

Faith and Joseph's bones

Ponder: Does it matter where I'm buried?

Scripture: "By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones" (Heb. 11:22).

Joseph had not gone to Egypt willingly, nor did he want his earthly remains to rest there permanently. He certainly knew of the promises God had made to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Joseph's father, Jacob, He would give the land of Canaan to their descendants. Jacob himself had reaffirmed to Joseph, "God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers" (Gen. 48:20). Thus when Joseph's own death was imminent, he "said to his brethren, 'I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. . . and you shall carry up my bones from here.'" (Gen. 50:24-25).

Like his father before him, Joseph's faith endured even to his dying day. Joseph's life was packed with events demonstrating God's care and keeping even in the midst of fiery trials. He had no doubt that the Lord would keep his word about the Promised Land. At age 110, Joseph was already seeing Israel thrive and become the great nation God had promised to Abraham.

Joseph didn't say to the Israelites, "IF God brings you out of Egypt and leads you to Canaan, then please take my bones with you." So confident was Joseph that he had them swear a sacred oath that they would take his bones with them when the Lord brought them out. And when Moses led Israel out of Egypt, he fulfilled the oath, taking Joseph's bones along for burial in Canaan (Exod. 13:19).

Though Joseph had served as governor of Egypt, his heart remained in his homeland. We appreciate his wish to be buried there. But the place of one's burial matters not at all as to his relationship with God. Let our attention focus on Joseph's faith that in God's own time He would fulfill His promise. May that same faith be ours!

Song: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Prayer: Father, how blessed we are because we know You keep Your word without fail. Help us to be like Joseph with complete confidence in You to our dying day. In Jesus' name, Amen.