

The Lives of Joseph and Jesus

Explanation

The fact that Jesus was raised under the guardianship of Joseph takes readers back to another Joseph who became an important ruler in Egypt and saved the children of Israel from severe famine. Early Christian writers, especially in the Syriac tradition that grew out of the fledgling congregations at Antioch and Damascus, drew many parallels between the lives of Joseph and Jesus. Both were “shepherds.” Both held the birthright. Both were “sold” by brethren. Both were tempted. Both forgave. This chart lists many interesting parallels. Most of them date to sources from early Christian times; others have been newly added or clarified. Some may be fanciful or tenuous, but all contribute to seeing Joseph in Egypt as a type or shadow of Jesus. Because patterns of righteousness are stable and enduring, the exemplary deeds and behavior of all great men and women of God share many common qualities and features.

References

- Kristian Heal, “Joseph as a Type of Christ in Syriac Literature,” *BYU Studies* 41/1 (2002): 29–49.
- Joseph Fielding McConkie, “Joseph of Egypt: Joseph, Son of Jacob,” *EM*, 2:760–61.

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LIFE OF JOSEPH AS RECOUNTED IN GENESIS

PARALLELS THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF JESUS

Was a shepherd (Gen 37:2)

The Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11)

Was the son with the birthright (37:3; 43:33)

Was the firstborn Son of God

Was beloved of his father (37:3)

Was the beloved of the Father (Mt 3:17)

His father clothed him in a coat (37:3)

The Father clothed him in a body (Lk 1:35)

Lived with his father in honor before going down to Egypt (37:2–4)

Lived with God before coming to earth (Jn 1:2)

Dreamed dreams but was despised for his prophecies (37:5–11)

Spoke in prophecies but was despised for his prophetic knowledge (Mt 26:68)

Sent by his father to inquire about his brothers (37:13–14)

Sent by his Father to save us all (Jn 3:16)

When his brothers saw him, they said, “Behold, this dreamer cometh.... Come, let us slay him,... and we shall see what shall become of his dreams” (37:18–20)

When the husbandmen saw him they said, “This is the heir to the vineyard. Come, let us kill him, and henceforth the inheritance will be ours” (Mt 21:38; Mk 12:7; Lk 20:14)

Reuben petitioned for the life of Joseph (37:21–22)

Pilate petitioned for the life of Jesus (Mt 27:2–26; Jn 19:4–22)

Was incarcerated twice: the pit and prison

Was enclosed twice: the flesh and the grave

His brothers cast him into a pit (37:24)

His brothers cast him in the grave

His brothers, while eating, intended to slay him (37:25–27)

The Jews, while eating the Passover feast, desired that he be killed

Sold into Egypt at the proposal of Judah (37:26–27)

Sold to the Jews by Judas (Mt 27:3)

Rose up from the pit (37:28)

Rose up from the grave

When his brothers sold him, he said nothing (37:28)

Did not speak a word to judges who judged him

His coat was dipped in the blood of a goat (37:31)

His garment was dipped in blood (Rev 19:13)

His cloak was soaked with blood but his flesh was not harmed at all (37:32)

His flesh was seized but not his divinity

LIFE OF JOSEPH AS RECOUNTED IN GENESIS

PARALLELS THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF JESUS

Potiphar's wife tempted him unsuccessfully (39:11–12)

Satan tempted him unsuccessfully (Mt 4:8–9)

Potiphar's wife grabbed his clothes, but he escaped (39:13)

His executioners grabbed his garment, but his flesh ascended

Avoided sin yet thrust to prison unjustly (39:16–20)

Conquered sin yet condemned to a tomb unjustly

Thrown into the pit and into prison naked

Hung upon the cross naked (Mt 27:28)

Entered into prison and comforted those who were captive (39:20–23; 40:6–8)

Entered into spirit prison and comforted those there (1Pt 3:19)

Had the keys to the prison (39:22)

Has the keys to release the dead (Rev 1:18)

Interpreted the dreams of the servants of Pharaoh—the chief butler would return to the courts of Pharaoh, while the chief baker would be hanged (40:1–23)

Told one thief he would join him in paradise, while he left the other thief to be punished (Lk 23:39–43)

Another prisoner (the butler) was released in his stead (40:21–23)

Another prisoner (Barabbas) was released in his stead (Jn 18:40)

In prison for two years (41:1)

In the tomb for two nights

Was brought out from prison on Pharaoh's order, easily interpreted the dreams, and provided the solution to save Pharaoh's people (41:14–37)

Was raised from the dead, proclaiming resurrection and everlasting life, offering to the Father our salvation

Interpreted dreams for the Egyptians and they believed him (41:14–37)

The disciples believed his prophecies, parables, miracles

Interpreted Pharaoh's dreams correctly (41:14–43)

His prophecies were and are fulfilled

Pharaoh clothed him in glorious robes (41:42)

Will be seen clothed in glory at the second coming (Mt 24:30; 25:31)

Took his seat in Pharaoh's chariot and sat upon the throne and was king over all Egypt (41:43)

Ascended into heaven on a cloud of light, took his seat with glory at the Father's right hand (Acts 7:55)

Married the daughter of an Egyptian (41:45)

Took to himself the church from the gentile nations

Was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh and became a lord over Egypt (41:46)

Was thirty years old when he was baptized in the Jordan River

LIFE OF JOSEPH AS RECOUNTED IN GENESIS

PARALLELS THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF JESUS

Went throughout the land to save the people from famine (41:46, 48)

Went out among the people during his ministry to feed and save them

Provided the Egyptians and all countries with bread (41:56–57)

Provided the whole world with the bread of life (Jn 6:48–57)

Purchased the whole of Egypt with bread (41:56)

Purchased the whole of creation with his body

His persecutors bowed and worshiped him (42:6)

Those who persecuted and crucified him will realize who he is and will bow and worship him

After he came up from the pit/prison, he ruled over his brothers

After he rose from the grave, his brothers were subject to him

Judged his judges and cast into prison those who had put him to shame in the pit (42:24)

Will judge those who crucified him (Mt 25:32)

Fed his hungry brothers (43:31–34)

Fed the hungry masses (Jn 6:5–13)

As they ate and drank at his table in his kingdom, he judged the twelve tribes of Israel

“That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk 22:30)

As their sovereign, he forgave his brothers

As the Sovereign, he forgave those who crucified him (Lk 23:34)

Revealed himself to his brothers in the chamber (45:1–3)

Revealed himself to his disciples in the upper room (Lk 24:36)

The brothers recognized him on the second occasion

All will recognize and know him at the second coming

When he revealed himself to his brothers they were ashamed and afraid and marveled at his majesty (45:3)

When he is revealed in his majesty at the second coming, his persecutors will be ashamed and afraid

Sent to Egypt by God to preserve the life of his people (45:5–7)

Sent to earth by God to provide everlasting life for all (Mt 27:3–5)

His bones were taken up from Egypt to the promised land (Ex 13:19)

Was resurrected and raised to heaven

Dishonored by men and honored by God

Dishonored by men and honored by God (Jn 5:44)