thus his sons did for him as he had commanded them, ¹³ for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place.

- Joseph summoned medical men, who were fully capable of embalming, rather than the religious embalmers in order to avoid the magic and mysticism associated with their practices.
- This was Joseph's first trip back to his homeland in 39 years, and it's too bad it had to be for his father's burial. But he didn't linger in Canaan, for

- God had given Joseph a job to do in Egypt, and that's where he belonged with his family.



Mediterranean
Sea

Syria

• Damascus

The Cave of Machpelah

During the Time of Abraham

Arabian
Desert

Bashan

Dothan •
Shechem •

The Cave
of Machpelah

• Gerar
• Esek
• Sitnah
• Salem •
• Hebron •

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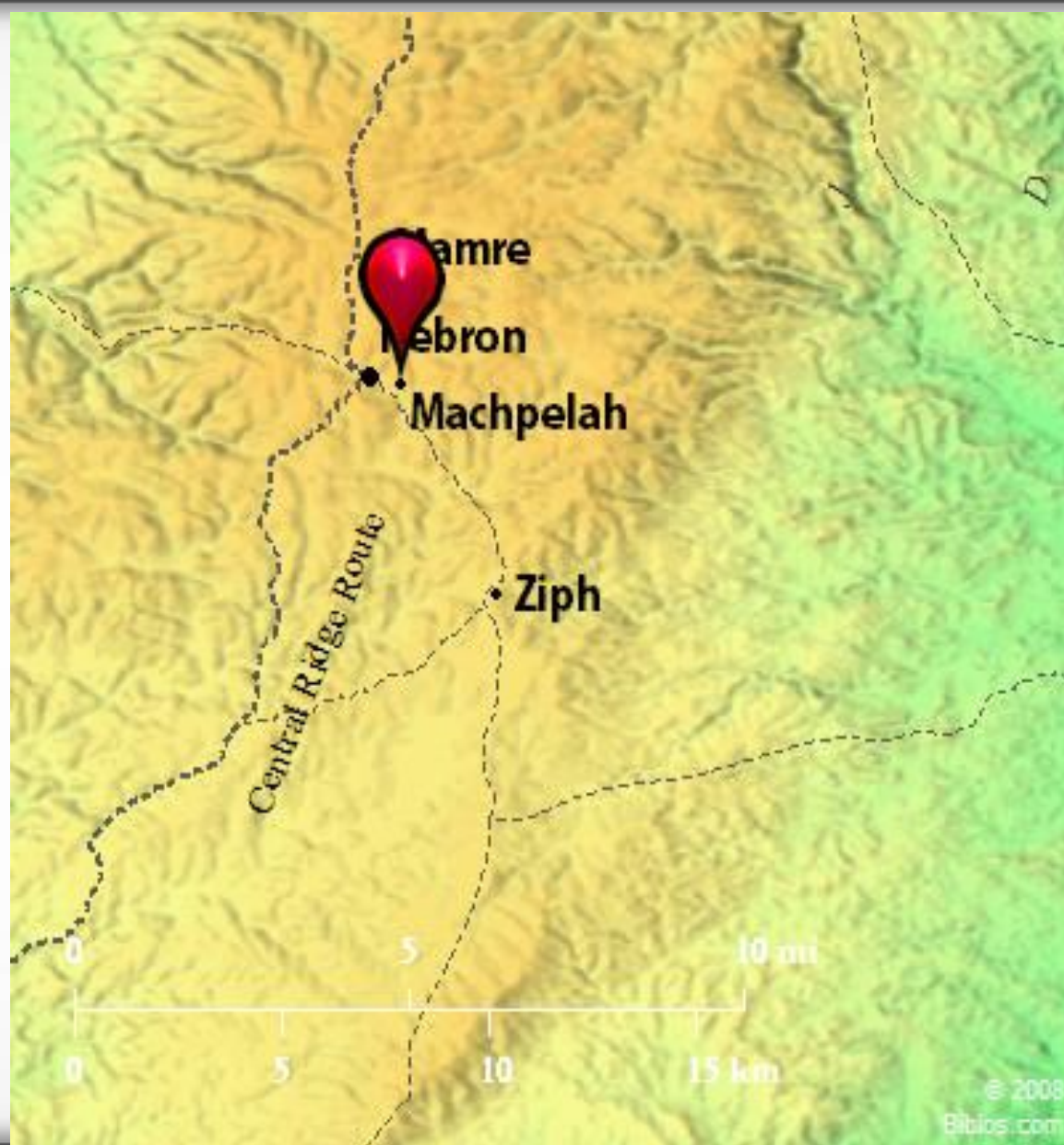
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Rehoboth •
Beersheba •

Edom

Beer Lahairoi •





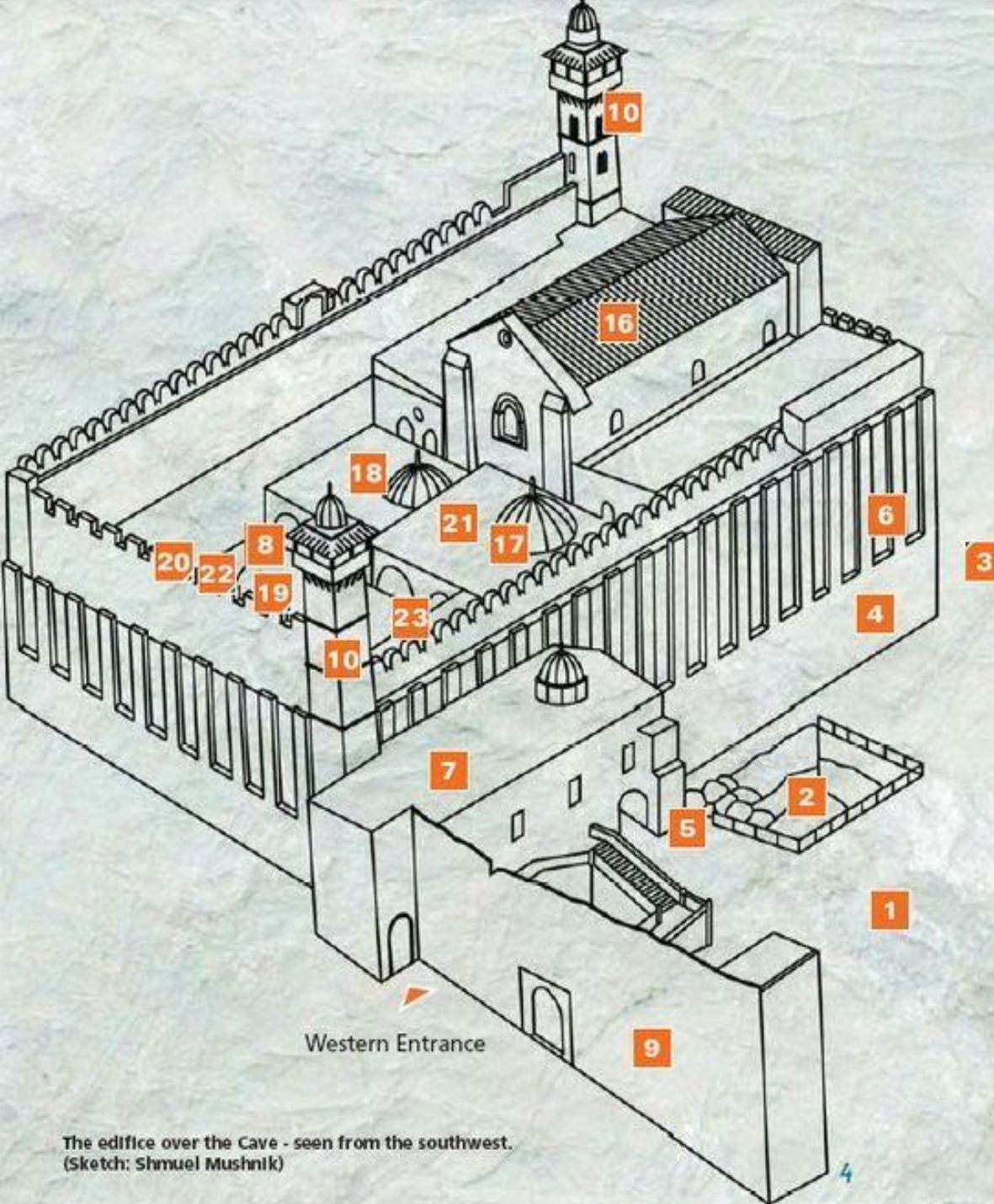


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1. Machpela Field - The large square outside the edifice
2. The Outside Cave
3. The Seventh Step
4. The Foundation, built during the Second Temple Period
5. The Arabic Annex - "Joseph's Tomb"
6. Second Temple Construction: "Cornrows" on the second floor
7. The Hall used for religious celebrations, study and prayer; Jewish entrance to the site
8. The Courtyard - Main Jewish prayer area
9. Crusader fortress wall
10. Minaret from the Mameluk period (14th century)
16. Isaac's Hall
17. Abraham's Chamber
18. Sarah's Chamber
19. Jacob's Chamber
20. Leah's Chamber
21. Synagogue - Abraham's Hall
22. Synagogue - Jacob's Hall
23. "Yeshenei Hebron" Synagogue
24. "Ja'ulia" mosque
28. Line connecting the wall with the ancient synagogue tiled roof
29. Baruch Nachshon's Artist Gallery and Rabbi Ashlag's yeshiva
30. The Tomb of Abner ben Ner
32. Gutnick Center

The edifice over the Cave - seen from the southwest.
(Sketch: Shmuel Mushnik)



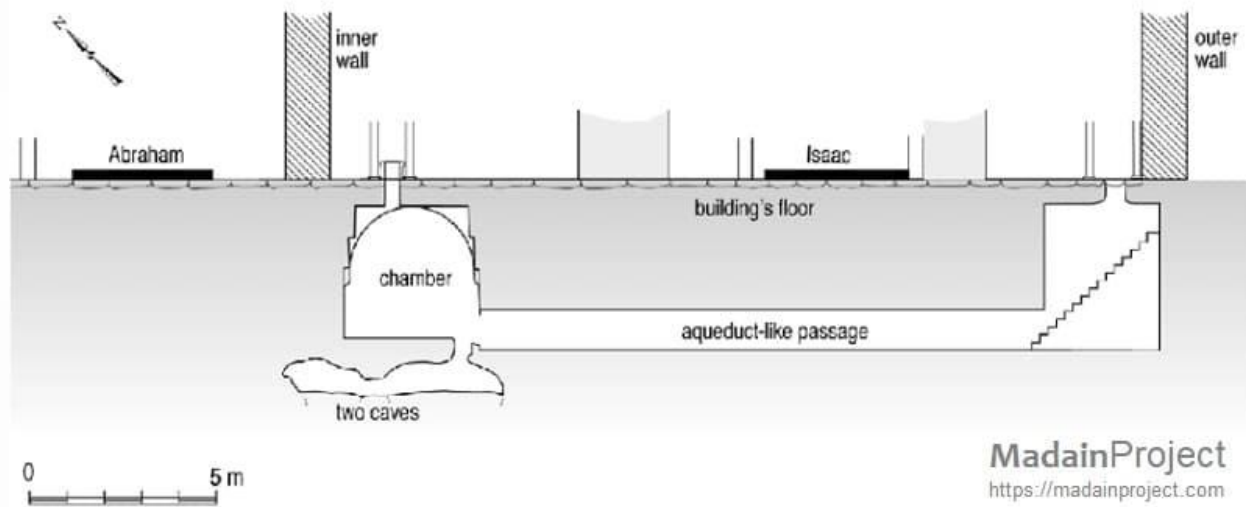
Tomb of Abraham



Tomb of Isaac



Tombs of Jacob (left) and Leah (right)



Side View



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Before fixing up the outside of the Monument

Joseph's Brothers Fear Revenge

Genesis 50:14-18

¹⁴ After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father. ¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that

Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.'" And now, please forgive

the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants."

- The brothers' guilty consciences reasserted themselves and caused them to seriously underestimate

- the genuineness of Joseph's forgiveness and affection for them.
- How did Joseph respond to their message? "When their message came to him, Joseph wept" (v. 17). He was deeply hurt that his own brothers didn't believe his words or accept his kind deeds at face

- value as true expressions of his love and forgiveness. What more could he have done to convince them?

Joseph's Gracious Response

Genesis 50:19-21:

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?" ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I

will provide for you and your little ones."
Thus he comforted them and spoke
kindly to them.

- Joseph illustrates the concept of
Romans 12:17-21.

Romans 12:17-21 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the

contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Joseph's Final Days and Death

Genesis 50:22-26:

²² So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years. ²³ And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. The children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were counted as

Joseph's own. ²⁴ And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." ²⁶ So Joseph died, being

110 years old. They embalmed him,
and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Summary & Conclusion

- Joseph was 17 years old when he was taken to Egypt (37:2), and he lived there 93 years, 51 of them with his beloved family near him. During those years, he saw to it that the Jewish people were cared for and protected; for God had a special work for them to do. He became

- a grandfather and then a great-grandfather!
- 51 years after Jacob's death, at the age of 110, Joseph died. He probably outlived his older brothers, but his own grandsons knew their grandfather Joseph's wishes regarding his mortal remains.

- Joseph's coffin in Egypt was a constant reminder to the Jewish people to have faith in God. They would return to Canaan as God had promised!
- God grant that each of us renew our commitment to have absolute faith in God's promises and live that way he tells us to live.

- Almost 4 centuries later (400 yrs.), Moses took Joseph's remains out of Egypt (Ex. 13:19) and Joshua buried them at Shechem (Josh. 24:32).
- Exodus picks up the historical narrative, after a 280 year silence, (from the death of Joseph until the birth of Moses, 1525 B.C).
- The Israelites were waiting for God to fulfill His promise.

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