



A LIFE OF MANY COLORS

7

THE INTERWOVEN STORY OF JOSEPH & GOD

YES, NO & MAYBE

1. I am braver than most of the people in this room.

2. I would rather try something new than to do the same thing over again.

3. I get nervous when entering places and situations where I don't know the details first.

4. Because of Satan's accusations of God's unfairness, God is able to guide more than He is able to protect.

5. Christian faith does not relieve us of the need to make hard choices; often it seems to multiply them.

DIG DEEPER:

READ: Genesis 46:1-7

So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached **Beersheba**, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!" "Here I am," he replied.

3 "**I am God**, the God of your father," he said. "**Do not be afraid** to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 **I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again.** And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

5 Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. 6 So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. 7 Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.

Leaving the Known, Walking Into the Unknown:

○ (Vs. 1) **Beersheba** - This is the place that both Grandpa Abraham made an oath & Father Isaac built an altar. It's the place which Jacob left when he stole Esau's birthright and that night had a vision of a ladder leading to heaven. It is the southernmost point of the Promised Land. **The root words for Beersheba intensify Jacob's concerns before going down to Egypt:** Be'er (b'r) means "to dig a pit or a well?" And Sheba [plural] (se'ba') means a group of seventy. For the group of 70 family members that Jacob was bringing to Egypt--Was he leading them to a pit or to a well?

Ø Has God ever led you from the "known" to the "unknown"? What fears did that well up within you, and what was your experience like?

Ø What are some of God's promises that we fear we might be walking away from?

○ (Vs. 3) **I am God...Do not be afraid** - These are the same words that God spoke to Isaac when he prayed here (Gen. 26:24).

Δ (Vs. 4) **I will go...with you...I will surely bring you back again** - The phrase here for "go with" means more than to accompany; it has the sense of "guide and protect." At this time, it was generally assumed that a deity's power was territorially confined. Specifically, God tells Jacob not to be afraid to go down to Egypt: leaving the Promised Land will not annul the promise. Indeed, the journey is not only compatible with the promise of God, it is the means by which the promise will be fulfilled.

Ø What does it tell you about God that He would speak to Jacob in a vision at a time like this? Is this consistent with His character, and does He still do the same in our day?



THEBIBLELAB



READ: Genesis 46:28-34

28 Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen, 29 **Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time.**

30 Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

31 Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32 The men are shepherds; they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.' 33 When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your occupation?' 34 you should answer, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.' Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, **for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians.**"

The Original Prodigal Story:

○ (Vs. 29) **Joseph...went to...his father** - In a reverse image to Jesus' Prodigal Son story, the son rushes out to meet the father coming to his home.

△ (Vs. 34) **All shepherds are detestable** - Sheep and goats were not generally used for sacrifice by the Egyptians, because their meat did not belong to the priestly royal dish, and because wool was considered by the priests to be unclean, and was, therefore, never used for the wrapping of the dead. The herdsmen are represented on the monuments, as long, lean, distorted, sickly forms—a proof of the contempt that rested upon them.

Ø In this story, Joseph accepts the killers and the outcasts as his family that he will provide a place and provisions for. Because of Joseph, even Pharaoh accepts the detestable. How does this reflect what we can see of God's character elsewhere?

Ø Why do you think that God does not always bring healthy closure to dysfunctional families, even when they've prayed for it?

MY PRAYERS THIS WEEK:

1. How afraid am I for God to take me to the "unknown"?
2. What is God asking me to forgive amongst my own extended family?
3. What new aspect of God's character do I understand better this week?

