

Joseph Transmits Abraham's Promise

Key Verse: *"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."*
—Genesis 50:20

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 50:1-26

"buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace."—vs. 13

As news spread among Joseph's brethren who had stayed back in the land of Goshen, that Jacob had been buried and Joseph now was returning to Egypt, they became fearful. "They said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him." (vs. 15) They sent a messenger to meet Joseph and tell him that their father Jacob had commanded that they ask for forgiveness of all the evil they had done to Joseph many years before, when they sold him into slavery. After sending the messenger, Joseph's brethren "also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants."—vs. 18

UPON THE DEATH OF JA-

cob in the land of Egypt, Joseph told Pharaoh that his father had made him promise to bury him back in the land of Canaan. "Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear." (Gen. 50:6) Accordingly, Joseph and a large group from his father's house, as well as many Egyptians, took Jacob's body to Canaan. They

buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace."—vs. 13

As news spread among Joseph's brethren who had stayed back in the land of Goshen, that Jacob had been buried and Joseph now was returning to Egypt, they became fearful. "They said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him." (vs. 15) They sent a messenger to meet Joseph and tell him that their father Jacob had commanded that they ask for forgiveness of all the evil they had done to Joseph many years before, when they sold him into slavery. After sending the messenger, Joseph's brethren "also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants."—vs. 18

“Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?” (vs. 19) We notice here that although Joseph had much power and authority in the land of Egypt, he recognized that only God could judge the actions and motives of his brethren. Many centuries later, Jesus taught the same principles that Joseph had followed. Jesus said, “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”—Luke 6:37

The Key Verse of our lesson points out that Joseph recognized that all that had happened, and the evil his brethren had thought against him, had been overruled by God. He saw the outworking of God’s arrangement for him and his brethren over a period of many years as a manifestation of his goodness. Joseph further saw that all that had happened resulted in actually saving the lives of his family and maintaining the promise given to his great-grandfather Abraham by God.

In this lesson, Joseph is a fitting picture of our Lord Jesus Christ and his bride, the church. It is they who, in Christ’s coming kingdom, will bring about the restoration of all their “brethren”—the world of mankind. Mankind will be redeemed then from Adamic sin and its penalty, death. They will learn that all the evil and the difficulties of their former life have actually been permitted by God for their eternal welfare, that they might learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin. (Rom. 7:13) Man will learn that love and mercy is at the core of God’s perfect character, not vengeance.

Joseph’s final words to his brethren before he died were very fitting. He said, “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.” (Gen. 50:24) Thus the promise of a future seed, eventually to be Christ and his church who will bless all the families of the earth, was passed to the next generation of those who would put their faith and trust in the God of Abraham. ■