

Parallels Between Jesus and Joseph

'While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, the day had come for Mary to give birth. Mary brought forth her firstborn Son' (Luke 2:6 & 7).

'God remembered Rachel ... she conceived, bore a son ... she named him Joseph' (Genesis 30:22 to 24).

There are some parallels between the life of Jesus and the life of Joseph. We will look at just a few of these similarities but there may be more. Parallel number one; as we can read in the opening verses, Jesus was Mary's eldest Son. Joseph was Rachel's eldest son.

Parallel number two; Joseph, the stepfather of Jesus, was born to a man named Jacob. Joseph's father was also named Jacob. 'Jacob became the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary from whom was born Jesus, Who is called Messiah' (Matthew 1:16). 'The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife were Joseph and Benjamin' (Genesis 46:19).

Parallel number three; Both Jesus and Joseph had younger brothers. Jesus' younger brothers were James (which is the English version of Jacob), Joses (or Joseph Junior), Judah and Simon' (Mark 6:3). Joseph's younger brother was Benjamin (Genesis 46:19).

Parallel number four; Both Jesus and Joseph were sold or betrayed for silver coins. Jesus was betrayed by His friend Judas who was paid thirty pieces of silver. 'Judas asked, "What are you willing to give me so I should deliver Him to you?" They weighed out for him thirty pieces of silver' (Matthew 26:15). Joseph was rejected by his brothers and sold for twenty pieces of silver. 'Midianites who were merchants passed by and they lifted up Joseph out of the pit and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver' (Genesis 37:28). Both the Midianites and the Ishmaelites were sons of Abraham and thus uncles of Joseph.

Parallel number five; Jesus and Joseph were rejected and scorned by their own brothers. 'Jesus' brothers said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea so Your disciples may see Your works which you do, for no one does anything in secret and Himself seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, reveal Yourself to the world." Even his own brothers did not believe in Him' (John 7:3 to 5). 'Joseph's brothers believed their father loved him more than all his brothers and they hated him. They could not speak peaceably to him. Joseph dreamed a dream and he told it to his brothers, and they hated him all the more' (Genesis 37:4 & 5).

Parallel number six; Both Jesus and Joseph spent time in prison or under arrest but both were completely innocent of any wrongdoing. 'They arrested Jesus, bound Him and led Him away' (Luke 22:54). 'Joseph's master put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound and he was there in custody' (Genesis 39:20). 'Joseph was sold for a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles. His neck was locked in irons' (Psalm 105:17 & 18).

Parallel number seven; Jesus was welcomed and received by Gentiles living in Galilee plus Gentile Syrians who were healed by Him (Matthew 4:15 & 24) then He was given glory and honour after dying on the cross in front of His family and being resurrected. "Worthy are You our Lord and God, the Holy One, to receive glory, honour and power" (Revelation 4:11). Joseph was received by Egyptian Gentiles and given great glory and honour in Egypt after his own family assumed he had died in Shechem (Genesis 37:33 & 34). 'Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Because God has shown you all of this, there is none so discreet and wise as you. You will be over my house and according to your word will all my people be ruled. Only in the throne I will be greater than you. Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in robes of fine linen. Pharaoh put a gold chain around his neck. Pharaoh made Joseph ride in his second chariot. The people cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" Pharaoh set Joseph over all the land of Egypt' (Genesis 41:39 to 43).

Parallel number eight; When Jesus comes, every person on earth will bow their knees to Him. 'It is written, "As I live, to Me every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess to God," says the Lord' (Romans 14:11). As we read in the previous paragraph, people had to bow the knee to Joseph (Genesis 41:43).

Parallel number nine; The families of Jesus and Joseph regretted what they had done. The family of Jesus (Jewish people) will be very sorry for their sins and they will mourn. 'They will look to Me (Jesus) Whom they have pierced and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only Son, and will grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for his Firstborn. In that day there will be a great mourning in Jerusalem' (Zechariah 12:10 & 11; Revelation 1:7). The brothers who rejected Joseph were later very sorry for their terrible sin. 'The brothers said one to another, "We are certainly guilty concerning our brother (Joseph) in that we saw the distress of his soul when he begged us and we would not listen. Therefore this distress has come upon us." Reuben

said, "I told you, 'Do not sin against the child,' and you would not listen. Therefore his blood is required" (Genesis 42:21 & 22).

Parallel number ten; Jesus opened the way for all Gentiles to be included in the covenant blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by faith and by adoption. 'You received the Spirit of adoption by Whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ... The blessing of Abraham came on the Gentiles through Jesus so we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith' (Romans 8:15; Galatians 3:14). Joseph married Asenath, a Gentile Egyptian woman and had half-Gentile sons Manasseh and Ephraim who were later included in the covenant blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 46:20; Joshua 16:4).

Parallel number eleven; On two occasions, Jesus fed the multitudes with bread and fish when they had followed Him and listened to His teaching for days. 'The disciples said to Jesus, "We have here five loaves and two fish." Jesus said, "Bring them here to Me." He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed the food, broke it up and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the multitudes. They all ate and were filled. They took up twelve baskets full of what remained left over from the broken pieces' (Matthew 14:17 to 20). 'Jesus asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven and a few small fish." Jesus commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. He took the seven loaves and the fish. He gave thanks and broke them and gave to the disciples and the disciples to the multitudes. They all ate and were filled. They took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces that were left over' (Matthew 15:34 to 37). Joseph fed and gave water to his entire family and the multitudes in Egypt when famine came to the land. Joseph, who had been 'dead' to his family still lived and saved them (Genesis 45:7).

Parallel number twelve; Jesus accepts us when we go to Him for help and when we acknowledge our sin and repent, He forgives us and welcomes us into His Kingdom (Matthew 25:34). Joseph's brothers went to Egypt seeking help, they acknowledged their sin, Joseph forgave them and welcomed them into his kingdom' (Genesis 47:11).

Parallel number thirteen; Both Jesus and Joseph are buried in Israel. 'Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus... asked Pilate for the body of Jesus ... Nicodemus ... also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. So they took Jesus' body and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as was the custom of the Jews. In the place where He was crucified (in Jerusalem) there was a garden. In the garden was a new tomb in which no man had ever yet been laid. The tomb was near at hand so they laid Jesus there' (John 19:38 to 42). Joseph's older brothers all died and were buried in Egypt. Joseph died in Egypt but was later reburied in Shechem, in Israel. Joseph was a righteous man, the only one of Jacob's sons who wholly followed the Lord. 'Joseph died, as did all his brothers and all that generation' (Exodus 1:6). 'Joseph took an oath of the Children of Israel saying, "God will surely visit you and you will carry my bones from here." So Joseph died at one hundred and ten years old, they embalmed him and he was put in a coffin in Egypt' (Genesis 50:25 & 26). 'Moses took the bones of Joseph with him for he had made the Children of Israel swear they would' (Exodus 13:19). 'They buried the bones of Joseph in Shechem' (Joshua 24:32). Joseph will be resurrected in the Resurrection of the Righteous that will take place in the future (Luke 14:14).

Parallel number fourteen; At one time both Jesus and Joseph lived in Egypt. 'Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Arise and take the young Child (Jesus) and His mother and flee into Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." Joseph arose and took Jesus and His mother by night and departed into Egypt ... When Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt saying, "Arise and take the young Child and His mother and return to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead"' (Matthew 2:13, 14, 19 & 20). And as we know, Joseph lived in Egypt from the age of about seventeen until his death aged one hundred and ten years old.

Jesus' life on earth ended dreadfully but after His resurrection He was blessed more than any person ever could be. He is the only Person ever invited to sit at the right hand of God. 'God the Father says to my Lord (Jesus), "Sit at My right hand" (Psalm 110:1; Ephesians 1:20). Jesus said, "I tell you, after this (after Jesus' death and resurrection) you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming (returning to earth) on the clouds of the sky"' (Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62). 'The Son of God is the radiance of His glory, the very image of His substance and upholding all things by the Word of His Power, when He had by Himself made purification for our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high' (Hebrews 1:3).

Amen and God bless you.

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