

THE SECRET OF THE REIGNING LIFE OF JOSEPH

Message Three

Joseph Betrayed and Imprisoned

Scripture Reading: Gen. 39:20; Lam. 3:27-28; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Gen. 40:1-23; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 4:13

I. After Joseph was betrayed and sold by his brothers, he passed through a period of confinement and imprisonment—Gen. 39:20a:

- A. Joseph's confinement lasted at least ten years:
 - 1. When Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, he was about seventeen years of age, and when he was released from prison, he was thirty—37:2a; 41:46a.
 - 2. According to the Bible, it is the young people, not the older ones, who experience this lesson of confinement—Lam. 3:27-28:
 - a. Young people need such a period of confinement because they are too free.
 - b. If the young people love the Lord and are today's Josephs, they will be placed into the Lord's confinement.
- B. Before Joseph was enthroned and came into power, he was imprisoned, indicating that before enthronement, there is confinement:
 - 1. Some may think that if they follow Jesus Christ and are in the Lord's recovery, everything will be glorious; however, the young people need a period of confinement; this is very important for them.
 - 2. Do not think that after you have seen the vision of Christ, the church, the cross, the inner life, or the Spirit, you will have a glorious time; rather, you will suffer and be imprisoned.

II. We must learn the secret of knowing how to enjoy our imprisonment and how to spend our time during our period of confinement:

- A. Joseph was tested by the fact that his dreams were not immediately fulfilled; moreover, in his dreams there was no indication or implication that he would suffer.
- B. During his imprisonment Joseph had the faith and the boldness to interpret the dreams of his two companions in prison, even though his own dreams had not yet been fulfilled—Gen. 40:1-23:
 - 1. It was difficult for Joseph to interpret the dreams of others when the interpretation of his own dreams had not been fulfilled; nevertheless, he did so.
 - 2. We should have the boldness to say that the church life is wonderful, even when our dream of the church life has not yet been fulfilled and the church life does not seem wonderful to us—1 Cor. 1:2; Num. 23:21; 24:5.
- C. When the dreams of Joseph's companions were fulfilled, Joseph was confirmed and strengthened, expecting that his dreams would also be fulfilled.
- D. The fulfillment of the dreams of Joseph's companions came in a few days; but Joseph's dreams were not fulfilled for another two years—Gen. 40:14-15, 23:
 - 1. In order to be qualified to rule, Joseph needed to stay in the dungeon for an additional two years.
 - 2. His view after ten years in prison was still that he had been kidnapped out of the land of the Hebrews, indicating that he was not ready to reign; because he still thought that he was in Egypt as a result of being kidnapped, he was not ready to reign—vv. 14-15.
 - 3. Joseph was not enthroned immediately after seeing the vision but passed through a long period of trial and testing; the visions Joseph saw not only controlled his life but also sustained his faith.

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4. We may have a heart that is absolutely for the Lord, and we may have seen some visions, but we should not think that we will be enthroned immediately; instead, we must be prepared to be depreciated and confined.
5. Apparently, Joseph was suffering in confinement; actually he was learning valuable lessons and experiencing what was necessary for his enthronement:
 - a. If Joseph had not learned the lessons during confinement, he could not have been enthroned in Egypt to rule over the whole country as a young man.
 - b. Joseph was trained by his imprisonment; his confinement was truly an exercise for him.
 - c. Any confinement that we must undergo is a training, an exercise, and a time of learning as a preparation for our enthronement.