

RUSSELL SANDERS

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THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – LESSON 23

JACOB'S ROYAL BURIAL

We pick up our story from Genesis 50:4 now. Jacob's embalmed body had laid "in state" forty days. Joseph goes to Pharaoh to tell him of the sworn oath to bury his father in Canaan. Pharaoh agrees and gives him great favor.

The caravan carrying Jacob's casket included all his family, likely more than one hundred. It also included all Pharaoh's servants, the elders of Pharaoh's own family, and all the elders (lords and princes) of the land of Egypt. There were many horsemen and many Egyptian chariots. It was a "ginormous" (gigantic/enormous) company that went to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's burial cave.

The caravan journeyed through the wilderness east of the Jordan River (where Israel would wander for 40 years over four centuries later) and stopped at "the floor of Atad" (v. 11) where they spent seven days in mourning to complete the 70 days of official mourning. The Canaanites in the area made notice of it and renamed the place "Abel-Mizrain" which means "the funeral from Egypt" or "the mourning of Egypt."

Afterward, the sons crossed Jordan and proceeded to the burial cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (Hebron), then all returned to Egypt.

It is interesting to note that King David, seven hundred years later, although born in Bethlehem, spent his first seven years as King in this same region, Hebron that was the final resting place of his fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Jacob) before gaining all of Israel in his kingdom united together to complete his forty-year rulership.

Joseph had greatly honored his father, Israel. The pagan King Pharaoh had for Joseph's sake also honored Israel, favor that was actually bestowed from Almighty God's favor.

When we honor God in all we say and do, God will in turn honor us.