

### Joseph (of Genesis) and Jesus

This is a talk looking at some of the similarities between the story of Joseph and the parallels with Jesus. Through the Old Testament there are lots of characters that shadow Jesus, or point to Jesus. These include Adam (except Jesus is shown as being opposite to Adam – eg Romans says Adam sinned for all mankind, Jesus was sinless for all mankind etc). Then there is Abraham (God the Father) and Isaac (the Son). The servant then goes to find Isaac a wife (this un-named servant reflects the Holy Spirit). There's also Isaiah (the suffering servant). So Joseph is one of a number of Old Testament reflections of the Messiah to come. Some of these are more obvious than others. Someone, somewhere has collected over 100 of these similarities / foreshadowing!

We've covered some of these similarities in our talk on Joseph (Talks > Joseph) but this goes deeper and more specifically on the similarities with Jesus! This talk must acknowledge Chuck Missler, Koinonia House for the outline of some of these points (Genesis Commentary DVD). This talk has taken some of these points and expanded on them.

NOTE – This has a lot of information!

#### 1. Both were shepherds

In Genesis 37.2 we find that Joseph was a shepherd. Psalm 23.1 lets us know that, *"The Lord is my shepherd."*

#### 2. Joseph had a robe which was significant

Genesis 37.3 describes this as an *"ornate robe."* We know from Psalm 22.18 that Jesus' garment would be divided, which it was in Matthew 27.35.

#### 3. Robe covered in blood

Joseph's robe was brought to his father, covered in blood (Genesis 37.31). In Matthew 27.28 we find that Jesus had a scarlet robe put on him. Jesus had also been beaten so he would have covered a robe or any clothing with his blood.

#### 4. Hated by brothers

Genesis 37.4 tells us that when Joseph's brothers saw he loved Joseph the most, *"they hated him."* Likewise, John 1.11 reveals how Jesus' *"own did not receive him."* We see in Matthew 27 how the crowd rejected him in favour of Barabbas, then the pharisees and elders all mocked him. Jesus was hated because of who he was (the Son of God) like John 10.30-31 and because of his words (John 7.7).

#### 5. Future kingship prophesied

In Genesis 37.7 Joseph unfortunately let his brothers know that their 'sheafs' (of wheat) would bow down to his sheaf, which didn't go down too well. In Matthew 26.64, Jesus let his

disciples know that they would see him sitting at the right hand side of the Father. In Luke 1.32-33, Gabriel spoke to Mary and let her know she would give birth to Jesus, *"the Son of the most high."*

## 6. Both were sent out by their Father

In Genesis 37.13, Jacob (Israel) sent Joseph out to his brothers in the fields. 1 John 4.10 lets us know that God "sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." Both Joseph and Jesus went willingly, there's no hint of resistance.

## 7. Both seek until they find

For Joseph, the seeking was due to the fact his brothers had moved on to Dothan, where he went to find them. Jesus tells the parable of the Lost Sheep in Luke 15.4, explaining that he goes after the lost sheep until they are found.

## 8. People plotted against them

Joseph's brothers plotted to kill him in Genesis 37.18 and throw him into a well. In Matthew 26.4, we find that the chief priests and elders of the people, *"plotted to kill (Jesus)."*

## 9. Betrayal Money

In Matthew 26 (verses 14-16) we see how Judas went to them and was paid 30 silver coins to betray Jesus. Likewise in Genesis 37.28, Joseph was sold by his brothers to the Midianites for 20 shekels of silver. I once read a report saying that with inflation, by the time of Jesus' day, the exact value of that would have been 30 shekels...

## 10. Words weren't believed

For Joseph this happened in Genesis 37.19, with his disbelieving brothers (and likely later when he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife). Jesus of course was not believed by the Pharisees on a regular basis. Matthew 27.39-44 saw the Pharisees, the Roman soldiers and even one of the robbers crucified with him hurled disbelieving abuse at Jesus.

## 11. Insulted and stripped

In Matthew 27.28, the Roman soldiers stripped Jesus. We've already seen how he was insulted in Matthew 27.39-44 and abused. In Genesis 37.20, we find a clue as to the mockery and abuse from his brothers. Then in verse 23, we find that his brothers, *"stripped him of his robe."*

## 12. Cast into a 'pit'

Genesis 37.24 is described in the Amplified Bible as being a "well-like pit". Jesus' descent to the grave was prophesied in Zechariah 9.11 and then Jesus himself referred to Jonah in the belly of the whale in Matthew 12.40, likening the 3 days of Jonah in the whale to the 3 days and 3 nights the Son of man would be in the *"heart of the earth."*

## 13. Both were 'sold', with Juda(s) the deal maker

In Genesis 37.28, Joseph is lifted out of the well and sold to the passing Midianite traders. I can't imagine how Joseph must have felt, or the evil that possessed his brothers to sell him. (Bear in mind, these brothers were 'half-brothers' in a sense, with different mothers to Joseph. Only Joseph at this point in time was the son of Rebekah, the wife that Jacob truly loved). Notice how Jesus also had half-brothers – he alone was born from God. In Matthew 26.14-16 we have already seen how Judas went to the chief priests and sold out Jesus. But notice how in both cases, it was someone with the same name. In Genesis 37.26, it was Judah who suggested the sale of Joseph, for Jesus it was Judas. Judah and Judas are both the same name, with different spellings.

## 14. Blood was presented to the Father (sin offering)

When Jesus died on the Cross, Hebrews 9.12 tells us that Jesus didn't enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of goats and calves but he entered, *"once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption."* (forever making right with God). When Jesus died on the Cross he cried out in a loud voice *"It is finished."*

The blood sacrifice of Jesus was once, perfect and complete. If we accept Jesus (as he is the only way to God, John 14.6) then we are made right with God by what Jesus did. We can't get right on our own. Only Jesus' blood counts – See Revelation 5.

Joseph's situation foreshadowed the blood of Jesus (the story of Abraham and Isaac where a 'ram' is found with its head stuck in 'thorns' is an even more powerful picture). But in Genesis 37.31 we find a powerful foreshadowing when Joseph's blood stained robe is presented to his gutted father – Israel. Just like Jesus, however, Joseph didn't 'die' (well Joseph did eventually!!) but just as Jesus didn't die but was resurrected, so we find that Joseph wasn't actually dead.

## 15. Tempted but 'sinless'

Did you realise that it's only Joseph (and Daniel) that are mentioned in the Bible without any fault. There are those who claim that Joseph was being arrogant when he spoke his dream to his brothers, but I totally disagree with this. Firstly, the Bible doesn't say or even hint at this. Secondly, we know that this 'without fault' is a foreshadowing of Jesus, who was the only one who was actually perfect and sinless. Of course we know that Joseph (and Daniel) must have sinned, but the sins are not recorded in the Bible.

Psalms 105 is another account of the story of Joseph and here we learn some more about Joseph that we don't find in Genesis. Psalm 105.19 tells us that, "the word of the Lord tried and tested him" until what was foretold came to pass. In Genesis 39 we find that Joseph was tempted to sin with Potiphar's wife. In verse 9, he refuses, saying *"How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God."* Notice how he doesn't want to sin against God – if we had the same attitude, we too could stay strong. I think Potiphar's wife must have been attractive, otherwise there wouldn't have been much of a temptation! But Joseph stayed strong and overcame temptation. (Egypt is a parallel of 'the sinful world' around us). In Luke 4, Jesus overcame Satan in the desert by knowing and speaking out the Bible. Another lesson for us!

## 16. Falsely accused

In Genesis 39.16-18, Potiphar's wife makes up an accusation against Joseph. We know it was totally false. In Matthew 26.59-61, we find that eventually two false witnesses came forward to speak against Jesus.

## 17. No defence was entered

Jesus didn't put forward a defence against the Sanhedrin (the council of the high priests) in Matthew 26.57-67. Pilate was amazed that Jesus did not defend himself (Matthew 27.14). Isaiah 53.7 prophesied this saying, *"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."* Likewise, we get a foreshadowing of this in the story of Joseph, who made no attempt (nothing that is recorded in the Bible) to stand up for himself against the false charges made up by Potiphar's wife – Genesis 37.19.

## 18. Cast into prison without verdict

In Genesis 39.20, Joseph is cast into prison (without a verdict being announced). In John 18.38, Pilate found no reason to accuse Jesus and knew it was politically motivated (Matthew 27.18) but he still handed him over to be crucified (despite the warning sent to him by his wife, see Matthew 27.19).

## 19. Suffered despite innocence

In Genesis 39.20 we see that Joseph's master put him in prison. Chuck Missler points out that in verse 19, we learn that his master's *"anger burned"* but it doesn't say who against (possibly his wife)! This suffering is affirmed in Psalm 105.17-18. Isaiah 53.8-9 tells us that by *"oppression and judgment he (Jesus) was taken away... though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."*

## 20. Suffered at the hands of Gentiles

In Acts 7, we find the believers praying to God. In their prayer they quote from Psalm 2.1-2 about *"why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain... against the Lord and against his anointed one?"* We still see today how the world rages against Jesus and some believe the world will even one day declare war on God!! (I'll give you clue who wins if you're unsure...) In the story of Joseph, he too suffered at the hands of Gentiles, as we've seen in Genesis 39.20.

## 21. 'Numbered with the transgressors'

A 'transgressor' is another name for sinner, someone who does wrong. In Isaiah 53 (a book of Isaiah prophesying the 'Suffering Servant' – Jesus) we learn that, *"because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

On the Cross, there were two robbers also being crucified at the same time as Jesus (Luke 24.32-43). One of them died (went to hell), the other one lived (Luke 24.42-43, *"Then (the robber) said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'"*)

The parallel to this in Genesis and the story of Joseph is found in Genesis 39 and 40 where we find that the Lord was with Joseph in all that he did (Genesis 39.21-23). Then in Genesis 40.13, Joseph interprets the chief cupbearer's dream saying he would be restored (in 3 days). Whereas the story wasn't so great for the chief baker who was told by Joseph in Genesis 40.19 that he would have his head chopped off in 3 days. (The subject of 3 days occurs throughout the Bible up until the story of the resurrection!) So one was given 'life' and one was given 'death'. (Of course they both died eventually!) We live in a world where some will choose spiritual life, others will choose spiritual death.

## 22. What Jesus / Joseph said came true!

Genesis 40.20 saw the interpretations Joseph made come true. Pharaoh restored the chief cupbearer but he killed the chief baker. Jesus fulfilled the law and the prophecies made about him completely. Matthew 5.18 says, *"For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."*

## 23. Crediting God alone as the revealer of secrets

Pharaoh wanted to know what his dream meant when Joseph was called to interpret. Instead, Joseph said, *"I cannot do it... but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."* Even Pharaoh goes on to credit God (Genesis 41.39). Likewise Jesus in John 12.49 said, *"For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken."*

## 24. New names

In Genesis 41.45, Pharaoh is so impressed by the interpretation to his dream by Joseph that he promotes Joseph to be second only to him across Egypt and he gave Joseph a new name – Zaphenath-Paneah (meaning 'the god speaks and he lives'). In Revelation 3.12 we have this promise, *"The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name."* (Revelation 2.17 tells us we will all have a new name).

## 25. Wisdom and Knowledge

Joseph is appointed over all the land, second only to Pharaoh. The Pharaoh says (Genesis 41.38-39), *"Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God... there is no one so discerning and wise as you."* In Colossians 2.2-3 we read this, *"Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."*

## 26. Seated on the throne of another

In Genesis 41.40-43, we find that Pharaoh effectively sits Joseph on his throne, as his second in command, *"You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."* In Revelation 3.21 we read, *"To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne."* Jesus sat down with his Father on the

Father's throne. There is an order to the 'Godhead' with the Father -> the Son -> the Holy Spirit. In one very real sense, Jesus is 'second in command.' Joseph was second in command to Pharaoh. However, the link can't be taken too far – the difference is that God is perfect and is the creator of the universe, Pharaoh was not!!!

## 27. Both had God's Holy Spirit in them

We know that the Holy Spirit rested and remained on Jesus when he was baptised – John 1.32. Luke 4.1 testifies Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit (and went out from his wilderness experience in the power of the Holy Spirit – Luke 4.14 – a shout to what God allows and what results from you overcoming!) In the same way, Pharaoh spoke of Joseph saying, *"Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"*

## 28. Has a Gentile wife

In Genesis 41.45, Pharaoh gave Joseph a wife – "Asenath daughter of Potiphara, priest of On (Heliopolis), to be his wife. (I've got mixed feelings about this one, as we don't really hear much else about her and what she was like!)

([Wikipedia says this](#), "Genesis records nothing more about Asenath, but her story is elaborated in the apocryphal Joseph and Asenath. There, she is a virgin who rejects several worthy suitors in favor of Joseph, but Joseph will not have a pagan for a wife. She locks herself in a tower and rejects her idolatry in favor of Joseph's God Yahweh." [The Jewish Encyclopedia says this](#), "The Rabbinical literature says... she was the child of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, born after violence had been done her by Shechem, the son of Hamor.) But Jesus wasn't married? No, he wasn't, despite the complete rubbish that people make up.

However, let's go to Revelation 19.7-8 – *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."* (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.) Do you realise a pinnacle of history is the wedding of the Lamb (Jesus) to his bride (the church)? This church (which hasn't replaced Israel) is a 'gentile bride'. In the same way, Genesis speaks of 6 gentile women who we don't have a record of having died. All this is a sign of the church – a bride that doesn't die. Yes we die physically, but we don't really die – we go to heaven! The Bible always has 7 as the perfect number though – the 7th 'bride' is the church.

## 29. Gives out the 'bread of life'

In Genesis 41.56-57, the famine that was prophesied by Joseph has taken hold and people are short of grain. We read that, *"When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere."* In a very real sense, Joseph was giving the grain/bread that gave people life.

In John 6, Jesus spoke to his disciples saying, *"Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."*

*"Sir," they said, "always give us this bread."*

*Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."*

## 30. Brothers driven out of their own land

In Genesis 42.1, Jacob told his sons to go into Egypt to find food as he'd heard there was grain there. Ten of the sons went. They were forced from the land to survive. Ultimately, they end up living in Egypt after Joseph and then Pharaoh allows them to. In Genesis 13, Abram had a dream where God spoke to him saying, *"Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there."* Deuteronomy 8.63 made this clear when God said that if Israel did not obey the Lord they would be driven from their land. (Only in 1948 did the state of Israel come back into being).

## 31. Initially unrecognised by brothers

When the ten brothers came to Egypt for grain we read in Genesis 42.8 that, *"Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him."* John 1.11 we learn about Jesus that, *"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."* Some scholars go on to make parallels with the 7 years of Jacob's trouble (see Jeremiah 30.7 / Daniel 12.1 / Revelation 3.10 etc).

Of course, eventually Joseph made himself known to his disbelieving brothers.

## 32. Restoration to the Father

Mark 16.19 reveals that, *"After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God."* In the same way, we find the incredibly moving restoration of Joseph to his Father, Israel/Jacob in Genesis 47.29.

## 33. Revelation and deliverance

In Genesis 45.7 Joseph made himself known to his brothers and spoke of how God had used him to bring a great deliverance, *"But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance."* This is exactly what Jesus did on the Cross. He delivered us from sin (if we accept Jesus). Romans 5 speaks a lot about this in what is a pretty complex chapter of the Bible. Verse 8 says this, *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Many people believe that one day, Christ will reveal himself to Israel as a complete nation. Romans 11.26 seems to point to this – *"I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

There is also an incredible passage in Zechariah 12.8-10, *"On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of*

*David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD going before them. On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.”* (The part about being pierced was affirmed in John 19.37). Many believe this points to a day when Israel will en masse recognise that Jesus truly is the Messiah and be saved!