

From PRISON to Palace

A Study of the Life of Joseph

Class 2 • Joseph Refined • Genesis 39-40

- Joseph is now 17 years of age, often a critical period for the direction that a young man takes in life, and he find himself in Egypt
- He will become Prime Minister of Egypt at 30, hold office for 80 years, and die at 110
- He will spend 93 years away from the Promised Land - His entire Adult Life
- No doubt Joseph's faith was severely tested as he entered Egypt as a captive - How unlikely seemed the fulfillment of his dreams now!
- Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph
- How would that have played out? Wouldn't it look more like Joseph is just a good businessman?
- Potiphar could not attribute Joseph's blessings to the Lord except that Joseph had spoken about the Lord!
- Joseph's responsibilities grew and grew, from a servant to an overseer
- God does this to test and prepare us for much greater tasks
- Here we see the frequently repeated biblical principle of God blessing the unrighteous for the sake of the righteous
- Joseph was beautiful in form and fair to look upon, like his mother Rachel
- Consider that Potiphar's wife only had time for Joseph's material attractiveness - Potiphar had noticed that the Lord was with him - But, Zuleika only saw his physical nature
- Joseph's options here did not allow him to be at peace with all men
- Either he will offend God and Potiphar, or Potiphar's wife - There is no middle ground
- The determining factor will be his love for righteousness
- Joseph's priorities were first to God, then his master, with his own feelings last

- How was Joseph able to resist this temptation when a hundred other religious men might have fallen?

APPLICATION

- **Jacob was converted at Peniel, (Genesis 32). Joseph would have been 5 or 6. What significance does the fact that he was the youngest have?**

- Hence, with greater exposure to this godly influence than his elder brothers, Joseph had continuous training in the Word of God

- In the military, most battles are won before the day of fighting through training and preparation

- Many a believer falls today because he believes he only needs a few days of preparation

- In fact we may need years of spiritual training for a particular battle

- Genesis 39:10 NIV

10) And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.

- Many can resist temptation once

- What about continual hounding?

- You know that she increased the temptations to try to persuade him

- Genesis 39:11 NIV

11) One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside.

- Potiphar's wife also added the enticement of secrecy, which is only effective to those who believe God to be remote, deaf, or blind

- But Joseph saw the need to flee from sin and a compromising situation

- He wasn't polite about it - HE RAN

- "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" - Is that true?

- NO - for if this were true, then God's fury would be lesser

- For this reason, Joseph wisely opts for the fury of a woman scorned rather than that of righteous God

- If Potiphar's wife cannot have Joseph, then she will destroy him, indicating that her desire for him was not love but lust, not selfless concern for Joseph, but a selfish craving
- Normally, Potiphar would have killed a slave accused of this, but his respect for Joseph makes him cast him in prison instead
- God prospers Joseph in prison!
- Remember that in the midst of depressing circumstances like jail-time, God is in full control just as much as when the circumstances are favorable
- In spite of the obvious temptation to doubt God's righteous ways, Joseph responsibly manifests a gracious, patient, and humble spirit that is noticed by pagan jailers
- Once again, Joseph receives a measure of relief and promotion, so that he becomes a trusted supervisor over the other inmates

APPLICATION

• God's presence is not limited to Churches. Where else has God made himself manifest to the faithful?

- The presence of God with His people is limited to churches. It has been often manifestly seen that He was with them in prisons, in caves or dens, and in fiery furnaces
- What should that teach us about God's presence in our lives?
- Genesis 40:1-3 - Can you imagine being put in Jail for not doing your job well?
- Egypt was a very dream conscious society, and these simultaneous dreams seemed special, revelatory, and not merely born of indigestion
- The regular court interpreters, usually professionals, were not at their disposal any longer
- Joseph's advice is both profound and humble: "Do not interpretations belong to God?"
- This dream of vines, grapes, and serving Pharaoh could have been understood as wishful thinking on the cup-bearer's part - But Joseph was not deceived by mere psychological reasoning
- Note that it is open to verification since in three days, not months, or years, the cup-bearer will be restored
- Joseph's plea indicates that his privileged position was still very restrictive

- How passionately must the cup-bearer have promised relief from Pharaoh upon his release?
- Joseph interprets the dream according to truth and not personal expediency
- In three days the baker will be beheaded and his body impaled on display as was customary in Egypt
- Imagine the argument that took place between the cup-bearer and the baker over the next three days - One adamantly claiming Joseph to be reliable, the other denounced him as a fraud
- Imagine after three days of wearisome debating, the contrasting expressions of hope and fear on the two prisoner's faces
- The cup-bearer, although elated, neglected Joseph

APPLICATION

- **Read Psalm 62:7-9 - This Psalm makes me think about how Joseph must have felt when having his hopes dashed in Prison. What lesson does this teach us for our own lives?**
- He was tempted to feel bitter, to let it build up into a desire for revenge
- But, he was simply being further refined in the furnace of life
- Joseph knew that God was with him, and he only learned all the more not to trust in man