

April 24/25, 2004

Study Questions
Fear or Faith (Part 2): A Study in the Life of Joseph
Experiencing God's Blessings
Genesis 47:1-31
Pastor Bryan Clark

Introduction

1. If you found out today you had 6 months to live, how would it change your priorities? How would it affect what you do with your time, energy, and money each week?
2. Describe the two competing value systems that we must choose between. Why does it seem like it's such a struggle to live for that which is eternal? How do events or circumstances in life sometimes cause us to rethink what matters in life?
3. If I am not really living for that which is eternal, do I really believe God's value system is the best option? Why or why not?

Bible Study

1. Read Genesis 47:1-31.
2. When interpreting Hebrew narratives, one key element to notice are the characters. In this text Pharaoh emerges as a key figure to understanding the theology. Go back and look at all the statements or dialogue related to Pharaoh.

What does Pharaoh do? What does he receive?

Compare this with God's promise in Genesis 12:3.

What is God trying to teach the reader in Genesis 47?

3. How does the writer contrast the people of Egypt and Canaan with the family of Jacob in this passage?
4. According to 47:7 and 47:10, Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Hebrews 7:4-11 refers to the time when Melchizedek blessed Abraham. When one blesses the other, what does that mean for the one being blessed and the one doing the blessing, according to Hebrews 7:7?

In what way does Genesis 47 reveal that God is indeed the greater power over Pharaoh, his gods, and his people?

Would the average person in Egypt have viewed Jacob as the greater power? Why or why not?

5. Before the famine Pharaoh and the people of Egypt had an abundance, with no real need for the blessing of the God of Jacob. The famine changed all that. Suddenly, apart from the God of Jacob and Joseph, the people would have died. They literally lost it all.

What “famines” have you experienced that have affected your perspective on life and what really matters?

What is the danger of abundance?

Application

1. Which of the two value systems will ultimately triumph? Are you daily living in light of your answer?
2. What are 3 practical things you can do to stay true to God’s eternal value system in times of prosperity?
3. We all know it is hard to live for that which is eternal while the world around us lives for the moment. At times it seems like we might be missing out. List 3 specific truths from this text that motivate us to live by faith believing that God’s value system is best.