

The InnerCHANGE

Online Edition for the Cross Point Community



Title: John Hancock

Date: 7.4.10

Series: Forefathers

Text: Gen 31

Synopsis: On July 4th, 1776, the Second Continental Congress of the United States ratified the wording for The Declaration of Independence outlining the grievances against King George III and giving birth to a new nation. Popular legend has it that John Hancock, then president of the Continental Congress and the first to sign the declaration, signed largely and clearly so the King George himself could “read it without his spectacles.” The Declaration of Independence is an enduring statement of what can happen when people come together under strong leadership and pursue a common, God-given vision.

This is what is happening in the life of Jacob and his family as well. After twenty years of hard labor and unfair treatment, Jacob, his wives, children and servants are declaring their independence from Laban. They are setting out on their own God-given quest to build a nation. Although at one point they lacked unity, and their relationships were marred by rivalry and dysfunction, now, under Jacob’s leadership, they are unified and resolute.

Like John Hancock, the Apostle Paul also wrote in large letters so that we can plainly read what he was writing. In Galatians 6:11 he writes, “See what large letters I used as I write to you with my own hand!” He goes on to explain that the things that we do, like circumcision, or the things that we don’t do, like uncircumcision, mean nothing, but what counts is that we are “new creations”. Just as Jacob emerges as a new creation after years of abuse by Laban, and as our own fledgling nation emerges as a new creation after years of abuse by King George the III, so we emerge as new creations after years of abuse by sin, guilt and shame. We are no longer under sin’s bondage. We are free. Free from what we have done and free from what we haven’t done. Now that’s a Declaration of Independence we should all put our “John Hancock” on. Happy Fourth of July!