

Joseph's Extraordinary Example

The patriarch Joseph's life provides us with many lessons.

Joseph is a surprising type of Jesus the Christ. His life and character parallels Christ's in at least 16 ways, which we are going to examine in this article. In fact, Jacob's son, Joseph, is a prophetic forerunner or a shadow of our Savior, Jesus the Christ.

Sixteen similarities between Joseph and Jesus Christ

So, let's look at those *sixteen* similarities between Joseph and Jesus the Christ:

1. Both Jesus and Joseph were loved by their fathers.

Christ is speaking of Himself, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again." John 10:17. Christ, as we all know, was loved by His Father, God. Joseph was also greatly loved and favored by his father, Jacob.

Let's look at another example: "Now Israel [or Jacob] loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age [and the son of Rachel, his favorite wife!]. So much so, that Jacob made Joseph a very special tunic of many colors" Genesis 37:3.

God the Father LOVES His Son, Jesus the Christ. He has worked a great miracle in all of us. We can now understand God's plan for salvation, for us first and then for all of mankind. Our minds have been opened to the path of eternal life, not death in the Lake of Fire. And brethren, we are also much loved by our Father, God!

We are in a very enviable position. Think about that. Joseph was also in a very enviable position. Only Joseph, out of thirteen children, counting Dinah, received a gift from his father; the coat of many colors.



2. Both Christ and Joseph were somewhat despised and not believed by their brothers.

John 7:5 tells us about Jesus, "For not even his brothers believed in Him [or followed Him]." Many of Christ's fellow Jews didn't either. All through His ministry, the Jewish leaders were plotting ways to kill Him.

Joseph's brothers ALSO wanted to kill him! "Now as soon as his brothers saw him approaching from a distance, even before he arrived, they plotted together to kill him," Genesis 37:18. And, the first part of vs. 20, "Come on! Let's KILL him and throw him in one of the cisterns."

Can you imagine wanting to kill your sister or your brother - a family member? How crazy is that? But that is precisely what Joseph's brothers wanted to do to him! They hated him for what he said about his dreams and because his father favored him. Hatred is the spirit of murder - which is what this was leading to!

3. Both Christ and Joseph were sent to their brothers.

Jesus was sent for all mankind (who are His potential brothers), "For God sent the Son into [the world](#), not to

condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him,” John 3:17. Israel also sent his son Joseph to check on his brothers, to see if everything was going well with them and to see what they might need. “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.’ 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.’ So, he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem,” Genesis 37:13-14.

Now tell me, how can the Bible be just another book written by a bunch of men when these things happen like this? Of course, it is not. It is the very word of God. God worked a great miracle in all of us so that we can understand the Bible.

4. Both Christ and Joseph were put into the earth and came back again.

This is after Christ’s death and resurrection, “And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and that he is going to Galilee to meet them there. That is my message to them,” Matthew 28:7. Jesus rose out of His tomb, and Joseph also came out of the earth where his brothers put him in the pit to die: “Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. So, Judah said to his brothers, ‘What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?’” Genesis 37:24-26.

This is the attitude that hate fosters. Judah saw an opportunity to make some money. So, Judah said, “Let’s not kill Joseph. Let’s sell him into slavery and make some money, some sweet moolah on him.” Judah did not want to sell Joseph out of love or concern for him, but because he saw an opportunity to make some cash. That is why he said, “Let’s not kill him, let’s sell him. Let’s make a profit.”

Genesis 37:27-28 “Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.” And his brothers listened. 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. And they took Joseph to Egypt,” Genesis 37:27-28. They were going to kill him in the pit. But instead, they pulled him out.

5. Both Christ and Joseph were stripped of their tunics.

The soldiers at Jesus’ crucifixion did just that: “When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they put his garments into four piles, one for each of them. But they said, ‘Let’s not tear up his robe,’ for it was seamless. ‘Let’s throw dice to see who gets it.’ This fulfilled the scripture that says, ‘They divided my clothes among them, and cast lots for my robe,’” John 19:23-24. Genesis 37:23 talks about Joseph: “So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him.”

Let’s look at more examples.

6. Both Joseph and Christ were taken to Egypt.

Speaking of the infant Jesus, “And Joseph, [Jesus’ earthly father - even that NAME is interesting, isn’t it?] - having risen, he took the Child [Jesus] and His mother by night and withdrew to Egypt and remained there until Herod’s death. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet Hosea, in 11:1, ‘Out of EGYPT have

I called My Son,” Matthew 2:14-15. We already looked at Genesis 37:25; it is talking about selling Joseph to Ishmael’s offspring - Uncle Ishmael’s people.

Do you think that sixteen different things just happen by circumstance to both Christ and Joseph? Not a chance. There are no “coincidences” with God! God is showing us that he is absolutely in charge of His creation and that the Bible is his Word without a shadow of a doubt. We should all take great comfort in this, as we read and study the Bible.

7. Both Christ and Joseph were sold for silver.

Jesus was betrayed by one of His own disciples, “Then one of the Twelve [apostles], who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?’ And they weighed out for and paid to him thirty pieces of silver,” Matthew 26:14-15. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, “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. And they took Joseph to Egypt.” Genesis 37:28.

8. Both Christ and Joseph were servants.

Think about this: Christ voluntarily gave up being fully God to serve us and all mankind - to make forgiveness and the remission of sins possible for us all. “But He stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the role of a servant (slave), in that He became like men and was born a human being,” Philippians 2:7. Jesus Messiah gave up everything, including His life, to give us grace – something we all should truly appreciate!

Genesis 39:4 relates a similar story about Joseph, “So, Joseph found favor in his sight [That is his master’s - Potiphar’s sight; Joseph is in Egypt now], and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under Joseph’s authority.”

Christ willingly became a servant; Joseph had no choice. He was sold into slavery by his brothers who didn’t care if he lived or died!

9. Christ and Joseph both overcame serious temptation.

Look at what our Savior went through: Satan personally tempted Christ with food because He had fasted for forty days. Satan also tempted Christ by saying to Him, “Jump off the temple roof and prove to me that You are the Son of God, because if You are, God will protect You from harm.” Believe me, Satan KNEW Jesus was the Son of God!

Satan also tempted Christ by saying, “I will give you all the nations and kingdoms of this world [and they were his to give!]. You will rule the world and have all the glory and wealth that will bring.” Wow! Wouldn’t that be great! What he was really saying is, “Just worship me and it is all yours, Jesus - for the taking.”

Obviously, no one is going to tempt us with all the nations of this world. but there is a real chance that a number of us, both men and women, could be tempted like Joseph was - by the opposite sex. This is very common in today’s world.

Temptation is around us all the time. The question is, how will we deal with it? Will we deal with it like Christ and Joseph? Or, will we deal with it carnally as is so common in this world today?

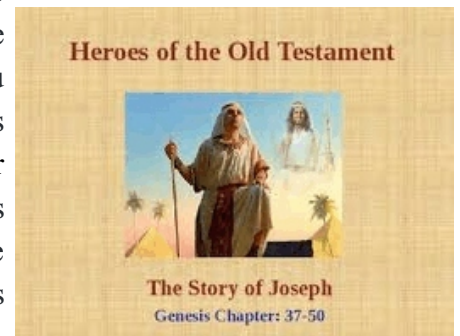
Let's look at Jesus' temptations: "Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, to be tempted there by Satan. For forty days and forty nights he ate nothing and became very hungry," Matthew 4:1-2.

Then Satan tempted Him to change stones into loaves of bread. Satan says to Jesus, "It will prove You are the Son of God." But Jesus told him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" So, Satan can quote (and misapply) Scripture.

"Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'IF You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall command His angels concerning you,' and, 'In their hands they will lift you up, lest you strike your FOOT against a stone.' Jesus said to him, 'Again, it is written, 'You shall NOT tempt the LORD your God.' Again, the devil took Him up on a very high mountain, and showed Him ALL the kingdoms of the world, and their glory. And he said to Him, 'ALL these things will I give You, IF You will fall down and worship ME.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him ALONE you shall serve,'" Vs.5-10.

Christ was tested as Adam and Eve were tested and you and I are tested from time to time. Christ passed the test on our behalf. Adam and Eve failed the test, and the whole world has never been the same since!

Let's look at Joseph's example: "It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with DESIRE at Joseph, and she said, 'Come lie with me.' But he REFUSED and said to his master's wife, 'Behold, with ME here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld NOTHING from me except YOU, because you are his WIFE. How then could I do this great evil and SIN against God?' As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or BE with her. Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and NONE of the other men of the household was there inside. She caught him by his garment, and demanded, 'Lie with me!' And he left his garment in her hand and FLED, and went outside," Genesis 39:7-12.



10. Both Christ and Joseph were falsely accused.

We will look at Jesus the Christ first: "Now the chief PRIESTS and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found NONE, though many FALSE witnesses came forward. At LAST two came forward and said, 'This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days,'" Matthew 26:59-61.

Now back to the example of Joseph: The spurned wife makes up an EVIL story about Joseph and tells her husband, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to mock me, and said to me, 'I will lie with you'. But as soon as I lifted up my voice and CRIED, he left his garment beside me and FLED out of the house. As SOON as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, 'So, THIS is the way your servant treated me,' his anger was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison," Genesis 39:17-20.

11. Both Christ and Joseph were punished with two others.

Speaking of Christ, "...two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Him," Luke 23:32. Matthew 27:38 has it: "Then they crucified two thieves with Him, one on His right, and another on His left."

In Genesis 40:1-3, we can see the example of Joseph. Joseph had been in prison for a while at this point. "It came to pass after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the KING of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where JOSEPH was confined."

Christ served the two criminals He was crucified with by his death and resurrection. Joseph served the chief butler and baker by taking care of them and their needs.

12. Both Christ and Joseph were exalted to sit at the right hand of a powerful ruler.

First, we will look at the example of the Messiah Jesus: "The High Priest said to Jesus, 'I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven,'" Matthew 26:63-64.

Let's go back to Genesis 41 and catch up with Joseph's story.

In Gen 40:41 Pharaoh says to Joseph, "'you shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.' And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.'"

13. Both Christ and Joseph made great transitions or changes in their lives at age thirty.

"Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli," Luke 3:23.

"Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went throughout all the land of Egypt," Genesis 41:46.

14. Both Christ and Joseph were providers of life-saving bread.

Jesus declared in John 6:35, "I am the bread of LIFE. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

As for Joseph, "Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in their families," Genesis 47:12.

So, Joseph also provided food and life for his family. He also provided food and life for the Egyptians, and for many, many other people that lived in that area of the world.

15. Both Christ and Joseph were unrecognized.

The apostle John says of Jesus, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him; but the world did not know Him. He came to His own [the Jewish nation], but His own did not receive Him," John 1:10-11.

Even though the Jews knew the prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament – especially the Jewish leaders, they would not recognize Him. He was a threat to their positions of power and influence. They refused to really know Him.

“Even though He had performed all these miracles in their presence, they did not believe in Him, so that what the prophet Isaiah had said might come true: ‘Lord, who believed the message we told? To whom did the Lord reveal His power?’ And so they were not able to believe, because Isaiah also said, ‘God has blinded their eyes and closed their minds, so that their eyes would not see, and their minds would not understand, and they would not turn to Me, says God, for Me to heal them,’” John 12:37-38.

In Genesis 42:8 tells us about Joseph and the first meeting he has with his brothers, “So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.” Joseph’s own family did not recognize him! For one thing, they thought he was probably dead and Joseph was obviously a very powerful ruler in Egypt and his appearance showed it!

16. Both Christ and Joseph provided salvation.

Let’s look at the famous John 3:16-17, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

And, back in Genesis 45:4-7, (Speaking of Joseph), “And Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Please come near to me.’ So, they came near. Then he said: ‘I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for GOD sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God send me before you to preserve a posterity for you and the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.’”

Now, if we do not get anything more out of Joseph’s life than his extraordinary example; think about Joseph’s attitude through all of this very severe trial.

After his trial ended, and he was made second to Pharaoh, second to the leader of the most powerful nation in the Middle East, if not in the whole world at that time! By this time, Joseph did not hold a grudge against the people that wanted to kill him: his eleven brothers who threw him into a pit and sold him into bondage and slavery, which resulted in years of prison time for him. Joseph forgave his brothers. Joseph did what God expects us to do as well!

Christ tells us in Matthew 18:22 that we have to forgive our brothers or our family members, whoever it is, not seven times, but seventy times seven, no matter who offends us. It’s really hard to humble yourself and go and apologize to someone, isn’t it? And some of us are so hardhearted that we won’t even accept someone else’s apology!

Joseph had something to be really offended by, and so did Christ—they killed Christ! Joseph’s brothers were offended by Joseph’s dreams, by the coat of many colors and by thinking that their father, Jacob, loved Joseph more than them. As a result, they wanted to kill their brother; that is how offended they were! God does not want us involved in being offended at one another or to offend one another. He wants us to act like Christ and Joseph did. They were not offended, even though they had something they could be offended by.

Joseph had the perfect opportunity to get offended with his brothers. Being second to Pharaoh, Joseph could have easily had his brothers executed! Or, he could have put them in prison, or made them slaves, or simply sent them away with no food and let them all starve. It was certainly in his power to do so!

But what did Joseph do? He brought his entire extended family to Egypt, and he talked Pharaoh into giving them the land of Goshen which is in the Nile delta: a very rich land with very good soil and plenty of water. Joseph's family grew and prospered and became many, many, in number - so many that the Egyptians, later on, became scared of them and made them slaves.

Joseph was not offended that his brothers wanted to kill him, or by all the trials that he had to endure because of their selling him into slavery.

So, here is the question for us, brethren: WHY was Joseph not offended? Why? The reason is: Joseph was not offended because he could working in his life! Joseph provided salvation from starvation for thousands and thousands of people.

And, if we clearly see God working in our lives, we would never be offended, brethren. We would be like Christ and say, "Forgive them, Father, because they know not what they are doing." 🙏

Pete Fleming



Joseph telling brothers their sheaf would bow down to his sheaf.

Genesis 37:7

Joseph telling his brothers he was their brother Joseph.

Genesis 45:3-5



