

DIGGING DEEPER

WEEK 6

Messianic Glimpses

Though the Joseph account in Genesis 37-50 offers many valuable lessons on topics such as humility, family relationships, and forgiveness, it also contains a symbolic foreshadowing of the Messiah—a Christ-type. Christ-types in the Old Testament are a kind of typology. One author defines typology as “the recognition of a correspondence between New and Old Testament events, based on a conviction of the unchanging character of the principles of God’s workings.”¹ In relation to the foretold Messiah, this means we see connections between people or events in the Old Testament and the life and ministry of Jesus.

When we look at Joseph’s life and ministry, we see glimpses of Christ. While the original audience might not have recognized these messianic indications, we can see in hindsight some similarities between Joseph and Christ. Though every comparison is not equal or identical in nature, we can draw some interesting parallels:

Both were loved and treasured by their fathers.	Genesis 37:3	Matthew 3:17
Both were hated without just cause.	Genesis 37:4	John 15:25
Both were foretold to be rulers.	Genesis 37:7	Matthew 26:64
Both were betrayed by those close to them.	Genesis 37:18-28	Luke 22:3-4
Both were stripped of their clothing.	Genesis 37:23	Matthew 27:28
Both had betrayers who received silver as payment.	Genesis 37:28	Matthew 26:15
Both took the form of a servant.	Genesis 39:1-2	Philippians 2:7
God caused both to prosper, though in different ways.	Genesis 39:3	Isaiah 53:10
Both resisted temptation.	Genesis 39:7-12	Hebrews 4:15
Both were falsely accused.	Genesis 39:17-18	Matthew 26:60-61
Both were known as great counselors.	Genesis 41:39	Isaiah 9:6
Both were given a new name.	Genesis 41:45	Revelation 3:12
Both provided grain/bread for people in need.	Genesis 41:57	Matthew 14:19
Both were not recognized or known by those close to them.	Genesis 42:8	John 14:9
Both were agents of salvation.	Genesis 45:5	Acts 4:12

These Messianic glimpses remind us of one of the significant themes in the Joseph story: God’s Sovereign plan to forgive, provide, and work through even the bad things in our lives. In Genesis 50:20 Joseph says, “You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.” This points to the ultimate work God would do in sending His own Son as the final payment to purchase forgiveness and freedom for us. He is El Shaddai, our All Sufficient God who is work even in the midst of our times of betrayal, delay, success, and reconciliation. He longs to free us from the destructive power of sin and shame so that we might fully embrace His complete forgiveness, which comes only through His Son—our Messiah—Jesus Christ.

1. William Klein, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 182.