

## “WHY DO YE LOOK ONE UPON ANOTHER?”

In Gen 42:1-2, during a time of bitter famine Jacob ask his sons the question that is the title of this article. Famines were frequent at this time because of very few ways of preserving food. The Bible records a famine during Abraham's time Gen 12:10; Isaac's time Gen 26:1 and now in the time of Jacob Gen 41:53-57. Man has always needed food so this is a problem that is given some attention in the Bible. You will notice the attention given to food beginning in the Garden of Eden Gen 3:6, 19; Esau's selling his birthright Gen 25:29-34; during the temptations of Jesus Matt 4:1-4; in Jesus' model prayer Matt 6:11; and in Jesus feeding 5,000 and 4,000 Matt 14:15-21; 15:32-39. In many if not all the instances in Scripture regarding the need for food there is a lesson as is the case under consideration in this article. So, let's examine this question and the story surrounding it to see if we can learn some lessons that it demonstrates to us.

This question and its context stress the value of **leadership**. The sons of Jacob lacked leadership and initiative. Food was needed and they only looked at one another. It seems as if each was waiting on the other to do something. As far as I know doing nothing has never produced anything. Their father, Jacob, took the initiative: and showed his wisdom and maturity. He said: “I have heard that there is corn in Egypt, go down and buy for us”. For the Lord's church to go forward there must be leadership. Elders are commanded to feed the flock 1Pet 5:2,3. It is a shepherd's duty to lead the flock and that takes vision and initiative. Certainly there cannot be leadership if no one will follow Heb 13:7, 17. Obviously, this congregation does not have Elders (shepherds, overseers, pastors or bishops). However, when the time comes when we have a plurality of men who meet the qualifications, then they should be appointed to shepherd the flock. But in the meantime, we have periodic meetings of the men to utilize the collective experience and wisdom to make decisions regarding the work of the church here and for there to be results from these decisions we must be willing to carry out the plan of work suggested.

This question emphasizes the importance of **vision**. Every accomplishment must begin with vision. Man cannot do anything he cannot visualize. Jacob was able to see what could and should be done, which shows his wisdom and maturity. His sons could not visualize going all the way to Egypt to get food. Leadership should be able to visualize what needs to be done. Vision, not necessarily physical but mental is essential to life Prov 29:18. We collectively must be able to see the need for teaching the lost the Gospel of Christ Jhn 4:35. Poor vision weakens and kills the Church in many places. Someone said: “those who dream dreams and make them come true have not been asleep. We must visualize the work that needs to be done here in this area.

This situation also stresses the value of **activity**. Vision alone will not get the job done. Jacob demonstrated that he was also a man of action. His sons were not, they only looked at one another. However, Jacob needed help to make his vision work.

Joseph, down in Egypt was also a man of vision and action Gen 41. He became great, second only to the Pharaoh, but not without help, (obviously he had God's help) but he also had the help of all the Egyptians. No one has ever invented a substitute for work. Leadership in a congregation must have vision, but they also must have help to put plans into action.

Why do we look one on another when needs are ever pressing? The world needs evangelizing (and it starts next door) Mk 16:15,16, Matt 28:18-20. Jesus said he would be with us “even to the end of the age” (NKJV) Matt 28:20. With the Lord as our partner we cannot help but succeed. There is much teaching and encouraging that needs to be done. New converts are not full grown when born; they must grow or die 1Pet 2:2. There are those who have fallen who need restoring Gal 6:1. There are those who are physically sick for whom we need to help provide care Matt 25:36,43. There are strangers who need visiting Matt 25:35,43. We must be busy contending for the truth

Jude 3. We must hate every false way Psa 119:104.

Why do we just look at one another when there is so much work that needs to be done? We must be busy developing leadership with vision that will enable them to see what needs to be done and are willing to work to see that the work gets done. There are no leaders, no matter how good they may be, who can do all the work by themselves. They must have help to accomplish what needs to be done. While we do not have elders who can plan the work here, there is work that needs to be done, and we have men with experience and wisdom who meet together and make plans for the work. Every member of the church here must be willing to do all they can to help carry out the plans that are made or else this congregation will gradually die as would Jacob and his family had they not done what needed to be done in order to “live and not die” Gen 42:1.

(JLH)