

The death of Jacob

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[0:00] Well, as I said this morning, we contemplated this very sad death of Saul. And it was a very dark time, wasn't it, for the people of Israel.

But there is light shining as we see further on the Messiah comes in the form of Christ. But we see a massive contrast here, don't we, in Jacob's life and death.

His death is a dignified one. We see that in verse 33. Have a look. When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last, and he was gathered to his people.

Jacob lived a very long and good life. And unlike Saul, who fell upon his sword in the great fight we were looking at this morning, this patriarch dies an old man, satisfied, happy, because he has given a blessing to his family, the 12 sons, given instructions of his burial, of his death, and he's gathered to his people. Isn't that lovely?

He's brought to his people. And, well, his life is marked full of faith, isn't it, brothers and sisters? He knew the Lord would bring his people back to the promised land.

[1:32] At this time, or at that time, the people of God were living in Goshen, in Egypt, in a foreign country. But the Lord had told Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, that they were going to go to the promised land, the land which Jacob had left.

He knew God's promises. He clung onto them. And we see that because he wanted his bones to be taken to that burial place, which Abraham had purchased.

And Jacob's death, well, he gets respected, doesn't he? Did you see that in verse 3? Taking a full 40 days for the time required for embalming, and the Egyptians mourned for him 70 days.

And verse 7 and 8. Verse 9.

A bit like what we were thinking about this morning with Queen Elizabeth's funeral. Here we have full on this, don't we?

[2:51] A huge entourage heading to the promised land to say goodbye to Jacob. A life well lived.

And then we move on to Joseph. Joseph's life. And, well, he had a full life as well, didn't he? And we come to the end of his life in the next chapter. And there's that very famous verse in verse 20. When his brothers actually play a trick on him, don't they? They actually lie. And they think, well, Joseph might get his comeuppance on us.

And might actually destroy us. So they lie. They say, Jacob, before he died, said, please forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.

And what does Joseph do? He weeps when he hears that. And his life is full of grace, isn't it? He doesn't treat his brothers badly at all.

[3:59] On the contrary, he treats them with love and with respect. Though he has treated them badly in the past. And he's taken, yeah, he's been, yeah, quite rude to them in the past.

But here he shows lavish life, love, sorry, to them. And that famous verse in verse 20.

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good. To accomplish what is now being done. The saving of many lives.

You see, you remember how the brothers tried to place Joseph in a pit. They wanted him dead because they were jealous, because he had favoritism from Jacob.

And yet, by God's grace, he was saved. He went to Egypt. He was exiled. He was under slavery. He was put into an Egyptian prison and treated badly.

[5:05] But the Lord used all that, which was bad. And he rose up to be in charge, second in command in Egypt.

And through the Lord, through God's grace in Joseph's life, he saved many lives. Because remember that dream that he interpreted for the king, for Pharaoh?

That there was going to be seven lean, sorry, good years. And then seven lean years, seven years of famine. And under his guidance, through the Lord's help, he interpreted that dream.

So that he stored up seven years of crop to save the people of Egypt. And save many other lives, including the lives of his own family in Canaan.

And, well, as we come to the communion table, we see this lavish life. As Joseph is a harbinger of Christ, a foreshadow of Christ.

[6:11] We see that evil men meant it for harm, but God made it for good, meant it for good to save us. If we flick over to Acts of the Apostles.

Acts chapter 2. We see Joseph's life is mirrored in the life of Christ.

Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2. Verse 22 to 24. Men of Israel, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him.

As you yourselves know, this man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[7:28] And verse 36 of the same chapter. Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this. God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Go over to chapter 4, please. Turn over. Chapter 4, verse 27 to 28. Indeed, Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Evil men meant it for harm, but God meant it for good to save us.

And this evening, brothers and sisters, we are all beneficiaries of this saving death, saving grace. As we partake of this meal, we remember how Christ was sent to death for us.

Such a sad death for us. But because of that, it's good. We are saved. Shall we come to the Lord?

[8:56] Perhaps a few people would like to lift up prayers of thanksgiving and praise before we come to communion.