

## The Book of Genesis

### Chapter 50

***50:1-3 Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him and kissed him. Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.***  
(NIV)

#### Embalming

Embalming was considered an art among the Egyptians. It was necessary to remove the brain and major organs, then fill the cavities with spices. Next they wrapped the body in salt for several weeks to draw out the moisture, after which they washed it, wrapped it in linen and smeared a type of resin or gum over the cloth. Hence, it took 40 days to prepare Jacob for burial, and another 30 days to lay in this state in Egypt.

***50:4-5 When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh's court, "If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, 'My father made me swear an oath and said, "I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan." Now let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'"*** (NIV)

#### Speaking to Pharaoh

Joseph could not enter Pharaoh's presence because he was wearing cloths of a mourner, and no one in mourning was allowed to approach a monarch (EST 4:2).

***50:6-16 Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do." So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him—the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt—besides all the members of Joseph's household and his brothers and those belonging to his father's household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen. Chariots and horsemen also went up with him. It was a very large company. When they reached the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan, they lamented loudly and bitterly; and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father.*** (NIV)

Now that they were in the land of promise, it was necessary to mourn the prescribed period of time for that area (NUM 19:19).

***50:11-17 When the Canaanites who lived there saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning." That is why that place near the Jordan is called Abel Mizraim. So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them: They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought as a burial place from Ephron the***

**Hittite, along with the field. After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father. When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.** (NIV)

### Suspicious Minds

After the passing of 17 years, Joseph was heartbroken that his brothers would still be suspicious of him, thinking that he still held them accountable for their sin.

**50:18-24 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees** [one Targum translates: "were brought up between his knees"]. **Then Joseph said to his brothers** [MOF: "kinsmen"], **"I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."**

Joseph now passes on to them the promise that Jacob passed to him before his death (48:21).

**50:25 And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."** (NIV)

Paul refers to this statement as a sign of Joseph's faith in the promises of God (HEB 11:22).

**50:26 So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.** (NIV)

### Time Frame

This was 1615 B.C., 168 years before the Exodus. Moses performed the oath made by Israel to Joseph by taking his remains out of Egypt (EXO 13:19), which were later buried in Shechem after they entered the promised land (JOS 24:32).