

Hebrews 11:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. Joseph's deathbed instructions (Genesis 50:24-25) demonstrated faith in God's promises despite contrary circumstances. Though second-in-command of Egypt, honored and prosperous, Joseph believed God would bring Israel out of Egypt to Canaan as promised. He commanded that his bones be carried to the Promised Land, refusing permanent burial in Egypt despite his exalted position there. This testified that his true home was not where he achieved success but where God promised inheritance.

The phrase 'made mention of the departing' (exodus, ἔξοδος in LXX—source of the book's name) shows Joseph prophetically foresaw Israel's deliverance from Egypt, centuries before it occurred. He possessed no political or military means to accomplish this; he simply believed God's word to Abraham. His faith looked beyond immediate reality to divine promises, shaping how he wanted to be remembered after death. Faith doesn't terminate at death but extends into eternity, concerned with God's purposes beyond our lifetimes.

Joseph's bones, carried through the wilderness for forty years and finally buried in Shechem (Joshua 24:32), testified across generations that God fulfills His promises. Every time Israel saw Joseph's coffin, they were reminded of his faith and God's faithfulness. Similarly, believers today should live and die in ways that

testify to future generations of God's trustworthy promises, leaving behind not merely material inheritance but spiritual legacy pointing to God's covenant faithfulness.

Historical Context

Joseph died approximately 1805 BC and was embalmed according to Egyptian custom (Genesis 50:26), his body preserved for the eventual exodus. He lived 110 years, the last 80+ years in Egypt, witnessing his family settle in Goshen and multiply. Yet despite assimilation into Egyptian culture and his own tremendous success, Joseph maintained faith in God's promise that Israel's future lay in Canaan, not Egypt. His bones remained in Egypt over 360 years before the Exodus, a constant reminder of God's promised deliverance. Moses personally ensured Joseph's bones were carried out (Exodus 13:19).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What 'bones'—lasting testimony of faith—will you leave behind for future generations?
2. How does Joseph's example challenge you to maintain faith in God's promises even when comfortable circumstances tempt you to settle where you are?
3. In what ways should faith in God's future promises shape your present decisions and legacy?

Interlinear Text

Πίστει	Ἰωσήφ	τελευτῶν	περὶ	τῆς	ἐξόδου	τῶν
By faith	Joseph	when he died	concerning	G3588	the departing	G3588
G4102	G2501	G5053	G4012		G1841	
υἱῶν	Ἰσραὴλ	ἐμνημόνευσεν	καὶ	περὶ	τῶν	
of the children	of Israel	made mention	and	concerning	G3588	
G5207	G2474	G3421	G2532	G4012		
ὀστέων	αὐτοῦ	ἐνετείλατο				
bones	G846	gave commandment				
G3747		G1781				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 13:19 (References Israel): And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

Joshua 24:32 (References Israel): And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Acts 7:16 (Parallel theme): And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.