

GearTalk: Summer of Stories: Joseph

**Significance of Joseph:** more frontground than any other character in Genesis!

### SET-UP

Adam's purpose as temple-expanding prophet, priest, and king

Gen 3:15 promise of a New Adam through suffering

Cain (start of the beastly line)

New Adam figures

Noah (new creation, blessing, fall with fruit)

Abraham (blessed prophet, priest, and king)

Isaac (almost slaughtered/resurrected, blessed, promised)

Jacob

brothers will bow/serve (26:23; 27:29, but 33:3)

Still longing for New Adam when Gen 37 starts on Joseph's story

### JOSEPH

tunic: priestly

prophetic dreams of ruling and "kinging"; family would "bow down" (37:7–10)

reminds of Jacob's unfulfilled blessing, New Adam

brothers become seed of serpent, murderous like Cain (37:4, 18–20)

throw into pit, sell into slavery, but report killed by beasts, priestly tunic dipped in blood (37:31–33)

slavery in Egypt, but blessed with God's presence

falsely accused: thrown in the pit again (prison)

interprets two dreams of fellow prisoners

interprets two dreams of Pharaoh

as a prophet, about a coming famine (curse on the ground, Gen 3)

plan to save

wronged but raised to reign as second in command

his brothers come and bow down; whole family saved

because of his suffering: in position to be savior (reminds of Gen 3:15)

fullest fulfillment of Gen 12:3 blessing families to date

only New Adam figure not to fall

Like Adam, Joseph was in charge of everything except one, Potiphar's wife, his forbidden fruit (cf. 39:6 with vv. 8–9); yet Joseph refused to listen to the woman with him (v. 10), unlike Adam, Abraham, and Jacob. Instead, Joseph maintained his integrity, overcame opposition, was "fruitful" (41:52; cf. 1:28), and saved the world (from starvation). Still, the narrative of Genesis teaches that we need more than preservation of physical life; we need salvation from sin, Satan, and death if we are to enjoy eternal life in God's global garden-temple. Joseph must not be the ultimate Adam. We're still waiting.

Joseph is overshadowed by the prophecy of the Lion of Judah in Gen 49:8–12.

In Egypt, saved, Jacob prophesies what will happen to the family “at the end of days” (49:1).

An end-time Judahite will possess a scepter, a ruler’s staff (49:10). He is described as a successful, predator lion (v. 9; cf. Rev 5:5). The “peoples” will obey Him as a global King (49:10). Jacob also prophesied in 49:8, “The sons of your father will bow down to you.” So, the prophetic dreams of Joseph’s brothers bowing down to him (37:7–10) are transferred to an end-time Lion of Judah. He will be the ultimate Adam who transcends Joseph. But I think we should then expect that the Lion of Judah would suffer like Joseph before being vindicated and exalted.

### **NT ALLUSIONS TO JESUS AS THE ULTIMATE JOSEPH**

father/mother kept the saying(s) in his/her heart (Gen 37:11; Luke 2:51)  
30 years old (Gen 41:46; 2 Sam 5:4; and Luke 3:23)

In the parable of the tenants, the son is sent to check on the father’s own, like Joseph (Gen 37:13–14; Matt 21:37 // Mark 12:6). Then the words Jesus put on the lips of the tenants echoed the words of Joseph’s brothers: δεῦτε ἀποκτείνωμεν αὐτὸν, “Come, let us kill him” (Gen 37:20 LXX; Matt 21:38 // Mark 12:7), the only places where this three-word phrase occurs in Biblical Greek.<sup>[1]</sup> It seems that Jesus interpreted His mission through the lens of the Joseph story. Hays suggests the prefiguring “resurrection” of Joseph from the pit is why Jesus did not leave the parable on the sad note of the son’s death and tenants’ judgment; He instead closes with celebration of the Lord’s marvelous work to place the rejected One as the head (Matt 21:42 // Mark 12:10–11, quoting Ps 118:22–23).<sup>[2]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 43; Hamilton, “Joseph,” 66. Luke 20:14 includes the last two words: ἀποκτείνωμεν αὐτὸν (cf. only Judg 16:2; *ibid.*, 76, n. 63).

<sup>[2]</sup> Hays, *Echoes*, 43–44.

### **TAKE-AWAYS**

Confidence in the midst of my own suffering and family’s suffering, that God works everything for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28). If we endure, we will reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12)!