

The Training, Testing and Rise to Power of the Rejected Son

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I. Joseph's first rise to power: administration in Potiphar's palace.

A. Joseph's work ethic

1. Gaining the trust of those who do not share our worldview.
2. The evidential basis for faith and trust: the Lord was with Joseph and Potiphar saw it.
3. The nature and significance of work: the key question – why do we work?
4. The origin of work: Genesis 2.
5. The goals and by-products of work: 2 Thess. 2.10, Matthew 6:25-34
6. The attitude to work: Colossians 3.22-4.1
7. Paul's commands and motivation
 - a) 2 Thess. 2.6-12
 - b) Acts 20.33-35
 - c) 1 Corinthians 9.9 and 1 Tim.5.17-18
8. The Lord gives Joseph success.

B. Joseph's ethics tested.

1. The location of the test – the work-place.
2. The ingredients in the test: the essence of morality.
3. The secret of Joseph's fidelity – a matter of absolutes.

4. The base of ethics: the logical possibilities – God, nature, society.
5. The relationship of ethics to worldview: “If God does not exist everything is permissible” (Dostoevski).
6. The contemporary problem: ethics and naturalism.
7. The deceit: the false evidence of Joseph’s clothes and the deception of Potiphar.

II. Joseph’s second rise to power: administration of the prison

- A. Potiphar’s choice – whom do I trust?
- B. The trust of the prison governor in Joseph – the Lord was with Joseph and made him succeed.
- C. The dreams of the chief butler and the chief baker: Joseph’s sensitivity and its implications.
- D. Joseph’s plea to the butler: “Remember me”.
- E. “How long O Lord?”

III. Joseph’s third rise to power: administration of the Egyptian Empire

- A. Joseph’s response to Pharaoh’s dreams: “It is not in me – God will give Pharaoh a favourable answer”
- B. Joseph’s belief in and witness to the fact of revelation:
 1. His interpretation of the double dream,
 2. His economic analysis and recommendations.
- C. Pharaoh perceives that there is such a thing as revelation.
- D. Joseph’s elevation to unprecedented authority: his economic strategy for saving Egypt from starvation.
- E. Joseph’s marriage and children:
 1. Manasseh = “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house”
 2. Ephraim = “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction”

Questions

1. Is our attitude to my work 'Christian' – and what does that really mean?
2. Do people trust me?
3. What principles and practice can we learn from Joseph's handling of attempted seduction?
4. How do we think Joseph resisted becoming bitter at the false accusation of Potiphar's wife? What resources do we possess to do the same?
5. What does Joseph's attitude to the dreams of the butler and baker tell us about his attitude to his own dreams?
6. Do we think I am being treated unfairly at the moment? How does this affect me and how am I going to deal with it?
7. Am I treating anyone else unfairly? What am I going to do about it?
8. What was the essence of Joseph's witness to Pharaoh? What gave him courage?
9. What about me? How can I witness and encourage others to witness to the contemporary world that God speaks?
10. What do the names Joseph gives his children tell us about his processing and acceptance of his own experience?