

JANUARY 10, 2020

Parashat Vayechi

Genesis 47:28–50:26

Taught By:

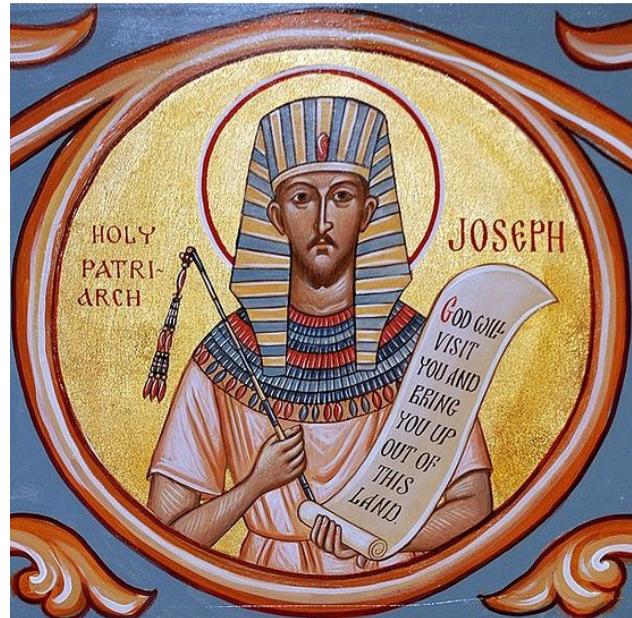
Kai & Rutie

SUMMARY

This is the VERY LAST *parasha* in the book of *Bereishit*. We learn that *Yisra'el* (also known as *Ya'akov*) has lived for 17 years in Egypt. He is now very old. His son *Yosef* brings his own two sons--*Efraim* and *Menashe*--to see their grandfather. *Yisra'el* blesses these two grandsons and then blesses each of his own twelve sons. *Yisra'el* makes his sons promise that when he dies they will bury him in the land of *Canaan*--in the Cave of *Machpelah*.

After *Ya'akov*'s death the brothers returned to *Yosef* and told him that their father, *Ya'akov*, had begged for *Yosef* to forgive them. They offer themselves to *Yosef* to be his slaves. *Yosef* responds that they will not be his slaves because--even though they planned evil things against him--G'd made it over to be good.

Right before his own death at 110 years old, *Yosef* also asked that his own bones be buried in the Promised Land. Although he was first buried in Egypt, when the Israelites went out from slavery they took *Yosef*'s bones with them so that he could finally be buried in the Promised Land.



1) Why might it be important to Yaakov and Yosef to be buried in the Promised Land?

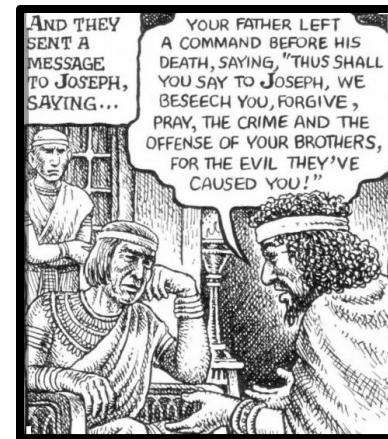
KAI: When many members of the same family are buried together, it makes a difference to the family that comes after them. By choosing to be buried in the same place, they make it easier for their family to find the family graves. This way they know where everyone is.

RUTIE: Their family is in *Eretz K'na'an*, so they probably want to be buried with their family. It is a way of telling future generations that they are all part of the same family and that they care about each other.

2) After Ya'akov dies and his sons bury him the brothers get nervous that Yosef will want revenge on them for throwing him into a pit and selling him into slavery when he was young. Yosef is now one of the most powerful people in Egypt. Why do you think they might be nervous now?

KAI: Maybe they felt like Yosef would never do anything to them as long as their dad was alive. Now they their dad is dead they are nervous that there is no one to protect them from Yosef if he wants revenge.

RUTIE: I bet they're all really sad that their dad has died. Maybe they know that sometimes when people have strong feelings--like sadness or fear--and they don't know how to express those feelings, those feelings can turn into anger or rage. Yosef's brothers might be nervous that if his sadness turns into rage he might turn it towards his brothers.



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3) Yosef's brothers tell Yosef, “YOUR father” said that you should forgive us. The brothers say Yosef, “YOUR father,” but they all share the same father. Why do you think the brothers said “YOUR father” instead of “OUR father said that you should forgive us?”

RUTIE: I think that this might be the brothers' way of reminding Yosef that *Yisrael* loved him best, that Ya'akov had a special relationship with him, and that Yosef should do what he said.