



16- Heal a Family / Build a Nation

02/07/2010 - Jim Johnson – Gen. 47:13-27

Security, according to the dictionary is “Freedom from fear, anxiety, danger and doubt. Not exposed to damage or attack.” Gen. 47:13-27 is focused on the issue of security. Where do we seek it and where is it found?

A. The _____ were seeking security. - 13-26

1. They surrendered their _____ to have security. - 13-15

The money in Egypt and Canaan was spent towards buying the grain that belonged to Pharaoh.

2. They surrendered their means of _____ to have security. - 13-15

The famine continued so they mortgaged their livestock to obtain food. Managing livestock was part of the way in which they supported themselves. Every hoof was given over to Pharaoh.

3. They surrendered their _____ to have security. – 18-19

At the end of the year, the famine still gripped the land. The people pleaded with Joseph to buy their land and homes and give them grain in return. He did only what they had asked him to do. And then directed the new homeless to the cities where grain was stored.

4. They surrendered their _____ to have security. – 20-24

Part of the previous deal was that Pharaoh also bought the people themselves. It was a common practice in the ancient near east to sell oneself into slavery in order to pay a debt. The people became serfs of the state and were therefore told where to live and what to do by the state. They were required to give 20% of their harvest each year to Pharaoh.

5. They surrendered _____ for security and were glad they did. – 25-26

The people were very grateful and even rejoiced in the fact that they were slaves who were tasked with farming the King’s land. They finally had the security that they had sought.

Notes from Egyptian History

Most conservative scholars believe that Joseph lived in Egypt about 1915-1805 BC which falls into the era known as the Middle Kingdom of Egypt, specifically the 12th Dynasty. Prior to Joseph the government in Egypt was decentralized and was characterized by chaos, instability, poverty, and despair. The famine had broken the back of this rebellious era. Pharaoh, through Joseph, consolidated power when he took control of the money, livestock, land and people of Egypt and Canaan. Though Egypt had much water, they depended on the flooding of the Nile to water their crops. If it did not flood then the land was not irrigated. Perhaps this was the reason for the famine.

Once the King had complete control he was in a position to prepare for the next famine. He subdivided the land and allowed it to be managed by the state. History also tells us that the Pharaoh commissioned the building of a system of irrigation canals on his land – which would take the waters of the Nile and disperse it throughout Egypt. This would mean that Egypt would always be well watered, and not dependent on the flooding of the Nile. Famine would never again be a problem.

From the perspective of the state, this was an amazing era of time. Egypt became a dominant international, almost imperial power. Why did God so bless the Pharaoh? One could argue that this was due to the

Abrahamic Covenant where God promised that those who blessed the family of Abraham would be blessed by God (Gen 12:1-3) Pharaoh was generous to Jacob and his sons and God was therefore quite generous to him.

This development was great for the state of Egypt, but what about her people? They looked to the state for their security and it cost them dearly. They became slaves in what might be called a benevolent dictatorship. The King's power, as wielded by Joseph, was being used to generously and justly care for the people. Though this may look attractive to us, we ought to keep in mind that Joseph was a godly man who took good care of them. A ruler with that kind of heart is rare. A state with that kind of ethic is atypical. When a totalitarian state exists, it is usually not so benevolent. Think of Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, North Korea. Think of men like Stalin, Kim Jong, Castro, Hussein, Hitler, and Mao. When the very wise and thoroughly godly Joseph passed on, his successors were most likely like most men – greedy and power hungry. Besides, it is likely that those Egyptians, though well fed, would have done anything to have recovered just a little of their personal liberty. There is a better way.

B. The family of _____ was also seeking security – 27

The story turns back to Israel, the corporate name of Jacob's family who moved to Goshen where they were fruitful and became very numerous. Also the text says that these folks acquired property. The native Egyptians and Canaanites surrendered everything to the state just to survive while up in Goshen the sons of Jacob were acquiring ownership to property becoming wealthy landholders.

Why is this? Because Jacob heard the voice of God and obeyed, thus moving his family to Egypt. (Gen. 46:3-5) There was risk, and lots of insecurities, but he was wise enough to know that the only true security in this life comes from the Lord and doing His will.

APPLICATION

The Egyptians looked to the state for security and freedom from want. They ended up being owned lock stock and barrel by the state. The family of Jacob, however, was committed to doing the will of God – following the plan of God. They, in turn, experienced amazing prosperity and became wealthy property owners.

When we surrender our liberties to the _____ - we prosper.

In our quest for security we will at some point need to surrender our freedom. This world is much too big for us to handle on our own. Shall we trust the state or other earthly things that enslave us, or the Lord who liberates us?

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

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

1. Where else do folks turn in their quest to find security?
2. To what measure are you depending on government for your security?
3. In what areas of your life are you resistant to trust God?