

Intro: At the beginning of Ch. 46, after Jacob was convinced Joseph was alive, the family left for Egypt and stopped at Beersheba where Jacob offered sacrifices to atone for sin, and to worship God for His faithfulness in leading the family through Joseph.

* When they arrived in Egypt, Joseph and Jacob had a wonderful reunion.

* Now in the last of Ch. 46 and in Ch. 47 Joseph again, shows his integrity by doing 3 things.

* He brought his brothers before Pharaoh to request that the family could settle in Goshen, then he brought Jacob before Pharaoh, and he continued to save the Empire through the famine.

* This part of the story progresses through 4 points.

I. JOSEPH INSTRUCTED HIS BROTHERS. (46:31-34- read)

* Once Joseph was reunited with his father and family, he immediately pursued the task of settling his family in Goshen. **There are 2 important things to notice here.**

A. JOSEPH SHOWED INTEGRITY BY NOT OVERSTEPPING HIS AUTHORITY.

* Here, Joseph told the family he would go before Pharaoh with his brothers, for them to gain permission to live in Goshen; And then, Joseph coached the brothers what to say.

* Remember that when Joseph's brothers left for home the 2nd time, Joseph told them when they arrived back in Egypt, Joseph would place them in Goshen, and Pharaoh confirmed all that Joseph told them.

* Also Remember- that Joseph had been placed in full authority over the Empire in regard to the famine and the food crisis, even to the point where Pharaoh would not make a decision, until he cleared his actions with Joseph. (Gen 45:8)

* But here, this decision wasn't about Joseph storing food, it was about Joseph placing his family in the best part of the land, and he wanted Pharaoh to make that decision.

* So Joseph did the proper thing and brought his brothers before Pharaoh, for them to request and confirm that the family could settle there.

B. JOSEPH CAUTIONED THEM TO BE TRUTHFUL ABOUT BEING SHEPHERDS.

- * Notice- at the end of vs 34 Joseph told them- "all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians." This was a well-known fact in that part of the world.
- * Egyptian social life was divided into 7 casts, and the lowest cast was the cattlemen.
- * No one from that cast could enter any Egyptian temple, or marry outside their cast.
- * So telling Pharaoh the truth about what they were, would seem to be detrimental to them, because it would arouse Pharaoh's disapproval of them.
- * But there were 2 good reasons for them to confess to Pharaoh that they were shepherds.

1. Obviously, as an honest man, Joseph wanted them to be truthful.

- Joseph had always been completely honest with Pharaoh, and he didn't want his brothers to be so afraid of Pharaoh's disrespect for them as shepherds, that they would lie to him about what they were.
- That would only cause trouble, because eventually Pharaoh would learn the truth anyway, and Joseph wanted his brothers to represent the family honestly, no matter what.

2. Joseph understood the need to separate the family from pagan society.

- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, knew it was wrong to worship any gods but God alone.
- So it was good that being known as Shepherds would forbid them to enter Egyptian temples.
- Also, Goshen was on the northeast edge of Egypt, semi-separated from Egyptian society. Living there would keep them from socializing and intermarrying with pagans.
- Earlier, Joseph was given an Egyptian wife, and he couldn't disrespect Pharaoh's gift.
- But Abraham and Isaac sought wives for their sons, that weren't Canaanite pagans.
- At this point in the family's history, some of Jacob's grandsons were already married, and others would soon be marrying age.
- Being known as shepherds and being placed in Goshen meant Jacob's family would be separated from the Egyptians, which would make pagan marriage difficult.

Point- Joseph knew they shouldn't integrate into pagan Egypt, either socially or spiritually.

- * Young people-- We obviously know it's wrong to worship any other gods but the true God.
- * But also, the bible forbids believers to marry an unbeliever. (2 Cor 6:14-16)

II. THE BROTHERS COME BEFORE PHARAOH. (47:1-6)

* After Joseph coached his brothers, he brought them before the king. **Notice 4 details.**

A. PHARAOH WAS TOLD - THEY BROUGHT ALL THEY HAD WITH THEM. (1-read)

* In Ch. 45, when Pharaoh confirmed that Joseph could move his family to Egypt, he specifically told them- "never mind about your belongings, the best of all Egypt will be yours".

* So why did Joseph tell Pharaoh they brought everything, and how would Pharaoh react?

1st- Joseph said this because again, he was determined to tell the truth.

2nd - The family ignoring this instruction showed Pharaoh they were not freeloaders coming to take advantage of Egypt. They wanted to make their own way, as much as possible.

* And normally, a great king like Pharaoh would be offended that they didn't listen to him, but this man was humble enough to accept their determination to work, and may have been impressed that they didn't intend to take advantage of Egypt.

B. THE BROTHERS OBEYED JOSEPH. (2-4-read)

* Joseph had chosen 5 of the 11 brothers to stand before Pharaoh to represent the family.

* And when Pharaoh questioned them, they answered as Joseph told them.

* This again shows they were new men, who had submitted to Joseph's leadership over them, just as God had shown Joseph many years earlier, in a dream.

C. PHARAOH WAS PLEASED AND GRANTED THEIR REQUEST. (5-6a)

* This again, indicates that because Joseph was saving the nation from starvation, Pharaoh displayed his deep gratitude by caring for Joseph's family.

D. PHARAOH WAS WILLING TO HIRE JOSEPH'S BROTHERS. (6b) (Interesting)

* These brothers lacked integrity all their lives, but that changed when they repented;

* And Joseph said nothing to Pharaoh or anyone else, about what they had done to him.

* Joseph covered their sin, so that Pharaoh saw Joseph's brothers through Joseph's person, and now they will enjoy the blessings that came from their brother's integrity.

Lesson- The NT teaches that at salvation, we are placed "in Christ".

- And even though we still sin, God sees us through His Son's perfect life.

- Pharaoh saw the brothers through Joseph's godly life. He thought they were like him, because Joseph have forgiven and covered their sin. (just like Jesus does for us)

III. JACOB COMES BEFORE PHARAOH. (47:7-10- read)

- * This is a rich setting. Incense, silver utensils, ivory statues, chairs of gold, many servants, Pharaoh- dressed to the hilt, seen as the personification of the Egyptian sun god, Ra.
- * Normally, when 1 came before Pharaoh, you gave the ultimate bow of honor (face down).
- * But Jacob wasn't intimidated. His spiritual renewal at Beersheba had changed him, and he knew he was God's man, in God's place, with God's promises, and God's protection.
- * So he came in, a foreigner, a shepherd, unshaven, probably in shepherds clothing, and walked right up to Pharaoh to greet him, and he did 2 things important to notice.

A. JACOB BLESSED PHARAOH - TWICE. Notice 2 facts.

1. In ancient times, a formal blessing had great significance.

- This wasn't a simple, "God bless you". This was a serious oath, conveying the blessings of Jacob's God on Pharaoh. (These are seen often in the OT)

Q- "Jacob stood tall with confidence, before all the earthly greatness before him, and gave a strong testimony to the Name and Nature of the only true God.

Jacob was saying to Pharaoh- "you are a prince among men with power on earth, but we are princes with God with power in heaven." (J. Phil.)

2. In Ancient times, it was always the greater who blessed the lesser. (more serious)

- With Pharaoh's earthly greatness, compared to Jacob's obscure insignificance in the world, a blessing should have been given by Pharaoh to Jacob, not the other way around.

- This again showed that discouraged, bitter, untrusting Jacob, had changed, so he stood with God's confidence, and blessed Pharaoh twice, (when arriving, when leaving)

Question- Why did Pharaoh tolerate this? Maybe because he admired Joseph and he knew without him and his God, the nation would have perished in famine.

- Maybe partly because Jacob was a very old man, so he graciously excused what he thought were the bad manners of a foreign shepherd who just didn't know any better.

- But maybe in watching Joseph, his heart was turning toward God. (is that our testimony?) Decades later, a Pharaoh turned Egypt to worship only 1 God. (temporary)

Sum- Joseph had been a great example before Pharaoh, and here, his father Jacob's actions for God added to this, and the testimony of their lives and the grace of God, is the only thing that could have made Pharaoh humbly accept Jacob's blessings.

B. JACOB CONFESSED TO PHARAOH - THAT HE WAS A PILGRIM - (also twice).

- * A pilgrim is a traveler without a permanent home. This was humanly true of Jacob. He had gone from Beersheba to Haran, Shechem, then Bethel, to Hebron, and now to Egypt.
- * But in v9, he compared his pilgrimage to-- "the pilgrimage of his fathers", but if we look back, Abraham and Isaac moved very little, and established solid residences in Canaan.
- * The point is, Jacob was referring to his pilgrimage in a spiritual sense.
- * He knew what his G-father Abraham had passed down, that this world was not his home, and he looked for a city whose Builder and Maker is God. (Heb 11:13-16)

App- Hebrews describes those with faith in God as believing they were aliens and strangers on earth, who were looking and longing for a better country - a heavenly one.

Q- By calling himself a pilgrim, Jacob showed Pharaoh- this world is temporary, and 1 day eternity will come, and there's a distinct difference between living for time and living for eternity. Too many believers are preoccupied with now, and have lost sight of the then.
(A. Beg) (2 Cor. 4:16-18, Ps. 90:10,12)

Sum- With Pharaoh's blessing, Joseph settled his family in Goshen. (11-12 r) note 2 things.

1. Joseph treated his family in a way that showed his character and humility.

- Even though Joseph knew shepherds were detestable in Egypt, he never shied away from introducing his shepherd brothers, or his old shepherd father to Pharaoh.

2. Again, Joseph presents a great picture of Christ, as the perfect mediator.

Q- "Joseph came from Jacob's shepherd family, and he was now the Prime Minister of Egypt. So he was the only 1 who could bridge the great gap between Pharaoh and the Egyptians greatness, and the considered unworthiness of lowly despised shepherds.--"

--And the blessings Joseph's family would now enjoy, didn't come to them by earning, conquering, or developing the land. They were given the best of Egypt, because of Joseph's suffering and work for them, and God exalting him".

- This is like Christ, who as God- became a perfect human, to be the only connection between a holy God and lost sinners, and he's the only reason we have eternal spiritual blessings.

IV. JOSEPH AND THE CONTINUED FAMINE. (47:13-26)

- * Read v13. About 5 years were left in this serious famine, and for the nation and region to survive, serious actions needed to be taken.
- * What Joseph does here, may seem harsh and abusive, but remember, people are starving, the land will not sustain them, and their only hope is for the nation's leadership to do something to rescue them from sure death.
- * Also remember that the ancient world knew nothing about a democracy or a republic, with a government- "of, by, and for the people".
- * They lived under the full unquestioning authority of a king's rulership. If he was an arrogant self-serving monster, things were not good, if he was decent, the people had it good.
- * Notice several things that Godly Joseph did in regard to the severe famine.

1. (Vs 14-r) Joseph had stored much grain, and required the people to buy it, and when their money was gone, he gave ALL the money to Pharaoh.

- This kept the people from wasting grain, and it proved Joseph was perfectly honest.

2. (v15-17f) With their money gone, Joseph required they buy grain with their animals.

- This led the people to realize they had to earn what they got. And it's doubtful Joseph actually confiscated the livestock, because he would have to hire people to tend it.
- It's likely the people tended their own cattle they sold to Pharaoh, and were paid with grain for their work. This way- they could still benefit from the milk and meat from the animals.

3. (v18-21r) With no money, and their livestock sold, THE PEOPLE offered Pharaoh their land and their lives, in exchange for grain.

- What Joseph did previously, motivated the people to take personal responsibility, so that now, they offered all they had to buy more grain, and they also desired to serve Pharaoh by sowing seed for what little it might produce.

4. (v22r) The priesthood was extremely powerful and influential. (even more than Pharaoh)

- The people were loyal to the priests, and it was imperative that Pharaoh protect them.
- If Joseph would have taken their land, the people would have rejected him, and Pharaoh would have removed Joseph from office.

5. (v23-24r) Joseph gave them the stored grain and encouraged them to grow more.

Then Joseph charged them 20% tax on what they harvested.

- Again, this kept the people from wasting grain, and they were glad to pay a 20% tax of grain for Joseph to distribute wisely, because Joseph had proven himself worthy.
- And a 20% tax was minimal.
- America's system is riddled with hidden taxes. Federal, state, city, wage, sales, property, excise, and multiple taxes paid by manufacturers and middle men in everything we buy.
- James Boice pointed out that Willian Johnson and Edgar Browning figured this out and determined that the average middle American pays 40 to 50% in taxes.

6. THE RESULT OF JOSEPH'S PLAN - THE PEOPLE WERE GRATEFUL. (v25-26 r)

- * In all Joseph's plan, he kept the people from wasting grain and becoming lazy by giving them something to work for, and he provided for as many people as possible.
- * The people could see that Joseph handled this life-or-death situation, in an upright, decent, self-respecting way, and that he had the people's best interest at heart, and they were extremely thankful that his plan saved their lives.

Lessons.

1. A person's sense of responsibility should be protected. Joseph did this at all costs.

2. Hardship isn't bad for people -- It builds character. (1 historian notes)

- History proves that when countries, cities, etc. have serious hard times, they become stronger, more caring, considerate, better people. (Joseph made character flourish)

3. Strong rulership is good when it comes from righteous men.

- In this crisis, the people didn't turn to their pagan gods, but to the righteous man that God placed over their government, through Pharaoh.

Q- "The prime minister Joseph and the private Joseph, were exactly the same.

Joseph was a man of character that knew all too well, that he had to live with himself in how he performed his responsibilities, and that one day he would answer to God." (Swindoll)