

## EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

### Message #95

### Genesis 47:27-31

The most famous “faith” chapter in the N.T. is Hebrews 11. Most in the chapter have dramatic stories of what they did by faith. Abel offered the right sacrifice; Noah built an ark; Abraham obeyed and left his homeland; Moses turned his back on his Egyptian background; Joshua conquered Jericho; Rahab hid Israeli spies. But Jacob’s story is odd. To be sure there are demonstrations of Jacob’s faith in Genesis. Even though he had tricked Esau, he did receive the blessing of Isaac (**Genesis 28**). Jacob kept working for Laban when he had been tricked to get Rachel, Joseph’s mother (**Genesis 29**). Jacob was a man blessed by God (**Genesis 30**). He was a man who had communication with God (**Genesis 31**). He was a man who wrestled with God (**Genesis 32**). He was a man who was reunited with Esau (**Genesis 33**). He was a man who went back to Bethel (**Genesis 35**). But when we look carefully at Hebrews 11, the thing mentioned is not a story from his life, but a story of his death. Hebrews 11:21 says, “By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff.”

Beginning here in Genesis, the remaining verses of the book have much to do with the subject of death, particularly a systematic look at the death of Jacob. When most people in the Bible die, there is a verse or two that mentions it. With Jacob, his death is the subject of most of the rest of Genesis.

### THE HONORED BELIEVER IN ETERNITY IS ONE WHO OBEYS GOD’S WORD AND DOES GOD’S WILL UNTIL THE MOMENT OF HIS DEATH.

Jacob is one of the great, honored patriarchs of the Bible. In fact, there are many places in the Word of God, where God is called the God of Jacob (i.e. Genesis 49:24; II Samuel 23:1; Psalm 20:1). God, Himself, calls Himself “the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6).

**REALITY #1** - Jacob abundantly prospered in Egypt. 47:27-28

**Blessing #1** - God blessed Israel in all their possessions. 47:27

Verse 27 informs us that Israel continued to live in the land of Egypt, the northeast corner of the country known as Goshen, and that there was great growth in all areas of life. God’s hand of blessing was upon this family and everything about them grew and multiplied.

**Blessing #2** - God blessed Jacob in all his years. 47:28

Jacob went to Egypt when he was 130 years old (47:9), and the world was in the midst of a severe famine. One would think that the final years would be depressing, but for Jacob that was not the case. Jacob lived in Egypt another 17 years and lived to be 147 years old. The irony is that the final 17 years of his life, although spent in a foreign country, were probably the most fulfilling and prosperous years of his entire life. As Dr. S. L. Johnson said, “There was light for him at eventide” (*Genesis*, Study #62, p. 5).

**REALITY #2** - Jacob must die in Egypt. 47:29a

It does not matter how faithful one has been to the Lord or how blessed one has been by the Lord or how long one has lived, sooner or later even God's best must die.

The death of Jacob has been an unusually anticipated expectation of the Joseph/Jacob stories (Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 43:27-28; 44:22, 29-31; 45:9, 13, 28; 46:30). This does seem to suggest that Jacob's death will be special.

In the plan of God no nation is more prominent than Israel and no individual is more prominent than Jacob who is Israel. What we learn from Scripture is that even the most prominent reach their appointed time of death. As Dr. Johnson commented, "There comes a time in the life of all of us in which we must face the fact of our own death. It is an appointment that we must keep (Hebrews 9:27). And Jacob had his too" (Ibid, p. 2).

**REALITY #3** - Jacob must not be buried in Egypt. 47:29b-31

When Jacob learned he must die, he is not in any way afraid of death, but he is afraid he will be buried in Egypt. The practical point to see here is that Jacob was more concerned about God's Word and will than he was his own life. Death didn't scare him, but being buried in the wrong land did.

The request to "place your hand under my thigh" (v. 29) is purely Abrahamic. This unique act was a sign of a very sacred promise that had serious ramifications if not carried out (Genesis 24:2, 9). Jacob is making Joseph promise before God that he will bury him in "Machpelah," a field purchased by his grandfather Abraham.

**REALITY #4** - Jacob worshipped God upon his bed. 47:31b

Jacob was too sick to travel to one of the great worship places, so he worshipped God on his bed. He bowed and prayed and worshipped.

Age cannot ever be used as an excuse for not remaining faithful to God or faithful to worship. One may always bow and worship God at the side of his bed.

What we see here is a man committed to doing God's will until the end of his life and as a result he ends up being one of the most honored saints in the entire Bible.