



15- Heal a Family / Build a Nation

01/31/2010 - Jim Johnson – Gen. 46:28-47:12

Genesis 46:27 tells us that Jacob and his family moved to Egypt and they numbered 70 males. Once the family arrived, it was time for all Egypt to meet their new neighbors.

A. The new neighbors had a loathsome _____ 46:27-47:6

It was to be expected that Jacob's family would move into the capital city of Memphis where they would be near to Joseph. But the family consisted of shepherds which were a despised caste in Egypt. Pharaoh had invited the family to live in Egypt, but that was before he knew what they did for a living. (46:27-34)

When Pharaoh met the brothers, the boys were refreshingly forthright and told the king their occupation. They also asked to be settled in Goshen, a rural and removed part of the land. They gave the King a gracious way out of his socially awkward situation. He did not want hicks settling in his bustling capital city so he was inclined to grant their request (47:1-6)

B. The new neighbors lacked appropriate _____ skills -7-10

Jacob was then ushered in to meet Pharaoh. He blessed the King and the king reciprocated by asking Jacob's age. He answered 130 years (7-9) unfortunately he continued to speak in complaining terms about the quality of those years. They had been few and unpleasant. Jacob was one of those people who told you more than what you wanted to know. He did have his trouble, but he also enjoyed lots of blessing in his life as well, most recently having been reunited with a son that he thought had died who was also showering the family with gold and clothes and food. Jacob foolishly stood in the presence of the greatest and most powerful political person in the world at that moment and complained.

C. Pharaoh gladly sent the hicks to the _____ – 11-12

Pharaoh issued an order. He ordered them to get out of town and move to the land of Rameses. Which was 90 miles to the northeast of Memphis (the capital) and was the administrative center of the region called Goshen - the bread basket of Egypt. That is where the family settled for the next 400 plus years.

ANALYSIS

Chapter 46 gave us three answers to the question why. Why did God allow Jacob's troubles? Each one had to do with God's plan to make a great nation of this family. **God used the troubles to bring the family closer, to preserve the family, and to provide a better home for the family.** The passage just studied gives us a couple more answers to the question why?

A. God used the troubles to provide vocational _____

Jacob and his family were herders. They lived a nomadic life in Canaan. It was an adequate vocation for a small family – but not for a great nation. There was not nearly enough pasturage in the land to support a population of any great size. But the shepherds ended up moving to Goshen – to a land that was amazingly well suited, not just for herding, but farming as well. There they learned to support themselves more efficiently through farming. God sent them to Goshen to learn to be farmers. When Israel finally entered the promised land some 400 years later, they were about 2 million in number which was OK because they moved into a land that was already populated with productive farms and they knew how to work those farms.

B. God used Jacob's trouble to provide _____ for the family.

One of the dangers of Canaan land was that it was a hotbed of every kind of filthy and immoral practice and Jacob's children and grandchildren were beginning to get comfortable with the locals and starting to intermarry (Gen. 46:10) The Canaanite culture threatened to infiltrate and destroy the integrity of the chosen line of Abraham. The line from which the Messiah would eventually come.

God needed to protect that family from compromise so he sent them to Egypt. But how could God transplant a people to a foreign land to help them grow them into a nation without causing them to intermix and intermarry and be merged to their host nation?

He sent them to a culture where they didn't fit. To a culture that didn't want them in the neighborhood. To a culture that sent them to the isolated land of Goshen to live. There they maintained the integrity of their faith. For 400 plus years they remained committed to truths of God which were passed down orally from father to son. On that day when Moses knocked on their door and said, its times to go. They were a mighty and a moral nation as well.

Shocking – the passage teaches us that God isn't concerned that we fit in. He didn't care that Jacob and his family were treated like country bumpkins. God, in fact, did not want them to fit in. He did not want them to be twisted and reshaped. He did not want them to get comfortable with the foul moral values of their neighbors. So God gave them a home in the sticks – out on the fringe of society where they could guard and cultivate their own moral and cultural heritage.

God is not concerned that we _____ in. He prefers that we stick out.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. How does it sit with you, that God actually created a situation where Jacob's family would be unpopular?
2. Consider the statement: "God wants us to visit the sick- not get in bed with them."
 - a. In what ways are you connecting with the people in our community?
 - b. What do you do to keep from catching their disease?