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## The Faith of Joseph

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The faith of Joseph DIG: How did Joseph get to Egypt? Why did the writer of Hebrews pick this event to characterize the faith of Joseph? By the time of Joseph's death how many of his descendants were living in the Promised Land? What did Joseph make his brothers promise him? What common theme can be seen in the lives of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph? What is the acid test of our faith? How is the faith of Joseph seen?

REFLECT: Isaac, Jacob and Joseph all passed on to their children God's promises of blessing. What legacy are you passing on? Are you passing on a legacy of holy living and faith in God, or one of worldliness and sin? If you have children, do they see your faith reflected in your daily life? Do you spend time teaching them about the truths of God's Word? The greatest inheritance we can leave our children is not material wealth, but a living faith in God.<sup>326</sup>



By **faith** Joseph, near the end of his life, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones. Of all the exciting events of **Joseph's** life this seems a strange summary, but it fits the approach of viewing the patriarchs' **faith** at the time of **their death**. **Joseph's** story is well known: betrayed by **his** brothers, **he** ended up as a slave in **Egypt**. Trusting **ADONAI**, **he** was

ultimately delivered and raised up to be prime minister to Pharaoh, with great power and wealth. When a famine struck Canaan, **his** family arrived as refugees, only to find their long-lost brother as the keeper of **Egypt's** grain. **Jacob**, who had mistakenly thought **Joseph** was dead, rejoiced, and the covenant family came for what would turn out to be a very long stay in **Egypt**.<sup>327</sup>

**Joseph** spent all his adult life in **Egypt**. Though a fourth-generation heir of promise, **he** could not claim even to have traveled in **the Promised Land**, much less to have inherited it. It had been some two hundred years since **ADONAI** had made the initial covenant with Abraham. Two hundred years of promise, and no fulfillment in sight. In fact, by the time of **Joseph's** death, none of Abraham's descendants of promise lived in **the Promised Land** at all. Because of the famine in Canaan, **Joseph** brought **his** father and brothers to **Egypt**. **Jacob** was carried back to Canaan after **he** died, and **Joseph** would be satisfied if only **his bones** could be buried there. If **he** could not inherit **the Land**, at least **the Land** could "inherit" **him**. It was not until the **Exodus** that **Joseph's bones** were actually taken to Canaan (see the commentary on **Exodus**, **to see link click Cf - Moses Took the Bones of Joseph With Him**), but **his** heart and **his** hope had always been there.

**Joseph** had to look ahead to see the promise, yet **he** saw it clearly and confidently. **He** knew that **God** intended to take the Jews back to **the Promised Land** of Canaan. So **he** said: **I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aide and take you up out of this land to the Land He promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 50:24)**. While **Joseph** was making **his** brothers swear to take **his** bones back to Canaan, **he** repeated the assuring words of **faith**: **God will surely come to your aide (Genesis 50:25)**. **But those who are righteous will live their lives by faith (Hebrews 10:38 CJB quoting Habakkuk 2:4 CJB)**.

**Isaac, Jacob** and **Joseph** all believed in **God** in the face of **death**. **Their faith** had wavered sometimes in life, but it was strong and confident in **death**. **Death** is the acid test of **faith**. For hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, courts of law have taken a **dying** person's word at face value. The need for lying and deception is over, and what is said on a deathbed is usually believed. So with our testimony of **faith**. Not only is the need for hypocrisy and pretense over with, but it is also extremely difficult to fake **faith** when you know you are facing eternity. A **dying** person's **faith** is believable because a sham cannot stand the test.

A believer who fears death has a serious weakness of **faith**, for **to die** in **Messiah** is simply to be ushered into the presence of **the Lord**. **For me, to live is Christ**, Rabbi Sha'ul says, **and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21)**. For those who believe, **death has been swallowed**



up in victory (First Corinthians 15:54).<sup>328</sup>