

THE PRISON TEST Genesis 39:16-40:23

INTRODUCTION: Every believer in Jesus Christ has a dream from God and a destiny from our God. In order to fulfill our God given destiny we must pass the character tests our Lord gives us and one of those tests is The Prison Test. Genesis 39:19-20. The Prison Test is “what are you going to do when you do the right things and the results are not pleasant.” Romans 5:3-5: Do you rejoice in your sufferings? Philippians 3:10; Acts 5:40-41. Why should we rejoice when it is our turn in The Prison Test?

I. SUFFERING PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE!

Joseph had done the right thing and went to prison for it. How could God allow that? “Why does God allow those who do right to suffer for it? Isaiah 55:8-9. Our God says “Get excited when you face lots of trials, even unfair trials. Why should we do that? Because of the possible outcome of those trials properly responded to. Our trials can produce perseverance in our lives: James 1:2-3. Our trials, even the unfair ones; if properly responded to will bring about the greatest spiritual growth in our lives if we will allow those trials to train us: Hebrews 12:11. Sadly many Christians still have not learned that nothing besides the trials of life produces perseverance in our lives: it is God’s way. Hebrews 5:7-8: Even our Lord Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered.

II. PERSEVERANCE PRODUCES GODLY CHARACTER!

Long, difficult trials properly responded to develop perseverance and perseverance produces godly character. Our long and difficult trials cause character flaws to emerge where we can clearly see them in our lives. When the trials the Lord allows in our lives come we often become angry or discouraged because we think it shouldn’t happen that way. But if when our God turns up the heat in our lives we respond by faith we learn to think differently. 1 Peter 4:12-19. Our reading today shows us Joseph in prison for doing the right things. Even in prison things did not go as Joseph would have liked: Genesis 40:14-15. Why didn’t the chief cupbearer remember Joseph? Because God had a plan not just for Joseph but for all of God’s people in mind. Our God has a plan not just for us but for the ages, but we too must learn to wait upon the Lord: Isaiah 40:31. Now it is time for Joseph to soar like an eagle!

III. GODLY CHARACTER PRODUCES HOPE!

The hope that God puts in our hearts is not an “I hope so hope.” But it is “An I know so hope!” It is a know so hope because it is centered in the promises of God! Proverbs 13:12. We must find our hope in our God and not in the changing circumstances of this life. Our God never stops working out His dream for our lives: Philippians 1:6; Philippians 2:13; Romans 8:28-29.

IV. HOPE PRODUCES APPOINTMENT!

Romans 5:3-5: Hope does not disappoint! Hope appoints! As we chose to live by faith and trust our God through the trials He appoints for our growth in Christ then Romans 5:3-5 comes to completion in our lives and God appoints! Every trial we pass gets us one step closer to our appointment! Joseph didn’t give in to self-pity but continued to wait upon his Lord to bring his dream to completion. Genesis 40:6-7 shows us that Joseph was not self-centered but others centered. No one on earth, other than me can thwart my destiny from God! Don’t let the trials of life make you bitter! Genesis 50:19-21; Philippians 1:6. That is The Prison Test!