

Abounding Grace Christian Church

Seeing Christ in the Old Testament: A Study of the Types of Christ – Part 4

I. Seeing Christ in the Book of Genesis (continued).

A. Jacob's Ladder – Genesis 28:10-22.

1. **Verse 10** - "...went toward Haran" - Jacob traveled eastward toward the home of Abraham's ancestors (11:31-32) and his mother Rebekah (24:3-4).
2. **Verse 12** – "Then he dreamed" - In this desolate wilderness, Jacob had a significant dream as he used a stone for a pillow. Jacob may have been going through a lot emotionally. He may have been experiencing feelings of isolation and fear.
3. **"A ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."** - In Jacob's dream, there was now access to heaven. Jacob now knew God was closer than ever and there was real access and interaction between heaven and earth.
 - a. The word "**ladder**" is translated as "**stairway**" in many other translations (e.g. NIV, NLT, NET).
 - b. Nancy Guthrie writes:

"This was the stairway that connected the worlds of deity and humanity. This was the stairway on which God came down. And it was the stairway to God's abode—the only way to enter the throne room of God.

Jesus referred to this stairway in Jacob's dream early in his ministry...That's when Jesus hearkened back to Jacob's dream: 'I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth' (John 1:51). Jacob saw the stairway and knew it was the way to God, and yet that way was still not clear. Jesus made it clear. He is that stairway. He is the way. He is God come down, and he is the One through whom sinners can ascend to the presence of God. Jesus can lead us up this stairway only because he was lifted up on the cross. We can ascend to God only when we come to the foot of his cross."¹

B. Joseph – A Type of Christ – Genesis 37-50.

1. **Who was Joseph of the Old Testament?** – Joseph was the eleventh son, out of twelve born to his father Jacob. He was also the first born of his mother Rachel, whom his father loved more than any of his wives and, therefore, this caused Jacob to favor his son Joseph (Genesis 29-30:24; Genesis 37:1-4). As Jacob's favorite son, he received from his father a coat of many colors, which made his brothers jealous to the point of hating him (Genesis 37:4). To make matters worse, Joseph began sharing his dreams with his family, which were prophetic in nature, showing Joseph one day would be ruling over his family (Genesis 37:5-11). Eventually his brothers conspired to kill him but were stopped by their oldest brother, Reuben (Genesis 37:28-24). Instead of killing him, they decided to sell him into slavery where he eventually ended up serving as a slave in the house of Potiphar, an Egyptian officer under Pharaoh (Genesis 39:1-2). After serving and being promoted in Potiphar's house for quite some time, Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of attempting to rape her due to him rejecting her advances (Genesis 39:1-19). He was then thrown into prison and, after some time, God gave him more dreams which eventually led to his release and to a place of great authority in Egypt (Genesis 40-41). Joseph was around 1058 years before Christ.
2. **How is Joseph a Type of Christ?** – Even though the New Testament doesn't say directly that Joseph is a type of Christ, there are too many similarities for it to be a coincidence. Many writers state that Joseph is the greatest type of Christ in the Old Testament.
 - a. Both Joseph and Christ were born by special intervention of God (Genesis 30:22-24; Luke 1:35).

¹ Nancy Guthrie, *The One Year Book of Discovering Jesus in the Old Testament* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Publishers, 2010)

- b. Both were objects of special love by their fathers (**Genesis 37:3; Matthew 3:17; John 3:35**).
- c. Both were hated by brethren (**Genesis 37:4; John 15:24–25**).
- d. Both were rejected as rulers over their brethren (**Genesis 37:8; Matthew 21:37–39; John 15:24–25**).
- e. Both were robbed of their robes (**Genesis 37:23; Matthew 27:35**).
- f. Both were conspired against and placed in the pit of death (**Genesis 37:18, 24; Matthew 26:3–4; 27:35–37**).
- g. Both were sold for silver (**Genesis 37:28; Matthew 26:14–15**).
- h. Both went into Egypt (**Genesis 37:36; Matthew 2:13–15**).
- i. Both returned from Egypt (**Joshua 24:32; Matthew 2:19–23**).
- j. Both became servants (**Genesis 39:4; Philippians 2:7**).
- k. Both were condemned though innocent (**Genesis 39:11–20; Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:19, 24**). Falsely accused – (cf. **Mark 14:57–58**).
- l. Both were raised from humiliation to glory by the power of God (**Genesis 41:37–45; Philippians 2:8–11**).
- m. Both became saviors, or deliverers of the world in different ways (**Genesis 41:25–57; Luke 2:11; John 4:42**).
 - 1) **Note:** In Genesis 41:45, Pharaoh gives Joseph an Egyptian name. He is called “**Zaphnath-Paaneah**.” Scholars seem to be uncertain as to the meaning of the word because so many different translations are given.
 - a) **The genuine Egyptian form of the word appears to be more accurately given by the LXX,.... in which Egyptian scholars recognize the Egyptian ‘salvation, or saviour of the age’.**²
 - b) **the name that Pharaoh gave to Joseph, Zaphnath-Paaneah, as is said, in the Egyptian language, signifies saviour of the world.**³
- n. Both during the time of exaltation but continued rejection by brethren, take a Gentile bride and were a blessing to Gentiles (**Genesis 41:1–45; Acts 15:14; Romans 11:11–12; Ephesians 5:25–32**).
- o. After the time of Gentile blessing begins to wane, both were received finally by their brethren and recognized as a savior and deliverer (**Genesis 45:1–15; Romans 11:1–26**).
- p. Both exalt their brethren to places of honor and safety (**Genesis 45:16–18; Romans 8:26–39; I Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:4–6**).

² Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2003), 716–717.

³ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1 (Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 163.