

The Book of Genesis

Chapter Forty Seven

The Wisdom of Joseph

Lesson Verse:

I. Lesson Introduction

- A. The descendants of Israel are now in Egypt. After many long years the family is reunited. There were many things to discuss. There were new family members to meet and old ones to get to know anew.
- B. As with any journey of this type, there will be some adjusting on the part of everyone; sitting up housekeeping in a foreign land was as much trouble then as now. There are old habits that must be dealt with for what was accepted as norm in the old country may not be so in the new.
- C. Here is one of those interesting lessons that begins with the nation of Israel arriving in Egypt and is not fully manifested to this nation for about 400 years. The lesson here is this: this race of people were to _____ in Egypt. They were not to take up residence nor where they to homestead the land. They were not to desire for the things of Egypt. They have a homeland and Egypt is not it.
- D. God told Abraham that his descendants would be in bondage in a land that was not theirs for 400 years, *Gen. 15:16*. Here is where the entire nations makes their way down into Egypt. In just four hundred years, God will drag them out for even though they are in bondage, they will like Egypt more than the will of God by faith!
- E. At best the family of Jacob probably thought they were to remain there for five years because that was the time left for the famine to fill its course, *Gen. 45:11*. God had other plans for them.

II. Study lesson

A. Meeting Pharaoh (47:1-10)

1. The five brothers were not ashamed of their occupation (3).
 - a. Regardless of what Joseph told the family, they heeded not his words and told Pharaoh out right they were shepherds. They were not ashamed. They told him: "We are shepherds."
 - b. _____, *2 Tim 1:16-17*, was not ashamed of Paul's tribulation.
 - c. Job was a man that went through some great bodily disfiguration for the Lord. Job had worms eating his body, *Job 7:4-5*. He sat in sack cloth and ashes. He could not sleep. His wife was ashamed of him. His so called friends chided him. There were not many folks running over to his home to cheer him. They were ashamed.
 - d. The great Apostle was another disfigured character that in our society today, we would shun such a man. We would prejudge a man scarred as Paul and tell our children to stay away from such hapless creature. The truth is Paul had been beaten so many times, whipped, stoned, and shackled that he could boldly say, *Gal 6:17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*. What kind of marks were upon his body? The answer is found in *2 Cor 11:24-28*. Even those scars mentioned here do not tell about his thorn in the flesh that he carried for the cause of Christ.
 - e. This scarred man of God had one friend that came and visited him. Onesiphorus was such a man that was not ashamed of the cause of Christ nor of those who suffered for the cause. Onesiphorus went to great lengths to find Paul. Why was this? It was because he and Paul stood for the same things. They were not ashamed to call Jesus Lord in a world that hated the name of Jesus.
2. Are we ashamed, *2 Tim. 1:12*?
 - a. Paul was not ashamed. Onesiphorus was not ashamed. Job was not ashamed. Even the brothers of Joseph were not ashamed to tell Pharaoh they were shepherds, knowing it was an abomination to be such in the eyes of the Egyptians. Now the question we ask and answer is: Are we ashamed?
 - b. Let us look at some today that are anything but Christ like; yet they are not ashamed of what they are. The reason these are not ashamed is it is very difficult if not impossible to shame one with no pride. Who are these proud boasting blasphemers? It is none other than the homosexuals. They are not ashamed of being such. Every day we hear of someone coming out of the closet of shame and announcing they are gay. These Ellen Degenerates even have what they call "Gay Pride."

- c. Not only are the homosexuals proud of what they are, the ACLU is proud of what all they stand against. The animal rights activist are proud and stand out on the corner telling the world how evil it is to wear fur and eat meat.
- d. How is it with Christians? Are we ashamed of what we are? How many of us become 'closet Christians' once we leave the church driveway? Jesus said if we were ashamed of him before men, He would be ashamed of us before His Father, *Mark 8:38* *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*
- e. It is time for Christians to be activist instead of pacifist. We need to stand boldly and preach Jesus. That was what the apostle did, *Acts 4:13*. They spoke with boldness about Jesus. How is it these ignorant and unlearned men spoke so boldly about spiritual matters? The answer lies in the fact that they spent time with Jesus. Why is it we sometimes have problems speaking with boldness about Jesus? The answer might just be in where we spend most of our time.

B. Home-Sweet-Egypt – Making Egypt Home Until God Calls them Out (47:11-12)

1. Joseph guided them to live in _____
2. This land would become the place of torment, and torture as it was there the children of Israel would be forced to build cities for Pharaoh
3. But until then, they were to enjoy God's provision
4. The only thing they forgot was to stay close to the Lord



C. Managing the Bad Times (47:13-27)

1. The famine continued to grow worse; so much so that in one year money was not worth much any more. The Egyptian people had rather have bread than gold. They exchanged cattle, horses, flocks, and donkeys for bread (17).
2. The next year the Egyptians did not have any herds to exchange for bread so they sold their homes for something to eat (18). Joseph made Pharaoh a very rich man. Joseph even set it up so that the fifth of all their harvest would come into the coffers of Pharaoh.
3. The Egyptians sold (exchanged) everything they had just so they could remain alive from one year to the next. They thought that next year would be a better year. However, next year found them with nothing to sell but themselves. They became servants to Pharaoh. However, before they became servants to Pharaoh, they became slaves of their bellies.
4. What was the value the Egyptians had on life?
 - a. Their value was primarily on something to eat. Nothing else mattered but their bellies. These people made their bellies their gods and they fed their gods by any means available. Each time we see some one that does not go to church feeding their ravenous appetite we think it is a shame. What we fail to see is there are some in the local church bodies across the world that do the same. This is also a shame of much greater proportions and consequences.
 - b. Making our bellies our gods is not a new teaching. Each of us will at sometime or the other be tempted to do the same. It is at times such as these that we must decide what or whom it is we will serve.
 - c. Those folks in the days of Joseph did not consider why the famine was upon them. The only thought they considered is where is my next meal coming from. Nowhere are we told that they sought counsel from God. This teaching regarding the making of the belly a god is a spiritual teaching more so than a physical. It deals with folks who feed an appetite that they cannot or refuse to control.
 - d. People have always made their bellies their gods. Paul warned us about it in *Rom 16:17-18*. Paul told us to mark them so we will not forget them. These types of folks are not hard to identify on the television for they plainly beg for more money and give out less biblical truths. Here is what happened to one man who made his belly his god:
 - e. They are sometimes harder to spot in a local church body. Sometimes we stand so close to the forest we cannot see the trees. Paul warned the saints in Rome to watch out for those who main

- desire was to serve self. He told us to mark those that caused controversy in the body of Christ for they were there not to serve the Lord, but their own bellies.
- f. The Egyptians in the days of Joseph had a high value for physical life but placed no value on the spiritual aspect of Godly living. This nature is still manifested in folks today. All the animals are not in the zoos or the forest. There are wolves in sheep clothing bent on scattering the flock. There are false shepherds bent of fleecing the flock. The child of God must stay close to the Lord and spend time in the word of God or they will be taken in by those that made their bellies their gods. Those that make their bellies their gods have only one desire: devour.
5. What is the lesson here for us?
 - a. Not only did Paul warn the church in Rome, he also warned the church at Philippi. This give us two warnings about those in any local New Testament church body where we may hold membership about those that have made their gods their bellies just as the Egyptians had, **Phil 3:17-19**.
 - b. How do we know who these people are? The Bible gives us the answer. They mind earthly things and not the spiritual things of God. The Egyptians here in today's lesson give us a prime example of minding earthly and fleshly things. All they wanted was something to eat. They sold everything they possessed to get something for their belly.
 - c. Once that gnawing commences in the belly, we want to put something there. Once the belly is filled we are content for awhile. However, in about four to eight hours that gnawing will begin again. We best have something on hand to satisfy that gnawing craving appetite of the flesh. For some of us it is food. For others it is position, wealth, our name in lights, honour, prestige, or to have the preeminence.
 - d. As born again believers is there a way to combat this demon of desire? Yes there is. God gave us the answer in **Col 3:1-3**. If our affections are on the things of God, the things of the world will not look so enticing and inviting. How is it that someone can fast for many days? It is because they set their affections on the things of God. Those that made their bellies their gods set their affections on the things of the world.
 - e. The lesson we must learn is if we are looking at the world we make worldly decisions. IF we want to make the right decisions, we must live near the Lord. "Live in the Word and stay out of the world."
 6. While They Were In The World (Egypt), Israel Had Possessions Even During The Famine (27-31).
 - a. Once again we see that Joseph, as a type of Jesus, nourishes his family, 47:11. He gave them possession in the midst of their enemies. While the world endured the famine, the nation of Israel enjoyed the blessing of God. While the world went hungry, the people of God had food to eat. While the remainder of the world sold everything they possessed to live from hand to mouth, the children of God live in His blessings.
 - b. God is just as much the only God of His words today as He was then. He told the little nation that He would never leave them nor forsake them. He always keeps His words. He will do the same for us if we will just get in His will for our lives and remain there with our affections in line with His will. Our problem is much like those the nation of Israel endures after the death of Pharaoh. We get comfortable in the world and forget we are only sojourners. We need to remember that as our spiritual father Abraham we need to be looking for a city not made with hands whose builder is God, **Heb. 11:10**.
- D. Jacob Prepares to Die – and be Buried in Canaan (47:28-31)**
1. Here are some interesting observations we can learn from what Jacob told Pharaoh about his age. Observe the following:
 - a. Joseph was 17 when sold into slavery and 30 when he stood before Pharaoh, *Gen. 37:2, 41:46*.
 - b. He was about 37 when his brothers came to Egypt the first time for we know that seven years of plenty had passed, *Gen. 42*.
 - c. He told his brothers on their second visit that there were five more years left in the famine, *Gen. 45:11*. Thus by the time the brothers go and get Jacob, Joseph would be approximately 39 when Jacob came to Egypt.
 - d. Jacob was 130 when he appeared before Pharaoh, *Gen. 47:9*.
 - e. Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years and died at the age of 147, *Gen. 46:28*.
 - f. By adding the supposed age of Joseph (39) when he met his father, to the 17 years that Jacob lived in Egypt, we find that Joseph was about 56 when Jacob died. By subtracting the age of

Joseph ($39 + 17 = 56$) at the death of Jacob from the number of years Jacob live (147) we come to know that Jacob was 91 years old when Joseph was born.

2. Jacob makes Joseph _____ that he will not leave him in Egypt, but will take him back to Machpelah and bury his bones THERE!

III. Conclusion and Study Questions