

February 16-Genesis 47

One of the beauties of following God is that we are following the One who is able to “meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Truly, those who are true to God can and will be blessed while others are in need or want all around them. This is illustrated powerfully in Genesis 47.

Jacob had moved his entire family and all of his possessions to the foreign land of Egypt because there was a severe famine throughout the entire known world. Egypt (because of the wisdom of God delivered to Joseph) had planned ahead and therefore were the only known supplier of food. The Bible says that the famine became so severe and long that the Egyptians ran out of money and began to sell to Pharaoh their livestock (v. 17) and then their very land (v. 20). In short, things were not well in Egypt at the time and seemingly no one escaped. It is hard to fathom the desperation that was present but it is easy to understand the breadth of the problem. The Bible says that it was so bad in Egypt that eventually Joseph was able to buy all the land in Egypt. This means that EVERYONE in the entire country was so badly in need of food that they were willing to sell all they owned to obtain it! This was a widespread problem and no one escaped, or at least no Egyptian.

If you continue reading in Genesis 47 you see a stark parallel from life for the Egyptians to the lives of Jacob and his family. The Bible says that Israel (or Jacob) “settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly” (v. 27). So as everyone in Egypt is giving away ALL of their possessions just to get basic food, God’s chosen people are gaining possessions and multiplying. While everyone else is struggling, those who God has chosen are being blessed!

I want to make sure that we don’t go too far with this. It is certainly true that God’s people struggle and that many people who are believers do not always experience these times of abundance. The lesson is NOT that you will always have lots of stuff, the lesson is that you serve a God who can ALWAYS supply what you need and so you have no need to worry. In fact, according to Philippians 4, God supplies all of our needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus. It is in Christ that we are guaranteed God’s provision. God provides for our physical needs to be sure. In Genesis 47 we see an example of such provision, but it is important to understand that God’s provision is much more than material goods and wealth. God’s provision is anchored in the hope that we have in Jesus Christ. Often times, what God provides that gets us through the difficult moments is our eternal hope of glory. We are able to look forward to the day that we will no longer struggle with sin and its consequences. The believer lays hold of the guarantee of a future with God in paradise and that knowledge is what meets our need for encouragement and strength in the midst of the storms of life. May we always reflect on the riches of the promise of Christ as we walk with God in these difficult days. Unlike the people of God, the Egyptians relied on their own strength and power alone to provide. There is a big difference between the two and it showed. Take time to confess to God that you rely totally on Him and then trust Him to supply all of your needs just like the book of Philippians says that He will!