

A Comparison between Joseph and Jesus

by Jews for Jesus
(From notes by Bill MacDonald)

Many Old Testament accounts of people and events tell of the immediate with a foreshadowing of that which is yet to come. For example, Moses told the Israelites of another Prophet, like him, who would come later and who would require the people's total allegiance and obedience; the Psalms describe the experiences of David; yet they also speak of David's Greater Son, the Messiah.

Perhaps one of the best known and loved Bible accounts, along with that of Noah's ark and David and Goliath, is the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors. Joseph's life story affords many valuable lessons and applications; yet there is also a prophetic aspect to the account that foreshadows the Messiah himself. There are many fascinating parallels (more than 100) between Joseph, beloved son of Jacob, and Jesus, the Son of God who would arrive on the stage of human history centuries later. Here are just a representative few:

PARALLEL	JOSEPH	JESUS
BELOVED OF HIS FATHER	Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children. (Genesis 37:3a)	"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17b)
ENVIED AND HATED WITHOUT A CAUSE	When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. (Genesis 37:4)	He knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy. (Mark 15:10) "They hated Me without a cause." (John 15:25b)
A ROOT OUT OF DRY GROUND	Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. (Genesis 37:3)	He [Messiah] shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. (Isaiah 53:2a)
HE FORETOLD THAT ONE DAY HE WOULD RULE	"Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." (Genesis 37:7)	Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:64)

PARALLEL	JOSEPH	JESUS
ACCUSED OF BEING A DREAMER (BESIDE HIMSELF, DELUDED)	Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!" (Genesis 37:19)	They went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." (Mark 3:21b)
SENT BY THE FATHER TO SEEK THE BROTHERS' WELFARE	Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." (Genesis 37:14)	"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.'" (Luke 20:13)
WENT WILLINGLY AND SOUGHT TILL HE FOUND THEM	"They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. (Genesis 37:17)	"Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." (Hebrews 10:9) He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. (John 1:11)
REJECTED AND CONDEMNED TO DIE	They conspired against him to kill him. (Genesis 37:18b)	"We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke 19:14b) They shouted, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" (Luke 23:21)
STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHING	They stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. (Genesis 37:23b)	They stripped Him. (Matthew 27:28a)
THROWN INTO A PIT (ALONE, FORSAKEN)	Then they took him and cast him into a pit. (Genesis 37:24a)	So will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40b)
SOLD FOR SILVER INTO THE HANDS OF GENTILES	So the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. (Genesis 37:28b)	They counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. (Matthew 26:15b)
RAISED FROM THE PIT	So the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit. (Genesis 37:28a)	He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:4b)
BECAME A SERVANT	Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar . . . bought him from the Ishmaelites. . . . The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. (Genesis 39:1–2)	I am among you as the One who serves. (Luke 22:27b) Taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. (Philippians 2:7b)

PARALLEL	JOSEPH	JESUS
EVERYTHING HE DID PROSPERED	The Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. (Genesis 39:3b)	When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. (Isaiah 53:10b)
RESISTED TEMPTATION	The temptation by Potiphar’s wife. (Genesis 39:7–12).	For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens. (Hebrews 7:26) . . . but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrew 4:15b)
FALSELY ACCUSED	“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 39:17–18)	But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’” (Matthew 26:60b–61)
NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS	Then Joseph’s master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king’s prisoners were confined. (Genesis 39:20a)	There they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. (Luke 23:33)
PROMISED DELIVERANCE TO A CONDEMNED MAN	Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh’s cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. (Genesis 40:13)	“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43b)
FORETOLD THE FUTURE ACCURATELY	And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. (Genesis 41:13a)	Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He. (John 13:19)
PROVED TO BE A GREAT COUNSELOR	Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you.” (Genesis 41:39)	His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6b)
PROMOTED TO HONOR AND GLORY AND GIVEN A NEW NAME	Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” (Genesis 41:41) (see also Genesis 41:45a)	Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name. (Philippians 2:9)

PARALLEL	JOSEPH	JESUS
ALL PEOPLE COMMANDED TO BOW TO HIM	They cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt. (Genesis 41:43b)	That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth. (Philippians 2:10)
PROVIDED FOR ALL IN NEED	So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands. (Genesis 41:57)	Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35a)
HIS PEOPLE DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM	So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. (Genesis 42:8)	“Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me?” (John 14:9a) But their minds were blinded. (2 Corinthians 3:14a)
HIS BROTHERS WERE TROUBLED WHEN THEY MET HIM	Now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. (Genesis 45:5a)	“I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” (Zechariah 12:10b)
ALLOWED HIS BROTHERS TO SUFFER A PERIOD OF TRIBULATION	Read Genesis 42:6–44:34	It is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:7) Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matthew 24:21)
REVELATION AND RECONCILIATION	Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph.” . . . “Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph: “God has made me lord of all Egypt.” ’ ” (Genesis 45:3–9)	And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” (Romans 11:26)

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