

Day #2: God Uses Crisis to Move People – Geographically

READ: Genesis 45:5; Genesis 46:1-4; Acts 8:1

My thoughts on the subject of crisis have evolved a lot from when I was first approached by Encompass World Partners about developing a Crisis Response ministry. To be honest, at that time I wasn't sure crisis ministry was a good fit for me. But all that changed when I looked at the role of crisis in the Bible, and I came to a conclusion that left me wildly passionate about serving in crisis.

What conclusion did I reach? I saw that **God uses crisis to move people**, to change people's hearts, minds, and sometimes even their geography. The crucible of suffering awakens; it shakes us from life's patterns and routines so that we are listening differently; it readies our mind to see afresh. But God uses crisis to move people geographically? Really? Yes, even geographically. Consider these well-known examples.

ISRAEL INTO EGYPT

When God wanted Israel to go into Egypt where they would grow into a great nation, how did He move them there? He sent a severe **famine** (*crisis*) and as food grew scarce, the patriarch Jacob had no choice but to seek provisions in the only land that still had food: Egypt.

His sons were welcomed by the "Egyptian" official, and they returned home with bulging sacks of grain. Turns out that this generous official in Pharaoh's court was none other than Joseph, their brother!

And how did brother Joseph end up in Egypt? It was by his brothers' **wicked betrayal** (*crisis*) years before, when they treacherously sold him to traveling merchants "happening by" on their way to Egypt.

Another geographic migration brought on by crisis was 430 years later, when God used **ten horrific plagues** (*crisis*) to bring Israel, now a vast nation, out of Egypt.

MOBILIZING THE EARLY CHURCH

After Pentecost the church was exploding; Jerusalem was Christianity-Central. Believers were living and fellowshiping together, and their numbers grew daily as they anxiously awaited Jesus' return.

But weren't they forgetting something? Oh, yeah, the Great Commission. Their town, Jerusalem, was only Phase I! So how would God move the church into Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth? Through **persecution** (*crisis*) ignited by Stephen's **martyrdom** (*crisis*).

Indeed, all throughout history God often has used crises – famine, betrayal, plagues, persecution – to move people into His good and perfect purposes.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Has God ever used a crisis or hardship to move you geographically? Describe it and how things turned out.

Can you think of Bible stories (other than those cited above) where God achieved something important in someone's life by relocating them?