

HOW DOES A BELIEVER FACE DEATH?

(Genesis 49)

...In 2000, my family's pastor, Jim Andrews, was told he had cancer, and that his life would be short. He announced this to the church and told them that he had spent 30 years teaching them how to live and now he would teach them how to die...and he did!!!! Those who witnessed this could never remain the same.

...Jacob had joined Joseph in Egypt, where they spent 17 years together. Now it was time for Jacob to die. This is a reminder that everyone must die. But how we die, that is the matter of real importance.

...In Jacob, we have a man determined to take charge of his death and bear witness to the end. He provides us an example of how we ought to die when our time comes.

TWO CHARACTERISTICS OF JACOB'S DEATH TEACHING US HOW TO FACE OUR OWN APPOINTMENT WITH THE FINAL ENEMY.

...To face death being right with God and man is the finest way we can enter eternity!

I. We, Like Jacob, Must Be Right With God. (49:29-33) He died "in faith."

- A. Jacob looks forward by faith, his focus was on the next world.
 1. He tells his sons, "I am about to be gathered to my people." (vv 29, 33)
...many try to minimize the meaning of this..."die." As if it meant to be buried in the same plot as other family members. NO!!!! (see Abraham/Isaac/Ishmael...)
...Jacob makes this statement and then joins it with a second request to be buried where Abraham and Isaac had been buried before him.
...Earlier, Genesis 47:29-30, "don't bury me in Egypt, but when I rest with my fathers, carrying me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried.
 2. So Jacob meant, after his spirit had joined the spirits of his Fathers in the next world, he wanted his body buried where his father were buried.
 3. Jacob had more than a "deathbed faith." His was a "life-transforming faith."
...He was a man of faith, having been regenerated by God. So he lived with his eye on eternity. Like his grandfather, Abraham, "lived like a stranger in a foreign land..."
...He was "otherworldly" in the way he lived. The unsaved are "this-worldly"...
 4. One day you will die and be swept into eternity. How will you die? To what will your soul be gathered? There are only two destinies and being with God's people depends on turning to God through faith in Christ while in this life.
- B. Jacob orders the place of his burial. (vv 29b-32) Important...for he too believed God.
 1. The most striking feature of this section is the length to which Jacob seems to go in in describing the cave of Machpelah. (Hebron)
...some suppose he did this because the place was unknown to his sons...No!!!
 2. Jacob wished "to speak precisely and seriously of this place and thus remind his sons of the way and the reasons for which it had come into the possession of his people.
...This piece of land was the only land owned by the Patriarchs in the Promised Land. They had been living as strangers in this land, but believed that God had truly given them this land.
 3. Jacob had loved Rachel, but he chose to be buried with Leah in this cave as a testimony to the fact that his faith was the same as his fathers.

(Quote from Spurgeon..."He who had journeyed with unwearied foot fully and many...now...die..."

II. We, Like Jacob, Must Be Right With Men. (49:1-28)

- ...He spent some of his final energies to make sure to bless and be a blessing to those near him!
- A. Jacob called each one of his sons to come. He did not leave any out. Even those who had deeply disappointed him. (Reuben, Simeon, and Judah) He ends well with all of them.
 - B. As he calls each one of his sons to himself, he rebukes sin, he promotes godliness, and he pronounces a blessing upon each son. (as a patriarch, this was "inspired" by God)
...Of special note: Judah...v. 10...for it points to Jesus. He is the "Lion of the tribe of Judah."
 - C. After this, Jacob died. (v. 33) He went to heaven...to be joined by God's family forever.
...Jesus...Matthew 22:23-32..."I am the God of Jacob...not God of the dead, but of the living."

LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES:

1. Every one of us has a coming appointment with death... you must prepare for this!!
2. First... you must be right with God... you must be delivered from God's wrath through Christ.
3. Second... you must strive to have right relationships with all others forgive/bless them.
4. The moment you die, you will be taken to either Heaven or Hell...
5. Oh what joy will be yours... when gathered in Heaven with God's people... forever!