

People of the Future

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

– Hebrews 11:22 –

There were so many outstanding events in the life of Joseph, the son of Jacob. He was sold into slavery by his brothers. He was promoted to position just to find himself falsely accused and cast back into prison. He was catapulted into the presence of Pharaoh and boldly interpreted the king's dream. This led to him being crowned vice-regent of Egypt and one of the most powerful men on the face of the earth at that time. He was miraculously re-united with his family and became the protector of the infant nation of Israel. The list could go on.

So, of all of these amazing events, why does the Holy Spirit isolate this seemingly obscure occurrence at the end of his life as the most characteristic illustration of the faith of this man of God? "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

Though he was a son of Jacob, almost everything about Joseph was thoroughly Egyptian. God had planted him there, and it was there in that pagan land that he assimilated, blossomed, and prospered. It would have been natural for Joseph to accept a permanent and honored burial place amongst the tombs of the Pharaohs, ensconcing his legacy in the annals of that nation's history. But the man's faith was anything but natural. Despite the many decades of Egyptian influence, Joseph was an astute student of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was keenly aware that there was specific promise associated with the land God had for His people, and he knew that Egypt was not that land. When Joseph's time finally came to go the way of all the earth, he must have done some mental calculus. God had promised Canaan to him and his people. They were not in that land currently, but God would take them there one day. And on the coming great day of God, Joseph must have wanted his first resurrected steps to be in that Promised Land. On his very deathbed, he was not looking back over his long years in Egypt and his legacy there, but toward the future to a time when God's promise would be fully realized amongst His people. He therefore gave commandment concerning his bones, to be carried out of Egypt into the land God had promised to his fathers. What a pristine example of vibrant, unencumbered and whole-hearted faith!

We are God's New Covenant people, brothers and sisters. This world is nothing more than our Egypt. It must not define us. Like Joseph, we are people from tomorrow – here for the moment, but our proper place is over yonder. God's promise of our everlasting home in heaven is where our focus should be fixed. Let us faithfully live today for that world to come! --

D. Murcek