

THE PURPOSE OF TESTING #5

Training for Reigning

I. Introduction

A. Review

We continue with our series on the ‘The Purpose of Testing’:

- Testing, trials, troubles and tribulation are unavoidable
- But God is in control; He is “working all things together for good”
- His purpose in allowing our testing is to conform our character to the image of Christ-His character and His Person

Theme

God uses all the tests, trials and troubles of the Christian life to prepare us for His great purpose-we are “training for reigning”

Our teaching tonight and next week will look at some lessons from the life of Joseph, one the great Old Testament “types” of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Lessons from the Life of Joseph

A. Learning to Type

1. One of the great keys to unlocking biblical revelation is to be able to connect the revelation of the Old and New Testaments.

St. Augustine

**“The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed;
The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.”**

2. All New Testament truth is in the Old Testament, but “concealed”. All the Old Testament truth is in the New Testament, where it is fully “revealed”.

3. This means that when we study the Old Testament we are looking at New Testament truth that is often *concealed* in what the theologians refer to as “types” or “shadows”.

“Type”

A historical event, person, or object that in some ways symbolized or anticipates a later occurrence or fulfillment; an Old Testament “foreshadowing” of a New Testament person, event, or spiritual truth.
The Concise Dictionary of Theology

Examples

Old Testament	New Testament
The Passover Lamb	Jesus the Lamb of God
The manna from heaven	Jesus the “bread of life”
The serpent of brass	Christ on the Cross

4. In our last study, we looked at the life of Jacob, the man who wrestled with God, to show how God uses testing and trials to transform a “Jacob”, (a “heel catcher” and “supplanter”), into an “Israel”, a “prince” of God.

a. The life of Jacob is a “type” of the life of a New Testament believer, and how God orders our lives to rid us of the “old (Jacob) nature” to produce an “Israel”, a “prince” of God.

5. But tonight we will look at “The Purpose of Testing” in the life of Jacob’s son Joseph, the favorite of his 12 sons.

6. If Jacob is a picture of what testing and trials look like in the life of an average believer, Joseph is a picture of what testing and trials look like in the life of the most Christ-like person in the Old Testament.

Arthur Pink

“In Jacob we see exemplified the conflict between the two natures in the believer, and God’s gracious disciplines which, slowly but surely, brought the triumph of the spirit over the flesh. But Joseph, typically, speaks to us of *heirship obtained through suffering, and points forward to the time when we shall reign together with Christ.*”

7. Of all the great men of faith in the Bible, Joseph is the man with the fewest flaws; the man most like Jesus.

a. Noah got drunk; Abraham produced Ishmael; Isaac lied to a King; Jacob was a deceiver; Moses lost his temper and could not enter the Promised Land; David committed adultery.

b. The Bible does not withhold its heroes’ shortcomings!

8. But we find none of these flaws in Joseph! Of all the great Old Testament heroes, the life of Joseph most closely typifies the life of Jesus Christ.

A.W. Pink in “Gleanings in Genesis”

“The different histories of persons in the Old Testament foreshadow the life and character of Jesus Christ. Adam represented His headship; Abel, His death; Noah, His work in preparing an Ark for His people; Melchizedek pointed to Him as Priest, Moses as Prophet, David as King.”

A.W. Pink

“But the fullest and most striking of all typical personage is Joseph, for between his history and that of Christ, we may trace fully 100 points of analogy.”

9. We shall see that Joseph suffered through many tests and trials but ends up on the throne of Egypt; the purpose of his testing was “training for reigning”.

B. Joseph: 9 Typological Details in the Life of Joseph

1. Joseph is a type of Jesus in that he was his father’s favorite son.

Genesis 37:3

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors.

a. Joseph put the coat on Joseph, to distinguish him from his half-brothers, the 10 born of another wife.

b. God loves all His children; but Jesus is His “beloved Son”, in whom He is “well pleased”.

c. Jacob clothed Joseph with a coat of many colors; God clothed Jesus with glory and honor.

2. Joseph, like Jesus, was hated by his brethren.

Genesis 37:4

And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

John 7:7

The world...hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.

3. The specific form of their hatred was envy.

Genesis 37:11

And his brothers envied him.

- a. Hatred takes many forms; but one of the worst is envy.
- b. It was envy that put Jesus on trial before Pilate:

Matthew 27:17-18

Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

4. Joseph, like Jesus, was sent by his father to seek his brothers who were lost.

Genesis 37:12-13

Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them. So he said to him, "Here I am."

a. What a perfect picture of Christ who was sent by the Father to look for His brothers who were lost!

Luke 19:10

...for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

1 John 4:10-11

And this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

5. Joseph, like Jesus, was conspired against by his brothers.

Genesis 37:18

And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near to them, they conspired to slay him.

a. His brothers saw Joseph coming from "afar off". How this reminds that before He was born, King Herod heard that Israel's Messiah was coming, so he conspired to have all the male babies to be murdered! Herod saw Him "afar off" and conspired to kill Him!

b. Later, during his earthly ministry, we read...

Matthew 12:14

Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him.

6. Joseph, like Jesus, was stripped of his clothing by his brothers.

Gen 37:23

When Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped off his robe, the robe of many colors that he had on.

a. This is a powerful picture of what happened to Jesus at His trial:

Matthew 27:27-28

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him...

John 19:23

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments

7. Joseph, like Jesus, was cast into a pit.

Genesis 37:24

Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

a. The cruelty of his brothers stripped him of his robe and threw him into a pit; so Jesus said it would happen to Him!

Matt 12:40

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights *in the heart of the earth*.

8. Joseph, like Jesus, would be sold for silver.

Genesis 37:28

Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver.

a. And just so Jesus was sold for silver by one of His own.

Matthew 26:15-16

**And Judas said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?"
And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.**

b. It was Joseph's brother Judah hatched the plan to betray Joseph.
And the name of the disciple who betrayed the Lord had the same name!

9. So Joseph is betrayed into the hands of the Egyptians. Egypt in the Bible represents the world. And so Jesus was betrayed into the hands of the Romans.

C. The Scene Moves to Joseph in Egypt

1. Joseph ends up a slave in the house of the wealthy Egyptian Potiphar, who quickly promotes him to be head of his house; where another testing awaits.

Genesis 39:6-8

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused...

2. The greatest tests of holiness come in private; when no one is around; or when no one would know; but Joseph knows that there IS someone around!

Genesis 39:8-10

But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

3. Notice that Joseph did not say "sin against my master"; but "against God". Joseph was a person aware of God's presence! But the woman persisted in tempting him:

Genesis 39:10-12

So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her. But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me". But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

4. So this evil woman calls the other servants into the house and shows Joseph's robe as proof he had tried to violate her. Then she tells the same story to her husband Potiphar:

Gen 39:17-18

Then she spoke to (her husband)...saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

Genesis 39:19-20

So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him...his anger was aroused. Then he took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.

5. Notice that Joseph, like Jesus, passed the test of holiness. But then, like Jesus, He is convicted by false witnesses (Matthew 26:59-61), and is sentenced to suffer for something he did not do.

a. How many of God's people have been tested this way!

6. But don't miss this: in spite of his innocence and the fact that the charges were false, Joseph gives not one word of self-defense! He does not try to explain; he does not accuse the woman of lying; he does not try to save himself! How beautifully does Joseph foreshadow how Jesus handled false accusation!

a. 500 years before His birth, the prophet Isaiah had a vision of the trial of the Messiah, who would suffer in silence for the sins of His people:

Isaiah 53:7

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

b. This was literally fulfilled at the trial of Jesus, standing under false accusations before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate:

Matthew 27:12-14

And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do you not hear how many things they

testify against You?" But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

7. Who among us has not suffered the sting of a false accusation? But how few among us react like Joseph and Jesus, trusting that God had a purpose for the testing!

8. Jesus would go to the Cross for sins He never committed. Here Joseph will be put into an Egyptian prison at age 17 and remained there for THIRTEEN YEARS... and all for something he did not do! But both would be delivered to become a Deliverer!

Joseph was raised from the prison to save the world from the pestilence of worldwide famine. Jesus would be raised from the dead to save the world from the pestilence of worldwide sin.

10. The lives of Joseph and Jesus teach us the purpose of testing in our own lives; we are training for reigning; our sovereign God foresees what's coming and is preparing us for promotion.

II. Our Sovereign God is Preparing Us for Promotion

A. Revealed in the Psalms

1. 500 years after these events, the great Psalmist King David would explain the purpose of Joseph's testing:

Psalm 105:16

Moreover He called for a famine in the land; He destroyed all the provision of bread.

a. This refers to the famine that Jacob and his family would suffer some 12 years before his brothers will sell Joseph to the Egyptians. Little did they know at the time how the brother they betrayed would be their Savior when the famine came! The sovereign foreknowledge of God is revealed in the next verse:

Psalm 105:17-19

He sent a man before them — Joseph — who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.

a. God gave Joseph a word as young boy that he would be exalted and promoted; but that word had to be tested “until the time”. As one said...

Treasury of David

“This verse presents to us a deep spiritual truth: The promises of God try a man, that through the trial he may be prepared for their fulfilment.”

2. The literal Hebrew of this verse says that Joseph was laid in irons until the iron came into his soul!

Charles Spurgeon

“Joseph was laid in iron, or ‘the iron come came into his soul’. His chains hurt his mind as well as his body. Under the cruelly false accusation, which he could not disprove, his mind was, as it were, belted and bolted around with iron, and had not the Lord been with him he might have sunk under his sufferings. In all this, and a thousand things besides, he was an admirable type of Him who in the highest sense is ‘the Shepherd, the stone of Israel’.

a. In all his trials and testing, Joseph was training for reigning!

Charles Spurgeon

“Joseph’s iron fetters were preparing him to wear chains of gold, and making his feet ready to stand on high places. It is even so with all the Lord’s afflicted ones; they too shall one day step from their prisons to their thrones.”

3. Oh, that we might live our lives in this revelation; we are all “waiting on the Word” or the promise to come. And as with Joseph, it will come in its time.

Treasury of David

“When the word of deliverance came, the man came forth, strong through trial, to fulfil his glorious destiny of ruling Egypt in the name of God, and securing for it the blessings of heaven. Thus his trial by the word of the Lord — his temptation to doubt its truth — was a divine discipline preparing him for the fulfilment of the promise.”

III. Review

Theme

**God has a purpose for every test and trial that He allows in our lives.
Like Joseph, we are “training for reigning”**

1. Joseph is an Old Testament type of Jesus Christ, and a model for all of us today.

2. Our faith in God's promises explains the purpose for our testing;

**Andrew Jukes
(1815-1901)**

"The Types of Genesis"

"(Joseph's) soul came into iron. Till we have felt it, we cannot conceive that sickness of heart, which at times will come upon the patient sufferer; that sense of loneliness, that faintness of soul, which comes from hopes deferred and wishes unshared, from the selfishness of brethren and the heartlessness of the world."

3. Have you felt it? Have you been there? Are you there now?

Andrew Jukes

"We ask ourselves, 'If the Lord were with me, should I suffer thus, not only the scorn of the learned and the contempt of the great, but even the indifference and neglect of those whom I have served, who yet forget me?' So Joseph might have asked; and so till now may the elect ask, as they stand alone without man's encouragement or sympathy, not turned aside by falsehood or scorn, with their face set as a flint, yet deeply feeling what it costs them."

Andrew Jukes

2. This is the great lesson on the purpose of testing from the life of Joseph; we are "training for reigning"; all he suffered prepared him for promotion!

Psalm 105:22

**Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.
The king sent and released him, the ruler of the people let him go free.
He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions, to bind his
princes at his pleasure, and teach his elders wisdom.**

3. God promoted Joseph; God promoted Jesus; and so He will promote the Church that submits to the purpose of testing!

Title