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One Century in the Service  
of our Lord Jesus Christ

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*Newz of His*

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Guided by His Word,  
Serving in His Love

## They Had Seen Enough

*By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. – Hebrews 11:21*

Most of us are familiar with the eleventh chapter of *Hebrews*. A fearful anticipation of persecution seems to have been causing certain Jewish believers to entertain the prospect of abandoning their trust in Jesus and returning to the temple rituals of their ancient faith. In this climactic chapter of the letter, the unnamed author catalogues numerous examples of their ancestors who persevered in faith even in the face of powerful enticements to give up.

Jacob's life was filled with spiritual highs and lows. There were several incidents in the patriarch's life that the author might have attributed to his faith. He once wrestled through the night with an angel to secure a blessing. He committed his life and his future to God at a place called Bethel. But the event that is featured occurred near the end of his life. He blessed two grandsons *"and he worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff."*

Generally, this clause is understood to mean that Jacob worshiped the LORD even as he anticipated something that he had never seen or experienced. He had never possessed the land promised to his grandfather Abraham or to his father Isaac. Jacob and his family had just moved to Egypt to escape a famine and, because of words God had spoken earlier, he knew that he would likely never return to the land where he had raised his family. Still, the realization of the promise to possess the land was at the heart of the blessing he spoke to Joseph's sons, so much so that he blessed them with the worshipful sense of expectation described in *Hebrews*. That expectation becomes even more apparent as we consider his last request as worded to Joseph:

*... "Do not bury me in Egypt, <sup>30</sup>but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried."*

*"I will do as you say," he (Joseph) said.*

*<sup>31</sup>"Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel (Jacob) worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. – Genesis 47:29-31*

Jacob never realized the blessing of a nation or of the homeland that God had promised. Like Abraham and Isaac before him, he led a family and a community of nomads. But, when Jacob compelled Joseph to promise to carry his bones out of Egypt, this confirmed that he believed that God would ultimately prove good to those promises. None of the patriarchs ever held a title to Canaan, but they had seen enough of the faithfulness of God in their respective experiences with Him to endure in their faith even as their deaths drew nearer:

*All these people were living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. – Hebrews 11:13*

In these uncertain times, believer, have you seen enough to trust God and to walk with Him even though you've never actually tasted heaven? There are times when our dreams don't come true. There are times when we see a possible outcome to some trial, some desire or some other event in our life as something that really "ought" to be the will of God. It sure would make sense *IF* God was to work things out for us in this matter accordingly. Sometimes, we even place an expectant hope in this scenario of our own design, only to set ourselves up for disappointment.

God is good and He is still on the throne. By the gift of Jesus, peace in the present is your birthright, and certainty for the future is your destiny. Is that enough? Have you seen enough to lean on the top of your staff and to keep looking homeward?



## Karl's Korner