**Who Will You Trust With Your Bones?**

* Genesis 1 begins gloriously with the creation of the universe
* Gen 1:1
* In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
* Genesis ends somewhat morbidly:
* Genesis 50:26
* So, Joseph died at the age of 110. They embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.
* Joseph, the son of Jacob, in the Old Testament was a type of Christ: faithful as a:
	+ Son
	+ Servant
	+ Savior
	+ Sovereign
* Joseph also was a “daddy’s boy”
	+ His coat of many colors
	+ According to ancient Jewish literature (not canon)
		- (Midrash Tanhuma / Numbers Rabbah / Testament of Zebulon)
		- Joseph’s coat was Adam and Eve’s garment that God made for them!
	+ The coat had power; it was…
		- Passed from Adam to Seth and down to Noah
		- Was stolen by Ham; given his son Cush then grandson Nimrod
		- Taken from Nimrod by Esau while hunting
		- Traded by Esau to Jacob
* Joseph was a “tattletale”
	+ And a “dreamer” – with no “filter”
* Gen. 37:5-10
* Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had:  We were binding sheaves of grain in the field, and suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to mine. ”Do you intend to reign over us?” his brothers asked. “Will you actually rule us?” So, they hated him even more because of his dream and his statements.
* Later his father Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers tending their sheep
* Gen. 37:18-20
* Now Joseph’s brothers saw him in the distance, and before he arrived, they plotted to kill him.  “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to one another.  "Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. We can say that a vicious animal has devoured him. Then we shall see what becomes of his dreams!”
* Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery in Egypt
	+ In Egypt Joseph was falsely accused of assault by Potiphar’s wife
	+ He was thrown into jail where he was a prisoner for a least two years
* But despite his hardships, Joseph recognized the plan and sovereignty of God in his suffering
* Gen. 50: 19-21
* But Joseph replied to his brothers, “Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God?  As for you, what you intended against me for evil, God intended for good, in order to accomplish a day like this—to preserve the lives of many people. Therefore, do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your little ones.” So, Joseph reassured his brothers and spoke kindly to them.
* Joseph is an example of overcoming injustice and temptation with integrity and grace
* Joseph asked one favor of his brothers: what they must do with his dead body
* Gen. 50:24-25
* Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will surely visit you and bring you up from this land to the land He promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” And Joseph made the sons of Israel take an oath and said, “God will surely attend to you, and then you must carry my bones up from this place.”
* Why would this matter so much to Joseph?
* In life, Joseph had been abused in his relationships to Israel, and more blessed by the people of Egypt
	+ But he identified with his father and brothers
	+ With the nation Israel
	+ And with his God
* Joseph understood that he was not a prince of Egypt (of this world); but an heir of God's promises to Abraham
	+ In Canaan
	+ In heaven
* So, Joseph did not want to be buried like an Egyptian
* The Egyptian Book of the Dead—a complicated deception of the long journey in the afterlife
* One of satan’s lies is that in order to be saved we need to live perfect lives on earth (no grace)
	+ And, in the case of King Tut, be perfectly preserved for the next life
	+ Or we don’t get to go directly to pagan heaven
	+ And we will be rejected by the spirit “Ba”
* Joseph trusted in the God of his father Jacob, grandfather Isaac, and great grandfather Abraham more than in Egyptian embalming rites and pyramids for his afterlife future
* Jesus’ teaching on the “journey” to heaven:
* John 14:2-4
* "In My Father’s house are many rooms...And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am."
* The afterlife promised to believers in Jehovah is in stark contrast to pagan myths
	+ That you must endure a second journey in the afterlife to make it to heaven
	+ This is the ultimate deception and demonic chicanery
* Joseph knew the prophecy (to Abraham) that the Israelites would be in Egypt for many years before returning to Canaan
* Gen. 15: 13-15; 18-21
* Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated *four hundred years.* But I will judge the nation they serve as slaves (Egypt), and afterward they will depart with many possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a ripe old age...Your descendants will return here (to Palestine), for *the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete…”*...on that day, the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land—from the river of Egypt to the great River Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites, and the *Rephaites* (the Rephaim."
	+ The Rephaites were the *Nephilim* (the giants born from Watcher fallen angels and human women.
	+ They were referred to as the Anakim, the Zumins, or the Emin, depending on the name which different Palestinian tribes gave them
* All the Canaanite tribes listed above are the children of Canaan, the son of Ham *(who was cursed by Noah)*
	+ The *Canaanite* tribes were doomed…devoted to destruction because they had had relations with a *second incursion* of the Watcher fallen angels after the Flood, creating *post-flood* Nephilim
* God promised land in Palestine to the *Ammonites* and the *Moabites*(the children of Lot and his daughters)
	+ And God promised land to Esau’s descendants, the *Edomites*
	+ He allowed the descendants of Hagar and Ishmael (the *Midianites*) to have the region of Saudi Arabia
* The Israelites were not permitted to take these lands
* Two other tribes, the *Philistines*and the *Amalekites,* were not promised land, but were not prophetically fated for destruction like the Canaanite tribes
* The bones of Joseph had to be kept in a box by Jacob and his descendants in Egypt for 400 years, then transported by Moses to the Promised Land
* The resting place of Joseph's bones:
* Josh. 24:32
* And the bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up out of Egypt, were buried at *Shechem* in the plot of land that Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for a hundred pieces of silver. So, it became an inheritance for Joseph’s descendants.
* Shechem is the region Jacob dug his first well (where the city of *Sychar* was in New Testament times)
	+ This is the very same well at which Jesus meets the Samaritan women
* John 4: 4-6; 11-12
* Now (Jesus) had to pass through Samaria.  So, He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.  Since Jacob’s well was there, Jesus, weary from His journey, sat down by the well… “Sir,” the woman replied, “You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where then will You get this living water?  Are You greater than *our father Jacob, who gave us this well* and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock?”
* Who were the Samaritans?
	+ And how can the Samaritan woman claim Jacob as her “father?”
* Some history: King Solomon’s son Rehoboam alienated the northern Israeli tribes
* Ten northern tribes rebelled against Judah and Benjamin in the south
	+ They formed the North Kingdom (referred to also as Samaria or Ephraim)
	+ Their kings were all wicked (King Ahab being a prime example)
	+ In 722 BC they were conquered by Assyria
* II Kings 17:6; 24; 32-34
* In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried away the Israelites to Assyria, where he settled them in Halah, in Gozan by the Habor River, and in the cities of the Medes…...then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took possession of Samaria and lived in its towns…So, the new residents worshiped the LORD, but they also appointed for themselves priests of all sorts to serve in the shrines of the high places. They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods according to the customs of the nations from which they had been carried away.
* So Samaritans were Jews from the ancient northern kingdom who intermarried with foreigners and followed a hybrid religion mixing pagan gods with Jehovah
* Joseph’s bones reached “the Promised Land” – their holding place in Palestine until their final destination-heaven
* Heb. 11:14-16; 22; 39
* By faith Abraham dwelt in the promised land as a stranger in a foreign country. He lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.  For he was looking forward to *the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God…*
* ...they were longing for a better country, *a heavenly one*. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a *city for them*…These were all commended for their faith, yet *they did not receive what was promised*.  God had planned something better for us, so that *together with us* they would be made perfect.
* Heb. 12:1; 22-23
* Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a *great cloud of witnesses...*
* You have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to *myriads of angels* in joyful assembly, to the *congregation of the firstborn*, enrolled in heaven...You have come to God the Judge of all, to *the spirits* of the righteous made perfect…
* Joseph had to rely on his brothers’ help after he died
	+ The same brothers who had sold him into slavery
	+ And rely on God’s help to get to his final destination
* And when we die, we will also have to rely on our friends' and God’s help
	+ Even *Jesus* needed his friends’ help at His death (in addition to His Heavenly Father's help)
* John 19:38-41
* Afterward, *Joseph (Yosef) of Arimathea*, who was a disciple of Jesus (but secretly for fear of the Jews), asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and removed His body... *...Nicodemus*, who had previously come to Jesus at night, also brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. So, they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now there was a garden in the place where Jesus was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. And because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they placed Jesus there.
* *Mary Magdalene* and another *Mary* went with the two Pharisees to the tomb as well
* What was the usual treatment of bodies of victims of crucifixion?
	+ They were thrown into a mass grave, covered with lime, and then with dirt
	+ Could this have affected the Resurrection?
* God the Father “protected” Jesus’ body and bones according to prophecy
* John 19:36
* Now these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of His bones will be broken.”
* Of the body, soul, and spirits, *our souls and spirits* are the most important, in that they are eternal
* But *our bodies* matter because they are the temple of God during this life
	+ And they are types of the glorified body we live been given in heaven
	+ We will not simply be spirits—ghosts—in heaven
	+ We will have a glorified physical body
	+ Like Jesus’ body in Acts and in Revelation
* John 20:15-17
* “Woman, why are you weeping?” Jesus asked. “Whom are you seeking? ”Thinking He was the *gardener,* she said, “Sir, if you have carried Him off, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). “Do not cling to Me,” Jesus said, “for *I have not yet ascended* to the Father. But go and tell My brothers, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’ ”
* Jesus’ body must have been like Lazarus raised from the tomb’s body at this time
	+ Not yet the final resurrection body
	+ And perhaps benefitting from not having His legs broken…and His body not eaten by lime(!!)
* Mark 15:9-12
* Early on the first day of the week, after Jesus had risen, He *appeared first* to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had driven out seven demons. She went and told those who had been with Him, who were mourning and weeping.  And when they heard that Jesus was alive and she had seen Him, they did not believe it. After this, Jesus appeared *in a different form* to two of them as they walked along in the country.
* Luke 24:30-31
* While He was reclining at the table with them, He took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus—and *He disappeared* from their sight.
* The Ascension of Jesus
* Acts 1:9-12
* After (Jesus) had said this, they watched as He was taken up, and a cloud hid Him from their sight.  They were looking intently into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near the city, a Sabbath day’s journey away (2/3 of a mile)
* A proof text of the bodily, and not just mystical or metaphorical, Second Coming of Jesus
* Zech. 14:1-4
* Behold, a day of the LORD is coming...I will gather all the nations for battle against Jerusalem, and the city will be captured…Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle.  On that day *His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives*, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley...
* Like Joseph, Jesus’ bones were first moved by people
	+ But then restored and taken to their final destination by God
* We also must entrust our bones to friends and family, and then the Lord
* Burial choices:
	+ Embalming and burial
	+ Natural burial (without embalming)
	+ Cremation
	+ Mausoleum interment
* The issue of “correct” burial does not matter to a Christian who has entrusted his soul and spirit to Christ
* BUT…in the Jewish and later Christian tradition
	+ The dead were respected and honored in their funerals and interment
	+ In Talmudic times, Jewish burial took place in caves, hewn tombs, or sarcophagi; and a secondary burial, i.e., a re-interment of the remains sometimes took place about one year after the original burial in ossuaries (bone boxes)
* Jewish families preferred loved ones to be interred together (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)
* In the Old Testament coffins were rarely used; if bodies were buried in the ground (rather than in tombs), they were buried very soon after death—without a coffin
	+ Coffins are used at present in Jewish ceremonies
* *Embalming* was not used (exceptions: Joseph and Jacob)
	+ There is no Biblical or archeological evidence of *cremation* being used by the Hebrews
	+ Of note--burning corpses was used as a punishment
	+ Achan’s family was stoned then their bodies burned for their taking spoil from Jericho
* Historically, embalming and cremation were *pagan* burial methods

 Alternative: mausoleum internment

* The application of this teaching:
* 1. Our bones (like Joseph, like Jesus) during *this life* need the help of others. “No man is an island.”
	+ For physical care, feeding, shelter
	+ For salvation
	+ For spiritual growth
	+ We must also trust family, friends and believers to carry our bones into *the next life*
	+ To handle our body when we physically die
	+ So... is a good idea to nurture good relationships with several other people in this life
* 2. We most likely “start” in heaven with the degree of spiritual maturity we "finished" with on earth
	+ We need others to help us be spiritually best positioned for our afterlife
* Dallas Willard quote
* The most important thing in your life is not what you do; it's who you become. That's what you will take into eternity.
* 3. There is *no* long afterlife journey for Christians
	+ Jesus carries us directly to heaven
* 4. Our true family is the people of God; our true country is heaven
	+ Church folk are our family
	+ We are sojourners--this land is not our home
* 5. We have the sure hope of a glorious eternity dwelling with God, the good angels, and the people of God
* For Christians with good family, good friends, and a good God...
	+ Every day is a good day to live
	+ And any day is a good day to die!