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COVENANT, TYPOLOGY, AND THE STORY OF JOSEPH:
A LITERARY-CANONICAL EXAMINATION
OF GENESIS 37–50

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APPROVAL SHEET

COVENANT, TYPOLOGY, AND THE STORY OF JOSEPH:

A LITERARY-CANONICAL EXAMINATION

OF GENESIS 37–50

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To Corrie Ann

My patient, wonderful, godly wife.

To our children, Cyrus, Carson, and Leighton

May you be oaks of righteousness in the kingdom of God

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	D. N. Freedman, ed., <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
AcBib	Academia Biblica
ACCS	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANE	Ancient Near East
ANET	J. B. Pritchard, ed., <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , 3rd ed. with supplement
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
ARM	<i>Archives royales de Mari</i>
AS	<i>Aramaic Studies</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibS	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series

<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>DOTP</i>	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch</i>
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
<i>DTIB</i>	<i>Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible</i>
<i>EDBT</i>	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>
<i>EJ</i>	Encyclopedia Judaica
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>FRLANT</i>	Forschung zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>HALOT</i>	<i>Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HDR</i>	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
<i>HSMM</i>	Hebrew Semitic Museum Monographs
<i>HTKNT</i>	Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LHBOTS</i>	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies

LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>LTJ</i>	<i>Lutheran Theological Journal</i>
<i>MTh</i>	<i>Modern Theology</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>NDBT</i>	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestaminica</i>
<i>NIB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Text Commenary
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	Willem VanGemeren, ed., <i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RBJ</i>	<i>Review of Rabbinic Judaism</i>
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>RTL</i>	<i>Revue Théologique de Louvain</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBL SBL	SBL Studies in Biblical Literature

SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Semeia Studies
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>ScrTh</i>	<i>Scripta Theologica</i>
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPS	Sacra Pagina Series
<i>STR</i>	<i>Southeastern Theological Review</i>
<i>TD</i>	Theology Digest
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
<i>TynBul</i>	Tyndale Bulletin
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentary
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien Zum Alten Und Neuen Testament
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
<i>ZAH</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Althebraistik</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

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PREFACE

Opportunities for formal gratitude to those who have cared for and loved us so well are regrettably infrequent. At the conclusion of this dissertation, I am deeply aware of the countless resources that others have invested in me—a debt I can never repay.

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary—particularly professors Tom Schreiner, Peter Gentry, Steve Wellum, and Jim Hamilton. Tom Schreiner represents everything I aspire to be. His careful exegesis and theological acumen are surpassed only by his godliness and unrelenting joy. Dr. Peter Gentry instilled in me a deep love for the original languages and is a model of a true biblical scholar. I hope, for the rest of my life, to follow Dr. Gentry’s example and “bury myself in a lexicon and arise in the presence of God.” Drs. Schreiner and Gentry are truly great men.

During my time at SBTS, I had more classes with Steve Wellum than with any other professor. Dr. Wellum’s rigorous theological method will forever shape the way I read Scripture and do theology. Finally, I am tremendously grateful for my *doktorvater*, Jim Hamilton, who has encouraged me every step of the way during this “ambitious” project. His careful feedback, criticisms, and corrections have proved invaluable. Dr. Hamilton is a model of Christian maturity and academic integrity. His love for Scripture and for the glory of God is infectious and his passion for personal holiness is evident. I could not ask for a better supervisor.

For the past 2 ½ years I have had the privilege of working as the Director of Theological Research for Albert Mohler, the president of Southern Seminary. My time in the president’s office has been enormously beneficial and intellectual stimulating. Dr.

Mohler has encouraged me throughout the writing process. Truly, without the time and resources provided by this job I never would have been able to finish the PhD program.

Aubrey Sequeria has been a constant friend and source of encouragement throughout the entire program. I can quite truthfully say I have learned as much from Aubrey as from any faculty member at Southern. Aubrey read every word of this dissertation and offered helpful feedback along the way. His methodological clarity and demand for precision have greatly helped this project.

Jack Brannen carefully read every word of this dissertation multiple times and provided invaluable suggestions on style and structure. This dissertation would not be nearly as interesting or as readable without Jack's keen editorial eye and incessant demand for clarity. If any sentence in this dissertation is poorly written, it is likely due to the fact that I ignored Jack's suggestions to my own detriment.

The most rewarding part of seminary, for me, has been the rich friendships forged over the last eight years. Jon Pentecost has been a true friend and brother in the Lord. His commitment to local church health and congregational living ignites in my heart a deep desire to love the bride of Christ more each day. Bobby Jamieson's theological and personal influence on me during the last eight years has been incalculable. I have learned a great deal about theology, discipleship, and academic faithfulness from Bobby. He steeled my resolve against theological liberalism when I most needed it. I will be forever grateful for his friendship. David Schrock taught me how to faithfully walk through trials all while modeling how to be a true pastor-theologian. Matt Smethurst, Jamie Southcombe, Nick Dorsey, Ryan Troglin, Jon Swan, Colin Smothers, and Matt Tyler made each day at SBTS a delight. I do not deserve such godly, faithful friends. I have benefited from them far more than they will ever benefit from me. Additionally, I would like to thank Kevin Feige, president of Marvel Studios, for creating the Marvel Cinematic Universe and giving me a few hours of mindless distraction in the rare moments of recreation over the past five years.

This dissertation was written as an act of love for Christ's church and with hopes that it will help pastors preach Genesis 37–50 more faithfully. I am deeply committed to the notion that biblical scholarship, in order to be truly faithful, must be done in service of the church and in submission to church authority. For that reason, I am thankful for the congregation of Third Avenue Baptist Church and its oversight of my life. God has blessed our congregation with many faithful elders. Greg Gilbert, Ben Birkholz, Bruce Kiesling, Allison Arruda, Joshua Dove, Matt Smethurst, Scott Croft, and Josh Morell all served as elders while I have been a member at Third Avenue. I am grateful for their leadership and pastoral care.

God's greatest earthly gift to me has been my family. I had the unspeakable privilege of growing up in a home with parents who loved Jesus and modeled Christian maturity. My father, Saeed, is a man of great integrity, generosity, and exemplary Christian character. I would be nothing without his influence. Whatever is of value in this dissertation is a product of his faithful parenting and loving support. My mother, Theresa, is one of the most generous and faithful Christians I have ever met. Her love for the Bible is out-matched only by her willingness to serve others. I will never forget the hundreds of hours she spent working through theological issues with me in high school and college. Without my parents' financial support, I never would have been able to make it through the doctoral program. Again, whatever is of value in this dissertation is a credit to them.

My brothers, Matthew and Michael, also deserve special commendation. I had the privilege of going through seminary (MDiv and PhD) with Matthew. Our countless hours of discussing theology and reading Greek and Hebrew have impacted me beyond measure. Also, Michael has encouraged me along the way while writing this dissertation and has lent his expertise on discourse grammar at critical moments. I cannot imagine having two better brothers. I am tremendously thankful for their lives, their ministries, and their families.

My wife's family has also served me in innumerable ways over the past five

years. My father-in-law and mother-in-law, Don and Mitzi James (AKA Papaw and Nami), have served me in every way imaginable—from babysitting to fixing plumbing issues in our home. This dissertation simply could not have been written without their loving support every step of the way. The same is true with regard to my brothers-in-law, Samuel James and Dan Maketansky, and my sisters-in-law, Emily James and Rebecca Maketansky. Their presence in my life has been a constant source of joy. I have cherished our time together in Louisville.

My wife, Corrie Ann, deserves more praise than these pages allow. She has been enormously supportive during this entire process. I cannot even begin to number the ways she has served me and spurred me on to finish this project. I cannot imagine life without her. She constantly encourages me, by both word and example, to be a more faithful follower of Jesus. She is a rare woman of great wisdom, patience, and godliness. Corrie Ann, you are my greatest earthly treasure.

Our children, Cyrus, Carson, and Leighton, have brought much joy to my life. I am so thankful that they have been with me on this academic journey every step of the way. My first child, Cyrus, was born my first semester of PhD studies and my youngest child, Leighton, was born just weeks before graduation. Children, I could not imagine writing this dissertation without you. I love every second we spend playing together. Every moment I spent writing this dissertation, I would have rather spent with you. Thank you for putting up with my failures, having a forgiving spirit, and bringing so much joy and laughter to our home. May God give each of you hearts that love Jesus, his church, and God's glory above anything else this life has to offer.

Finally, I wish to thank the triune God who sovereignly planned, accomplished, and applied his saving work to me. I do not deserve God's grace and kindness. I do not deserve his mercy. I do not deserve to read the Bible, let alone study it. I owe everything that I am to the sovereign grace of God. May this work bring glory and honor to Him who delivered his Son over for my sins and raised him from the dead for

my justification. My great hope is that whoever reads these pages will know and love more fully the true and better Joseph—Jesus Christ, my only hope in life and in death.

Samuel Emadi

Louisville, Kentucky

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Moses affords Joseph more time in the narrative foreground than any other character in Genesis—a striking fact given the significance of Genesis’ other main characters: Adam, Noah, and the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This prominence is even more striking considering the apparent insignificance of Joseph in the rest of the OT.¹ The name “Joseph” is mentioned just 57 times in the OT. Five of these occurrences refer to other individuals (Num 13:17; Ezek 10:42; Neh 12:14; 1 Chr 25:2; 1 Chr 25:9) while another 45 refer to Joseph’s eponymous tribe. Thus the OT explicitly refers to Joseph only 7 times: once in a summary of Israel’s story (Ps 105:17), twice in the Chronicler’s introductory genealogy (1 Chr 2:2; 5:1), three times in the transition narrative between Genesis and Exodus (Exod 1:5, 6, 8), and twice with reference to his bones’ removal from Egypt (Exod 13:19) and into Canaan (Josh 24:35). Joseph fares no better in the NT, either; he is mentioned only twice—both times in a summary of Israel’s story (Acts 7:9–14; Heb 11:21–22).

The prominence of the Joseph story in Genesis and the paucity of references to him thereafter pose a particular challenge to the biblical theologian whose aim is to read any portion of Scripture in the context of the entire Christian canon.² How should

¹See, for example, Kugel’s remarks (with which I disagree): “Save for a passing reference to Joseph being sold into slavery in Psalm 105 and a somewhat more obscure reference to Joseph in Egypt in Psalm 81, there is scarcely the slightest allusion to the events of Joseph’s life recounted in Genesis anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible” (James Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994], 14).

²My use of the phrase “Joseph narrative” or “Joseph Story” refers to the entirety of Gen 37–50. This goes against the grain of most Joseph scholarship, which reserves those phrases only for the reconstructed source text of the Joseph story usually identified as Gen 37 and 39–47 (though with some variations from scholar to scholar). See for example the discussion in George W. Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt: Structural and Theological Context of the Joseph Story*, CBQMS 4 (Washington, DC: Catholic

interpreters read the Joseph narrative in the context of the entire Genesis narrative and ultimately in canonical context? Brevard Childs posed this same question nearly 40 years ago.³ Regrettably, to my knowledge, no scholar since has sought a meaningful answer.⁴

The question of Joseph's place in the canon is intimately associated with another, narrower biblical-theological question: is Joseph a type of the Messiah? This, of course, is not the only question related to a canonical reading of the Joseph narrative. Yet when the church and biblical scholarship have addressed the question of Joseph's role in the canon, the conversation invariably turns toward typology.

Patristic commentators asserted that the typological relationship between the patriarch and Jesus were certain.⁵ Obvious similarities between the two figures has spawned an interpretive tradition within Christianity that sees righteous Joseph, on his path to glory through suffering, as foreshadowing the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Modern scholars have been less persuaded.⁶

Biblical Association of America, 1976), or Robert E. Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence: A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39–48* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989). I am not concerned with the conjectural reconstructions but with the text as finally delivered in canonical form.

³Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 156. See further discussion on Childs below.

⁴Interestingly, even some evangelical, biblical-theological treatments of Genesis fall short on this account. See, for example, Kenneth Mathews' article on Genesis, which does not even mention Joseph (Kenneth Mathews, "Genesis," in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al., [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 606–08).

⁵The earliest modern summary of the interpretation of Joseph narrative in the early church is in A. W. Argyle, "Joseph the Patriarch in Patristic Teaching," *The Expository Times* 67, no. 7 (1956): 199–201. Argyle notes that the Fathers employed the Joseph narrative "(1) as prefiguring the Incarnation, Passion, and Exaltation of our Lord; (2) as providing a pattern for Christian character and conduct." For a more thorough analysis of early church interpretation of Joseph, primarily in the eastern church up to the fourth century AD, see John Lee Fortner, "'Much More Ours Than Yours': The Figure of Joseph the Patriarch in the New Testament and the Early Church" (MA thesis, Miami University, 2004). Fortner likewise concludes that the two primary uses of the Joseph narrative were typological (messianic) and hortatory. The works of Kristian Heal have thoroughly investigated the typological character of the Joseph narrative in early Syriac literature (Kristian Heal, "Joseph as a Type of Christ in Syriac Literature," *BYU Studies* 41, no. 1 [2002]: 29–49. Kristian Heal, "Tradition and Transformation: Genesis 37 and 39 in Early Syriac Sources" [PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2008]).

⁶In fact, modern literature on Genesis rarely even discusses the issue. Mathews' commentary is typical in that he mentions the matter only in his history of interpretation but never revisits the issue or evaluates its validity (Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, NAC [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005], 670. Victor Hamilton's analysis of the "New Testament Appropriation" of the Joseph story does mention the potential typological relationship between Joseph and Jesus. Interestingly, Hamilton does see a

Their hesitation arises from a number of factors. Historical-critical presuppositions, which have dominated academic treatments of the Joseph narrative for the last 200 years are inherently hostile to typological readings of Scripture.⁷ Those sympathetic with typological hermeneutics have also been hesitant to affirm Joseph as a type of the Messiah given the apparent lack of textual warrant. Ultimately, the longstanding tradition that Joseph typifies Christ has not produced the exegetical argumentation needed to convince modern scholars.

This skepticism is, at least in part, warranted. Messianic interpretations of the Joseph narrative have often lacked methodological rigor or have simply failed to make a convincing case. Typically these arguments present a “two dimensional” portrait of the typological relationship—one that focuses on the thematic and, potentially, linguistic correspondences between the Joseph and Jesus narratives, but without considering the Joseph narrative’s function in the context of Genesis, its redemptive-historical significance, or its appropriation by later biblical authors. Defenders of the messianic reading of Joseph often draw a large arc between the Joseph narrative and the Jesus narrative without showing any of the smaller arcs that link the Joseph story to the rest of the canon.

sort of typological correspondence between Joseph and Stephen in Acts 7—“Joseph is the forerunner of Stephen—God is with both, and upon both, and upon both shines the glory of God.” Furthermore Hamilton affirms the validity of seeing Matt 21:38 and Luke 20:14 as alluding to Gen 37:20 but does not mention the potential Christological significance of this point (Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 714). Marshall states regarding Acts 7, “Whether this is a typological allusion to the way in which God delivered Jesus from his afflictions . . . is not clear” (I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC [Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1983], 137). Westermann strongly opposes the typological interpretation (Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, trans. John Scullion [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982]). Likewise, Van Seters argues that the “Joseph-Christ typology” is utterly foreign to the NT and is instead a creation of the early church (Arthur Van Seters, “The Use of the Story of Joseph in Scripture” [PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1965], 283–84).

⁷Lampe notes that in historical critical circles, typology was a “historical curiosity, of very little importance or significance for the modern reader. The new emphasis upon the diversity of Scripture and the original independence of its several parts tended to overthrow the foundations upon which that method rested. This was the most important . . . effect of ‘higher criticism’” (G. W. H. Lampe, “The Reasonableness of Typology,” in *Essays on Typology*, SBT 22 [Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1957], 16). See also Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974).

The aim of this project is to present a more comprehensive canonical treatment of the Joseph narrative. I hope to avoid the “two-dimensional” messianic readings of the Joseph narrative which merely focus on large-scale similarities between the lives of Joseph and Jesus. Instead I hope to paint a three-dimensional portrait of Joseph by considering (1) Genesis 37–50 in its own literary and theological context, (2) intra-canonical development of the Joseph story via inner-biblical allusion, and (3) references and allusions to the Joseph story in the NT.

Personal Interest

My personal interest in the canonical context of the Joseph narrative began, at least inchoately, in elementary Sunday school classes, when I noticed and was confused by the obvious similarities between Joseph and Daniel—two characters who found a place in the royal court because of their ability to interpret dreams. At a more academic level, my interest in the canonical role of the Joseph narrative was piqued listening to a panel at Southern Seminary in which Drs. Duane Garrett, Peter Gentry, and James Hamilton discussed “Christology in the Old Testament.” While all of these scholars share similar presuppositions on the nature of Scripture and participate in the theological heritage of the post-Vos evangelical biblical theology movement, they nevertheless come to radically different conclusions on the question of the typological character of the Joseph story. Garrett was highly skeptical about the idea of Joseph as a type. Gentry articulated what could be described as an “open but cautious” position given the lack of textual warrant (specifically NT textual warrant). Hamilton fully supported the idea.

Further studies on OT historical narrative, the discipline of biblical theology, and hermeneutical warrant for identifying types in the OT have also spurred my interest in the Joseph narrative. The similarities between the lives of Jesus and Joseph are indeed striking, but does a typological reading of Joseph hold up under the scrutiny of the type of constraints scholars have traditionally proposed should control typological readings? Is

there evidence from the original context that the story is messianic? Is there a clear connection to the covenant structure of Scripture? Is there intra-canonical development? And is there explicit NT textual warrant? While I do not believe each of these questions must be answered affirmatively in order to assert the presence of an OT type, I have come to the conclusion that, even according to the strictest hermeneutical controls, Joseph passes the typological test.

Further, the well attested literary beauty of the narrative interests me—as it has numerous other scholars in both the modern period and in antiquity. As Levenson notes, the Joseph story “is arguably the most sophisticated narrative in the Jewish or the Christian Bibles.”⁸ Similarly Alter echoes these sentiments in the conclusion to his analysis of the Joseph story, saying that it is “one of the best stories, as many readers have attested, that has ever been told.”⁹

Finally, evangelical treatments of the Joseph narrative—ones committed to the inerrancy and unity of Scripture—are sparse. Lay studies of the Joseph story are short on exegesis, out of touch with the need to place Joseph in biblical-theological context, and primarily focus on (1) how the theme of God’s providence in the Joseph story (cf. Gen 50:20) exemplifies the doctrine of compatibilism or (2) character studies and moral exhortation.¹⁰ Additionally, I am unaware of any academic, evangelical treatments of the Joseph story.

⁸Jon Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 143. Westermann designates it a “work of art on the highest order” (Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 26). In Albright’s estimation, “nothing in the Ancient Near East can equal the dramatic portrayal of Joseph’s career” (William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006], 23). Even Speiser, whose commentary is largely committed to carving up each narrative along the lines of the documentary hypothesis, admits “[The Joseph story] is at once the most intricately constructed and the best integrated of all the patriarchal histories. . . . The remarkable thing is that the whole still appears to be deceptively smooth, after so much legitimate scrutiny by modern critics” (E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, vol. 1, The Anchor Bible [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964], 292–94).

⁹Robert Alter, *The Art of the Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 219.

¹⁰See for example Voddie Baucham Jr., *Joseph and the Gospel of Many Colors: Reading an Old Story in a New Way* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013). R. C. Sproul, *The Invisible Hand: Do All Things Really Work for Good?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1996).

Thesis

This dissertation will defend the notion that Joseph, understood according to a literary-canonical analysis, functions as the resolution to the plot of Genesis and that this story typologically influences how later biblical authors narrate redemptive history culminating in the NT's portrayal of Jesus as an antitypical Joseph. In other words, my research will provide a biblical-theological account of the Joseph narrative by exploring his redemptive-historical contribution to Genesis and also by examining how later biblical authors develop the story of Joseph across the OT. My research will explore two questions: First, what is the literary and biblical-theological significance of the Joseph narrative as the conclusion to Genesis? Second, how do later biblical authors interpret and reuse the Joseph narrative? As I will demonstrate below, scholars have largely ignored question one. Question two has received some consideration in various locations of the canon but a synthetic biblical-theological portrait is still missing.

With regard to Joseph's biblical-theological function in Genesis, I will argue that Joseph provides the literary and biblical-theological resolution to the story of Genesis. Joseph is intimately tied to the Abrahamic covenant, functioning as the first major instantiation of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. Joseph also provides resolution to (or sometimes more appropriately reversal of) the fractious, curse-ridden storylines developed in Genesis such as fraternal conflict, famine, and family deception. Furthermore, I will also demonstrate that Moses links the story of Joseph to the eschatological expectations established in Genesis (such as royal seed) and specifically to the hope for an eschatological king.

With regard to later biblical authors' appropriation of the Joseph story, I will argue that Joseph is a model-character for faithfulness in exile, a harbinger of God's exodus salvation, and an exhibition of the hope of glory through suffering. Later biblical authors saw the life of Joseph as the type of life that characterized how God worked among his people, particularly in fulfilling his promises. Some authors, such as Daniel,

even modeled their autobiographies in part on the life of Joseph.

This biblical-theological treatment of the Joseph narrative lends credibility to the notion that Joseph prefigures the Messiah. Moses includes evidence within Genesis itself that Joseph foreshadows God's future work in fulfilling his promises and undoing the curses established in Genesis 3. Later biblical authors, such as the author of Psalm 105, confirm this interpretation. Other authors reuse and incorporate material from the Joseph story into their own writings in order to present themselves or others as "new Josephs." These "new Josephs" develop the Joseph narrative across the pages of the OT and thus provide the proper foundation for a truly canonical reading of Genesis 37–50. Finally, I will argue that this intracanonical development of the story of Joseph culminates in the NT. The NT authors employ the Joseph narrative in the service of their Christological claims about Jesus of Nazareth, the one who recapitulates the life of Israel and the lives of Israel's prominent OT figures in a way that brings fulfillment to the story of the OT. Consequently, the NT itself presents Jesus as the new and final Joseph.

History of Research

Joseph in Canonical Context in Pre-Modern Christian Literature

Early Christian interpreters primarily read the Joseph narrative as either foreshadowing the life of Jesus the Messiah or as modeling Christian virtue.¹¹ Each of these interpretations shows a distinct desire to relate the story of Joseph to the larger story of redemption. The Christological reading of the Joseph narrative, universally accepted by pre-critical Christian interpreters, was essentially assumed largely due to the interpretive posture of early Christians as they sought to demonstrate that Jesus of

¹¹The Joseph narrative has enjoyed a rich interpretive life in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—a point to which scholars have given quite a bit of attention. See the most recent survey of the rather significant amount of literature on this topic in Maren Niehoff, *The Figure of Joseph in Post-Biblical Jewish Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 1–14. See also the bibliography provided by Westermann on Joseph "In Later Literature" in Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 17–18.

Nazareth was the resolution to the story of the OT.¹²

The earliest instance of this typological reading of the character of Joseph is from Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. Commenting on Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 33:17, Justin asserted that the "horns of the wild ox" were a "type which portrays the cross."¹³ While not an interpretation of the Joseph story proper, this reading of Deuteronomy 33 shows the early church's willingness to connect even the most cursory details of Joseph's legacy with the life of Christ and likely points to an already burgeoning acceptance of the notion that Joseph's life foreshadowed the life of the Messiah.

Tertullian, who followed Justin's Christological reading of Deuteronomy 33:17,¹⁴ provides the first explicit Christological reading of the Joseph story in Genesis, identifying the persecution Joseph received at the hands of his brothers and the favor of God that rested on Joseph as foreshadowing the life of Christ.¹⁵ Likewise Irenaeus explicitly asserted that Joseph "prefigured" (προετυπώθη) the life of Christ.¹⁶ Origen described Jesus as "the true Joseph, our Lord and Saviour."¹⁷ Similarly Cyprian,¹⁸ Jerome,¹⁹ Chrysostom,²⁰ Ambrose,²¹ Augustine,²² Cyril of Alexandria²³ and a host of

¹²Westermann identifies the "traditional ecclesiastical view," which affirms the historicity of Gen 37–50 and its typological significance as the first of three major stages in the history of interpretation of the Joseph story (Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 18). On the interpretive commitments and presuppositions of the early church, see Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and John O'Keefe and R. R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

¹³Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* XCI.

¹⁴Tertullian *An Answer to the Jews* 10; *Against Marcion* 3.18.

¹⁵Tertullian *Against Marcion* 3.18.

¹⁶Irenaeus, *Fragment 17*.

¹⁷Origen, *On Genesis*, Hom., xv.; Gen 46:1. Origen makes this claim on other accounts as well. See *On Genesis*, Hom., xv.; Gen 45:25–26.

¹⁸Cyprian, *Liber de bono patientiae*.

¹⁹"Joseph...in typo praecessit Domini salvatoris" (Jerome, *Letter to Riparius* 2).

other interpreters of the early church affirmed a typological reading of the Joseph narrative.

The notion that Joseph foreshadowed the Messiah remained largely unchallenged throughout the early and medieval church,²⁴ in the Reformation,²⁵ and among the puritan tradition²⁶ and its theological heirs.²⁷ Some interpreters are more guarded and critical in their conclusions than others.²⁸ Yet examples of pre-modern

²⁰“Just as Joseph went away to his brethren to see their needs, and they, reverencing neither brotherhood nor the reason for his coming, at first plotted to kill him, but afterwards sold him to the barbarians, so also our Lord . . . came to see to the needs of the human race and took upon Himself humanity like ours, and, deeming it right to become our brother, thus arrived. . . . But the hard-hearted Jews tried to slay the physician of bodies and souls who was working countless wonders every day. . . . And they crucified Him who had accepted the form of a servant for our salvation. But whereas the Jews not only tried to kill Him, but actually did deliver him to the Cross and slay Him, the brothers of Joseph plotted to kill him, but did not carry their plots to the deed. The type had to fall short of the reality, of which it was the type (ἔδει δὲ τὸν τύπον ἔλαττον ἔχειν τῆς ἀληθείας)” (Chrysostom, *On Genesis*, Hom. lxi). See also Chrysostom, *On Matthew*, Hom., lxxxiv).

²¹“By no patristic writer are the adventures of Joseph more extensively treated as a type of the work of Christ than by Ambrose” (Argyle, “Joseph the Patriarch in Patristic Teaching,” 200). See Ambrose, *Of Joseph the Patriarch*.

²²Augustine, *Epistolarum Classis III* (PL 33:919). Augustine, *Quæstionum Augustini in Heptateuch* (PL 34: 588).

²³Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyrorum in Genesis 7* (PG 69:376).

²⁴See Argyle, “Joseph the Patriarch in Patristic Teaching,” 200.

²⁵John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. John King, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 261, 266.

²⁶John Owen, *Communion with God, The Works of John Owen*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965), 203. Thomas Goodwin, *Of Christ the Mediator, The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, vol. 5 (Eureka, CA: Tanski, 1996), 161.

²⁷Andrew Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle, 1988), 3:146. Jonathan Edwards, “Types of the Messiah,” in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 2:651–53. See also the comments throughout Matthew Henry’s commentary on Gen 37–50 (Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1, Genesis to Deuteronomy (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1935).

²⁸Fuller, for example, cautiously observes, “I am far from thinking that every point of analogy which may be traced by a lively imagination was designed as such by the Holy Spirit; yet neither do I think that we are warranted in rejecting the idea.” Fuller proceeds to tie his discussion to his larger examination of the nature of typology and hermeneutics. See Fuller, *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, vol. 3:146. Spurgeon’s typological interpretation is significantly less restrained. “I need not say to you, beloved, who are conversant with Scripture, that there is scarcely any personal type in the Old Testament which is more clearly and fully a portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ than is the type of Joseph. You may run the parallel between Joseph and Jesus in very many directions, yet you need never strain the narrative so even much as once . . . in making himself known to his brethren, he was a type of our Lord revealing himself to us. . . . I. Notice, first, that the Lord Jesus Christ, like Joseph, reveals himself in private for the most part. . . . II. The second remark I have to make is this—when the Lord Jesus Christ reveals Himself to any man for the first time, it is usually in the midst of terror, and that first revelation often creates much sadness. . . . III. Now,

Christian interpretation of the Joseph narrative which do not affirm or largely expound on the Christological character of Joseph are hard to find. A messianic reading of the Joseph narrative cemented itself early in the interpretive tradition.

Yet, while the Christological interpretation of Joseph enjoys a rich and well-attested theological heritage, the actual outworking of this notion beyond the mere notation of similarities between the lives of Joseph and Jesus is rare. Given the hermeneutical assumptions of pre-critical authors (and their theological heirs), the typological correspondence between Joseph and Jesus was largely assumed—never garnering sustained reflection or defense.

Modern Research on the Biblical Theological Significance of Genesis 37–50

Since this dissertation will examine the topics of (1) Joseph’s literary and biblical theological function in the book of Genesis, (2) later biblical authors’ use of the Joseph narrative, and (3) ultimately the notion that Joseph is a type of Christ, I will consider modern research on each of these questions in turn.

Joseph in the Context of Genesis

Disunity with the Rest of Genesis. With the publication of Jean Astruc’s *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux don’t il paraît que Moïse s’est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse* (1753), literary, canonical, and typological readings of the Joseph narrative largely gave way to historical-critical approaches to the story. When scholars did examine the literary features of the Joseph story, they typically did so along source-critical lines.²⁹ In short, these critical treatments of the Joseph story, essentially

thirdly, though the first appearance of Jesus, like that of Joseph, may cause sadness, the further revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to his brethren, brings them the greatest possible joy” (Charles Spurgeon, *Christ in the Old Testament: Sermons on the Foreshadowing of Our Lord in Old Testament History* [London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1899], 93–97). The worst, and perhaps most notorious, offender in this regard is Arthur W. Pink. In *Gleanings in Genesis*, Pink identifies 101 ways Joseph is a type of Christ (Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1922], 340–408).

²⁹For an overview of the development of the historical critical treatment of the Joseph story,

concentrating on the source-divisions (and thus internal incoherence) of the story, disengaged Genesis 37–50 from its place in the story of Genesis in particular and in the OT in general.³⁰ Even as scholars challenged source-critical approaches and reasserted the narrative’s synthetic unity by virtue of a thoughtful redactor(s),³¹ the Joseph story was still seen as an isolated literary composition without any significant literary, theological, or biblical theological connection to the rest of Genesis. Donald Redford for example argues,

The theological outlook of the writer of Gen 37–50 is different from that of the Patriarchal narrator. He does not mention the Covenant or the Promise, ubiquitous in the earlier chapters of Genesis. He is not interested in supplying the reader with comment on matters theological, as the Patriarchal author was.³²

Gerhard von Rad likewise asserted that “the Joseph story is in every respect

see C. Paap, *Die Josephsgeschichte, Genesis 37–50: Bestimmungen ihrer literarischen Gattung in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, 23, Theologie, 534 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995). Raymond de Hoop, *Genesis 49 in Its Literary and Historical Context* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 366–450. Even source critical approaches were driven by deeply historical interests. In other words, the goal of these source-critical efforts is not to uncover the literary features and or interpretive rules for the Joseph saga, but to reconstruct the history behind the Joseph story—thereby situating it in the right historical context. For an example, see William F. Albright who posited that the story is a “syncretism of two separate mythic cycles,” – a fertility myth from the cult at Shechem and an Egyptian tale (William F. Albright, “Historical and Mythological Elements in the Story of Joseph,” *JBL* 37, nos. 3–4 (1918): 114). Cf. Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph*, VTSup 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 88–98.

³⁰The previous century’s scholarly obsession over the genre Gen 37–50 has only further driven a wedge between the story of Joseph and the rest of the Genesis narrative. Gunkel, credited for being one of the first scholars to return scholarship to more literary interest in the Joseph story, argues that the story’s length, “epic discursiveness,” and interest in “soul life” indicated that it ought to be read as “romance” in contrast to the rest of Genesis which he characterized as “legend.” See Gunkel, *Legends*, 80–86. Similarly Von-Rad’s well-received proposal that the Joseph story grew out of the wisdom tradition and is a “didactic tale” highlights its distinctiveness in the light of the rest of Genesis given its characterization of Joseph and infrequent direct speech from God (Gerhard Von Rad, “The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom,” in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966], 294–95).

³¹As Smith notes, “It was in the study of this segment of Genesis during the 1960s and 70s that the scholarly consensus concerning the Documentary Hypothesis began to break apart” (Bryan Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50 and Its Implications for the Narrative’s Structural and Thematic Unity” [PhD diss., Bob Jones University, 2002], 3). For broader treatments on the death of the documentary hypothesis and source critical approaches to the Pentateuch, see Gordon J. Wenham, “Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm,” in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, ed. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 116–44; Duane Garrett, “The Undead Hypothesis: Why the Documentary Hypothesis Is the Frankenstein of Biblical Studies,” *SBJT* 5, no. 3 (2001): 28–41.

³²Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph*, 247. Redford’s criticism of previous scholarship’s source critical approach to Joseph is tapered by the fact that he himself still engages in the enterprise—positing different sources behind the story than those traditionally proposed.

distinct from the patriarchal narratives which it follows.”³³ These sentiments are repeated with some force by Arnold.

A final question about the Joseph narrative is its function in Genesis and the Pentateuch as a whole. The covenant and the ancestral promises of land and seed—so central throughout Gen 12–36—are absent entirely, nor do we encounter any further revelatory theophanies. This theological uniqueness combines with the literary distinctiveness we have discussed to illustrate the role of the Joseph narrative in the Bible.³⁴

Given the resistance to the notion that the Joseph story bore any meaningful connection to the rest of Genesis, locating the Joseph story in canonical context was long an abandoned enterprise among scholars.³⁵ As Brevard Childs noted, amidst the raging debates of historical-critical concerns such as Gunkel’s designation of the Joseph story as a novella or von Rad’s argument that the wisdom tradition gave birth to the story of Joseph, “there was little or no attention given to the canonical questions. What is the shape of the final chapters and what is their function within the book as a whole? . . . If Joseph is not the bearer of the promise in the same way as his forefathers, what then is his role in Genesis?”³⁶

More recently scholars have revisited the question of the relationship of the

³³Von Rad, “The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom,” 292. See also Von Rad’s later comments, “[The Joseph story] is . . . devoid of any specifically theological interest in redemptive history” (299).

³⁴Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, NCBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 316. See also the comments by Brueggemann, “The Joseph narrative offers a kind of literature which is distinctive in Genesis. It is distinguished in every way from the narratives dealing with Abraham and Jacob. The intellectual world of this narrative has much more in common with the David story of II Sam. 9–20 than it does with the ancestral tales. While we cannot be sure, a plausible locus for the narrative is the royal, urban ethos of Solomon which imitated international ways and which sharply critiqued the claims of the old tribal traditions. Its presuppositions suggest a cool detachment from things religious that is contrasted with the much more direct religious affirmation of the Abraham and Jacob stories. This narrative appears to belong to a generation of believers in a cultural climate where old modes of faith were embarrassing. . . . The narrative should be understood as a sophisticated literary response to a cultural, theological crisis. How does one speak about faith in a context where the older ways are found wanting? That is the issue in the Joseph narrative” (Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1982], 288).

³⁵T. Desmond Alexander, “The Regal Dimension of the תולדות־יעקב: Recovering the Literary Context of Genesis 37–50,” in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, ed. J. G. McConville and Karl Möller (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 198.

³⁶Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 156.

Joseph story to the rest of Genesis. Some treatments are fairly trivial, noting, for example, nothing more than the fact that Genesis 37–50 “deals with the same persons” as the Jacob narrative or reflects a similar economic and community structure as previous narratives.³⁷

Other scholars have similarly voiced minimalist accounts of the relationship of Joseph to the rest of Genesis. Coats posited the largely well-received proposal that Joseph’s role in Genesis is purely etiological, providing the rationale for why the Israelites, promised the land of Canaan, found themselves in Egypt in the first place.³⁸ In other words, Joseph is purely a “bridge” character—a man whose biography, while theologically instructive in its own way, does little more than geographically transition readers from Israel to Egypt. Joseph may change the setting of the story of Israel, but he plays virtually no role in advancing the plot of that same story. Joseph bears no relationship to the patriarchal covenants, the messianic hope initiated in Genesis 3:15, or the major redemptive-historical themes developed in primeval and patriarchal histories.

Unity with the rest of Genesis. More recently, several scholars have argued for significant literary and biblical theological unity between Joseph and the rest of

³⁷Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 27. Westermann expresses some dissatisfaction that “not enough attention has been paid” to the commonalities shared between the Joseph story and the rest of Genesis. However, his own proposals on points of contact are so trivial they are hardly worth mentioning. “1. All people mentioned in chs. 37–45 (except chs. 39–41) have been the subject of narratives in the patriarchal story. . . . 2. Consequently, what is narrated about the lives of these people in chs. 37–45 (except chs. 39–41) agrees with what we know from chs. 12–36. . . . 3. Conflicts, as in the patriarchal stories, are between members of the family, especially between brothers. . . . 4. The Joseph story, however, differs in one very striking way from the patriarchal story—women scarcely appear in it.” In this list, the first two points are trivial and the last point highlights what Joseph does not have in common with preceding narratives. Only the third point merits any significant reflection since it highlights a major literary theme woven throughout Genesis.

³⁸Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt*. Coats has been followed by other commentators such as Brueggemann, who offers the following helpful summary of Coats’ proposal: “George Coats has shown that the Joseph narrative is a literary device to link ancestral promises to the Exodus narrative of oppression and liberation. Before this narrative, there were older traditions about the promise to the forebearers [sic] and about the deliverance from Egypt. But no way was found to link the two memories, one of which is based in Canaan and the other in Egypt. To overcome that problem, Coats suggests, this narrative was constructed. The Joseph account, then, has no independent life or function. It never existed on its own but was formed after the other materials were fixed to make a narrative linkage. It serves to carry this family from Canaan to Egypt and oppression” (Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 291). Arnold comments, “Thus the Joseph Novel has been incorporated into the Joseph narrative as the conclusion of Genesis in order to serve as a bridge, theologically and structurally, between the ancestors and the exodus” (Arnold, *Genesis*, 317).

Genesis. Bruce Dahlberg's "On Recognizing the Unity of Genesis," though only seven pages, was the seminal work dissenting from the majority position.³⁹ Dahlberg argued that Genesis 1–11 and the Joseph story shared so many common thematic and linguistic features that readers should see them as forming an inclusio around the entire Genesis narrative. Ultimately, Dahlberg argues that the two parts of the inclusio function as a call and response. Genesis 1–11 sets up problems that are ultimately resolved in the story of Joseph. Thus, "Joseph appears to have been drawn intentionally as an 'antitype' to Adam and, for that matter, to other main representatives of humanity who figure in chapters 1 through 11."⁴⁰

Other scholars, often building on the work of Dahlberg, argue that the Joseph narrative has striking connections to previous material in Genesis. Lindsay Wilson has explored the relationship of the Joseph story to the Abrahamic covenant and the intersection between the prominent wisdom theme in the Joseph story and the centrality of the covenant in Genesis.⁴¹ T. D. Alexander has posited that the Joseph story is a "natural continuation of the theme of royalty found in the patriarchal narratives of Gen 12–36"⁴² and "is more than simply a bridge between Canaan and Egypt."⁴³ Timothy J. Stone, explicitly building on the work of Dahlberg, has argued that the Joseph story is the culmination and conclusion of Genesis and explores that notion by considering how the "story of the fall" replays several times in the lives of different figures in Genesis before

³⁹Bruce T. Dahlberg, "On Recognizing the Unity of Genesis," *TD* 24 (1977): 360–67. Dahlberg published a similar work five years later: Bruce T. Dahlberg and Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, "The Unity of Genesis," in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), 2:126–33.

⁴⁰Dahlberg and Gros Louis, "The Unity of Genesis," 2:129. Similarly Dahlberg concludes that the Joseph story "functions as a completion and consummation to everything in the book of Genesis preceding it" (idem, "On Recognizing the Unity of Genesis," 363).

⁴¹Lindsay Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise: The Intersection of Wisdom and Covenant in Genesis 37–50* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004), 215–236.

⁴²Alexander, "The Regal Dimension of the תולדות־יעקב," 202.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 212.

“taking a surprising turn in Joseph’s story.”⁴⁴

Finally, Brian Sigmon’s dissertation, “Between Eden and Egypt,” which also builds on Dahlberg’s work, explores in great detail the literary relationship between the Joseph story and Genesis 2–4. For Sigmon, the Joseph story represents the literary “reversal” of the curse-induced themes of Genesis. Sigmon argues that the fraternal conflict first appearing in the lives of Cain and Abel parallels the conflict between Joseph and his brothers. Yet whereas the first conflict results in fratricide, the latter resolves with forgiveness. Further Sigmon argues that Joseph is portrayed as a new Adam, succeeding in his own temptation narrative (Gen 39) and unraveling the effects of the curse by exercising knowledge of good and evil appropriate for human creatures.⁴⁵

Overall, most scholars advocating for the “unity with Genesis” view see Joseph as bringing happy resolution to the minor chords playing throughout earlier portions of Genesis. Joseph is a “reversal” character. He counteracts the plot lines of fratricidal conflict, famine, infertility, and a host of other problems escalating throughout the narrative since Genesis 3. Behind Joseph’s part in this story—as the one who brings the hope of redemption to the frustrations and grief of the Abrahamic family—is the God who keeps his covenant and ensures the fulfillment of his promises to Abraham (Gen 45:5–8; 50:20).⁴⁶

⁴⁴Timothy J. Stone, “Joseph in the Likeness of Adam: Narrative Echoes of the Fall,” in *Genesis and Christian Theology*, ed. Nathan MacDonald, Mark Elliot, and Grant Macaskill (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 62–73.

⁴⁵Brian Sigmon, “Between Eden and Egypt: Echoes of the Garden Narrative in the Story of Joseph and His Brothers” (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2013). Other works, focused more broadly on the theology of the Pentateuch or on the entire OT have also contributed to notion that the story of Joseph authentically integrates with the rest of Genesis. Two premier examples of these types of works are John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), and Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 88–92.

⁴⁶The same point is also made by Todd Patterson, who examines the role of “plot” in the interpretation of Genesis (Todd Patterson, “The Righteousness and Survival of the Seed: The Role of Plot in the Exegesis and Theology of Genesis” [PhD diss., Trinity International University, 2003]).

The Use of the Joseph Narrative in Later Scripture

Westermann represents the minimalist interpretive position of the role of Joseph in later biblical writings. In his estimation, “The Joseph narrative has found a remarkably faint echo in the writings of the OT and the NT. . . . He received no promise from God and so has no direct significance for the later history.”⁴⁷ Westermann identifies only Psalm 105, Acts 7, and Hebrews 11 as containing any significant mention of Joseph, though he notes that each passage is merely a “historical survey.”⁴⁸

Not all scholars, however, share Westermann’s skepticism. Some have explored how later biblical authors reappropriated the story of Joseph. Arthur Van Seters attempts a comprehensive treatment of the subject in his 1965 dissertation “The Use of the Story of Joseph in Scripture.” Van Seters examined what he considered every quotation of or allusion to the Joseph narrative in the Old and New Testaments and helpfully identified some of the most important biblical references to Joseph in later biblical literature.

Writing from a commitment to higher-critical methodology and to the notion of the ultimate disunity of Scripture, Van Seters does not offer any synthesis of his observations. Furthermore, written before the recent intertextuality discussion—largely sparked in the field of biblical studies by Hays’ seminal work *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*⁴⁹—Van Seters’ methodology for identifying allusions and echoes and

⁴⁷Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 252. In this same discussion, Westermann states that Joseph is mentioned only once in the rest of the OT in Ps 105. A strange claim given 1 Chr 5:1–2.

⁴⁸Ibid. Ruppert, like Westermann, considers only the above mentioned texts in his consideration of “Das Nachwirken der Josephserzählung in der Bibel.” See Lothar Ruppert, *Die Josephserzählung Der Genesis: Ein Beitrag Zur Theologie Der Pentateuchquellen*, SANT (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1965), 239–60.

⁴⁹Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). For Hays’ further reflection on intertextuality, see Richard Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005). For an analysis of the development of the intertextuality conversation since the publication of Hays’ *Echoes*, see Geoffrey Miller, “Intertextuality in Old Testament Research,” *CBR* 9, no. 3 (2010): 283–309; David Shaw, “Converted Imaginations? The Reception of Richard Hays’s Intertextual Method,” *CBR* 11 (2013): 234–45; and Samuel Emadi, “Intertextuality in New Testament Studies: Criteria, Method, and History,” *CBR* 14 (2015): 8–23.

discussing their theological significance can be greatly improved upon.

Finally my own conclusions regarding the canonical function of the Joseph narrative differs markedly from Van Seters, particularly on whether Joseph functions as a type of the Messiah. He writes, “As for the New Testament, one cannot prove that its authors had a developed Joseph-Christ typology or viewed Christ’s life as patterned to any significant degree on this particular patriarch.”⁵⁰

Other scholars posit that the story of Joseph has influenced the rest of the OT. In the law, Danny Matthews has argued that elements of the story of Moses may be modeled on the story of Joseph.⁵¹ In the prophets, Robert Alter, Peter Leithart, and James Hamilton have all noted linguistic and thematic correspondences between the stories of David and Joseph.⁵² Jan Granowski, John Harvey, and others have suggested that the fate of Jehoiachin in the royal court of Babylon may draw from the imagery and themes of the Joseph story.⁵³ Likewise, Mark Roncace has argued that the account of Jeremiah’s imprisonment in “a pit without water” echoes the story of Joseph and that the prophet shows other evidences of literary dependence on the Joseph story.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Van Seters, “The Use of the Story of Joseph in Scripture,” 283–84.

⁵¹Danny Matthews, *Royal Motifs in the Pentateuchal Portrayal of Moses* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 45–54.

⁵²Robert Alter, “Putting Together Biblical Narrative,” in *Cabinet of the Muses: Essays on Classical and Comparative Literature in Honor of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer*, ed. Mark Griffith and Donald Mastronarde (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 119–21. Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: Norton, 1999). Peter Leithart, *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003). James M. Hamilton, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification Between Joseph, David, and Jesus,” *SBJT* 12, no. 4 (2008): 52–77.

⁵³Jan Granowski, “Jehoiachin at the King’s Table: A Reading of the Ending of the Second Book of Kings,” in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell, *Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 173–88; Thomas Römer, “Transformations in Deuteronomistic and Biblical Historiography: On ‘Book-Finding’ and Other Literary Strategies,” *ZAW* 109 (1997): 10–11; K. Schmid, *Erzväter Und Exodus: Untersuchungen Zur Doppelten Begründung Der Ursprünge Israel Innerhalb Der Geschichtsbücher Des Alten Testaments*, WMANT 81 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener, 1999), 142–43; John E. Harvey, “Jehoiachin and Joseph: Hope at the Close of the Deuteronomistic History,” in *The Bible as a Human Witness to Divine Revelation: Hearing the Word of God through Historically Dissimilar Traditions*, ed. Randall Heskett and Brian Irwin, LHBOTS 469 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 54–55; Matthew Patton, “Hope for a Tender Sprig: Jehoiachin in Biblical Theology” (PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2014), 63–64, 302–4; Michael Chan, “Joseph and Jehoiachin: On the Edge of the Exodus,” *ZAW* 125, no. 4 (2013): 566–77.

⁵⁴Mark Roncace, *Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem* (New York: T&T Clark,

More than in any other section of the canon, the Writings have been identified by scholars as having the most prominent allusions to the story of Joseph—particularly in the stories of Esther and Daniel. In the modern period, the recognition of a literary relationship between these three stories goes back at least as far as Ludwig Rosenthal’s 1895 article “*Die Josephgeschichte, mit den Buechern Ester und Daniel Verglichen.*” Rosenthal posited that the Joseph story directly influenced the literary features of Daniel and Esther. More recently scholars have continued to affirm Rosenthal’s observations but argued for a less direct literary relationship. Instead, the similarities are largely to a shared *ur-genre*, a literary convention controlling the author’s presentation of the story.⁵⁵ This relationship has been regularly revisited by numerous scholars from various theological and hermeneutical perspectives.⁵⁶

2005), 81–84.

⁵⁵Talmon for instance argues that “Esther consciously borrowed from the writer of the Joseph-story.” Yet “what is more important, they can be shown to belong basically to one literary type. . . . Their similarities therefore are to be accounted for not only by their probably interdependence but also by their dependence upon one common literary tradition” (S. Talmon, “‘Wisdom’ In the Book of Esther,” *Vetus Testamentum* 13, no. 4 (1963): 454–55). Talmon, relying on the work of Von Rad, refers to this genre type as a “historicized wisdom-tale” (455). Morris also argues that the stories of Joseph, Daniel, and Esther “begin with the same generic convention”—what Morris calls a “Hebrew Courtier Tale” (Gerald Morris, “Convention and Character in the Joseph Narrative,” in *Proceedings, Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies* 14, ed. Terrance Callan [Buffalo: Canisius College, 1994], 75).

⁵⁶Ludwig Rosenthal, “Die Josephgeschichte, Mit Den Buechern Ester Und Daniel Verglichen,” *ZAW* 15 (1895): 278–84. Moshe Gan, “*Megillat ‘Esther Be’aspeqlariyat Qorot Yoseph Be’misrayim,*” *Tarbiz* 31 (1961): 144–49. John J. Collins, “The Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic,” *JBL* 94, no. 2 (1975): 218–34. Arndt Meinhold, “*Die Gattung Der Josephgeschichte Und Des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle, Part I,*” *ZAW* 87 (1975): 306–24. P. R. Davies, “Daniel Chapter Two,” *JTS* 27, no. 2 (1976): 392–401. Arndt Meinhold, “*Die Gattung Der Josephgeschichte Und Des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle, Part II,*” *ZAW* 88 (1976): 72–93. Sandra Beth Berg, *The Book of Esther: Motifs, Themes and Structure* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), 123–65. Ken Frieden, “Dream Interpreters in Exile: Joseph, Daniel, and Sigmund (Solomon),” in *Mappings of the Biblical Terrain* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1990), 193–203. Robert Gnuse, “The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court: The Recurring Use of a Theme in Jewish Literature,” *JSP* 7 (1990): 29–53. G. G. Labonté, “Genèse 41 et Daniel 2: Question D’origine,” in *The Book of Daniel in Light of New Findings*, BETL 106 (Louvain: Leuven University/Peeters, 1993), 271–84. Jon Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997). Harald Martin Wahl, “*Die Sprache Des Hebraischen Esterbuches. Anmerkungen Zu Seinem Historischen Und Traditionsgeschichtlichen Referenzrahmen,*” *ZAH* 12, no. 1 (1999): 21–47. Jan-Wim Wesselius, “Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible,” *SJOT* 13, no. 1 (1999): 24–77. Harald Martin Wahl, “*Das Motiv Des Aufstiegs in Der Hofgeschichte: Am Beispiel von Joseph, Esther Und Daniel,*” *ZAW* 112 (2000): 59–74. Naor Bezael, “Joseph and Daniel: Court Jews and Dreamers,” *JBQ* 30, no. 1 (2002): 10–16. Marius Nel, “Daniel 1 as Wysheidsliteratuur: Bevestiging van Die Vergeldingsleer,” *OTE* 15, no. 3 (2002): 780–98. Jan-Wim Wesselius, “The Literary Nature of the Book of Daniel and the Linguistic Character of Its Aramaic,” *AS* 3, no. 2 (2005): 241–83. Michael Segal, “From Joseph to Daniel: The Literary Development of the Narrative in Daniel 2,” *VT* 59 (2009): 123–49. Michael Shepherd, *Daniel in the Context of the*

Joseph as a Type of Christ in Modern Scholarship

Negative assessments. Since most scholars abandoned the notions of the unity of Scripture and the prophetic character of the OT after the rise of higher criticism, the possibility that Joseph served as a type of the Messiah was largely taken off the table. Most modern scholars do not even address the question—clearly implying a “no.”

Some scholars—prompted by their interaction with pre-critical Christian literature on the Joseph story—have criticized the typological reading of the Joseph story on two counts. First, Westermann judges pre-critical typological readings of the Joseph story as merely “time-conditioned adaptations” of the text. This “ecclesiastical” interpretation observes “nothing of what happened between father, brothers, and brother, between family and state, and between all these and God.” Ultimately, in Westermann’s estimation, “the Joseph narrative itself did not live on” in typological readings of the figure of Joseph.⁵⁷ In other words, Westermann sees the typological reading of Joseph as the very death of the real significance of the Joseph narrative.

Second, Van Seters and Westermann posit that such a reading is foreign to the authors of the NT. The identification of Joseph with Jesus does not emerge from Scripture, but is an imposition promulgated by the early church.⁵⁸

Positive assessments. Gary Anderson’s essay, “Joseph and the Passion of Our Lord,” integrates the life of Joseph with the themes of election and the trials of the

Hebrew Bible, SBL SBL 123 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009). Matthew Rindge, “Jewish Identity Under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41,” *JBL* 129, no. 1 (2010): 85–104. Funlola Olojede, “Sapiential Elements in the Joseph and Daniel Narratives Vis-à-vis Woman Wisdom—Conjunctions and Disjunctions,” *OTE* 25, no. 2 (2012): 351–68. Fernando Milán, “¿Un Daniel Polifónico? El Libro de Daniel y La Tradición Del Antiguo Testamento,” *ScrTh* 45 (2013): 335–62. James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, NSBT 32 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 221–35. Wendy Widder, “The Court Stories of Joseph (Gen 41) and Daniel (Dan 2) in Canonical Context: A Theological Paradigm for God’s Work Among the Nations,” *OTE* 27, no. 3 (2014): 1112–28.

⁵⁷Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 253.

⁵⁸Van Seters notes, “As for the New Testament, one cannot prove that its authors had a developed Joseph-Christ typology or viewed Christ’s life as patterned to any significant degree on this particular patriarch” (Van Seters, “The Use of the Story of Joseph in Scripture,” 283–84). Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 252–53.

“beloved” son in Genesis.⁵⁹ While Anderson has a number of suggestive comments on the Joseph narrative, he largely assumes rather than defends a typological reading of Joseph. In some senses, his work is largely a homiletical reproduction of Levenson’s *Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*.

James Hamilton’s article, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah?,” is the most robustly textual defense of the Messianic character of the Joseph narrative and the only one that attempts to show canonical development of the Joseph narrative in the OT itself. Hamilton argues that “the story of Joseph in Genesis 37–50 was a formative influence on the account of David produced by the author(s) of Samuel.”⁶⁰ If this is the case, it shows that biblical authors considered the story of Joseph as establishing a pattern that later biblical authors employed to describe other major figures in the life of Israel. As Hamilton argues, once this pattern is established “it is plausible that expectations for more of the same would be generated.”⁶¹ Further, Hamilton considers NT evidence for Joseph as type of Christ, principally the testimony of Stephen in Acts 7 and possible allusions to the Joseph story in the Gospels that identify Jesus with Joseph.⁶²

Nicholas Lunn’s “Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts” examines whether the NT warrants a typological reading of Joseph. As Lunn explains, “Joseph is not expressly termed a type or a prefigurement by any New

⁵⁹Gary A. Anderson, “Joseph and the Passion of Our Lord,” in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, ed. Ellen F Davis and Richard Hays (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 198–215.

⁶⁰Hamilton, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah?” 52.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Schrock who mainly commends Hamilton’s treatment criticizes him on the grounds that Hamilton does not tie his view of typology (specifically the typological reading of the Joseph narrative) to the covenantal structure of Scripture. “It is significant that Hamilton grounds his redemptive historical points to the larger story of salvation outlined in the Old Testament. For instance, he traces the covenantal promises of God when he recounts the Patriarchal history leading up to Joseph, yet he does not make explicit mention to the biblical covenants. Hamilton convincingly proves the relationship between Joseph, David, and Jesus. Yet, greater support for Joseph’s status as a type of Christ can be found by relating Joseph and David to the covenantal structures of the Old Testament. Both figures, in different ways and at different times, carried on the Abrahamic promises of land, people, and blessing” (David Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type? A Christotelic, Covenantal Proposal,” *Southeastern Theological Review* 5, no. 1 [2014]: 10).

Testament writer, nor is any part of the text of Genesis concerning Joseph explicitly expounded in a typological fashion in the NT, evidence can nonetheless be adduced which points to the fact that both Jesus and certain of the NT authors viewed the Joseph story typologically.”⁶³ Lunn specifically sees allusions in Luke-Acts—particularly the parable of the tenants and the parable of the prodigal son—as portraying Jesus in Josephite imagery.

Finally, Timothy Stone argues that Joseph reverses the curse as it is played out through the story of Genesis, arising as a new and successful Adam.⁶⁴ In this role, Joseph foreshadows Christ, the consummate curse-reverser. While Stone’s article is brimming with interesting connections between Joseph and early narratives in Genesis, he does not attempt to show any connections between Joseph and the Gospels. Instead, Stone argues that since Christ fulfills all of Scripture (Luke 24) and since Adam is explicitly a type of Christ, then Joseph, a new Adam, must likewise foreshadow the Messiah.

Other positive evaluations. Other scholars have also made minor contributions to the discussion and have voiced their approval of a messianic reading of the Joseph story. Greidanus’ commentary on Genesis has been the most forward, effectively summarizing the exegetical evidence both from within Genesis and from the NT.⁶⁵ Others have followed pre-critical exegetes, noting “obvious similarities” between Joseph and Jesus without reference to methodological constraints, intracanonical development, or exegetical evidence. Gerard Van Groningen,⁶⁶ R. R. Reno,⁶⁷ and others⁶⁸

⁶³Nicholas Lunn, “Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts: Foundations of a Biblical Type,” *JETS* 55, no. 1 (2012): 30.

⁶⁴Stone, “Joseph in the Likeness of Adam.”

⁶⁵Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Genesis: Foundations for Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 335–473.

⁶⁶Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 150–53, 166–67 Alexander also seems to register his agreement with the messianic reading of the

are representative of this position. Still other scholars approve the messianic reading in passing without further commentary or defense.⁶⁹

Preview of the Argument

Chapter 1 just explained the rationale for this project and introduced readers to the canonical “problem” of the Joseph narrative—namely, his prominence in Genesis and apparent absence elsewhere. This chapter also surveyed the history of the interpretation of the Joseph narrative, discussing why pre-modern interpreters used Joseph *primarily* as a typological character while historical-critical scholars largely rejected those conclusions. Further, this chapter explored recent scholarship on Joseph’s role in Genesis and the Joseph story’s influence on later Scripture.

Chapter 2 discusses the methodology of this dissertation, particularly in relation to the hotly debated hermeneutical fields of biblical theology, typology, and inner-biblical allusion/intertextuality. This chapter establishes my interpretive commitments and also makes a case for typological reading, as regulated by the interpretive practices of the NT authors, as a legitimate hermeneutical enterprise. I also articulate the hermeneutical controls of the project, particularly for discerning the presence of inner-biblical allusion. Furthermore, I synthesize this typological approach with recent discussions on the literary phenomenon of inner-biblical

Joseph narrative in citing Van Groningen approvingly (T. Desmond Alexander, “Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis,” in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. P. E. Satterthwaite, R. S. Hess, and G. J. Wenham [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995], 36).

⁶⁷R. R. Reno, *Genesis*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 258–65.

⁶⁸C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, trans. James Martin (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 329–34; Richard Patterson, “Joseph in Pharaoh’s Court,” *BibS* 164 (2007): 164. Wenham hints along these lines in his commentary though without explicitly calling Joseph a “type.” Wenham writes, “This principle of salvation being brought to all through the suffering of the one finds its clearest expression in the NT in the life, death, and exaltation of our Lord (cf. Mark 10:45)” (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 493).

⁶⁹Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 523. Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, TOTC 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 191. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 360.

allusion/intertextuality and the role of the canon in biblical-theological exegesis.

Chapter 3 focuses on the Joseph narrative in the context of Genesis. I establish the literary structure of Genesis and examine Joseph's place in it. By demonstrating Joseph's literary relationship to the rest of Genesis and the intratextual connections between the Joseph story and previous episodes in the lives of Adam, Cain and Abel, Abraham, and others, my analysis shows that Joseph is indeed tied to the larger story of Genesis found in both primeval and patriarchal narratives. The majority of this chapter examines how Joseph develops and relates to the Abrahamic promises of land, seed, blessing, and kingship. Furthermore, an analysis of this evidence demonstrates that, even within the context of Genesis itself, Joseph is a typological figure—a messianic character.

Chapter 4 examines the explicit mentions of Joseph in the OT in order to discern how later biblical authors interpreted the Joseph story. This chapter also examines allusions to the Joseph narrative in the account of Daniel and how Joseph contributes to the canonical pattern of the exiled Jew in a foreign court. Finally, I explore how these allusions and patterns contribute to a canonical understanding of the Joseph story.

Chapter 5 examines two explicit references to Joseph in the NT: Acts 7 and Hebrews 11. This chapter proposes that there is explicit NT warrant for the assertion that Joseph is a type of the messiah. Furthermore, this chapter examines a possible allusion to Joseph in the parable of the tenants—an allusion which ties the story of Joseph to the larger typological structures of the OT. Finally, chapter 6 offers a summary of my proposal and of the biblical-theological implications of my argument.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Biblical Theology

This dissertation is an exercise in biblical theology—a discipline which I understand as “faith seeking understanding of the redemptive-historical and literary unity of the Bible in its own terms, concepts, and contexts.”¹ According to this definition, biblical theology is more than simply tracing themes through Scripture. Doing biblical theology means attempting to understand the logic of Scripture’s unfolding drama and make sense of how each part fits into the whole.

Therefore, integral to biblical theology is understanding how later biblical authors interpret earlier ones, particularly how NT authors interpret the OT in light of Christ. Indeed, understanding the exegetical logic of biblical authors is of such importance that Hamilton posits that biblical theology is nothing less than understanding and embracing “the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors.”² By “interpretive perspective” Hamilton means “the framework of assumptions and presuppositions, associations and identifications, truths and symbols that are taken for granted as an author or speaker describes the world and the events that take place in it.”³

¹Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 35. Rosner provides another helpful definition of biblical theology: “[Biblical theology is] theological interpretation of Scripture in and for the church. It proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyze and synthesize the Bible’s teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible’s overarching narrative and Christocentric focus” (Brian Rosner, “Biblical Theology,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al., [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 10).

²James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 15.

³*Ibid.*

This focus on the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors means that biblical theology essentially emerges from exegesis. Again, as Hamilton notes, “the only access we have to the *interpretative perspective of the biblical authors* is what they wrote. Rather than try to go behind the text to get at what really happened, as though the text is mere propaganda, we are trying to understand what the biblical authors have written.”⁴ Thus, biblical theology considers not only a text’s immediate context, but the context of the entire canon—the ultimate boundary for a text’s meaning. Only in light of later revelation and through the interpretive perspective of Christ and the apostles is the redemptive-historical significance of an OT text fully revealed. Thus, whereas much previous work on the Joseph story regards it as an insulated composition, this dissertation aims to read the Joseph narrative on its own terms by allowing the *literary* and *canonical* contexts of the Joseph story to have their voice in the interpretation of Joseph’s theological significance.

Typology

More narrowly, this dissertation is an exercise in typological exegesis.⁵ Regrettably, as Moo notes, “typology is much easier to talk about than to describe,”⁶ and even among evangelicals, competing definitions of typology are legion. These matters are

⁴James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, NSBT 32 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 21.

⁵Moo argues that the phrase “typological exegesis” may be unhelpful since “typology is not an exegetical technique, nor even a hermeneutical axiom, but a broad theological construct with hermeneutical implications” (Douglas J. Moo, “Paul’s Universalizing Hermeneutic in Romans,” *SBJT* 11 [2007]: 82). I believe, however, the phrase can be appropriate in a project like this that seeks to uncover how later biblical authors understand Joseph in light of (1) continuing revelation and (2) the revelation afforded by the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the New Covenant. Beale notes that typology “can be called contextual exegesis within the framework of the canon since it primarily involves the interpretation and elucidation of the meaning of earlier parts of Scripture by later parts” (G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012], 25).

⁶Moo, “Paul’s Universalizing Hermeneutic in Romans,” 81. Oswald Allis similarly warned that typology, while “interesting” and “important,” is also “very difficult; and it is easy to make mistakes, even serious mistakes, in dealing with it” (Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* [Philadelphia: P&R, 1945], 23).

further complicated by related (and equally polarizing) issues such as the nature of biblical theology, the NT's use of the OT, the structure of the canon, authorial intent, the relationship of the divine and human authors of Scripture, and other knotty theological and hermeneutical issues. Given the debate surrounding typology, even in evangelical circles, this section discusses competing definitions of typology, my proposal for the essential features of a biblical type, and the criteria necessary for discerning types in Scripture.

Competing Definitions of Typology

The nature of typology is one of the most fundamental hermeneutical questions in biblical theology. Since the publication of Goppelt's seminal work, *Typos: Die Typologische Deutung Des Alten Testaments Im Neuen* (1939),⁷ scholars have published an enormous amount of literature explaining typology as both a NT phenomenon or as a hermeneutical method.⁸ The number of qualifications and distinctions between scholars

⁷ Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: Die Typologische Deutung Des Alten Testaments Im Neuen* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1939). Goppelt's work was later published in English as *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

⁸Literature on typology and other attendant issues abounds. For a small sampling of the conversation, see Richard Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical ΤΥΠΟΣ Structures*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981); Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975); John S. Feinberg, ed., *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988); Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994); G. K. Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994); John Currid, "Recognition and Use of Typology in Preaching," *RTR* 53, no. 3 (1994): 115–29; W. Edward Glenny, "Typology: A Summary of the Present Evangelical Discussion," *JETS* 40, no. 4 (1997): 627–38; Christopher Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001); D. A. Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment: Toward a More Comprehensive Paradigm of Paul's Understanding of the Old and the New," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, vol. 2, WUNT 181 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 393–436; Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, PBM (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); Douglas J. Moo, "The Problem of Senus Plenior," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1986), 179–211; idem, "Paul's Universalizing Hermeneutic in Romans"; Peter Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); Benjamin Ribbens, "A Typology of Types: Typology in Dialogue," *JTI* 5 (2011): 81–96; James Hamilton, "The Typology of David's Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel," *SBJT* 16 (2012): 4–25; idem, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus," *SBJT* 12, no. 4 (2008): 52–77; David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: The*

on this issue can be truly dizzying. Nevertheless, most approaches can be broadly categorized into one of two major schools of thought: (1) traditional/evangelical typology or (2) post-critical neo-typology.⁹

Traditional approaches to typology (often rooted in the work of Patrick Fairbairn¹⁰ and Leonhard Goppelt) ground typology textually, according to Scripture's character as progressive revelation of God's saving acts. On this foundation, proponents of traditional typology assert that a type must be characterized by (1) historical correspondence, (2) escalation, and (3) Christological fulfillment. Thus, traditionalists are concerned to distinguish typology from allegory, which they understand as essentially unconcerned with textual warrant or with the historicity of OT persons, events, and institutions.

In contrast, post-critical neo-typology eschews the methodological and textual restrictions of traditional typology. Advocates of this position often describe their approach as “figural reading”¹¹ and in recent years has been championed by the diverse and multi-faceted Theological Interpretation of Scripture (TIS) movement.¹² Proponents

Theological Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010); Andrew Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology: Paul's Use of Isaiah and Job in Romans 11:34–35* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012); G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012); Richard Ounsworth, *Joshua Typology in the New Testament*, WUNT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering, eds., *Heaven on Earth: Theological Interpretation in Ecumenical Dialogue* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

⁹Davidson was the first to employ this terminology to describe those who wanted to recover a typological reading of Scripture within the framework of historical-critical commitments (Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 111).

¹⁰Patrick Fairbairn, *The Typology of Scripture* (London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1900).

¹¹Frei for instance conflates “typology” and “figural reading” in Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of the Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974), 1–7.

¹²For a description and balanced criticism of the modern TIS movement(s), see D. A. Carson, “Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, But . . .,” in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Allen (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 187–207. See also Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “Introduction: What is the Theological Interpretation of the Bible?” in *DTIB*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

of TIS and figural reading posit that typology employs readers in creating typological (or “figural”) associations. As a result, the NT’s use of the OT is perceived as an imaginative, Christological re-appropriation of Israel’s Scriptures. In the language of Hays, the NT authors engage in a “retrospective hermeneutical transformation of Israel’s sacred texts.”¹³ Thus, in this view, NT authors (and by implication modern interpreters) are not uncovering OT types intended as prospective historical events, persons, or institutions that culminate in Christ. Instead, they are creating correspondences between the OT and Christ through sanctified interpretive imagination. The OT is “Christianly contextualized”¹⁴ by reading Christological correspondences *into* it—correspondences unintended by the human author. As a result, proponents of figural reading also support allegory as a legitimate hermeneutical enterprise. They posit that many instances of what scholars have typically designated “typology” in the NT are better understood as allegory.¹⁵

As will become more evident below, neo-typology fails to do justice to the nature of Scripture as progressive revelation, is incompatible with the hermeneutical assumptions of NT authors evinced in their use of the OT, discounts divine inspiration

¹³Richard Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2014), xv. See also Hays’ comments on interpretive imagination in *Conversion of the Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

¹⁴R. W. L. Moberly, “Christ in All the Scriptures? The Challenge of Reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture,” *JTI* 1 (2007): 100.

¹⁵See, for instance, Gignilliat’s comments that typology “is a form of allegorical reading or a subset of allegorical reading and is still a useful term but is not to be opposed to allegory. Typology *is* allegorical or figural reading” (Mark Gignilliat, “Paul, Allegory, and the Plain Sense of Scripture: Galatians 4:21–23,” *JTI* 2 [2008]: 140; emphasis original). See also Robert Louis Wilken, “In Defense of Allegory,” *MTh* 14, no. 2 (1998): 197–212.

Much of the literature in this tradition is also focused on demonstrating that pre-modern readers did not distinguish between typology and allegory. As Young asserts, “The modern affirmation of typology as distinct from allegory, an affirmation which requires the historical reality of an event as a foreshadowing of another event, its ‘antitype’, is born of modern historical consciousness, and has no basis in the patristic material” (Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], 152–53). O’Keefe and Reno also state, “Allegory and typology are part of the same family of reading strategies, often referred to by the fathers as ‘spiritual,’ that seek to interpret the scriptures in terms of the divine economy” (John O’Keefe and R. R. Reno, *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005], 90). Also Seitz, *Figured Out*, 8–9.

and lacks any real methodological constraints. Figural reading suffers from the same problems inherent to all postmodern interpretive agendas: it muffles the voice of the author and discounts a text's character, making the task of interpretation a subjective enterprise. Reader-activated correspondences between OT and NT reveal nothing about Scripture's own redemptive-historical claims. As a result, figural readings of Scripture often reveal little more than an interpreter's imaginative prowess. The true message of Scripture as developed through the promise-fulfillment structure of the covenants is bartered away for a two-dimensional interpretive freedom which licenses interpretive communities to shape and re-shape Scripture as they see fit. The result is "Theological Interpretation" which eschews the Bible's own approach to both theology and interpretation.

In contrast, this dissertation attempts to understand Scripture on its own terms and according to its nature as a text of both human and divine production. My aim is to account for Genesis 37–50 by engaging in author-oriented exegesis that simultaneously recognizes that the ultimate context of a text's meaning is the entire canon of Scripture. My understanding of typology, then, is very much "traditional"—particularly as that method has been developed within the evangelical and Reformed traditions.

Essential Features of a Type

In their recent work on the covenants, Gentry and Wellum represent this traditional approach to typology within the Reformed tradition. They define typology as "the study of the Old Testament salvation-historical realities or 'types' (persons, events, institutions) which prefigure their intensified antitypical fulfilment aspects (inaugurated and consummated) in New Testament salvation history."¹⁶ This definition usefully

¹⁶Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 103. See also Beale's clunkier but perhaps more theologically loaded definition: "The study of analogical correspondences among revealed truths about persons, events, institutions, and other things within the historical framework of God's special revelation, which, from a retrospective view, are of a prophetic nature and are escalated in their meaning" (Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 14).

highlights the essential features of a biblical type. First, types are historical (“salvation historical realities”). Second, types are prospective (“prefigure”). Third, types exhibit escalation in moving from type to antitype (“intensified antitypical fulfillment”). Fourth, types are textual (“Old Testament” and “New Testament salvation history”). Finally, as Wellum and Gentry imply throughout the book, types are unfolded through the covenants. They are shaped and interpreted by the covenantal structure of Scripture. In the remainder of this section, I will establish and discuss the significance of each of these features as part of the NT’s conception of typology.

Historicity. The NT evidence indicates that types are actual historical events, persons, and institutions. This historical dimension to typology is critical for NT theology given how many apostolic claims concerning the person and work of Christ are rooted in his fulfilling the patterns of Israel’s history.¹⁷ McCartney and Clayton make this point clearly:

History cannot be purposeless or aimless, going nowhere in particular, if a meaningful typology is to be founded upon it. It cannot be an infinite circle, as the Greeks imagined. Biblical history is linear, and events are indicative of where history is moving. Thus typology is possible only if history has a purpose, that purpose being ordained by an intending Person who controls it and intimates within it where it is going (see Eph. 1:9–10).¹⁸

In this respect, types are not mere metaphors or symbols—products of literary art.¹⁹ As Thistleton explains, “[Typology] is grounded in *history* and presupposes

¹⁷As Vanhoozer notes, the Reformers also understood the centrality of the historicity of OT types. He writes, “For the Reformers, *history* itself has a determinate meaning—imposed not by the reader but intended by God—that culminates in God’s self-revelation in Christ. The Reformers’ typological interpretation followed from their Christology: the wisdom of God is not hidden on some higher conceptual level above the literal sense, but manifest in the literal meaning of the story of Jesus” (Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998], 119; emphasis original).

¹⁸Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 163.

¹⁹Contrast Sparks who posits that a “theological reading of the Bible [may be performed] even when Scripture’s ostensible historical content turns out to be either wrong or fictional in some way” (Kenton L. Sparks, *God’s Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008], 178).

corresponding *events*; [allegory] is grounded in a linguistic system of signs or *semiotic codes* and presupposes resonances or parallels between *ideas* or *semiotic meanings*.”²⁰ If the Apostles’ typological claims about Christ are purely allegorical, Christ is not necessarily the actual solution to any historical plight. He does not remedy our exile from the garden or meet Israel’s need of a Davidic king. Instead he is merely a figure to whom the Apostles, via their own literary artfulness, assigned allegorical or kerygmatic significance. Put simply, if types are not historical, then Christ is not the culmination of a providentially ordained history or the fulfillment of any actual, historical promise.

The NT attests to this fact repeatedly where the significance of an OT type depends upon its historicity. The Adam-Christ typology in Romans 5, for instance, hangs on the notion that Adam is a figure of historical consequence—the federal head of the human race. Paul’s typological argument is stripped of any real significance if Adam is merely metaphorical or mythological. Similarly, when NT authors mention other typological events (see 1 Cor 10 and 1 Pet 3) their arguments hang on the historicity of the OT person, event, or institution discussed. Wherever NT authors employ typological exegesis they do so in a way that highlights the historicity of the OT. Their aim is not merely to describe Christ using theological or kerygmatic categories but to demonstrate that he is the *telos* of history, the one who fulfills Israel’s expectations and resolves humanity’s plight.

Prospective/author-intended. The biblical data also indicate that OT types are prospective in nature, which is to say that they were intended by the author. This means that types are “indirect prophecy;”²¹ they are designed and described by God to forecast something about his redemptive work in Christ. This claim contrasts with the

²⁰Anthony Thistleton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 730.

²¹Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 17–18

post-critical view of typology, which asserts that types are formed by NT authors retrospectively positing correspondences between Christ and patterns in Israel's history. In this "retrospective" view, types have no prophetic, predictive, or promissory function. Instead, they are theological constructs rooted in post-resurrection re-readings of the OT.²²

Once again, the prospective nature of types is borne out by the way NT authors speak about them. In Romans 5:14, for instance, Paul refers to Adam as a "type of the one who was to come." As Schreiner notes, "the reference to 'the coming one' (τοῦ μέλλοντος) should be understood from the perspective of Adam. In other words, from Adam's standpoint in history Jesus Christ was the one to come."²³ Thus, Adam's federal headship is designed by God to forecast the federal work of the Messiah.

Other passages in the NT also clearly attest to the prospective element of OT types. Paul, for instance, states that Israel's rebellion in the wilderness was typological (τυπικῶς) and even written down in order to instruct New Covenant Christians. As Davidson notes,

Paul is not saying that the events can now be seen to be τυπικῶς—as if they *became*

²²France, for instance, states, "A type is not a prediction; in itself it is simply a person, event, etc. recorded as historical fact with no intrinsic reference to the future. Nor is an antitype the fulfillment of a prediction; it is rather the re-embodiment of a principle which has been previously exemplified in the type. A prediction looks forward to, and demands, an event which is to be its fulfillment; typology, however, consists essentially in looking back and discerning previous examples of a pattern now reaching its culmination. . . . [Typology] is essentially 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 working, and a consequent understanding and description of the New Testament event in terms of the Old Testament model. The idea of fulfilment inherent in New Testament typology derives not from a belief that the events so understood were explicitly predicted, but from the conviction that in the coming and working of Jesus the principles of God's working, already imperfectly embodied in the Old Testament, were more perfectly re-embodied, and thus brought to completion" (R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* [Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1998], 39–40).

²³Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 280. Also Moo, "The future tense is probably used because Paul is viewing Christ's work from the perspective of Adam" (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 334). While it is not exactly right to speak of τοῦ μέλλοντος as "future tense," Moo probably has in mind the sense of the word more than its form.

τύποι as a result of some later occurrence or factor. Rather, Paul insists that in their very happening, they were happening τυπικῶς. The τύποι-quality of the events was inherent in their occurrence, not invented by the Pentateuchal historiographer or artificially given “typical” significance by Paul the exegete. The divine intent of the events clearly includes the τύπος-nature of the event. A providential design was operative, causing the events to happen τυπικῶς.²⁴

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 15:1–3 Paul understands the life, death, and third-day resurrection of the Messiah to be events fully attested to by the OT Scriptures. Clearly, Paul does not have any specific predictive prophecy in view. In fact, one would be hard pressed to find any prophecy that speaks to Jesus rising on the third day.²⁵ Instead, Paul is appealing to the prospective patterns of OT redemptive history which Jesus fulfills.²⁶ According to Paul, Jesus’ death is not retroactively made to fit with Israel’s Scriptures. Rather his death and resurrection are carried out “in accordance with” their prophetic expectations.

Jesus and the NT authors also attest to the prospective nature of OT types by the way they expect others to interpret Scripture. Jesus, for example, rebukes the Jews for not believing what Moses wrote of him (John 5:46–47). Paul uses “the Law of Moses and the Prophets” to convince an audience of Jesus’ work as Messiah (Acts 28:23). Apollos, too, “refuted the Jews in public, showing by the [Old Testament] Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus” (Acts 18:28; cf. 9:22). These instances, which could easily be multiplied, demonstrate that the promise-fulfillment character of the Old and New Testaments is not something imposed by later Christian readers. Instead it is essential to progressive revelation. Jesus’ words in John 5 and Apollos’ defense of Jesus’

²⁴Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 268.

²⁵Stephen Dempster considers the OT typological roots of Paul’s “third day” statement in “From Slight Peg to Cornerstone to Capstone: The Resurrection of Christ on ‘The Third Day’ According to the Scriptures,” *WTJ* 76 (2014): 371–409.

²⁶In the same vein, Treat comments on Luke 24 saying, “When Jesus said, ‘thus it is written, that the Christ [Messiah] should suffer’ (Luke 24:46), he was not merely proof-texting Isa 52:13–53:12 or some other elusive individual prophecy of a suffering Messiah. He was interpreting his life, death, and resurrection as the fulfillment of a pattern in the story of Israel, a pattern characterized by humiliation and exaltation, shame and glory, suffering and victory” (Treat, *The Crucified King*, 54).

messiahship in Acts 18 are only intelligible if the typological structures of the OT genuinely anticipate their New Covenant fulfillments.

The fact that OT types anticipate New Covenant realities does not negate that Christ often fulfilled the OT in surprising, unexpected ways. Additionally, affirming the prospective nature of OT types does not mean that interpreters prior to Pentecost could have discerned all that the OT typologically anticipated. As Paul states, even though the Law and the Prophets bore witness to Christ (Rom. 1:2; 3:21; 15:8; Gal 3:8), the gospel was a “mystery that was kept secret for long ages” (Rom 16:25–27). Thus, Christian interpreters after the resurrection have a privileged interpretive location in redemptive history. Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension, coupled with his apostles’ ministry and the work of illumination by the Spirit, shed light on the typological structures of the OT. Certain OT types are only discernible retrospectively. This retrospection, however, does not “create” the type. The association is not reader-imposed.²⁷ Instead, this retrospection is a recognition that some OT types were “hidden in plain sight”—only intelligible by the light of later revelation.

Escalation. Given the progressive nature of special revelation, types also undergo escalation from OT anticipation to NT fulfillment. In other words, the pattern of God’s acts in the OT bears witness to a final act which will not just reflect his previous dealings with his people, but will also consummate his work with them. Since biblical history develops toward an eschatological goal, antitypes are not merely analogous with earlier episodes in biblical history. As Hoskins explains, “future realities anticipated by the prophets would not merely serve to repeat the past, but would be greater than the patterns or types that preceded them.”²⁸ New Covenant antitypes are the *telos* of biblical

²⁷See also Beale’s comments on retrospection in *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 13–25.

²⁸Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, 20.

history. The New Covenant fulfills OT expectations within the framework of inaugurated eschatology. Thus, the NT indicates that Jesus (and by implication the church) fulfill all OT expectations, leaving no further room for redemptive-historical development aside from the consummation of the kingdom.²⁹

Textual. As Berkhof notes, “Accidental similarity between an Old and New Testament person or event does not constitute the one a type of the other. There must be some Scripture evidence that it was so designed by God.”³⁰ This means that types are rooted in the *text* of the Old and New Testaments and are exegetically discerned. Any posited correspondence between persons, events, or institutions that is not rooted in Scripture imposes an extra-textual grid over Scripture’s message and thus silences Scripture’s own self-interpretation.

Schrock explains that the *textual* dimension of typology recognizes that types “must arise from the language, sequence, and storyline of the Bible itself. [They] cannot be imported from an ‘extratextual hermeneutical grid,’ but must be verified by the Bible’s own language or imagery.”³¹ This means that typology must be “tethered” to the text of Scripture.³² Correspondences between events which contravene or go beyond Scriptural testimony cannot be considered types since these correspondences emerge from readers’ imaginations and not from the exegetical data. Again, as Schrock explains, “true typology” is built on the foundation of “the intratextual relationship between one historical figure in one biblical epoch and another later, (usually) greater historical

²⁹See also Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomena to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 305.

³⁰Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation: Sacred Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), 145.

³¹David Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type? A Christotelic, Covenantal Proposal,” *STR* 5, no. 1 (2014): 5.

³²*Ibid.*, 6.

figure.”³³

Reading Scripture typologically is not an “imaginative” task but an exegetical one. This proposal takes seriously Scripture’s claims concerning itself and its nature as “word-act” revelation. God designs persons, events, and institutions to foreshadow the culmination of redemptive history in Christ (act) and then attests to these through his own commentary on those persons, events, and institutions in Scripture (word). Types then can only be uncovered through grammatical-historical and canonical exegesis, which reveals the divine author’s intention for a text. As Beale explains:

If typology is classified as partially prophetic even from the OT human author’s viewpoint, then it can be viewed as an exegetical method. This is true because such an anticipatory aspect of an OT passage can be discerned by a historical-grammatical approach. . . . And . . . if we assume the legitimacy of an inspired canon, then we should seek to interpret any part of that canon within its overall canonical context (given that one divine mind stands behind it all and expresses its thoughts in logical fashion). . . . In this regard, typology can be called contextual exegesis within the framework of the canon since it primarily involves the interpretation and elucidation of the meaning of earlier parts of Scripture by later parts.³⁴

Typology, therefore, is rooted in a *canonical* understanding of redemptive history. Scripture bears witness to types, and readers uncover those types through the discipline of exegesis. This exegesis focuses on the intent of both the human author (revealed via the grammatical-historical method) and the intent of the divine author (revealed via exegesis that takes into account earlier *as well as* later revelation, i.e. canonical context). Further, the intents of the human and divine author never contravene. The divine intent, discovered through canonical context, always grows out of and is consistent with the human author’s intent. Thus types are textual because they are not products of “imaginative” re-readings of Scripture but exegetical facts, rooted in

³³Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type?”, 6–7.

³⁴Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 24–25.

Scripture by divine intent.

Covenantal. Finally, types are covenantal. As many scholars have posited throughout the history of interpretation, covenants shape the biblical storyline and provide the essential building blocks for biblical theology. With each new covenant, God unfolds his eternal plan, filling out the details and developing earlier promises while bringing Israel’s eschatological hopes into sharper focus. As a result, “the Bible’s typological and covenantal structures are interdependent.”³⁵ Types (i.e. the law, the temple, the land, etc.) are part and parcel of God’s covenants, and covenants provide the interpretive context necessary to understand a type’s significance in redemptive history.³⁶

Interpreting types according to their covenantal context is particularly important when examining OT historical narrative, since it typically lacks explicit theological commentary.³⁷ Readers often understand the full significance of characters’ actions only in light of covenant stipulations and promises laid out elsewhere in the OT. Covenants, thus, provide the inner-biblical interpretive and theological grid needed to evaluate historical narratives. Reading OT history according to covenantal unfolding and context reveals the deeper, theological significance that often goes unstated in narrative. For example, chapter 3 notes that Genesis 39:4–5 indicates that Joseph is a “blessing” to Potiphar the Egyptian. This detail takes on much richer theological significance when read in light of the covenant promise that Abraham’s children would be a “blessing to the nations” (Gen 12:2–3).

³⁵Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type?,” 6.

³⁶For a full development of this point see, Peter J. Gentry, “The Significance of Covenants in Biblical Theology,” *SBJT* 20, no. 1 (2016): 9–33.

³⁷This is particularly true of the Joseph story.

Criteria for Discerning Types

Equally important in this discussion is how types are discerned in the OT. Or more pointedly, what criteria must be used to establish OT types? This question is paramount in a dissertation such as this where strict methodological controls are needed in order to avoid “domesticating the evidence”³⁸ and becoming a “hyper-typer.”³⁹

The primary task for establishing the existence of a type is showing how it accords with the nature of a type as outlined above. Scripture must attest that a proposed type, rightly understood in covenantal context, is a historical person, event, or institution anticipating an escalated reality. If these features can be established from the original context or from later biblical reflection, then a type is present. My purpose in this chapter is not to rehearse the many different ways Scripture can attest to these features. Beale,⁴⁰ Wellum and Gentry,⁴¹ and others⁴² have already enumerated the types of exegetical and theological evidences which establish historicity, prospection, escalation, and the other elements of typology. My work builds on their proposals and stands on their shoulders.

³⁸D. A. Carson’s warning about thesis-driven dissertations is a constant source of tapering any unwarranted enthusiasm. “I frequently tell my doctoral students as they embark on their research that dissertations in the broad field of the arts disciplines, including biblical and theological disciplines, can, at the risk of slight oversimplification, be divided into two camps. In the first camp, the student begins with an idea, a fresh insight, a thesis he or she would like to test against the evidence. In the second, the student has no thesis to begin with but would like to explore the evidence in a certain domain to see exactly what is going on in a group of texts and admits to uncertainty about what the outcome will be. The advantage of the first kind of thesis is that the work is exciting from the beginning and directed by the thesis that is being tested; the danger is that, unless the student takes extraordinary precautions and proves to be remarkably self-critical, the temptation to domesticate the evidence in order to defend the thesis becomes well-nigh irresistible. The advantage of the second kind of thesis is that it is likely to produce more even-handed results than the first, since the researcher has no axe to grind and is therefore more likely to follow the evidence wherever it leads; the danger is that there may not be much of a thesis at the end of the process, but merely a lot of well-organized data. In reality, of course, dissertation projects regularly straddle both camps in various ways” (D. A. Carson, review of *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* by Chris VanLandingham, *RBL* 12 [2007]: www.bookreviews.org/pdf/5679_6710.pdf). My dissertation falls squarely into the first category. I hope that careful attention to exegetical method, a healthy dose of self-critical honesty, and regular feedback from both the scholarly community and the church will keep me from the type of academic dishonesty Carson warns against.

³⁹John Currid, “Recognition and Use of Typology in Preaching,” *RTR* 53, no. 3 (1994): 121.

⁴⁰Beale has written voluminously on typology and related issues. For a helpful summary of his position, see Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 13–27.

⁴¹Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 102–108.

⁴²See for example Andrew Naselli, *From Typology to Doxology* and Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type?”

In summary, I hope to show that the typological reading of the story of Joseph is textually rooted and canonically developed within Scripture itself.⁴³ I will demonstrate the typological character of Joseph by considering: (1) the exegetical, literary, and thematic features that relate Joseph to the larger storyline of Genesis and the Abrahamic covenant; (2) linguistic and thematic points of contact between the Joseph story and earlier episodes in Genesis; (3) how later OT authors appropriate the language and imagery of the Joseph story;⁴⁴ and (4) the ways NT authors allude to or employ the Joseph narrative in their retelling of the gospel accounts and their biblical-theological commentary on Joseph. With each of these points, I aim to demonstrate concrete *textual* warrant for my proposal. I also hope to reveal the biblical authors' "interpretive perspective" on the Joseph story in light of unfolding revelation, particularly as it climaxes in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

⁴³Instead of "canonically developed," Gentry and Wellum use the phrase "intertextually developed" (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 606). This phrase is unhelpful given that the word "intertextuality" originates in the writings of Julia Kristeva and deconstructionist hermeneutics. For this and other reasons I agree with Beale and others that we should lay "intertextuality" to rest in biblical studies, opting for the less philosophically loaded terms "inner-biblical allusion" or "inner-biblical exegesis" (Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 40). See the helpful analysis by Russell Meek on this point in "Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Ethics of a Methodology," *Bib* 95, no. 1 (2014): 280–91.

⁴⁴For demonstrating linguistic points of contact, I will largely rely on the now-famous seven criteria provided by Hays first in *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* and later in *Conversion of the Imagination*. Others have sought to sharpen Hays' criteria, and I will strive to be sensitive to the best methodological practices biblical scholarship has to offer here. For a discussion of the development of the "criteria question" after the publication of Hays' *Echoes*, see Samuel Emadi, "Intertextuality in New Testament Studies: Significance, Criteria, and the Art of Intertextual Reading," *CBR* 14 (2015): 8–23.

CHAPTER 3

JOSEPH IN LITERARY AND BIBLICAL- THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT IN GENESIS

What is the role of the Joseph story in Genesis? As chapter one demonstrated, much previous scholarship concedes little, if any, real theological correspondence between the Joseph story and preceding narratives. Redford's comments are worth repeating on this point: "The theological outlook of the writer of Gen 37–50 is different from that of the Patriarchal narrator. He does not mention the Covenant or the Promise, ubiquitous in the earlier chapters of Genesis. He is not interested in supplying the reader with comment on matters theological, as the Patriarchal author was."¹

As noted in chapter one, Brevard Childs states the dilemma more pointedly when he asks, "What is the shape of the final chapters and what is their function within the book as a whole? . . . If Joseph is not the bearer of the promise in the same way as his forefathers, what then is his role in Genesis?"²

This chapter is primarily a response to that question. Joseph's story is an anticipatory fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. By "anticipatory fulfillment" I mean that while God indeed uses Joseph to fulfill his promises to Abraham, this fulfillment is only partial and incomplete, thus "anticipating" a greater fulfillment to come. Joseph shows the type of work God will do in the future, pointing forward to a more complete fulfillment of the patriarchal hopes. In this way, Joseph's story also provides literary and redemptive-historical resolution to the Genesis narrative. This resolution is visible in (1)

¹Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph*, VTSup 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 247.

²Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 156.

Joseph's place in the structure of Genesis and (2) his relationship to the Abrahamic covenant.

By placing Joseph in the literary and biblical-theological framework of Genesis, I also hope to answer another question pertinent to the entire project of reading Joseph in canonical context: Does the Joseph narrative itself indicate that Joseph's life ought to be read as a pattern of God's future saving activity? Or, to put it another way, do typological features emerge from the story when read in light of its biblical-theological context in Genesis?

In this chapter, I unfold the biblical-theological significance of the Joseph story along several lines. First, I briefly examine how Moses introduces Joseph in the Genesis story and discuss some of the hermeneutical challenges in interpreting Genesis 37–50. Second, I examine the significance of the *toledot* structure of Genesis and how Joseph fits within that structure. Third, I argue that kingship is an essential element of the Abrahamic covenant and that Joseph is a truly royal figure in the Abrahamic line. Fourth, I argue that Moses portrays Joseph as instrumental to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic seed promise. Fifth, I show how the Joseph story develops the Abrahamic land promise and how his death signals the nation's hope for the Exodus and the return to the Promised Land. Sixth, I examine how Joseph fulfills covenantal expectations by mediating blessing to the nations. Seventh, I briefly examine how other, less prominent features of the Joseph story develop his role within Genesis. Finally, I synthesize all these exegetical arguments in a brief biblical theological account, explaining the contextual and epochal purpose of the Joseph story.

Introducing Joseph and Genesis 37–50

Moses' initial mentions of Joseph in Genesis 30–36 foreshadow his coming prominence in the rest of the book. Joseph is first mentioned in the birth narratives of the twelve sons of Israel with his birth acting as the final event in the chiastic center of the

Jacob cycle.

A 29:1–14, Jacob arrives in Paddan-aram
B 29:15–30, Laban gains an advantage over Jacob
C 29:31–30:24, Birth of Jacob’s children (Conclusion: Joseph’s birth)
B’ 30:25–43, Jacob gains an advantage over Laban
A’ 31:1–55, Jacob departs from Paddan-aram

Figure 1: Genesis 29–31 chiasm

Joseph’s place in the chiasmic structure portends his later significance in Israel’s history.³ Other features of the Jacob narrative continue to anticipate this reality. For example, the account of Jacob placing Joseph and Rachel in the back of the caravan to meet Esau hints at the favoritism that will later ignite the conflict between Joseph and his brothers (Gen 33:2, 7), as does his being introduced to Esau before Rachel (Gen 33:7).

Similarly, in the Genesis 35:22–26 genealogy,⁴ Moses arranges Jacob’s children by mother (Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, Zilpah) rather than birth order, thus putting Joseph in the seventh position in the genealogy. As Sasson notes, the seventh position in a genealogy regularly marks a person of great significance (cf. Gen 5:21–24, Matt 1:17)

³Adapted from Arnold, *Genesis*, 264. For a defense of this chiasmic proposal, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998), 40–58; J. P. Fokkeman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Koninklijke: Van Gorcum, 1991), 86–241; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 169–70.

⁴Bailey argues that this text is also chiasmic and that the structure emphasizes Rachel’s sons (and her handmaiden, Bilhah’s sons), specifically Joseph and Benjamin.

A Now the sons of Jacob were twelve (v. 22b).

B The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob’s firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun (v. 23).

C The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin (v. 24)

C’ The sons of Bilhah, Rachel’s maid: Dan and Naphtali (v. 25)

B’ The sons of Zilpah, Leah’s maid: Gad and Asher (v. 26a).

A’ These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram (v. 26b).

See Nicholas Andrew Bailey, “Some Literary and Grammatical Aspects of Genealogies in Genesis,” in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. Robert D. Bergen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 270–71. Kaminski concurs with Bailey’s argument (Carol Kaminski, *From Noah to Israel: Realization of the Primal Blessing After the Flood*, JSOTSup 413 [London: T&T Clark, 2004], 114).

and may here signal Joseph's centrality in the following narrative.⁵

Joseph reappears next in his own story, Genesis 37–50. These chapters are notoriously difficult to interpret—most probably because they have almost no theological commentary embedded in the story itself. In this sense Joseph's story resembles Esther's. The narrator embraces a primarily “secular” outlook in his retelling of the events by providing little explicit theological evaluation on the meaning of this small portion of Israel's history.

In a few important instances the narrator does interject theological interpretation of the unfolding events. Moses mentions Yahweh's response to the wickedness of Judah and his sons in Genesis 38. He also notes Yahweh's presence with Joseph and blessing of Potiphar's house in Genesis 39.⁶ These references to Yahweh are enormously important for our understanding of the story—both for their theological content and as a literary device cementing the stories of Judah and Joseph together. Strangely, however, these final 14 chapters refer to Yahweh only 12 times (.85 times per chapter), in comparison to 153 references in chapters 1–36 (4.25 times per chapter). Elohim occurs 35 times in the Joseph story (2.5 times per chapter) but 184 times in the first 36 chapters (5.11 times per chapter).

Just as explicit divine activity decreases after Genesis 37, theophanic visions are also much less frequent in the Joseph story than in the patriarchal narratives. Even Joseph's dreams differ from his fathers': they employ figurative imagery, contain no direct speech from Yahweh, and are not explicitly attributed to Yahweh (initially). Yahweh resumes his more active role only after Joseph and his family are reunited, when

⁵J. M. Sasson, “A Genealogical ‘Convention’ in Biblical Chronography?,” *ZAW* 90 (1978): 171–85, particularly 183. Arnold likewise agrees that “this list may illustrate the honor accorded the seventh position in genealogies, placing Joseph there by narrating Rachel's and Bilhah's sons, before returning to Leah's sons through Zilpah” (Arnold, *Genesis*, 306).

⁶Gen 38:7, 10; 39:2, 3(x2), 5(x2), 21, 23(x2). Jacob invokes the name of Yahweh after the blessing of Dan (Gen 49:18).

the dramatic tension is resolved. At this point, only Jacob hears directly from Yahweh (Gen 46:1–4)—the final theophanic vision in the book.

Further, the most salient theological interpretation of the narrative comes from the mouth of Joseph himself (Gen 45:4–9; 50:19–21), leaving readers to discern whether the narrator shares his interpretation of the events.⁷ As a result, scholars divide over both large and small interpretive matters. For example, commentators posit a number of central themes in the story: reconciliation,⁸ providence and preservation,⁹ covenantal fulfillment,¹⁰ sapiential embodiment or idyllic leadership,¹¹ among others.¹²

⁷Pirson, for instance, argues that the narrator's silence toward Joseph's interpretation of his own destiny (Gen. 45:5–11) makes it impossible to know whether the narrator affirms Joseph's statement as true. "It should be noted that it is his [Joseph's] interpretation of the events; the narrator nowhere denies nor confirms it" (Ron Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams: A Semantic and Literary Analysis of Genesis 37–50*, JSOTSup 355 [London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002], 138, emphasis in original). Miscall adds, "The speech tells much of Joseph's character and his development in theological awareness, but it does not necessarily say that God did actually intervene in past events. Joseph certainly believes it; the reader can, but does not have to. The narrator does not affirm Joseph's interpretation nor does God himself appear in the narrative to confirm it" (Peter D. Miscall, "The Jacob and Joseph Story as Analogies," *JSOT* 6 [1978]: 31).

⁸Bryan Smith, "The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50 and Its Implications for the Narrative's Structural and Thematic Unity" (PhD diss., Bob Jones University, 2002); Bryan Smith, "The Central Role of Judah in Genesis 37–50," *BibS* 162 (2005): 158–74; A. Wénin, ed., "Die Josefsgeschichte als Modell für Versöhnung," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*, BETL 155 (Leuven: Leuven University, 2001), 242–71.

⁹John Scullion, "Genesis, the Narrative Of," in *ABD* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 955; Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967), 179; Ray B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 48–56; Duane Garrett, "Genesis, Theology of," in *EDBT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); William S. Lasor, David A. Hubbard, and Frederic W. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 48; James Hoffmeier, "Joseph," in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997); Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 1998) 82–85; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 25–27.

¹⁰Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 344.

¹¹Gerhard Von Rad, "Josephsgeschichte und Ältere Chokma," *VTSup* 1, ed. G.W. Anderson et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 120–27. This article later appeared in English as "The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966). See also Thomas Smothers, "The Joseph Narrative and Wisdom" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1964); J. A. Loader, "Chokma - Joseph - Hybris," in *Studies in the Pentateuch*, ed. W. C. Van Wyk, Ou Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika, 17, 18: *Old Testament Essays* (Pretoria: Ou Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika, 1974), 21–31; George W. Coats, "Strife and Reconciliation; Themes of a Biblical Theology in the Book of Genesis," *HBT* 2 (1980): 15–37; J. P. H. Wessels, "The Joseph Story as a Wisdom Novelette," *OTE* 2 (1984): 39–60; Lindsay Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise: The Intersection of Wisdom and Covenant in Genesis 37–50* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004).

¹²By referencing the previously mentioned works in correspondence with a particular theme, I do not mean that those scholars posit that those themes are the only or even the primary themes of the

Scholars also divide on more specific interpretive matters. Some, for example, see Joseph in Genesis 37 as a bratty, tattling upstart who needs a lesson in humility,¹³ while others advocate a more sympathetic or agnostic reading.¹⁴ Some see the narrator's silence about Judah and Tamar as approbation,¹⁵ while others infer an unfavorable comparison to Joseph's purity (Gen 39).¹⁶ Similarly, scholars variously interpret Joseph's "testing" of his brothers (Gen 42–44) as either the actions of a man prudently and patiently pursuing reconciliation with his estranged family or the torturous power play of a maniacal, self-absorbed tyrant.¹⁷

Similar disagreement exists over Joseph's administration in Genesis 47:13–26. According to McKenzie, this passage portrays a seed of Abraham blessing the nations

Joseph story. Indeed, many of the scholars listed in nn. 7–10 articulate other minor themes in addition to the major themes mentioned. Also, not every scholar fits neatly into each of their assigned categories, since each develops his proposed theme along different lines and with a seemingly infinite number of permutations.

¹³Sternberg, for example, comments, "God's future agent and mouthpiece in Egypt could hardly make a worse impression on his first appearance: spoiled brat . . . braggart" (Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985], 98). See also Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 350; Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 406; Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 499.

¹⁴Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, trans. John Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), 36; Smith, "The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50," 226, 229; Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 55–56; Liam Goligher, *Joseph: The Hidden Hand of God* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2008), 17–18; Robert R. Gonzales Jr., *Where Sin Abounds: The Spread of Sin and the Curse in Genesis with Special Focus on the Patriarchal Narratives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 213–15; Arnold, *Genesis*, 318.

¹⁵Westermann writes, "The episode serves further to portray Judah as an honorable man. The narrator does not regard Judah's going to a prostitute as something dishonorable; but it would have been dishonorable had Judah reneged on the payment. Hence it is expressly stated in v. 23b that he had done all to deliver the promised kid" (Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 54). Also Brueggemann states, "Care must be taken not to moralize or to evaluate the conduct of either character on criteria outside the narrative itself. The narrative makes no point at all of the adultery. . . . Our interpretation must not introduce moral dimensions alien to the text itself" (Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, Interpretation [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1982], 308–9).

¹⁶Smith, "The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50," 53.

¹⁷Indeed, Wildavsky, Fung, and Pirson make Joseph out to be little more than a maniacal, self-absorbed, ladder-climbing tyrant with a god complex. See Aaron Wildavsky, *Assimilation Versus Separation: Joseph the Administrator and the Politics of Religion in Biblical Israel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993); Yiu-Wing Fung, *Victim and Victimizer: Joseph's Interpretation of His Destiny*, JSOTSup 308 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams*.

through judicious policy.¹⁸ According to Watt, this passage shows Joseph as “a tyrant wielding power as a corrupt form of leadership.”¹⁹ In short, the “interpretive space” created by the lack of explicit theological commentary from the narrator makes the meaning and function of the Joseph story more ambiguous than previous sections of Genesis.

The prominence of other characters also poses interpretive challenges. Obviously Joseph is the main human actor in this drama, but Jacob and Judah both play prominent roles as well—so much so that, as opposed to being just the story of Joseph, some scholars argue that Genesis 37–50 is really the story of all three men.²⁰ What do we make of a story that seemingly features one character but constantly shifts attention to the “supporting roles”? Do all of these characters and storylines integrate into a single “Joseph story”?

Perhaps the most infamous challenge along these lines is the so-called “excursus” of Genesis 38, the account of Judah’s promiscuity. Scholars have produced a mountain of literature trying to account for the rationale of this story so seemingly out of place in the context of Genesis 37–50.²¹

¹⁸Brian Alexander McKenzie, “Jacob’s Blessing on Pharaoh: An Interpretation of Gen 46:31–47:26,” *WTJ* 45 (1983): 386–99.

¹⁹Trevor Watt, “Joseph’s Dreams,” in *Jung and the Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. David L. Miller (New York: Continuum, 1995), 68–69. See also the article by Berel Dov Lerner, “Joseph the Unrighteous,” *Judaism* 38 (1989): 278–81. The thesis of Lerner’s article is that the Torah condemns Joseph’s actions. With remarkably strong language he asserts, “Joseph is here portrayed as ruthlessly pursuing a course of coercive economic centralization. . . . The Torah’s account of Joseph’s early life presages his moral failure as ruler of Egypt.” The Egyptians under Joseph’s reign did not share such a negative assessment (Gen 47:25).

²⁰Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 88–92. Smith refers to Gen 37–50 as the “Joseph-Judah story” and argues that these chapters present a “double plot.” Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50”; idem, “The Central Role of Judah in Genesis 37–50.”

²¹For a small sampling of this literature, see George W. Coats, “Widow’s Rights: A Crux in the Structure of Genesis 38,” *CBQ* 34 (1972): 461–66; Umberto Cassuto, “The Story of Tamar and Judah,” in *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, vol. 1, *The Bible*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973), 29–40; Judah Goldin, “The Youngest Son; or, Where Does Genesis 38 Belong?,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 27–44; Edward Curtis, “Genesis 38: Its Context(s) and Function,” *CTR* 5 (1991): 247–57; J. A. Emerton, “Some Problems in Genesis XXXVIII,” *VT* 29 (1975): 338–61; idem, “Judah and Tamar,” *VT* 29 (1979): 403–15; G. R. H. Wright, “The Positioning of Genesis 38,” *ZAW* 94 (1982): 523–29; Steven D. Mathewson, “The

While some scholars overstate the dissimilarity between the Joseph story and the rest of Genesis, the Joseph story does bear some distinguishing marks. As noted, explicit divine activity and theological interpretation are much more scarce here than before. The shape of the narrative also distinguishes it from other patriarchal stories. These previous stories are fairly episodic,²² whereas the Joseph story is a “single unit that traces the development of a single conflict.”²³

These interpretive challenges are, indeed, daunting. Yet, as I believe the following exegesis will show, these challenges are not insurmountable. In order to unearth the biblical-theological significance of the Joseph story, I will explore its

Relationship of Genesis 38 to the Joseph Story” (MA thesis, Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1986); idem, “An Exegetical Study of Genesis 38,” *BibS* 146 (1989): 373–92; Peter F. Lockwood, “Tamar’s Place in the Joseph Cycle,” *LTJ* 26 (1992): 35–43; J. P. Fokkelman, “Genesis 37 and Genesis 38 as the Interface of Structural Analysis and Hermeneutics,” in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. L. J. de Regt, J. de Waard, and J. P. Fokkelman (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), 152–87; Anthony J. Lambe, “Genesis 38: Structure and Literary Design,” in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives*, ed. Philip R. Davies and David Clines (London: JSOT Press, 1998), 102–20; Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50”; idem, “The Central Role of Judah in Genesis 37–50.” The traditional historical-critical response to this problem is to simply assert that Gen 38 has been shoehorned into its current location by a sloppy redactor. For example, Von Rad argues “every attentive reader can see that the story of Judah and Tamar has no connection at all with the strictly organized Joseph story at whose beginning it is now inserted” (Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks, OTL [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972], 351). See also Brueggeman’s comments, “This peculiar chapter stands alone, without connection to its context. It is isolated in every way and is most enigmatic. It does not seem to belong with any of the identified sources of ancestral tradition. It is not evident that it provides any significant theological resource. It is difficult to know in what context it might be of value for theological exposition” (Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 307–8). Additionally, as one might expect, Gen 38 has quite a sordid history of interpretation—with some even refusing to render commentary on the chapter. This tradition goes back as far as Josephus who passed over the episode entirely in his *Antiquities*, likely in order to portray Israel favorably to a gentile audience. This tradition of excising Gen 38 from the Joseph story continues even in the modern period. The 1948 Eerdmans edition of Calvin’s commentary, for instance, omits Calvin’s comments on Gen 38:9–10.

²²Wilson notes, “The earlier patriarchal accounts are composed of smaller stories, generally no longer than 20 or 30 verses. The Joseph story arguably contains 392 verses” (Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 45).

²³Smith, “The Central Role of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 158. Similarly Kugel writes, “Certainly one of the striking features of the Joseph narrative is its literary quality. Unlike other narratives from the lives of Israel’s patriarchs, this one is rather long and complicated (it is, in fact, by far the longest single narrative in Genesis), and it is very story-like. That is, for all the complications, it has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and the various strands of the narrative ultimately unite to form a neat and satisfying whole” (James Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994], 13). Also Sarna, “In numerous ways [Genesis 37–50] differs markedly from the preceding patriarchal biographies. It is by far the longest and most complete account, and . . . it is not a collection of isolated incidents. There is an unparalleled continuity of narrative set forth with the consummate skill of a master story-teller” (Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* [New York: Schocken Books, 1966], 211). See also W. Lee Humphreys, *Joseph and His Family: A Literary Study, Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 8.

relationship to the *toledot*-structure of Genesis and examine its relationship to the Abrahamic covenant. While Moses has indeed constructed a complex and subtle narrative, assiduous attention to the details of the text will reveal just how the Joseph story fits within the storyline of Genesis and within redemptive history.

Reading the Joseph Narrative in Genesis' *Toledot* Structure

The *Toledot* Formula in Genesis

The primary literary structuring device in Genesis is the תולדות (*toledot*) formula, the demonstrative pronoun (usually אלה) followed by תולדות in a construct relationship with a noun (usually a proper name).²⁴ This phrase, אלה תולדות (“these are the generations of”), occurs ten times in Genesis (2:4; 5:1;²⁵ 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, [9],²⁶ 37:2). Most previous scholarship has approached the *toledot*-formula with an emphasis on source criticism, believing that each *toledot* marks the introduction of new source material into Genesis.²⁷ More broadly, scholars who adopt a literary approach to Genesis generally agree that the *toledot* mark new sections within the book.²⁸ As some

²⁴The anomaly in this pattern is Gen 5:1. Though still clearly a *toledot* structural marker, 5:1 reads “This is the book of the generations of Adam.” On this anomalous *toledot* see the discussion in Jason DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledot* Structure of Genesis,” *JETS* 56, no. 2 (2013): 242–44.

²⁵Again, 5:1 is an anomaly. See n. 24 above.

²⁶While 36:9 does repeat the phrase אלה תולדות, most scholars agree that this should not be read as an independent (or eleventh) *toledot* structural marker but as some type of substructural unit within Gen 36 separating the genealogy recording Esau’s time in Canaan (36:1–8) from the genealogy of Esau’s descendants in the “hill country of Seir” (36:9–43). Garrett, for example, reads the repetition of 36:9 as an inclusio with 36:1 (Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991], 96n, 97). More persuasively, as both Matthew Thomas and Jason DeRouchie have observed, a second use of *toledot* within a section already introduced by the phrase occurs three times (Gen 10:32; 25:13; 36:9). Notably, these genealogies share two traits: (1) each follows a segmented (as opposed to linear) genealogy, which (2) traces the descendants of the nations surrounding Israel, not the seed of promise. See Matthew Thomas, *These Are the Generations: Identity, Covenant, and the Toledot Formula*, LHBOTS (New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 74–76. DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 219n.

²⁷See the history of research in Thomas, *These Are the Generations*, 25–31.

²⁸Wiseman and Harrison have argued that the *toledot* is a colophon for the preceding section rather than a heading for what follows. See P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis* (London: Marsh, Morgan, & Scott, 1936); repr. P. J. Wiseman, *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis* (Nashville: Nelson, 1985). See also R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 543–53. For a refutation of the colophon position, see DeRouchie, “The

recent studies have shown, however, the *toledot* are much more than generic chapter headings in Genesis. Instead, they provide a reading strategy for Genesis by signaling major plot developments while simultaneously tracing the development of the singular theme of redemption through the seed of the woman.²⁹

Furthermore, as many scholars have noted, the *toledot*-formula signals not only the beginning of a new section, but its subjects—the descendants of the person named in the *toledot*-formula.³⁰ As DeRouchie explains, the purpose of these “transitional headings” is to “progressively direct the reader’s focus from progenitor to progeny and narrow the reader’s focus from all the world to Israel, through whom all families of the earth will be blessed.”³¹ Thus, excluding the segmented genealogies of the sons of Noah (10:1–11:9), Ishmael (25:12–18) and Esau (36:1–8; 36:9–37:1),³² the *toledot* sections trace the story of the promise from Adam and Noah through the funnel of Abraham and Isaac into the nascent nation of Israel, represented by Jacob and his twelve sons.

But the *toledot*-formula does more than mark sections and introduce new subjects. These markers also signal, at least in part, how each section of Genesis relates to

Blessing-Commission,” 223–25.

²⁹See Thomas, *These Are the Generations* and DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission.”

³⁰Ross notes, “The person named after *tôledôt* is usually not the central character in the narrative but the person of origin” (Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 73). See also the discussion in DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 224–26.

³¹DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 225. See also Hamilton, “The *tôledôt* structure . . . suggests a movement from a starting point to a finishing point, from a cause to an effect, from a progenitor to a progeny who is the key individual at that point in either implementing or perpetuating God’s plan and will in his heavens and earth” (Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 10). Similar observations lie at the heart of Alexander’s arguments in T. Desmond Alexander, “From Adam to Judah: The Significance of the Family Tree in Genesis,” *EQ* 61, no. 1 (1989): 5–19; idem, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis,” *TynBul* 44, no. 2 (1993): 255–70; idem, “Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis,” in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. P. E. Satterthwaite, R. S. Hess, and G.J. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 19–39; idem, “Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings,” *TynBul* 49, no. 2 (1998): 191–212.

³²Alexander notes, “To ensure that the main line of descent in Genesis is clearly established, segmented genealogies are never used in relation to it; only linear genealogies are employed” (Alexander, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis,” 259).

the previous and, in turn, provides a reading strategy for the book. As DeRouchie notes the *toledot* “witness a progressive narrowing that places focus on the line of promise and the centrality of Israel in God’s kingdom-building program.”³³ The Genesis story moves from (1) the heavens and the earth (1:1–2:3) to (2) Adam (2:4–4:26) to (3) Noah (5:1–6:8) to (4) Shem (11:10–26) to (5) Terah (11:27–25:11) to (6) Isaac (25:19–35:29) and finally to (7) Jacob (37:2–50:26). In other words, the story moves all creation to humanity then to a specific family line within humanity. The seven divisions move from larger to smaller units until the readers arrive at the central vehicle through which God will accomplish redemption—the nation of Israel represented by its twelve patriarchs.³⁴ Thus the *toledot* ensure that the narrative does not “wander aimlessly” but focuses attention on a line of promise commissioned to carry out God’s purposes in the world.³⁵ This structure

³³DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 235.

³⁴DeRouchie and Thomas argue on the basis of discourse grammar that the five asyndetic *toledot* introduce major divisions within Genesis while *waw*-initial *toledot* serve as coordinating subsections. In this light, the *toledot* in Genesis do not mark ten sections of equal rank, but rather five major sections marked by asyndeton with *waw*-initial subsections underneath these main headings (Gen 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 11:10; 37:2). See Table A1 in appendix 1.

DeRouchie further posits on the basis of linguistic and literary evidences that Genesis further divides into two major sections with the second section likewise divided into two parts. His proposal is summarized in Table A2 in appendix 1.

Previous scholars have also argued for five major divisions on the basis of asyndeton though not on the same text-linguistic grounds as Thomas and DeRouchie. See Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, pt 2: From Noah to Abraham*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964), 188, and Peter Weimar, “Die Toledot-Formel in Der Priesterschriftlichen Geschichtsdarstellung,” *BZ* 18, no. 1 (1974): 65–93.

In this scheme, the major divisions marked by the asyndetic *toledot* appear to fall along covenantal lines. The first *toledot* records the story of the Adamic covenant, from its initiation, through its undoing (Gen 3:1–7), to the glimmers of hope (Gen 3:15, 4:26) and despair (4:1–16) that follow as God responds in both salvation and judgment. The second *toledot* does not record the beginning of a new covenant but instead seems to hold out the implications of the failed Adamic covenant (Gen 6:1–7). This section focuses on “stage two” of the Adamic administration, highlighting the ruin caused by Adam’s failed administration. The third and fourth asyndetic *toledot* (with their corresponding *waw*-initial subsections) focus on successive covenants. The third asyndetic *toledot* highlights the Noahic covenant, whereas the fourth traces the history of the Abrahamic covenant. Like the second major *toledot* section (Gen 5:1–6:8), the Joseph story does not record the inauguration of the next covenant in redemptive history. The likely reason is because it fulfills the same function for the story of the Abrahamic covenant as 5:1–6:8 did for the Adamic covenant. The Joseph story is “stage two” of the Abrahamic covenant. Yet unlike 5:1–6:8, this final *toledot* is not meant to show the failure of the Abrahamic covenant, but its success. As we will see more fully below, the fourth major section established the *promises* given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the final *toledot* (Joseph’s story) highlights the partial *fulfillment* of those promises.

³⁵As Thomas notes, “Through the series of *toledot* headings, the narrative does not wander aimlessly, but according to a certain pattern. On the macro scale, this pattern takes the reader from the heavens and earth (creation) at the beginning of Genesis to Jacob (Israel) at the end of Genesis. Thus, within 36 chapters (2 to 37) the reader’s focus has been drawn from the entire universe to a small tribe

thus emphasizes the essential unity of Genesis. Each linear *toledot* advances the same promises and the same redemptive-historical expectations, even as those promises and expectations develop as God initiates new covenants with increasingly smaller family units (e.g. Adam, Noah, Abraham).

Function of the *Toledot*-Formula: Tracing God's Promise through Each Generation

As Johnson observed in his seminal work on genealogies in 1969, genealogies (like those represented in the *toledot* of Genesis) develop “a sense of movement within history toward a divine goal.”³⁶ The linear genealogies delineating the royal line of blessing in Genesis trace the development of God’s covenant promises through specific family lines in exclusion to all others. From a biblical-theological perspective, Moses uses the *toledot*, with its emphasis on genealogy as part of the very meaning of the word, as a way of tracing the story of God’s commitment to fulfill His eschatological goal of a world populated with image bearers (Gen 1:28) that must now come through an act of redemption and warfare by a “seed of the woman” (Gen 3:15). The ten-fold *toledot* propels forward the genealogically-driven storyline represented by Genesis 1:28 and 3:15, while also identifying family lines excluded from covenant participation—the nations of the world to whom Israel must carry out its missiological purpose.³⁷ The very use of the word *toledot* as a structural marker indicates that Moses highlights the inseparable connection between the main characters of Genesis (the “seeds or “begotten ones” [לְדָוָר]) and the redemption story. Each “seed” in the line of promise is indelibly linked to the eschatological hope of Genesis 1:28 and 3:15 as well as to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the covenants their narratives represent.

wandering around the Levant and Egypt” (Thomas, *These Are the Generations*, 42, see also 72–73).

³⁶Marshall Johnson, *The Purpose of Biblical Genealogies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 60.

³⁷DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 239–42.

Within Genesis, the seven *toledot* units made up of linear genealogies and narrative work hand-in-hand to disclose how, through a particular line of descent climaxing in Israel, God preserved his blessing-commission (Gen 1:28) and the hope for a curse-defeating, regal offspring (Gen 3:15). In contrast, the three segmented *toledot* establish Israel's "mission field". In other words, Moses uses narratives and linear genealogies to highlight the ancestry of Israel as the chosen line of promise, but he uses segmented genealogies to give ever-present reminders to Israelite readers that their image-bearing purpose is for the sake of the nations and that their longed-for deliverer would be the agent of blessing to all the families of the earth (12:3; 22:17b–18). The world was not created for Israel but she for the world.³⁸

These observations on Genesis' internal structure further advance the proposal, already affirmed by many scholars, that the patriarchal stories must be read with an eye toward God's larger creation purposes established in the primeval narratives and that those purposes play out along covenantal lines.³⁹ The result is that the interpretive influence between the patriarchal and primeval histories is bidirectional. Whereas the patriarchal narratives clarify and refine our knowledge of God's purpose to create for himself a people with whom he dwells and over whom he rules, the primeval history highlights that these are God's intentions not only for the nation of Israel, but for all humanity. Genesis 1:1–11:9 establishes the universal scope of God's work in creation and redemption, whereas the patriarchal narratives (officially beginning with the *toledot* of Shem in 11:10) focus on the means God will use to effect that redemption. Thus while

³⁸DeRouchie, "The Blessing-Commission," 240–41.

³⁹For example, Arnold states, "Cosmic beginnings and Israel's national beginnings are thus tied together theologically as one story in Genesis. . . . By tying it together through the genealogies and *tôlēdôt*-structuring device, Abraham and the nation Israel serve as the means of salvation for all humanity, indeed for the entire cosmos. . . . The book of Genesis took a dramatic turn with Terah's genealogy at 11:27 (that is with Terah's *tôlēdôt*-structuring clause). . . . This ingenious macrostructure is made possible by five occurrences in the primeval history (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10) and five more in the ancestral narratives (11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:1; plus one extra in 36:9)" (Arnold, *Genesis*, 229).

the patriarchal narratives focus on Israel, they remain in the cosmic framework of God's purposes for his creation established by the first eleven chapters.

A number of smaller literary and textual features demonstrate the interplay between creation, the Noahic, and the Abrahamic covenants.⁴⁰ As Hamilton notes, the promises of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:1–3 provide a “direct answer” to the curses of Genesis 3:14–19.⁴¹ Along the same lines, the fivefold repetition of “blessing” in Genesis 12:1–3 appears to be Yahweh's response to the fivefold curse in Genesis 3–11.⁴²

Similarly, the promise that God will bless all the “families” (משפחות) of the earth hearkens back to the proliferation of “families” in the Table of Nations (10:5, 18, 20, 31, 32). On this point Carrol R. notes, “Continuity is thus complemented by contrast: Abram and the nation which will spring from him are not to exhibit the same sort of disobedience and prideful aspirations as were exhibited at Babel; greatness will come by divine grace, not human pretense.”⁴³

Also, at the seam between the primeval and patriarchal narratives, linguistic links between the Babel story in Genesis 11 and the initial promises to Abraham (cf. Gen 11:4 with 12:2) indicate the author's purpose that readers see each event in light of the other. The Babelites desire to make a name for themselves and are thwarted by God, but Yahweh will make a name for Abraham.⁴⁴ The very contours of the Abrahamic promises

⁴⁰Contra Speiser, “There was nothing in the preceding accounts to prepare us for Abraham's mission” (E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, vol. 1, AB [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964], 87).

⁴¹James Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” *TynBul* 58, no. 2 (2007): 253–73.

⁴²Gen 3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25. See Hans Walter Wolff, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” in *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions*, ed. Walter Brueggemann and Hans Walter Wolff, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox, 1974), 54–55; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 77; Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 59.

⁴³M. Daniel Carroll R., “Blessing the Nations: Toward a Biblical Theology of Mission from Genesis,” *BBR* 10, no. 1 (2000): 21.

⁴⁴Arnold, *Genesis*, 132. Further, as Gonzales notes, the story of the spread of sin also continues rather seamlessly from the primeval through the patriarchal narratives. Gonzales, *Where Sin Abounds*.

also demonstrate the interpretive dependence between primeval and patriarchal narratives. For example, Dempster notes that Yahweh's promise to bless "all the families of the earth" through Abraham exhibits Israel's essentially missiological (hence global) *raison d'être*.

At the beginning of Israel's history, then, is the fundamental fact that it has been made for the benefit of the world. Israel's calling is fundamentally missiological; its purpose for existence is the restoration of the world to its pre-Edenic state. Genesis 12:1–3 is thus the "aetiology of all Israelite aetiologies," showing that "the ultimate purpose of redemption for which God will bring about in Israel is that of bridging the gulf between God and the entire human race."⁴⁵

The *Toledot* Structure and the Story of Joseph

Genesis' *toledot* structure, as well as the thematic and textual linkages between primeval and patriarchal history, attests to an essential and unbroken unity to the Genesis story. God's covenant promises, reflecting his purpose for all of creation, are traced from generation to generation in a single family through the *toledot*. Joseph does not discontinue Genesis' focus on creation and covenant, but advances it. If the *toledot*-formula does, in fact, "witness a progressive narrowing . . . on the line of promise and the centrality of Israel in God's kingdom-building program" then the Joseph story is the climax of that genealogical unfolding, at least as far as Genesis is concerned.⁴⁶ Since the *toledot* trace the development of the seed promise through the unfolding of the covenants, then Joseph's story must be interpreted according to this authorially-constructed

⁴⁵Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 76–77. The final phrase of Dempster's quotation comes from Gerhard Von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966), 65. A host of other scholars have also posited this type of "call-and-response" or "problem-solution" relationship between the primeval and patriarchal histories. See Arnold, *Genesis*, 229; William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 68.

⁴⁶DeRouchie, "The Blessing-Commission," 235.

framework.

Thus, as the final section in Genesis, the Joseph story exhibits both continuity and discontinuity with what precedes it. As the final *toledot*, Joseph's story is the endpoint of Genesis' racing, genealogy-driven narrative. In this sense, considering Genesis as a self-contained literary unit, Genesis 37–50 represents the final act of the book. So far from being wholly discontinuous from the primeval and patriarchal narratives, this final *toledot* presents Genesis 37–50 as the final plot piece in a story developing as early as Genesis 2:4—cementing the Joseph story into the unfolding drama of God's covenant promises. In other words, the structure of Genesis clearly roots the Joseph story as being in essential literary and biblical-theological continuity with all that precedes.

Joseph, however, is also discontinuous from earlier narratives. Just as previous *toledot* marked, at least in some sense, a “new stage” in redemptive history (especially through the inauguration of new covenants), so also Joseph's story is a new stage. As argued below, the Joseph story marks a transition from the establishment of promises to the fulfillment of promises. Consequently, the point is not that the covenant story here ceases, but with this final *toledot* that story turns toward new developments. The same covenant promises are still in view, yet instead of linear developments that trace the passing of covenant promises from a father to a single heir, the covenant blessings now diffuse to all twelve sons of Jacob and hence to their eponymous tribes.⁴⁷ With previous *toledot* sections, the line of promise narrowed. Now those covenant promises fan out to the blossoming nation of Israel. Thus far in the story the promise has transferred from a

⁴⁷Joseph himself recognizes this fact when he refers to the covenant's being administered to “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” (Gen 50:24) not “Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph [or Judah].” As Thomas notes, “As we move into the following generation [the *toledot* of Jacob], the process of narrowing stops with the sons of Jacob. All 12 are taken as the focus of the story from that point on, so no narrowing process is necessary. . . . Given that in each of the previous narrowings there is a decision made among siblings as to who will be the next focus, the focus on all 12 brothers from here on is significant. The *toledot* section of Jacob begins with his 12 sons” (Thomas, *These Are the Generation*, 116–17).

father to his singular seed. Now those promises develop along corporate lines.⁴⁸ The age of the patriarchs is over; the age of Israel is about to begin.

The new direction of the story also includes other biblical-theological developments. Thomas, for instance, posits that one reason Genesis 37:2–50:26 is its own *toledot* is due to the “reconciliation of the brothers in the Joseph cycle.” He continues,

In the earlier stories of brothers in Genesis, there was always some problem: Cain killed Abel, Ishmael “played with” Isaac, and Esau wanted to kill Jacob, for example. Here, in the story of Jacob’s sons, however, after the initial problems, the brothers are able to reconcile on the basis of Joseph’s forgiveness of them. This opens up a new type of relationship among different groups of people. Perhaps, this is the basis on which all 12 tribes are able to be together the focus of the narrative from here on. Perhaps, it is the next stage of covenant: people covenanting among themselves in imitation of the covenants with God.⁴⁹

Thomas is right to look for a theological explanation as to why the story of Joseph receives its own *toledot*. As I will show, reconciliation as a resolution to the theme of fraternal conflict is indeed part of the answer. This theme, however, is part of a much larger picture, one of a regal seed of Israel beginning to fulfill the covenant promises.

The patriarchal narratives and covenant promises have set up an expectation for God to act through and for Jacob’s descendants in fulfillment of those promises. Genesis 37:2 marks a turning point in the narrative and as a result new questions emerge: what new challenges are posed to the fulfillment of God’s promises? What will the fulfillment of those promises look like? What will happen to the covenant promises given the Cain-like behavior of the covenant family and their eventual dislocation out of Canaan into Egypt?

⁴⁸“That Jacob has *twelve* sons may have further significance. It is common for key figures in Genesis to have two or three sons. . . . Jacob’s fathering twelve sons distinguishes him, therefore, from the other patriarchs. Yet it has been noted that one son in particular usually takes up the position of the main line and that secondary lines are presented first, whereas the main line is presented last. That Jacob has twelve sons, rather than two or three, and that there is no reversal of primogeniture in the genealogy seems to indicate that Gen. 35:22b–26 marks a new stage in the genealogical schema. The implication appears to be that all twelve sons constitute the main line” (Kaminski, *From Noah to Israel*, 112, emphasis original).

⁴⁹Thomas, *These Are the Generations*, 46.

In sum, the *toledot* structure highlights the continuity of God’s covenant purposes as they pass from Adam through Abraham to the nation of Israel. Moses’ use of *toledot* thus gives biblical-theological unity to Genesis and emphasizes the continuity between the parts. But, as demonstrated above, the final *toledot* signals a new stage of development in the story of the Abrahamic covenant.⁵⁰

Joseph and Kingship in Genesis

Having looked at how Genesis 37–50 fits within the *toledot* structure of Genesis, we are now in a place to consider how the covenantal themes are developed throughout the Joseph story. Particularly, we will examine how the Joseph story develops the themes of kingship, seed, blessing, and land.

T. D. Alexander argues that “the entire book of Genesis is especially interested in highlighting the existence of a unique line of male descendants which will eventually give rise to a royal dynasty.”⁵¹ This interest in kings and their kingdoms begins as early as the creation narrative (Gen 1–2) and continues throughout the primeval history (3–11). The Abrahamic Covenant heightens this interest, enshrining the hope for godly human dominion in the covenant promises given to Abraham and his seed.

⁵⁰Similarly Childs, reflecting on why Joseph receives his own *toledot*, writes, “Joseph is clearly set apart from the earlier patriarchs. He does not form part of the triad to whom the promise of land and posterity is given, rather he becomes the first (Gen 50:24) to whom the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is reiterated. . . . Joseph became the means of preserving the family in a foreign country (50.20), but also the means by which a new threat to the promise of the land was realized. Conversely, Judah demonstrated an unfaithfulness which threatened to destroy the promise of posterity, which was only restored by the faithfulness of a Canaanite wife. In sum, the final section of the book of Genesis turns on the issue of the threat to the promise which leads inevitably to the book of Exodus” (Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 156–57).

⁵¹T. Desmond Alexander, “Further Observations on the Term ‘Seed’ in Genesis,” *TynBul* 48, no. 2 (1997): 366. Alexander has written extensively on the theme of kingship and its relation to “seed” both in Genesis and in the OT in general. See Alexander, “From Adam to Judah”; idem, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis”; idem, “Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings”; idem, *The Servant King: The Bible’s Portrait of the Messiah* (Leicester: Regent College Publishing, 1998); idem, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 74–97.

Royal Seed: Primeval Types and Promises

Genesis 1 establishes God’s royal prerogatives over his creation. In contrast to other ANE creation accounts, which focus on cosmic struggle, Genesis highlights God’s unchallenged authority to simply speak the world into existence.⁵² As other scholars have demonstrated at length, Yahweh commissions Adam to share in the royal task, and Moses depicts Adam in Genesis 1–2 as a priest-king.⁵³ In other words, Yahweh invests in Adam a right to rule that, if rightly administered, reflects God’s own kingly glory as creation’s life-giving sovereign and continues his creative and animating rule described in Genesis 1.⁵⁴ The end result is that “God not only reigns over people, he also reigns through them.”⁵⁵

Several features of the creation narrative point to Adam’s royal position.⁵⁶ Moses’ identification of Adam as God’s “image” (צֶלֶם) carried royal overtones in the

⁵²For a brief but helpful overview, see John D. Currid, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 33–46.

⁵³William J. Dumbrell, *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 25; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 81.

⁵⁴“Adam and Eve’s rule was not . . . to be an abusive, life-stealing rule. God did not commission them to inaugurate all great acts of colonialism, imperialism, or authoritarianism that would follow. Just the opposite. Adam and Eve’s rule was to be a fruit-bearing, cultivating, empowering, equipping, authoring-life-in-others rule” (Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God’s Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 143).

⁵⁵Treat, *The Crucified King*, 55.

⁵⁶Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 55–75; Peter J. Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 177–221; Gordon J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, ed. Richard Hess and David Toshio Tsumura, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399–404; John Walton, “Eden, Garden of,” in *DOTP*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 29–121; Bryan Keith Payne, “The Summing Up of All Things in Christ and the Restoration of Human Viceregency: Implications for Ecclesiology” (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008); Catherine Beckerleg, “The ‘Image of God’ in Eden: The Creation of Mankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the *Mis Pî Pî Pî* and *Wpt-r* Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2009); Christopher Beetham, “From Creation to New Creation: The Biblical Epic of King, Human Vicegerency, and Kingdom,” in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and Benjamin L. Gladd (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 237–40.

ANE. Furthermore, “image” (צלם) coupled with “likeness” (דמות) indicate that Adam as king bore a covenantal as well as a filial relationship with the Creator (cf. Gen 5:1–3).⁵⁷ As a result of his identity, Yahweh commissions Adam with the regal duties of subduing (רדה) and ruling (כבש) creation (Gen 1:26–28). In other words, Adam bears God’s image *so that* he might rule.⁵⁸ Later biblical reflection on the creation account, such as Psalm 8, also affirms the notion that Adam is king among God’s creatures and mediator of God’s rule.⁵⁹ Dempster summarizes the evidence: “the rest of the canon assumes the royal overtones of Genesis 1, indicating the unique authority assigned to the primal couple, and thus to all humanity.”⁶⁰ All in all, Adam’s identity is defined by his place in God’s covenantal dealings. Adam is a beloved son and servant king.⁶¹

Further development of Adam’s royal commission in Genesis 2 closely ties his regal work to the duties of a priest. Yahweh places Adam in a garden-temple where Adam must “serve” (עבד) and “guard” (שמר). These two words, in combination, only refer to the work of priests elsewhere in the OT (Gen 2:15; cf. Num 3:7–8; 8:26; 18:5–

⁵⁷“Since the Spirit’s act of creating man is thus presented as the fathering of a son and that man-son is identified as the image-likeness of God, it is evident that image of God and son of God are mutually explanatory concepts. Clearly man’s likeness to the Creator-Spirit is to be understood as the likeness which a son bears to his father. And that understanding of the image concept, according to which the fundamental idea is one of representational similarity, not representative agency, is further unmistakably corroborated by Genesis 5:1–3 as it brings together God’s creation of Adam and Adam’s begetting of Seth, expressing the relation of the human father and son in terms of the image-likeness that defines man’s relation to the Creator. To be the image of God is to be the son of God” (Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* [Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000], 45–46).

⁵⁸See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 187–89, for a defense of the resultative translation of ירדו.

⁵⁹“Clearly, this psalm puts to rest any thought that human beings were not created with royal dignity and purpose” (Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 61). See Also Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 196; Roy E. Ciampa, “The History of Redemption,” in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 276.

⁶⁰Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 60.

⁶¹Gentry sums up his examination of צלם in the ANE stating “the term ‘the image of god’ in the culture and language of the ancient Near East in the fifteenth century B.C. would have communicated two main ideas: (1) rulership and (2) sonship” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 192). See also Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 77.

6).⁶² Summarily Adam is a priest-king. “He is to rule (Gen 1:26–28) by serving in the Edenic temple and guarding it from intruders (Gen 2:15).”⁶³

Significantly, the creation account, as well as later biblical texts’ reflection on Genesis 1–2, indicate that Adam’s royal office was eschatological. Notably, Adam’s reign was not a static enterprise—the maintenance of a *status quo*. It came with an inherent *telos*. Adam only rightly administered his rule as he expanded the borders of Eden and, with Eve, populated that acquired territory with other image-bearers. Adam’s royal labors worked toward joining the Creator in eternal Sabbath rest—the endgame of creation.⁶⁴ The reigning was for the resting.⁶⁵

This eschatological character of Adam’s royal duties not only explains God’s purposes in the “creation project” (as Alexander calls it)⁶⁶ but also God’s purposes in the work of redemption. As God acts to reclaim humanity and restore his kingdom in a post-Genesis 3 world, the restoration of human viceregency is vital to that end. As demonstrated below, a post-Genesis 3 hope for royal seed expressed prophetically in passages such as Genesis 3:15; typologically in characters such as Noah or Melchizedek; or covenantally in the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob does not merely point to the promise of earthly power for the nation of Israel, but indicates God’s commitment to reinstate his rule over creation—and to do so through a new human mediator. God will resurrect the hope of Sabbath rest by restoring the throne of Adam.

This hope for royal restoration begins as early as the curse itself. Yahweh

⁶²Stephen G. Dempster, “The Servant of the Lord,” in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 135.

⁶³Treat, *The Crucified King*, 55; see also G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 32; Dempster, “The Servant of the Lord,” 136.

⁶⁴G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 81–87. Treat, *The Crucified King*, 56.

⁶⁵Treat, *The Crucified King*, 56.

⁶⁶Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 22, 37, 72.

prophesies that a child will crush the head of the serpent, undoing the serpent’s damage and restoring creation’s Edenic character (Gen 3:15).⁶⁷ While the royal character of the seed is not immediately apparent, his ability to accomplish what royal Adam failed to achieve (making him a new Adam) and his ability to wage war against “the serpent”⁶⁸ at least hint at his royal character. The development of the seed theme in Genesis confirms this conclusion. Relying on the work of Alexander, Treat shows that the promised victory of the seed over the serpent is a “royal victory” because this promise is “progressively revealed in a lineage of kings.”⁶⁹ More specifically, Moses and other biblical authors, tie Genesis 3:15 to royal imagery, particularly in Numbers 24 and the Psalms,⁷⁰ which also confirms a royal reading of the text.⁷¹

More forcefully, Genesis develops the royal seed promise typologically through characters who emerge as “new Adams.” These figures advance God’s work of restoration and foreshadow the ultimate royal seed both through their successes and failures. As Beale notes, “After Adam’s failure to fulfill God’s mandate, God raises up other Adam-like figures to whom his commission is passed on.”⁷²

The first recipient of that royal commission is Noah, whom Moses pictures as a new Adam, with kingly responsibilities over creation.⁷³ The very name “Noah” derives

⁶⁷Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 68–69.

⁶⁸Robert Gonzales’ rather thorough treatment of the identity of the serpent shows that the serpent of Genesis (שֶׁרֶפ) may not simply be a regular snake possessed and animated by Satan, but Satan himself in Seraph form—a dragon-like, supernatural angelic entity. See Gonzales, *Where Sin Abounds*, 21–28. See also John L. Ronning, “The Curse on the Serpent (Genesis 3:15) in Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics” (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1997), 126–42.

⁶⁹Treat, *The Crucified King*, 58 emphasis in original.

⁷⁰See, for example, Pss 72 and 89.

⁷¹Alexander, “Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings,” 204–5; Walter Wifall, “Gen 3:15—A Protoevangelium?,” *CBQ* 36, no. 3 (1974): 361–65; James M. Hamilton, “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *SBJT* 10 (2006): 30–54.

⁷²Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 93.

⁷³Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 161–65; Gary Smith, “Structure and Purpose of Genesis 1–11,” *JETS* 20, no. 4 (1977): 307–19; Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 383.

from the intersection of the two eschatological hopes of (1) “rest” in the land (2) through the mediation of a seed (Gen 5:29). Adam’s royal commission to be fruitful and multiply passes to Noah (Gen 9:1, 7; cf. Gen 1:28). Additionally, as Hahn observes, the Noahic covenant gives Noah “a dynastic authority over ‘all flesh’ (9:16, 17).”⁷⁴

Royal Seed: Abrahamic Types and Promises

Just as Noah was the tenth generation from Adam, Abraham enters the narrative as the tenth generation from Noah—the new heir in God’s lineage of royal covenant mediators.⁷⁵ God’s promises in Genesis 12:1–3 clearly point to the kingly destiny of Abraham and his seed. In Genesis 12:2–3, Yahweh promises Abraham that he will make him a great nation (גוי) and that he will bless the “families” (משפחה) of the earth. As Gentry explains, the word גוי, particularly in contrast with משפחה, connotes royalty. Gentry writes,

The basic meaning of *gôy* is an *organised* community of people having *governmental, political, and social structure*. This contrasts with the fact that the other nations are derogatorily termed *mišpāḥâ* in Genesis 12. This word refers to an amorphous kin group larger than an extended family and smaller than a tribe. . . . This shows that the author has a real purpose in Genesis 12:3 in using the term *mišpāḥôt* [for the nations]: he wants to indicate that the kingdoms of this world will never amount to anything; only the kingdom of God will last forever. The author’s choice of terms emphasises that the family of Abram is a real kingdom with eternal power and significance while the so-called kingdoms of this world are of no lasting power or significance.⁷⁶

God’s promise to make Abraham’s name great (Gen 12:2) also portends royal status—“to have a great name given to one by God is to be viewed as a royal figure (2

⁷⁴Scott W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 97.

⁷⁵Alexander, “Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings,” 205.

⁷⁶Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 243–44, emphasis original). Dempster also notes, “[Abraham and Sarah] will become a great nation [גוי] through which all families of the *’ādāmā* will be blessed (Gen 12:1–3). This indicates not only the genealogical dimension to the promise but also a royal one, as the promise to become a great nation assumes a political and regal destiny” (Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 76). See also DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 241–42.

Samuel 7:9).”⁷⁷ In short, in Genesis 12:1–3, “Abram was promised . . . the hope of many an oriental monarch.”⁷⁸ In biblical theological terms “The promises to Abraham renew the vision for humanity set out in Gen 1–2. He, like Noah before him, is a second Adam figure.”⁷⁹

Later developments of the covenant blessings also focus on the royal features of Abraham’s identity. Yahweh promises Abraham that he will sire a line of kings (Gen 17:6). Abraham’s inherited royal Adamic identity will transfer to a line of sons. Similarly, Abraham’s wife bears a regal name. Both Sarai and Sarah mean “princess,”⁸⁰ a name which Yahweh highlights when he promises to make her the matriarch of a royal line (Gen 17:16).

Moses continues to *show*, not so much *tell*, Abraham’s royal identity in subsequent narratives. In Genesis 14 Abraham marshals a military conquest against other ANE kings.⁸¹ Further, in this episode the enigmatic Melchizedek appears as a priest-king after the order of Adam and Noah. The close associations between Melchizedek and Abraham hint at the royal-priestly identity Abraham shares with this king of

⁷⁷Arnold, *Genesis*, 132.

⁷⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 275. See also Eberhard Ruprecht, “*Der Traditionsgeschichtliche Hintergrund Der Einzelnen Elemente von Gen 12:2–3*,” VT 29 (1979): 444–64; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 275–76. Hamilton notes, “This is clearly royal language, and Abram is to be viewed as a regal figure” (Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 372–73). Gentry also argues that the parallels in the genealogies of Adam, Noah, and Terah also portray Abram as a new Adam and thus the inheritor of his role as a royal priest. “Abram and his family constitute another Adam. Notice the parallels in the biblical narrative: Adam and Eve had three sons (besides other children who are not named in the text; Gen 5:4). Similarly, the genealogy in Genesis 5 ends with a man who also had three sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth). The genealogy in Genesis 11 ends in the same way: with a man who had three sons (Abram, Nahor, and Haran). This parallel is a literary technique inviting the reader to compare Abram with Noah and Adam” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 224).

⁷⁹Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Ethically* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 37.

⁸⁰Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 476; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 25; Arnold, *Genesis*, 173; HALOT, s.v. “שָׂרָה”

⁸¹Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem*, 82. Wenham agrees, “In these scenes Abram is portrayed not merely as the archetypal Israelite who has faith in God, but as a conquering king who has been promised victory over his foes and a great territory” (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC [Dallas: Word Books, 1987], 335).

righteousness in proto-Jerusalem.⁸²

Later the Hittites identify Abraham as “a prince of God” (Gen 23:6).⁸³ Abraham treats with kings as an equal (Gen 20; 21:22–34). Similar features are found in the Isaac and Jacob stories, though less prominently (cf. Gen 26:26–31). Most importantly, in all these activities Abraham bears Adam’s royal commission to be fruitful and multiply, though now mediated to him in the form of covenant promises (Gen 12:2; 17:2, 6, 8; 22:17).

Yet in Abraham’s life, the theme of a royal seed is strongest in the covenant promises. In fact, the promise of royal seed is “a central feature to the patriarchal promises.”⁸⁴ Through Abraham, God promises not only to restore the land, fruitfulness, and blessing of Eden⁸⁵ but to restore human viceregency. Thus God repeatedly promises future royalty when he reiterates the covenant to Isaac and Jacob (Gen 17:6; cf. 17:16; 22:17b–18; 35:11).⁸⁶

Scholars generally organize the Abrahamic covenant promises according to the categories of land, seed, and blessing. While these themes are primary, the theme of a royal seed also clearly emerges in the covenant ceremonies of Genesis 15 and 17 (and in reaffirmations to Isaac and Jacob). The promise of royal offspring is so thoroughly folded into the Abrahamic expectation that it becomes part of the very fabric of the covenant. Abraham’s covenant promises included land, seed, blessing, and kingship—these four

⁸²Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 130–134; Matthew Habib Emadi, “The Royal Priest: Psalm 110 in Biblical-Theological Perspective” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016).

⁸³LXX translates נָשִׂיךְ (prince) as βασιλεύς

⁸⁴Diffey, “The Royal Promise in Genesis,” 316.

⁸⁵James Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” *TynBul* 58, no. 2 (2007): 253–73. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Clarendon, 1985), 372–373.

⁸⁶Diffey, “The Royal Promise in Genesis,” 313–16. T. Desmond Alexander, “Further Observations on the Term ‘Seed’ in Genesis,” 363–67; idem, “Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings,” 191–212.

notions are intimately and inseparably linked.⁸⁷

Three passages in Genesis (17:6, 17:16, 35:11) demonstrate this connection by mentioning all four promises together. Diffey rightly notes that “these three ‘royal promise’ narratives share common features: 1) each of these promises occurs within the context of a narrative in which the character is given a new name; 2) within each of these narratives the promise of kings is intertwined with the themes of fruitfulness, seed and land.”⁸⁸ Additionally, 3) each promise of future royalty is tied to a specific recipient: Isaac (not Ishmael) in Genesis 17 and Jacob (not Esau) in Genesis 35.⁸⁹

In Genesis 17 “God Almighty”⁹⁰ appears to Abram and recommits himself to the three promises established in Genesis 12 and 15: seed, blessing, and land. Yahweh promises to make Abraham the “father of a multitude of nations” (17:5) and “exceedingly fruitful” (17:6). He assures Abraham that by establishing an everlasting covenant he will “be God to you and to your offspring after you” (17:7). Finally, Yahweh promises to give Abraham and his offspring “the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession” (17:8).

Two features stand out in this reaffirmation of the covenant. First, Yahweh

⁸⁷See Diffey, “The Royal Promise in Genesis,” 313–16. I arrived at these conclusions independent of Diffey. I was pleased to find his stimulating article on this subject as further confirmation that the promise of kingship in the Abrahamic covenant deserves closer attention than scholars have given it in the past.

⁸⁸Ibid., 314.

⁸⁹Diffey also recognizes this third feature, though he does not include it in his list. He writes, “These promises were not made generically to the patriarchs with the vague hope that sometime, somewhere, one of their descendants would be a king. Rather, the contexts of these passages are similar in that the promise of kingship is linked specifically to the promised seed; in Genesis 17 this is Isaac and in Genesis 35 it is Jacob. Consequently, there is also a rejection of other seed within the context of the kingship promises” (ibid). Interestingly, Diffey divides the rest of his article along the lines of the “renaming and Promise of Kings” and the “Royal and Rejected Seed,” thus perhaps indicating that he sees the “election and rejection” theme as prominent, if not central.

⁹⁰Diffey notes, “This title is used of God only five times in the book of Genesis, two of which occur in the passages at hand. Each of these occurrences are found in direct speech. In Genesis 17:1 and 35:11 the name is proclaimed by God himself. These are the only two times in Genesis that God refers to himself as God Almighty. Furthermore, four of the five times this name is used it is in the direct context of fruitfulness (Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11 and 48:3). There is one instance in Genesis where the title Almighty is used (Gen 49:25), this too is in the context of procreative activity and blessing” (ibid., 314–15).

changes Abram’s name to Abraham, signifying his role as a father of nations. Second, Yahweh promises that “kings shall come from you” (17:6)—a hope inseparable from the already established triad of covenant promises.

The same pattern appears just a few verses later as God reconfirms his commitment to give barren Sarai a son (17:16) and to make her progeny into “nations” (17:16). Again, amidst this reaffirmation of the covenant, two important features emerge. God gives Sarai the name Sarah (both are dialectical versions of the regal name “princess,” as mentioned above) and promises here that “kings of people shall come from her” (17:16). Furthermore, Yahweh explains that while Ishmael will also give birth to royalty (by fathering “twelve princes,” 17:20), this is *not* the fulfillment of God’s royal seed promise to Abraham and Sarah. Instead, Yahweh will fulfill that promise through Isaac (17:19, 21).⁹¹ This explicit rejection of Ishmael and election of Isaac has biblical theological significance. Yahweh will not fulfill his royal seed promise to Abraham and Sarah generically, as if any kings among Abraham’s progeny will do. A specific royal house is in view—one that participates in God’s redemptive work in restoring creation by reclaiming a people that enjoy God’s blessing in the Promised Land. Only the royal seed through Isaac share in that redemptive agenda.

These same elements emerge in Genesis 35. God appears to Jacob and reaffirms the covenant promises to Abraham—promises which recapitulate God’s original purposes for humanity. God commands Jacob to “be fruitful and multiply” (פרה ורבה)—a repetition of the original mandate to Adam and Eve (Gen 1:28; cf. 9:1, 7). Along with the command comes a promise that Yahweh will grant what he commands: “A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will

⁹¹Even the narrative of Genesis highlights this point. Gen 17 is Yahweh’s response to the events of Gen 16, in which Abram and Sarai’s faithlessness toward God’s promises leads Abram to seek offspring through Hagar. As Diffey notes, chap. 17 is a “divine corrective” (ibid., 315).

give the land to your offspring after you” (Gen 35:11–12). Again the promises of kingship, seed, and land are explicit.

As in Genesis 17, this reaffirmation of the covenant includes a name change (Jacob to Israel, 35:10) and the explicit promise that “kings shall come from your own body,” nestled between the promises of seed and land. Diffey rightly summarizes the evidence,

The intertwining and repetition of these themes in parallel narratives reveals that every aspect of the promise is an integral part of the whole. The promise of kings is no less important than fruitfulness or land in these passages. All three coalesce into one and the same promise that is given to each of the characters at his or her renaming. These promises of fruitfulness, kingdom and land are not intended for just any offspring though. The context of each of the narratives reveals that the promise of kingship was intended for a specific child’s lineage. The context also reveals that there were offspring that were rejected or excluded from this promise.⁹²

Joseph: Abraham’s Royal Seed

With these observations, we are now in a place to explore how the Joseph story picks up the theme of kingship in Genesis and the Abrahamic covenant.⁹³ Strikingly, Joseph’s introduction in Genesis 37 bears a number of royal features. His special treatment by his father and his “bad report” (Gen 37:2) about his brothers plant seeds of animosity in the family, but what ultimately incites his brothers to action are Joseph’s dreams of royal destiny. These dreams become Joseph’s defining characteristic in the

⁹²Diffey, “The Royal Promise in Genesis,” 315.

⁹³T. Desmond Alexander has also explored the concept of royalty in Gen 37–50 from the perspective of redaction criticism in his essay “The Regal Dimension of the תולדות יעקב: Recovering the Literary Context of Genesis 37–50,” in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, ed. J. G. McConville and Karl Möller (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 196–212. In this essay Alexander proposes that “the final editor of Genesis was heavily influenced by this concept when selecting and organizing the present content of chs. 37–50” (197). Later Alexander writes, “The basic thesis of this essay is that the final redactor of Genesis was strongly influenced by the belief that in ancient Israel there existed two complementary traditions that associated kingship with the tribes of Judah and Ephraim, with the former eventually winning out over the latter” (199). While I agree with Alexander that Genesis undergoes editorial updates and is only delivered to us as a completely stable text after its final publication with the entire canonical corpus sometime in the fifth century BC, I see no reason to assume that the regal dimensions of the Joseph story are the product of a post-mosaic redactor. The simplest solution is that Moses himself emphasizes the regal elements of the Joseph story for his own literary and redemptive historical purposes.

eyes of his brothers, who ridicule him as “this lord of the dreams” (בעל החלמות הלזיה) [37:19]). Genesis 37:20 also demonstrates the centrality of the dreams to the conflict in Genesis 37 and to Joseph’s identity among his brothers, “Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.”

In the first dream, Joseph’s sheaf is exalted above those of his brothers and even receives obeisance from them. Such bowing (חווה) suggests an action done for a royal figure, which is exactly how the brothers interpret the dream. Their incredulous response makes this explicit: “Are you indeed to reign over us [המלך תמלך עלינו] or are you indeed to rule over us [משול תמשל בנו] [37:8]”?⁹⁴ Both מלך and משל carry explicit connotations of royalty.⁹⁵ Further, מלך and משל occur in the same context only three other times in the OT, each instance clearly denoting royalty (Judg 9:2, 6, 8; Jer 33:21, 26; 2 Chr 9:26, 9:30).⁹⁶

Joseph’s second dream continues in the same vein. In this instance the sun, moon, and eleven stars bow down before Joseph. While these celestial bodies represent Joseph’s family, the imagery itself is suggestive. Only the king of creation would have the obeisance of the cosmos. Joseph again uses the word חווה (Gen 37:9), as does Jacob when he rebukes Joseph for his dreams (לשתחוה לך ארצה) [Gen 37:10]).

While the dream sequences contain the most explicit royal imagery, other features of chapter 37 also seem to foreshadow Joseph’s future royal status. Joseph is a

⁹⁴Contra Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams*, 47–50. Pirson believes Joseph’s brothers erroneously interpret חווה. Pirson argues that חווה need not denote royalty, which is true. Excluding Gen 37, חווה occurs 20 times in Genesis and only twice connotes deference before royalty (Gen 27:29; 49:8). As one sees from chaps. 42–45, however, the brothers did in fact rightly interpret “bowing” (חווה) as bowing to royalty. Pirson rejects this evidence, arguing that chaps. 42–45 do not fulfill the dreams of chaps 37 (see throughout Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams*). He believes Joseph’s dreams never come to fruition. Below I will show why I think this position is untenable.

⁹⁵BDB, s.v. “מלך, II”; HALOT, s.v. “מלך, I”; BDB, s.v. “משל, III”; HALOT, s.v. “משל, II”

⁹⁶On the brothers’ response to Joseph’s dream, Westermann comments, “The question of kingship is only hinted at, but it runs through the narrative” (Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 38).

leader among his brothers. Though he is eleventh in birth order, Jacob looks to him for the supervision and administration of his other children (Gen 37:2, 12–14).

Joseph’s famous “coat of many colors” (כתנת פסים [37:3]) may signify some sort of royal garb.⁹⁷ The translation of כתנת פסים is notoriously difficult.⁹⁸ Regardless, as others have noted, the OT mentions this type of clothing elsewhere only once: when describing the “long dress with sleeves” worn by Tamar—the typical garb of the virgin daughters of the royal family (2 Sam 13:18).⁹⁹ Further, as Wilson notes, the dream and the robes represent the same reality of Joseph’s future royal preeminence. “As far as the brothers are concerned, the robe and the dream are one, for their reaction to *both* is the hatred of Joseph. The robe will carry the meaning of, and will symbolize the dreams for the rest of the chapter.”¹⁰⁰

Genesis 37:3 may reveal even more about Joseph’s leadership in the family. Jacob loves Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph is a “son of old age to him” (בן-זקנים לו). Many commentators understand this to mean that Joseph was beloved because he was born late in Jacob’s life.¹⁰¹ On further reflection, however, this

⁹⁷Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 300; Waltke, *Genesis*, 500. Wilder shows that clothing in the ANE is often closely associated with ruling and kingship. See William N. Wilder, “Illumination and Investiture: The Royal Significance of the Tree of Wisdom in Genesis 3,” *WTJ* 68 (2006): 51–69.

⁹⁸כתנת פסים is one of the most notorious *crux interpretums* in the OT. The “coat of many colors” tradition comes from the LXX’s *χιτῶνα ποικίλον* and the Vulgate’s *tunicam polymitam*. For a full discussion of the translational problems and history, see Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 407–9; Ron Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams*, 33–35. Gonzales, *Where Sin Abounds*, 215.

⁹⁹Mathews notes, “The giving of a garment is a well-known theme in cultural studies and a standard item in royal correspondence from Mari” (Victor Mathews, “The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative,” *JSOT* 65 [1995]: 30). Mathews cites *ARM* 1.8.31; 10:17; 29.10; 46.15.

¹⁰⁰Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 67, also 69–70. See also Barbara Green, “What Profit for Us?” *Remembering the Story of Joseph* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 51; Mathews, “The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative,” 30).

¹⁰¹See for example David Baker’s representative comments, “this phrase functions adjectivally, and although it grammatically modifies זקני, referring to Joseph, it really says more about Jacob. That is, Joseph was born to Jacob in Jacob’s old-age” (David Baker, *Genesis 37–50: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014], 14). See also Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 37.

explanation for Jacob’s favoritism is “a little odd.”¹⁰² Why, then, would Jacob’s favoritism not extend to Joseph’s *younger* brother Benjamin, who was also a son of the favored wife, Rachel, and later identified as ילד זקנים, the “child of [Jacob’s] old age” (Gen 44:20)?

Lowenthal posits that in this instance בן connotes a “word of quality” or expresses a “characteristic” rather than genealogy.¹⁰³ If that is the case, then בן־זקנים refers to someone who bears the characteristics of a sage or an elder, or is, as Lowenthal suggests, “a born leader.”¹⁰⁴ Lowenthal’s solution, however, is problematic. The phrase בן + plural זקן occurs only two other places in the OT, both in reference to Isaac (Genesis 21:2, 7, both בן לזקניו). Lowenthal’s notion that this phrase represents a wise son or “a born leader” works for seventeen-year-old Joseph, but could not be applied to Isaac, who is only a few days old in Genesis 21. A more likely interpretation is that בן־זקנים typecasts Joseph with an Isaac-like identity.¹⁰⁵ Joseph appears on the scene much like the first son of promise, and, as such, the covenantal and dynastic expectations for Isaac (and Jacob) are now linked to him.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰²Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: Norton, 1996), 209.

¹⁰³Eric Lowenthal, *The Joseph Narrative in Genesis* (New York: KTAV, 1973), 167.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 168. *Targum Onqelos* opts for this reading as well (בר חכם הוא ליה). Hamilton posits that this targumic reading was adopted either to create harmonization with Gen 44:20 or in an effort to defend Jacob’s favoritism (Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 407). There is some evidence that Josephus (*Ant* 2.9) opts for the “son of wisdom” reading as well. LXX, Vulgate, and Peshitta support the traditional reading “son of old age.”

¹⁰⁵I am indebted to Aubrey Sequeira for this insight. This conforms with Fretheim’s observation on Jacob’s favoritism: “Joseph evidently now has a relationship with his father that the others do not have. It suggests that Joseph becomes the chosen son of the promise; the eleven are ‘Esau’” (T. E. Fretheim, *The Book of Genesis: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections* in vol. 1 of *NIB*, ed. Leander E. Keck [Nashville: Abingdon, 1994], 598).

¹⁰⁶Wenham notes that another possible evidence of Joseph’s royal stature is the description of Joseph as רעה את־אחיו בצאן in Gen 37:2 (Wenham, “The Regal Dimension of the תולדות־יעקב,” 202). While most translations render this phrase, “He was shepherding the flock with his brothers,” some commentators posit that את may function as the direct object marker, changing the phrase to read, “He was shepherding his brothers who were with the flock” [Duane L. Christensen, “Anticipatory Paronomasia in Jonah 3:7–8 and Genesis 37:2,” *RB* 90, no. 2 (1983): 261–63; Lowenthal, *The Joseph Narrative in Genesis*, 15]. Hamilton, for instance, indicates that this may be “anticipatory paronomasia” and that the sense of רעה את is “to rule over” as in 2 Sam 5:2, 7:7 (Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 406). The primary evidence for this interpretation is Gen 37:12, the only other instance where רעה is followed by both ב and את. In that passage את very clearly functions as the direct object marker and the ב denotes location.

If these introductory comments do describe Joseph with royal imagery, or at least foreshadow his future royal position, then his brothers' animosity is always linked to his position of leadership. This leadership (which enables him to give a "bad report" about his brothers to Jacob), along with his position as Jacob's favorite (signified by the **כתנת פסים**) incites the animus of the eleven. Later, the brothers "hated [Joseph] even more" (Gen 37:8) because his dreams signified regal destiny.

Whether all or just some of these features associate Joseph with royalty, the dream sequences rather unambiguously portray him as the potential first royal seed of Abraham.¹⁰⁷ As Alexander notes, "kingship is the 'dominant motif'" of the dreams.¹⁰⁸ This characterization is surely suggestive.

In light of the royal expectations found prior to Gen 37, it is hardly a coincidence that the plot of the Joseph story should rely so heavily on the theme of royalty for its development. Since the narratives in Gen 12–36 associate kingship with the patriarchs and their descendants, the manner of Joseph's introduction in Gen 37 is significant.¹⁰⁹

Readers of Genesis have awaited—prophetically, typologically, and by covenant promise—the arrival of a royal seed through the line of Abraham. Now, in the

As a result Pirson argues, "It is not unlikely that v. 2 on first reading reads, 'he was shepherding the flock with his brothers,' whereas on second (or further) reading—when readers know about Joseph's food policy and the salvation of his relatives—the feasibility of reading 'he was shepherding his brothers with the flock' urges itself upon those readers" (Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams*, 30).

The evidence, however, points away from this proposal, which Pirson himself admits is only on the "margins of possibility" (ibid., 29). The verb **היה** + the Qal ms participle **רעה** is a periphrastic construction. If the **את** is marking the direct object, then the **ב** prefix on "flock" must denote "with" or "near"—both of which are rarely in the semantic domain of the **ב**-preposition.

First Sam 16:11 is another example of the Qal ms participle **רעה** taking a transitive **ב**—interestingly, with the same word, "flock" (**צאן**). See also 1 Sam 17:34, where the same construction, Qal ms participle **רעה** + **ב** with "flock" occurs. Given the use of the same periphrastic construction, these 1 Samuel passages are much closer structurally to Gen 37:2 than 37:12, which employs the infinitive construct form of **רעה**. Finally, the LXX, the Vulgate, the Peshitta, Targum Onkelos, and Targum Neofiti are also uniform in supporting the reading, "Joseph was shepherding the flock with his brothers."

¹⁰⁷Alexander rightly notes that while these features of Joseph's introduction in Gen 37:2–4 do not "establish Joseph's royal credentials" with the same sort of certainty as do the dreams, "due consideration should be given to them in the light of the acknowledged artistry of the Joseph Story" (Alexander, "The Regal Dimension of the **תולדות יעקב**," 202).

¹⁰⁸Alexander, "Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings," 206.

¹⁰⁹Alexander, "The Regal Dimension of the **תולדות יעקב**," 201.

opening verses of the final *toledot* section, the introduction of Joseph heightens that anticipation. Readers in touch with the royal theme cannot help but question, “Are you the one who is to come or should we expect another?”

The following narrative continues to hint, and then finally affirm, Joseph’s regal destiny. Joseph becomes a slave to Potiphar, “an officer of Pharaoh” (Gen 39:1) but eventually rises to the rank of chief-of-staff in Potiphar’s house. Even as Joseph sinks deeper into suffering and humiliation through incarceration, the narrator never allows the audience to disassociate Joseph from the royal imagery that marked his introduction, reminding them that Joseph’s prison is “the place where the king’s prisoners were confined” (Gen 39:20). In hindsight, readers can see that, in God’s providence, the further Joseph descends in social rank, the closer he moves to the royal court. Though in prison, he moves one step closer to the palace, as Potiphar appoints him custodian of the chief cupbearer and baker of the “king of Egypt” (40:1, 4).¹¹⁰

Finally, Pharaoh exalts Joseph to his right hand, including him in the royal court. Joseph may not be king, but Moses describes him with royal attributes. Joseph’s dreams come to fruition when his brothers “bow down” (חזה) before him three times (42:4 and 43:26, 28), matching the three uses of הוה in the dream sequence in Genesis 37:7, 9–10.¹¹¹ The brothers who once scoffed at the notion that Joseph would “rule”

¹¹⁰“The royal motif also functions as an important element in the development of the Joseph story because every new stage in the first part of the story makes the fulfilment of Joseph’s dreams seem less and less likely. As Joseph descends in social status from favoured son to slave to prisoner, it becomes highly improbable that his brothers will ever bow down to him” Alexander, “The Regal Dimension of the תולדות־יעקב,” 199.

¹¹¹This type of matching is characteristic of Moses’ writing in Genesis. See for example the fivefold use of “blessing” in Gen 12:1–3 (ברך), which seems to be a response to the fivefold use of “curse” (ערר) in Gen 3–11. This type of numerical matching fits with the overall literary character of the Joseph story, which regularly uses numbers as a literary device. Though I disagree with a number of his conclusions, see Pirson’s comments on the significance of numbers in the dreams in “The Sun, the Moon and Eleven Stars: An Interpretation of Joseph’s Second Dream,” in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History*, ed. A. Wénin, BETL 155 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 561–68.

The number three also seems to be a significant literary device throughout the Joseph story. For instance, Moses records three incidents involving robes with Joseph (Jacob, Potiphar’s wife, and Pharaoh), three blessings from Jacob (Pharaoh, Ephraim/Manasseh, the twelve tribes), three pairs of dreams (Joseph, baker-cupbearer, and Pharaoh), and three trips of the brothers to Egypt. Furthermore, the ages of the patriarchs also seem patterned after a rather complex pattern built off the product of decreasing odd

(משל) over them (Gen 37:8) report to their father that Joseph is alive and “ruling” (משל) over Egypt. Joseph even describes himself as a “father to Pharaoh, lord [אדון] of all his house, and ruler [משל] over all the land of Egypt” (Gen 45:8; cf. 45:9, 26)—a description that “appears to be overly stated,” perhaps in order to cast Joseph as a regal figure.¹¹²

Joseph’s royal status is the first hope for resolution to an eschatological expectation burgeoning since Genesis 1 and now mediated through the promises of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:6; cf. 17:16). Alexander correctly notes, “When viewed as part of the book of Genesis as a whole, Joseph’s regal connections take on a deeper significance. His dreams and their fulfilment come in the context of a family tradition that has royal expectations embedded within it.”¹¹³

Joseph’s rise to royalty, therefore, is not merely evidence of God’s vindication or approbation of his faithfulness. It is the first tangible evidence of God’s unswerving commitment to restore human vice regency through a son of Abraham. God promised Abraham a dynasty, a royal seed. Joseph is the first of that seed, a new Adam mediating God’s blessings to the nations—a beloved son and a servant king.¹¹⁴

Joseph and Judah: Present and Future Royal Seed

Given the contours of Genesis thus far, readers might expect that the identity of the royal line is now clear: Joseph and his progeny. Yet a final plot twist shatters those

numbers with increasing squares. Abraham dies at 175 (7×5^2); Isaac at 180 (5×6^2); and Jacob at 147 (3×7^2). Joseph both continues and alters the pattern by continuing the decrease in odd numbers but by being the sum of the squares. Joseph dies at 110 ($1 \times (5^2 + 6^2 + 7^2)$). As Labuschagne notes, “Joseph is the *successor* of the pattern (7, 5, 3, 1) and the *sum* of the predecessors ($5^2 + 6^2 + 7^2$)” (C. J. Labuschagne, “The Life Span of the Patriarchs,” in *New Avenues in the Study of the Old Testament: A Collection of Old Testament Studies Published on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap and the Retirement of Prof. Dr. M. J. Mulder*, ed. A.S van der Woude [Leiden: Brill, 1989], 126). See also Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 491; Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 709–10.

¹¹²Alexander, “Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings,” 206.

¹¹³Alexander, “The Regal Dimension of the תולדות יעקב,” 200.

¹¹⁴On Joseph mediating blessing to the nations see further arguments below.

expectations. At the end of his life, Jacob blesses his children by prophesying concerning the “last days” (Gen 49:1) and identifies *Judah* as the father of the royal line: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples” (Gen 49:10).

Joseph and Judah in Genesis 37–50. While readers might assume Joseph will be the father of Abraham’s royal line, the revelation that Judah is the line of Israel’s royal seed is not entirely unexpected. Judah is more than a supporting actor in the Joseph story. Literary interplay between Judah and Joseph emerges as early as Genesis 37 and the subsequent juxtaposition of their stories in Genesis 38 (Judah’s story) and Genesis 39–41 (Joseph’s story).¹¹⁵

Both sons are prominent characters in Genesis 37. At first Moses foregrounds Joseph, the favorite, as Jacob’s most significant child. Joseph’s dream reports dominate the content of verses 1–17. After verse 18, however, Joseph recedes into the background. He no longer contributes any dialogue to the story and is largely an object acted upon rather than a subject performing action.¹¹⁶ In fact, only later, in Genesis 42:21, do we learn that Joseph pleaded for his life while his brothers dined. In the latter of half of the

¹¹⁵Alter’s work seems to have renewed contemporary scholarly interest on this point (Robert Alter, *The Art of the Biblical Narrative*, rev. ed. [New York: Basic Books, 2011]). Yet, as Alter points out, his observations are as ancient as *Bereshit Rabba*. Modern commentators also noted the literary interplay between the Joseph and Judah stories in the initial chapters of the Jacob *toledot* prior to Alter’s work. In an article that originally appeared in 1929 in Hebrew, Cassuto also noted these same parallels in the narratives (Cassuto, “The Story of Tamar and Judah,” 29–40). Redford noted these same parallels in 1970, though he determined they were not intentional and irrelevant (Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph*, 17). Smith’s explanation of the history of interpretation on this point is worth noting, “It seems that much of the success of Alter’s article should be attributed to the fact that scholarship was ready for his perspective by the mid-1970s, whereas in 1929 it was not” (Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 40–41).

¹¹⁶On the centrality of dialogue in Hebrew narrative, see Alter, *Art of the Biblical Narrative*, 69–87. Sternberg notes just how different the biblical narrative is from other literature with its practice of characterization through dialogue. She writes, “Notorious for its general courting of the redundant detail, the nineteenth-century novel intersperses its block characterization with assorted features that perform no other role than realistic fullness. . . . Even ancient literature shows equivalents of this purely descriptive function. The great exception is the Bible. . . . Considering the range of the Bible’s portrait gallery, it is amazing how distinct and memorable its figures remain, without the benefit of formal portrayal. And this is largely due to the surplus inner life expressed in act and speech” (Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 329).

chapter, Moses foregrounds two other characters: Reuben (Gen 37:21–22, 29–31) and Judah (Gen 37:26–27), presenting Judah as the more prominent and influential of the two.

Genesis 37 thus highlights the four main characters of Genesis 37–50 (Jacob, Joseph, Judah, and Reuben) as well as the fraternal conflict that characterizes their story. After chapter 37, the two primary characters, Judah and Joseph, each have their own individual but parallel narratives. While a number of scholars have seen Genesis 38 as only an excursus (or worse the product of a sloppy redactor), its linguistic and thematic features link it to Joseph’s story in both 37 and 39. For example, in 37:31 the brothers deceive Jacob with a “goat of the flock” (שְׂעִיר אַזִּים), whereas in 38:17 Tamar’s deception of Judah involves Judah’s pledge of a “goat of the flock” (גְּדִי־עִזִּים) in exchange for sex. Even more forcefully, the phrase “reckon please’... And he reckoned” occurs in both accounts. In Genesis 37:32–33, the brothers ask Jacob to identify the blood-soaked garment of the supposedly dead Joseph (הַכְּרִנָּא...וַיִּכְרֶה), while in Genesis 38:25–26 Tamar makes Judah identify his signet cord and staff (הַכְּרִנָּא...וַיִּכַּר). Additionally, in Genesis 37 Jacob mourns over the supposed loss of a son, while Judah loses two sons in Genesis 38, seemingly without a hint of mourning.

Yet even more forcefully, Moses links the story of Judah’s fall in Genesis 38 to the story of Joseph’s rise to power in Genesis 39–41. Both stories begin with each brother “going down” from the land of promise—Judah of his own accord (וִירַד [Gen 38:1]) and Joseph against his will (הוֹרַד [Gen 39:1]). A number of scholars have noted the theme of illicit sex shared between these chapters.¹¹⁷ Joseph’s purity is the foil to Judah’s promiscuity. “Whereas Joseph refuses temptation that accosts him ‘day after day’ (Gen 39:10), Judah is tempted because his temptress knows that he is the kind of man to pursue

¹¹⁷See discussion in Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 102–5.

immorality repeatedly.”¹¹⁸

The parallels continue to the end of each narrative. Both Genesis 38 and 39–41 culminate in the birth of two sons (Gen 38:27–30; 41:50–52)—the naming of which portends hope for both characters. Perez and Zerah mark a significant moment of change for Judah on account of his repentance, while Ephraim and Manasseh signify Joseph’s rescue out of both the pit and the prison. Also, as is customary in Genesis, both sets of brothers will experience a reversal of the primogeniture.

Moses ensures that readers will see these narratives as mutually interpretive by repeating the name Yahweh. Of the twelve occurrences of Yahweh in Genesis 37–50, all but one occurs in Genesis 38–39. The last occurrence of the divine name (Gen 49:18) comes on the lips of Jacob. Thus these eleven occurrences constitute the only times in the entire Joseph story where the narrator references Yahweh.

This rare instance of theological interpretation from the narrator highlights the antithesis between Joseph and Judah. In Genesis 38, “each of the three occurrences of the divine name in Genesis 38 presents God as Judah’s antagonist.”¹¹⁹ “But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. . . . And what [Onan] did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also” (Gen 38:7, 10). In Genesis 39, however, Yahweh is an agent of blessing. He twice causes Joseph to prosper (Gen 39:3, 23), he blesses Potiphar on account of Joseph (Gen 39:5), and Moses indicates that he was “with Joseph” four times (Gen 39:2, 3, 21, 23). The juxtaposition is clear: Yahweh blesses the one and opposes the other. Joseph is the foil to Judah.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 104.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 112.

¹²⁰Other narrative contrasts abound. “Finally, . . . whereas Joseph suffers for a sin he did not commit, Judah refuses to take responsibility for a sin he did commit. . . . When, however, it comes time for Judah to pay for his immoral deed, he does not search out the prostitute himself. He sends his friend Hirah the Adullamite. Joseph is therefore presented as a martyr who would rather suffer for an immoral act he never committed than to live prosperously with a guilty conscience. Judah, on the other hand, is presented

The subsequent chapters continue to focus on both Joseph and Judah, and in the remaining chapters their paths will intersect again. Smith graphically illustrates this bisection of the Joseph and Judah stories and their subsequent intersection in the figure below.¹²¹

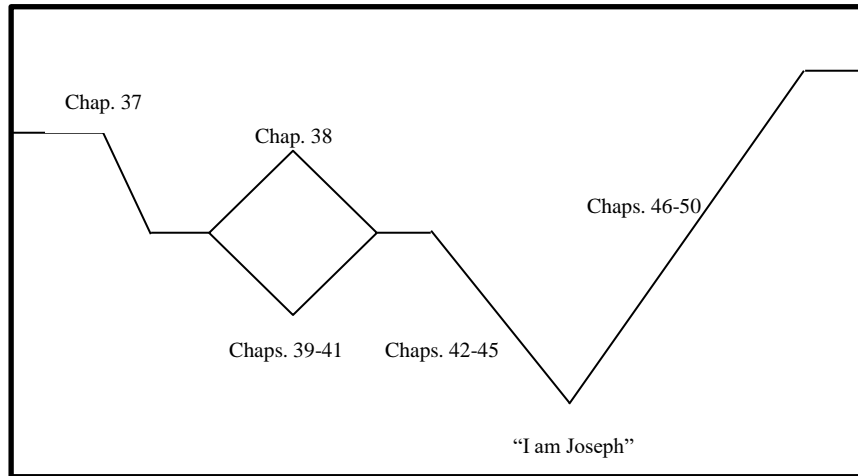


Figure 2: The bisected Joseph-Judah storyline

Judah (a changed man after the events of chap. 38) continues to play a prominent role in the remaining chapters.¹²² Judah convinces Jacob to allow Benjamin to

as a coward who embraces immorality while shunning its shame. . . . Judah’s remarkable failures become even more profound as one looks at the life of Joseph. Joseph lacks the advantages that Judah enjoys. Unlike Judah, Joseph is not streetwise. He tends to assume the best of people, even when he has reason to assume the worst. He zealously and ingenuously agitates his brothers’ hatred of him by sharing with them his dreams of supremacy and dominion. Freedom is another advantage that Judah enjoys over Joseph. The end of Genesis 37 and the beginning of 39 tell the reader that, like Judah, Joseph leaves his family for another land, but unlike Judah he goes there as a slave—a victim of Judah’s shrewd scheming. Like Judah, Joseph in his chapter encounters opposition, but unlike Judah, who is opposed only by his inferiors (Onan in verse 9 and Tamar in verses 12–25), Joseph is opposed by Potiphar’s wife and Potiphar, his superiors. And whereas Judah comes to his moment of crisis with a crowd of friends supporting him, Joseph comes to his crisis friendless. He begins chapter 39 a slave in a rich man’s house. He ends the chapter a slave in prison. Amazingly, however, Joseph is the one who succeeds. While Judah’s world is getting turned upside down, Joseph is prospering. Three times the text uses the *מְצַלֵּחַ* to refer to Joseph” (Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 104–11).

¹²¹Smith, “The Central Role of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 170.

¹²²For a thorough defense of the notion that Gen 38:26 represents Judah’s repentance, and that the names of Perez and Zerah represent a hopeful, spiritually brighter future for Judah, see *ibid.*, especially

return with the brothers to Egypt (Gen 43:8–10). Judah’s speech (the third longest in Genesis)¹²³ and sacrificial offer to save his brother ultimately convinces Joseph of the possibility of reconciliation with his brothers (Gen 44:18–34). Further, Smith has argued on a number of fronts that Judah takes Joseph’s place of favor in the family. For example, Smith notes that “Genesis 37:4, 14 presented Joseph as Jacob’s favored information-gatherer. In 46:28, however, Jacob sent Judah to gather information for him regarding the family’s settlement in Goshen.”¹²⁴ He concludes,

In this plot analysis, the presence of Judah throughout the narrative is taken as a proof of unity and not of fracture because Judah, together with Joseph, played a central role in the unifying plot action of reconciliation. He and Joseph together dominate the narrative at its three most crucial points. First, they appear together at the story’s beginning, creating the exciting force and thus giving the plot the direction and shape that the rest of the narrative develops. Second, they appear together at the story’s crisis moment, the narrative’s most decisive turning point, where Judah pleaded for Benjamin, and Joseph responded by assuring the brothers of his forgiveness. And third, they appear together in the most important scene of the story’s resolution, Genesis 49. Here they dominate Jacob’s prophecies concerning the twelve tribes of Israel, the prophecies into which all of Genesis flows and from which all subsequent biblical history issues.¹²⁵

Judah and Joseph in Genesis 49:8. Significantly, this Joseph-Judah association climaxes in Genesis 49:8: “Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down before you.” Jacob depicts the coming Judahite with imagery that closely resembles the life of Joseph. Judah’s brothers will praise him and even “bow down” (חונה) before him—the same word used three times of the brothers’ obeisance to Joseph in the dreams (Gen 37:7, 9, 10) and

99–108.

¹²³Several commentators erroneously refer to this as the longest speech in Genesis. See Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 134; Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 569; Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 561. Jacob’s prophecy, however, in Gen 49:1–27 is 268 words, and Abraham’s servant’s speech in Gen 24:24–39 is 239 words. Judah’s speech is 218 words, making it the third longest.

¹²⁴Smith, “The Central Role of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 167.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 169–170.

another three times when they actually bow before him (Gen 42:4; 43:26, 28).¹²⁶ Indeed, the image of eleven brothers “bowing” to their royal sibling in Genesis 49:8 reads like a summary of the preceding Joseph story. This similarity is deliberate. Joseph is a “narrative prefiguration” of Judah's seed.¹²⁷ In other words, the first frame of reference the original audience would use to interpret the phrase would be the story of Joseph. Should those readers ask what the coming Judahite will look like, they have an answer provided in Genesis 49:8—he will look like Joseph.¹²⁸

While this Josephite imagery in the blessing on Judah can seem unexpected initially, after review, Genesis 49:8 is clearly the climax of the Joseph-Judah juxtaposition that begins as early as chapter 37. Sailhamer, one of the few scholars, to

¹²⁶I came to this conclusion independent of Smith’s excellent work on the Joseph story. Smith, however, also argues that Gen 49:8 is part of the literary interplay between Joseph and Judah. Further, Smith sees this as part of the “transformation” of favoritism from Joseph at the beginning of the story to Judah at the end (Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 169–70).

¹²⁷I have adopted the language of “narrative prefiguration” from Michael Shepherd, *Daniel in the Context of the Hebrew Bible*, SBL SBL 123 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 13. Shepherd’s summation of the Joseph story and its relationship to Gen 49:8 is insightful and worth reproducing: “Throughout the narrative, Joseph stands as the Spirit-filled source of life for all the land (Gen 41:38–57). His dream in which his brothers bow to him (Gen 37:7–8) finds fulfillment in Egypt (Gen 42:6, 9; 43:26) and connects him to what was said to Jacob in Gen 27:29: ‘be a lord to your brothers, that the sons of your mother may bow down to you.’ By means of this the author sets forth a pre-figuration of the future messianic kingdom from Judah to whom the brothers will bow (Gen 49:8). The poem in Genesis 49 highlights Judah (Gen 49:8–12) and Joseph (Gen 49:22–26) by the amount of text devoted to them in contrast to the other brothers. It is no surprise that Joseph—the main character of the preceding narratives—figures so prominently in this poem. As for Judah, he appears as the main character in the Judah and Tamar narrative of Gen 38, inserted so curiously between the otherwise continuous narratives of Genesis 37 and 39. Judah also steps in the place of the firstborn, Reuben, in the course of the Joseph narratives (Gen 37:21–22, 26–27, 29–30; 42:37; 43:3–4, 8–10), and his offering of himself as a substitute for Benjamin leads to the climax of the first half of the story (Gen 44:16–34). Thus, Judah appears in Genesis 49 as the one from whom the messianic king will come, and Joseph stands as a pre-figuration of this individual through whom the blessing will be restored.”

¹²⁸Pirson notes other verbal similarities: “There is a strange phenomenon to be seen in Jacob’s prediction about Judah. In his words to Judah, he uses the verbs חוה (‘bow down’, v. 8), טרף (‘tear’, v. 9), אסר (‘bind’, v. 11) as well as the noun גפן (‘vine’, v. 11). These words are encountered elsewhere, but in all of these instances they were used in connection with Joseph.” Pirson then notes, “הוה in 37:7, 9, 12 (cf. when the brothers come to see Joseph in Egypt and bow down before him); טרף in 37:33; 44:28; אסר (qal) in 39:20; 40:3, 5; 42:24; 46:29; גפן in 40:9, 10” (Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams*, 128). These linguistic points of contact are indeed suggestive, given the literary relationship between Joseph and Judah throughout the story and the strong connection between Gen 49:8 and Gen 37, 42–45. Further, many of these words appear in only these instances in Genesis. Perhaps these linguistic points of contact further color the Judahite blessing with Joseph imagery. I am skeptical, however, as to how strong these linguistic connections are. For example, טרף is also used in the blessing of Benjamin (49:27). Further, the binding of the Judahite’s foal to the vine (49:11) seems to bear little meaningful connection to the binding of Joseph in prison (40:3) or Joseph’s binding of Simeon (42:24).

comment on the connection between this prophecy and the preceding narrative, summarizes it well:

It is difficult not to see in this statement an intentional allusion to the dream of Joseph (37:10) in which his father's sons would come to bow down before him. In other words, that which was to happen to Joseph, and did happen in the course of the narrative (e.g., 42:6), has been picked up by way of this image and transferred to the future of the house of Judah. That which happened to Joseph is portrayed as a picture of that which would happen to Judah "in the last days" (49:1).¹²⁹

Moses' association of Joseph and Judah is particularly fecund for a biblical theology of the Joseph narrative. Even if, as some scholars claim, Gen 49:8–12 is not messianic,¹³⁰ the point remains the same. Moses patterns the life of the future royal seed of Israel on the life of Joseph. Joseph is the *type* of king Israel will see again. As Alexander notes:

The existence of close parallels between Joseph and the future king anticipated by the writer of Genesis is a natural consequence of their both belonging to the same 'seed'. As we have noted above, there is running through Genesis the idea that progeny will resemble its progenitor. If a future king is to arise from the main line of 'seed' in Genesis, then it is to be expected that he will resemble his predecessors. However, it is apparent that for the writer of Genesis the achievements of this future king will far surpass those of his ancestors.¹³¹

By drawing a typological line from Joseph to the future king from Judah,

¹²⁹Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 235. Other scholars have noted the relationship but do so in passing or with limited biblical-theological reflection. In fact, these words from Sailhamer are the sum total of his commentary on the relationship between Joseph and the messianic Judahite. Shepherd's observations have been noted above. Stone argues along the same lines in a footnote. He writes, "Joseph is a type of the ruler to come from the line of Judah. . . . The image invoked by Joseph's dreams sets the stage for Joseph's rule, playing a central role in its culmination. Transferring this image to Judah's blessing may suggest that in the latter days a ruler will arise from Judah who will look like Joseph" (Stone, "Joseph in the Likeness of Adam," 69).

Hamilton also notices the relationship only in passing. "Genesis closes with promises of a king from the line of Judah, in the splendor of Joseph reigning over Egypt, a pattern of the coming seed of the woman, seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth have been blessed" (James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 89). See also short references to this association in T. Desmond Alexander, "Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis," 36–37. Wenham notes, "'Your father's sons will bow down to you,' just as earlier they had bowed down to Joseph (cf. 37:7, 9; 42:6; 43:26; 43:28)" but does not provide any further commentary or mention the significance of this observation (Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 16–50* [Dallas: Word Books, 1994], 476). Also Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 91.

¹³⁰Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 232. See Alexander's analysis and response to Westermann (Alexander, "Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis," 34–36).

¹³¹Alexander, "Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis," 37.

Moses explicitly folds the Joseph narrative into Israel’s larger story, which will culminate with the Messiah. This association retrospectively informs our reading of the story. To ensure that his readers see Joseph as a royal figure with eschatological significance, Moses now makes that point plainly. The account of Joseph is not an end in itself. It is a pattern for God’s work in the future.

In short, Jacob’s prophecy is the most explicit evidence from Genesis that Joseph should be read typologically—his life is a pattern of things to come. Genesis 49:8 crystallizes his biblical-theological significance. This text effectively “eschatologizes” the preceding Joseph narrative. The king from the line of Judah will be *Joseph redivivus*—the Joseph of “the last days.”

Genesis 49:8 may also allude to another royal figure in Genesis. Whereas the first and third lines of Genesis 49:8 employ imagery from the Joseph story to describe the coming king, the second line may also faintly echo Genesis 3:15 with the words “your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies.” No verbal parallels exist between this text and the *protoevangelium*, but the image of a king who overcomes his enemy through violent, personal conflict (hand on the neck) parallels the warfare described in Genesis 3:15 (heel crushing the head). This association would certainly not be unexpected. Throughout Genesis, Moses has meticulously traced the lineage of the royal seed of Genesis 3:15 through Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, culminating in Genesis 49:8–12.¹³² As a result, while Genesis 49:8 may further develop earlier “seed” promises in Genesis, the promised Judahite seed is still the same hoped-for conqueror mentioned as far back as Genesis 3:15. Further, as Alexander notes in tracing the promise of a royal seed through Genesis, “the members of the family line often resemble each other.”¹³³ Readers should thus expect similarities between the seed of the woman, Seth, Noah,

¹³²Alexander, “From Adam to Judah”; idem, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis”; idem, “Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis.”

¹³³Alexander, “Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis,” 24.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and the coming Judahite.

Inner-biblical exegesis of Genesis 49:8–12 in Numbers 24 (which contains the very next instance of Moses’ use of “the last days,” [Num 24:14]) appears to confirm this conclusion. In Numbers 24, Moses records that Balaam identifies the king of Genesis 49:8–12 (cf. Num 24:9) with the enigmatic serpent-crushing seed of Genesis 3:15 (Num 24:17). This figure, who embodies the promises of the Abrahamic covenant (Num 24:9) will conquer Israel’s enemies, making the people of God an Edenic paradise (Num 24:5–9).¹³⁴ If it is the case that Gen 49:8 contains allusions both to Gen 3:15 and the figure of Joseph, Jacob depicts the coming Judahite with imagery from the first and last kingly figures of Genesis, perhaps indicating that this new king will be the summation of the royal hope that runs throughout Genesis.

Joseph and the Promise of Seed

The “Seed” Theme in Genesis

As already noted in my discussion of the *toledot* formula, family lines are enormously important in Genesis. In fact, the word זרע is a *Leitwort* in Genesis, appearing 59 times despite only showing up 171 times in the rest of the OT (including the Aramaic equivalent in Dan 2:43).

Like the theme of kingship, the theme of “seed” (i.e. numerous offspring) extends as far back as the creation account. Adam’s royal and priestly duties included populating the earth with image-bearers (Gen 1:28). By having children, Adam would extend God’s reign and visible glory to the far reaches of the earth. By becoming one flesh, Adam and Eve engage in an eschatological pursuit—the creation of a people that reflect the image and glory of the creator.

In fact, the climactic “blessing-commission” of Genesis 1:28 is paradigmatic

¹³⁴Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 113–17; Hamilton, “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” 263–66; Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 92–102.

for understanding all of Genesis. God’s intention for humanity is the global proliferation of image-bearers.¹³⁵ Thus Genesis 1:28 functions as the Bible’s first “Great Commission.”¹³⁶ In the Edenic state, reproduction was the central component needed for fulfilling God’s eschatological program. After the Fall, however, the proliferation of “kingdom” seed can only come through the redeemed line of promise and, even then, only through great difficulty. In a Genesis 3 world, obstacles litter the path of seed-bearing. Even more, as Genesis 3:15 intimates, serpentine assaults will imperil the seed’s survival. For God to fulfill his promises, the covenant seed must not only prosper but be preserved through many dangers.

Adam’s failure in his confrontation with the serpent not only corrupts the quality of the image but also makes reproduction difficult. The hope for numerous offspring is curtailed by Yahweh’s words of judgment against the woman, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children” (Gen 3:16). As Turner observes, “In [Gen] 1:28, humans had been commanded to ‘multiply’ . . . in 3:16 what actually multiplies . . . is ‘your pain in childbirth.’”¹³⁷ This minor chord reverberates throughout Genesis as barrenness plagues the women of the covenant (Gen 16:2; 25:21;

¹³⁵I have adopted the language of blessing commission from DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 226. Depending on the work of Cynthia Miller, DeRouchie notes that the command is framed as a blessing since “introductory speech frames will often include an additional finite verb before the primary verb of saying in order to characterize the type of speech that is made. Here the commission to fill and oversee the earth is framed as a divine blessing, which throughout Scripture is always dependent on God to fulfill” (DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 227; cf. Cynthia L. Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis*, HSM 55 [Atlanta: Scholars, 1996], 51–52, 186, 192–94; idem, “Discourse Functions of Quotative Frames in Biblical Hebrew,” in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What It Is and What It Offers*, ed. W. R. Bodine, SBLSS [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995], 155–82). For more on the notion that Genesis 1:26–28 as the climax of Gen 1:1–2:3, see Derouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 226 and Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 56–58.

¹³⁶Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 57.

¹³⁷Laurence A. Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis*, JSOTSup 96 (London: JSOT Press, 1990), 23–24; The connection between 1:28 and 3:16 may exceed mere thematic correspondence. Kim argues that “the use of *אֶרְבָּה אֶרְבָּה* (‘I will surely multiply’) in Gen 3:16 suggests an allusion to the *רָבָה* (‘multiply’) in Gen 1:28,” particularly given how the *hiphil* form of the word is used throughout Genesis (Mitchell M. Kim, “The Blessing of the Curse: Fulfilling Genesis 1:28 in a Context of Suffering” [PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2010], 42).

Gen 29:31).¹³⁸

Yet in spite of, and even through, these barren wombs, the eschatological hope of creation lives on both in the commands and corresponding promises of Yahweh. Adam's commission to "be fruitful and multiply" (פרו ורבו) passes through Noah (Gen 9:1; 9:7) to the patriarchs Abraham (Gen 12:2; 17: 2, 6, 8, 16; 22:18), Isaac (Gen 26:3–4, 24), and Jacob (28:3–4, 14; 35:11–12). As we might expect, the command to produce numerous offspring is transposed into a promise of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:2; 17:6; etc.).¹³⁹ Whereas Yahweh once said, "be fruitful and multiply," in the Abrahamic covenant he says, "I will multiply you exceedingly . . . I will make you exceedingly fruitful" (Gen 17:2, 6).

This promise develops slowly through the first three quarters of Genesis. God promises in Genesis 12 that Abraham will sire a great nation. Yet by the time of his death Abraham has only one son in the covenant line, who himself will die with only one son in the covenant line. Isaac and Jacob, therefore, function as downpayments on the promise, giving hope for future fulfillment. But even as Jacob bears twelve sons (29:31–30:24), the question remains as to how his fledgling family will flourish into a nation in light of the constant threats that imperil their proliferation, both internal (family conflict) and external (famine).

Joseph and the Creation of a New Humanity

Preservation and proliferation. Once again the story of Joseph changes the

¹³⁸Kim, "The Blessing of the Curse," 63–65; James M. Hamilton, "A Biblical Theology of Motherhood," *Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 2, no. 2 (2012): 6–13.

¹³⁹For a full discussion, see Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 46–58. Other scholars have also commented on the transfer of the Gen 1:28 through Noah to the Patriarchs. See N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 21–26. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 94–95. Treat, *The Crucified King*, 57. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 112–13. Kaminski, *From Noah to Israel*, 10–14. Ancient Jewish interpreters also recognized the echo of Gen 1:28 in the commissions and blessings given to Noah and Abraham. See *Midr. Tanh. Gen 3.5*; *Midr. Tanh. Yelammedenu Gen 2:12*.

melody of Genesis from the music of promise to that of fulfillment. Through the ministry of Joseph, the Abrahamic hope of nationhood is first realized. In this sense, Joseph catalyzes God's creation of new humanity.

The theme of preservation of the seed marks Joseph's ministry to his family and characterizes Joseph's own self-understanding.¹⁴⁰ In Genesis 45:5–8, a rare moment of theological interpretation from within the story, Joseph informs his brothers (and readers) of the redemptive-historical significance of the events of his life.¹⁴¹

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt (Gen 45:5–8).

The primary theme of Joseph's statement is God's superintending providence over all human affairs, a theme that will reappear more concisely in Genesis 50:20: "What you meant for evil, God meant for good."¹⁴² Joseph emphasizes divine providence three times in his speech in Genesis 45, each time with increasing intensity and theological specificity.

The third time, Joseph not only affirms that God sent him to Egypt but even downplays his brothers' role. He is eager to highlight God's sovereign providence. Climactically, in Genesis 45:8b, Joseph explains that God not only "sent" him but even

¹⁴⁰For a list of publications that see preservation through God's providence as perhaps the dominant theme of the Joseph story, see n. 9 in this chapter.

¹⁴¹Some scholars question whether Joseph's interpretation of his destiny is shared by Moses or God himself. Miscall, "The Jacob and Joseph Story as Analogies," 31; Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams*, 138; David Clines, *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible*, JSOTSup 205 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 195. Also see throughout Fung, *Victim and Victimizer*. The problem with this position is that it fails to reckon with later biblical affirmation of Joseph's words (cf. Ps 105:17–24).

¹⁴²This point is even further highlighted by comparing Pharaoh's words in Gen 41:41 ("I have set you over all the land of Egypt") with Joseph's in Gen 45:8 ("God . . . made me . . . ruler over all the land of Egypt"). For this insight I am indebted to Greg Gilbert.

“established” (שים) him in his positions of power.¹⁴³

Table 1: Theological interpretation in Genesis 45:5–8

Verse 5	God sent me...to preserve life	למחיה שלחני אלהים
Verse 7	God sent me...to preserve a remnant	וישלחני אלהים...לשום ... שארית
Verse 8	It was not you who sent me here, but God [sent me] and placed me [followed by 3 things]	לא-אתם שלחתם אתי הנה כי האלהים [שלחני] וישימני...

Joseph also escalates the reason God sent him to Egypt. First, he says God sent him merely to preserve life (Gen 45:5). Then he adds that God sent him, more specifically, to preserve a “remnant” (Gen 45:7). Finally, he explains that God sent him in order to establish him in his position of power over Egypt.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³Joseph’s statement that God made him a “Father to Pharaoh” (45:8) may also hearken back to the promise to Abraham that he would be the “father of many nations” (Gen 17:4). While many scholars take the plural “nations” in Genesis 17:4 to refer to the progeny Abraham fathered through Hagar and Keturah, others reject this notion since the same promise is repeated to Sarah in Gen 17:16 (cf. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 73; T. Desmond Alexander, “Abraham Re-assessed Theologically: The Abraham Narrative and the New Testament Understanding of Justification by Faith,” in *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12–50*, ed. R. S. Hess, G. J. Wenham, and P. E. Satterthwaite [Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1994], 17–18; Chee-Chiew Lee, “גים” in Genesis 35:11 and the Abrahamic Promise of Blessings for the Nations,” *JETS* 52, no. 3 [2009]: 473–74).

Alexander, for instance, notes that the fatherhood of Abraham does not merely refer to “natural descendants” but to any for whom Abraham is a “channel of divine blessing”—even indicating that this explains the “unusual comment that Joseph ‘was a father to Pharaoh’” (Alexander, “Abraham Re-assessed Theologically,” 17). This interpretation is certainly possible, particularly given that such a non-biological nuance of the Hebrew term אב is also reflected elsewhere in the OT (see Paul R. Williamson, *Abraham, Israel, and the Nations: The Patriarchal Promise and Its Covenantal Development in Genesis*, JSOTSup [London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 158, see the whole discussion from 157–60; cf. Christopher J. H. Wright, “אב,” in *NIDOTTE*, ed. Willem VanGemeren, [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 219–23).

¹⁴⁴The literary features of Joseph’s speech suggest a sophisticated three-part structure. Verses 3–4 are bookended with the phrase “I am Joseph” (אני יוסף). Verses 5–8 each begin with the exclamation “now” (עתה) which, in conjunction with the shared language of verse 5–8, unites these verses as their own section and may suggest a chiasm. The fact that a *waw* + finite verb mainline narrative marker only occurs in verse 7 (וישלחני) may suggest verse 7 as its own line within a chiasm. Finally, verses 9–13 are bookended by the imperatives “hurry and go up” (מהרו ועלו) and “hurry and bring down” (ומהרתם והורדתם). Many of these literary features have been already noted by Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 809–10. Visually the structure looks like the following:

Joseph’s affirmation in verse 7 that God sent him to “preserve a remnant (שאריית)”¹⁴⁵ and to “keep alive . . . survivors (פליטה)” is particularly interesting given how these words are “freighted with theological significance”¹⁴⁶ in the Prophets, particularly when used in tandem (Isa 10:20; 37:32; cp. 2 Kgs 19:31; Joel 2:32). Additionally, “remnant” and “survivor” in Genesis 45:7 signify that God saves the covenant community from destruction as a sign of future hope for the nation—essentially the same idea found in the Prophets. In both the exilic era and in Genesis, Yahweh preserves a “remnant of Israel and... survivors of the house of Jacob” (Isa 10:20). The apparent connection to the prophetic corpus is so arresting that critical scholars view it as evidence of post-exilic theology’s influence on the Joseph story.¹⁴⁷

Of course, the evidence is insufficient to posit that prophetic remnant theology emerged wholly out of Genesis 45:7 or that Isaiah intends an allusion to this passage in Isaiah 10:20 or 37:32.¹⁴⁸ But given the verbal and conceptual similarities, it is not out of

Section 1

Verse 3a “I am Joseph”

Verses 3b–4a

Verse 4b “I am Joseph”

Section 2

Verse 5–6: “Now [ועתה]... God sent me... to preserve life”

Verse 7: “God sent me [וישלחני]... to preserve... a remnant”

Verse 8: “Now [ועתה], not you who sent me... but God [sent me]”

Section 3

Verse 9: “Hurry and go up”

Verses 10–13a

Verse 13b “Hurry and bring down”

If the chiasm in section 2 is indeed valid then the centrality of verse 7 in the chiasm may suggest the importance of the statement that God sent Joseph in order to preserve a “remnant.”

¹⁴⁵This is the only instance of שאריית in the Pentateuch.

¹⁴⁶Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 576.

¹⁴⁷Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 145; E. W. Heaton, “The Joseph Saga,” *The Expository Times* 59 (1947): 134–36.

¹⁴⁸The bare presence of שאריית and פליטה is insufficient to establish the presence of an allusion, particularly given that the verb שאר occurs with פליטה together in contexts clearly not related to the OT’s remnant theology (Gen 32:9). This is one reason Wenham prefers not to see any biblical theological significance to these words, preferring the translation “surviving descendant” (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 428).

the question that Genesis 45 could have easily influenced prophetic writing about God preserving a remnant—even muscling its vocabulary into the prophetic writings from time to time.

As Currid notes, God’s intention to preserve a remnant or seed “has been the primary purpose of the book of Genesis.”¹⁴⁹ God has preserved the seed through child-bearing in the face of violence (Gen 4:1–26), through an ark in the face of judgment (Gen 6:9–9:29), through divine intervention in the face of foreign corruption (Gen 12:10–20), and even through sacrifice in the face of certain death (Gen 22:1–19). Now, through Joseph, God protects the covenant line in the face of famine, a perennial enemy endangering the covenant line throughout Genesis (Gen 3:17–19; 12:10; 26:1; 42:1–2). Thus, Joseph’s use of “remnant” and “survivor” in Genesis 45:7 is, in part, an embryonic manifestation of the Old Testament’s remnant theology—a subtle foreshadowing of a theme more prominently developed in later revelation.¹⁵⁰ Also, God’s purpose “to preserve life” (v. 5 [למחיה]) and to “keep alive” (v. 7 [ולהחיות]) may correlate Joseph to Noah, the archetypal seed-preserved in Genesis. As Wenham notes, “‘to preserve’ (life) is a key phrase in the flood story (6:19–20; cf. 7:3; 50:20), implying that Joseph is like Noah, an agent in the divine saving plan.”¹⁵¹

Even aside from these biblical-theological considerations, the most basic meaning of the passage is that God preserved humanity, particularly the covenant line,

¹⁴⁹John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Genesis*, (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2003), 2:324.

¹⁵⁰Hamilton notes, “It may well be that in the deliverance of his brothers and his father Joseph perceives that far more is at stake than the mere physical survival of twelve human beings. What really survives is the plan of redemption announced first to his great grandfather. At least the reader is cognizant of that fact” (Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*, 576).

Hasel also comments, “If the essential kernel of the prophetic remnant motif is given when the election of Israel is referred to, then we have here already an inkling of the remnant motif of the eighth century prophets” (Gerhard Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1972], 159; see entire discussion 154–59).

¹⁵¹Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 428; also Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 813. See also Hasel’s analysis linking the Noah story to the remnant motif in Hasel, *The Remnant*, 135–47.

through Joseph. Joseph then instructs his brothers to bring their father and his entire family to Egypt (Gen 45:9–10) and he makes provision for the journey (Gen 45:21). Further, Joseph ensures that they will flourish in Egypt: “I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty” (Gen 45:11).¹⁵²

Genesis 46–47 explicitly focuses on the covenant promises, particularly seed and blessing.¹⁵³ These chapters are rich with covenantal language and imagery from the patriarchal narratives, particularly the introductory verses of Genesis 46. Jacob’s dream in verse 1 reintroduces theophanic communication from Yahweh, a characteristic feature of the patriarchal narratives, notably absent in the Joseph story thus far.¹⁵⁴ This is God’s third (and final) appearance to Jacob in a dream and notably each dream highlights the Abrahamic seed promise. As Smith explains:

When God first spoke to Jacob, he was alone, *en route* to Padan Aram to escape the wrath of Esau. In the dream that He gave Jacob, He promised that his seed would be “as the dust of the earth” (Gen. 28:14). The next time Yahweh appears to Jacob, the patriarch is again in Bethel, this time *en route* to his father’s home in Hebron. Similarly God tells him that “a nation and a company of nations” would come from his offspring (Gen. 35:11). Unlike Genesis 28, however, which presents Jacob alone, Genesis 35 concludes with a list of Jacob’s descendants, the twelve sons of Israel (vv. 22b–26). The next time God appears is Genesis 46:2–4, when Jacob is in Beersheba, *en route* to Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan. Again Yahweh reiterates the promise that Jacob would become a “great nation,” but this time the dream is followed by twenty verses listing not twelve but *seventy descendants*. As

¹⁵²These words in and of themselves show that Joseph preserves the line and fulfills the seed promise. As Wilson points out, God’s seed promise demands not only the multiplication of Abraham’s progeny, but even more fundamentally, its “survival . . . despite dangers and threats” (Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 227).

¹⁵³As Wilson notes the final five chapters of the Joseph story focus extensively, among other topics, on the Abrahamic promises (ibid., 183).

¹⁵⁴“This vision occurs not simply at a turning point in Jacob’s life; it is also the last time God is recorded as speaking to the patriarchs. The next recorded revelation takes place in the time of Moses. This, then, is the culmination of all the promises made to the patriarchs, and it picks up motifs from other great moments of revelation (e.g., 15:1–21; 17:1–21; 22:1–18). God, as it were, reminds Jacob of all the promises made to him in his own lifetime and to his forefathers Abraham and Isaac before him” (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 440). Lohfink argues that this incident shares a similar literary pattern to other theophanies in Gen 22:1–2, 11–12; 31:11–13; Exod 3:2–13; 1 Sam 3:4–14 (Gerhard Lohfink, *Paulus vor Damaskus: Arbeitsweisen der neueren Bibelwissenschaft dargestellt an den Texten Apg 9:1–19, 22:3–21, 26:9–18*, SBS 4 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1966), 53–60).

Jacob journeys into Egypt, he is not yet the great nation that Yahweh has promised he will one day be. But the growth of his seed in Genesis from zero, to twelve, to seventy, provides a compelling argument for trusting that what remains unfulfilled in the Abrahamic covenant will most certainly come to pass in every detail.¹⁵⁵

Beersheba, the location of the vision, is also profoundly important in the patriarchal narratives. Abraham resided in Beersheba when God told him to sacrifice Isaac and also returned to live there at the conclusion of that ordeal (Gen 22:19). Both Abraham and Isaac were at Beersheba when they built altars and “called on the name of the Lord” (Gen 21:32–33; 26:23–25, 32–33).¹⁵⁶ Jacob follows suit, offering sacrifices at Beersheba, the text notes, “to the God of his father Isaac” (Gen 46:1)—another suggestive annotation drawing attention to the patriarchs. Also in Genesis 46:2 is a double call (“Jacob, Jacob”) from Yahweh followed by יהגני, which echoes the double call of Abraham in Genesis 22:11—the only other name repetition in Genesis.¹⁵⁷

In Jacob’s dream, God recommits himself to his covenantal seed promise. He assures Jacob about the decision to go into Egypt (Gen 46:3)¹⁵⁸ and indicates that “there”—in Egypt(!)—God will begin to fulfill his promise to make Jacob’s line “into a great nation” (גוי גדול). This phrasing recalls the promise God made when he first spoke to Abraham in Genesis 12:2.¹⁵⁹ Alter’s conclusion is right: “both the language and the action of this whole scene are framed as an emphatic recapitulation of the earlier Patriarchal tales.”¹⁶⁰ Further, in verse 4 God promises his presence with the patriarch (“I

¹⁵⁵Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 283–84.

¹⁵⁶See discussion in Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 96–103. See also discussion in A. Pagolu, *The Religion of the Patriarchs*, JSOTsup 277 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 62ff.

¹⁵⁷Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 184–85; Alter, *Genesis*, 273; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 441.

¹⁵⁸A needed assurance, perhaps, given Yahweh’s strict commands to Isaac in Gen 26:1–5 against traveling to Egypt.

¹⁵⁹Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 156; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 353; Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 185.

¹⁶⁰Alter, *Genesis*, 273. Later Alter notes again, “The language of the dream-vision strongly echoes the language of the covenantal promises to Jacob’s father and grandfather” (ibid). Similarly White, “[Gen 46:1–4] stitches the Joseph narrative to the previous unifying theme of the history of the promise”

myself will go down with you to Egypt”) and to bring him up again to Canaan. Thus the three-step drum beat of land, seed, and blessing continues. Here, however, Yahweh reveals that the multiplication of Israel’s progeny will begin *outside* Canaan.¹⁶¹

Yahweh’s rationale for sending Israel to Egypt in order to multiply may be alluded to later in the Joseph story. Genesis 46:33–34 indicates that the Egyptians considered the Israelites an abomination because they were shepherds. Thus, unlike the Canaanites, the Egyptians would not likely seek out Israelite sons and daughters for marriage, nor would the Israelites be able to turn to the Egyptians for spouses. Safeguarded, then, by the prejudices of the Egyptians, Israel would develop as a nation without the dangers posed by intermarriage with foreign peoples. Yahweh thus sent Israel was sent into the womb of Egypt where they could safely develop away from foreign cultural influences.¹⁶²

The rest of Genesis 46 is an outworking of God’s promise to make Jacob a “great nation.” Verses 5–7 establish this point generally, while verses 8–27 accomplish the same task in greater detail. Almost each line in the chapter makes some reference to the seed’s preservation and proliferation.

In verse 5, for example, Jacob is carried in Pharaoh’s wagons not only by the “sons of Israel” but by “their little ones (טַפּוֹת) and their wives.” The reference to “little ones” (טַפּוֹת) is particularly interesting given its previous usage. In Genesis 43, after Reuben’s failed attempts to persuade his father, Judah pleads with Jacob for permission to return to Egypt, “that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones (טַפּוֹת).” (v 8). Later, after the brothers reconcile, Pharaoh unwittingly honors Judah’s

(Hugh C. White, *Narration and Discourse in the Book of Genesis* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 237.

¹⁶¹See also Dempster's comments, “The aged patriarch is promised that in exile the family will mushroom from the size of a small family into a huge nation. God will then bring the nation back and re-establish it in the land of promise” (Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 89).

¹⁶²For this insight I am indebted to Dr. Peter Gentry.

concern for the covenant line by providing wagons to bring the “little ones” (לטפכם) safely to Egypt. Moses then records the transport of “the little ones” (Gen 46:5 [טפם]) and Joseph’s provision for them in Egypt (Gen 47:12 [הטה]). Finally, when Jacob dies and his sons worry about Joseph’s intentions for the family, Joseph again pledges to provide for “the little ones” of the family (Gen 50:21 [טפכם]).¹⁶³

Verses 6–7 also highlight the seed theme, indicating that those who traveled to Egypt were “Jacob, and all his offspring with him, his sons, and his sons’ sons with him, his daughters, and his sons’ daughters. All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt.” Moses here uses זרע as the bookends around a chiasmic construction. The *waw*-initial ויבאו in verse 6b continues the mainline narrative, indicating that Jacob went to Egypt with his “seed,” whereas the asyndetic verse 7 provides subordinate (offline) information further describing the זרע. The resulting chiasm highlights that Jacob’s sons and daughters who come to Egypt are part of the seed promise, the nascent “great nation” God promised in verse 3.¹⁶⁴

After verse 7, the text names all the descendants who journeyed with the Jacob to Egypt (Gen 46:8–27). This section begins yet another dual mention of offspring: “These are the names of the descendants of Israel (בני־ישראל [cf. verse 5]),¹⁶⁵ who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons (ובניו)” (46:8).¹⁶⁶ As Smith notes, “In Genesis 46:3, God promised to make Jacob a ‘great nation.’ In the list of Genesis 46:8–27, Moses demonstrates that before Jacob even reached Egypt, the fulfillment of that promise was

¹⁶³זרע is used only three other times in Genesis (34:29; 47:24; 50:8).

¹⁶⁴“The double mention of זרע, ‘his descendants’ (vv 6–7), a word used elsewhere in the patriarchal narratives of the promised offspring, underlines God’s fidelity to his covenant” (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 442).

¹⁶⁵Both v. 5 and v. 8, which introduce respective sections of chap. 46, begin with the phrase בני־ישראל, marking the primary interest of the chapter.

¹⁶⁶Gen 46:8 is recapitulated in Exod 1:1.

already well under way.”¹⁶⁷

A Jacob and all his seed came with him came to Egypt	A ויבאו מצרימה יעקב וכל־זרעו אתו
B His sons and his sons’ sons	B בניו ובני בניו
B' His daughters and his sons daughters	B' בנותיו ובנות בניו
A' [Jacob] brought all his seed with him to Egypt	A' וכל־זרעו הביא אתו מצרימה

Figure 3: Genesis 46:6b–7 chiasm

The colophon at the end of the genealogy totals Jacob’s descendants at “seventy” (Gen 46:27)—a highly suggestive annotation. Dempster notes, “remarkably, this list includes seventy members, the same number as the nations enumerated in the Table of Nations (Gen 10), which were eventually dispersed across the earth. Here is Abraham’s new humanity, a new ‘Table of Nations,’ called into being to restore the nations to the fulfillment of the divine purpose.”¹⁶⁸ Yahweh is both preserving (Gen 45:5–8) and multiplying Israel. Jacob’s descendants are emerging as a nation. Under Joseph, the promise of offspring begins to be fulfilled.

Genesis 46 significantly slows down the pace of the story at just the moment we might expect it to race to its emotional resolution, the reunion of Joseph and Jacob. Verses 5–7 record in some detail the journey of Jacob and his family to Egypt while

¹⁶⁷Smith, “The Presentation of Judah in Genesis 37–50,” 283.

¹⁶⁸Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 89. So also Sailhamer, “The list of names in these verses appears to have been selected to total ‘seventy’ (47:27). It can hardly go without notice that the number of nations in Genesis 10 is also ‘seventy.’ Just as the ‘seventy nations’ represent all the descendants of Adam, so now the ‘seventy sons’ represent all the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the children of Israel. . . . Thus the writer has gone to great lengths to portray the new nation of Israel as a new humanity and Abraham as a second Adam. The blessing that is to come through Abraham and his seed is a restoration of the original blessing of Adam, a blessing which was lost in the fall” (Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 225). See also, Thomas, *These are the Generations*, 109. Wilson also rightly notes that the number 70 “appears to be symbolic,” though he doubts any connection to Genesis 10 since it never explicitly mentions the number seventy (Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 186).

Verses 8–27 “amplify the general information given in verses 6–7, and thus do not serve to advance the storyline at all.”¹⁶⁹ The genealogy does highlight the seed, but what purpose does it play in the larger Joseph story? Wilson rightly explains:

The fact that [the genealogy] immediately follows verses 1–7, which were bursting with echoes of the patriarchal promises, suggests that this element in the narrative is being reinforced. The implied reader has been immersed in Joseph’s rise to power, and wise use of it, coupled with his scheme to achieve reconciliation with his brothers. Now the editor is drawing back from this specific focus in order to show the larger picture of God’s purposes for the world through his covenant people.¹⁷⁰

Genesis 46–50 shows how Joseph relates to Genesis’ larger story of creation and covenant. Covenantal and patriarchal themes emerge quite prominently in Joseph’s story, but only *after* the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers. This order is significant. Fraternal conflict has plagued the covenant family and endangered the seed promise as far back as Cain and Abel. Joseph’s reconciliation with his brothers, however, triggers an advance in covenant history. God, by his gracious providence, undoes the fraternal hostility impeding the success of his promises. As a result, God begins to fulfill his promises and the covenant seed flourishes. This narrative progression “makes it clear that more is at stake than simply the fate of a wandering family.”¹⁷¹ In Joseph God reverses the status quo of violence against the covenant line. The reconciliation of the family is a demonstration that God is reversing the curse, turning evil in on itself, and advancing his cause in the world—as a result the covenant seed blossoms.¹⁷²

The focus on covenant fulfillment in Genesis 46–50 may also reveal why

¹⁶⁹Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 186.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Ibid., 187.

¹⁷²Also Wilson, “The literary effect of including this and the following section is very revealing. While the implied reader would expect Joseph and Jacob to be reunited quickly after 45:28, the journey (and the travelers) are described in great detail. This inevitably alerts the reader to the twin function of Jacob’s descent to Egypt. On a family plane, it enables the reuniting of a fractured family. However, the detail and patriarchal overtones of 46:1–27 also serve to recall the broader context of the Abrahamic promises before Joseph meets Jacob. As the story comes to a conclusion, both the resolution of the family conflict and the partial fulfillment of the broader promises are coming to a climax” (Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 185).

Moses adopts a largely secular perspective in Genesis 37–45. The absence of Yahweh’s name and lack of theological interpretation heighten the sense of drama as readers wonder whether the covenant line will be able to recover from what is perhaps the greatest set of challenges it has faced thus far: family violence, separation, famine, and exile. Joseph’s provision and reconciliation in Genesis 45 resolve all of these problems, undoing the tensions of the previous eight chapters. This resolution, in turn, triggers a return to a pattern of narration more consistent with earlier sections in Genesis, including explicit mentions of the Abrahamic covenant, patriarchal blessings, more frequent use of covenant terminology, and theophanies.

This focus on the seed promise intensifies in Genesis 47:27. The preceding narrative records the devastation of the famine. As Genesis 47:13 indicates, “There was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine.” Through his careful planning, Joseph not only saves Egypt and Canaan, but also acquires more territory for Pharaoh (47:13–26; especially 47:25).¹⁷³ Even in the midst of famine, God brings life and prosperity to Israel. Counter-intuitively, the Israelites increase even as the curses of Genesis 3 press against them in full force. Joseph’s planning and God’s blessing cause Israel to prosper.

Significantly Moses describes the state of the Israelites in Goshen with words reminiscent of the Garden of Eden: “thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly [ויפרו ויברו מאד]” (Gen 47:27). Up to this point, the word pair “fruitful and multiply” (פרה ורבה) has either been imperative or promissory (see Table 2 below).¹⁷⁴ In other words,

¹⁷³See Brian Sigmon’s argument that Gen 47:13–26 is a “slideshow,” a picture of what might have happened to Jacob and his family were it not for Joseph’s intervention (Brian Sigmon, “Shadowing Jacob’s Journey: Gen 47:13–26 as a Sideshadow,” *BibInt* 19 [2011]: 454–70).

¹⁷⁴This table excludes irrelevant references to פרה and רבה, such as when God commands animals to multiply (Gen 1:22; 8:17) or promises fruitfulness to the line of Ishmael (Gen 17:20).

God has either commanded people to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7; 35:11) or promised that they will do so (16:10; 17:2, 6; 22:17; 26:4, 24). But now, for the very first time, fruitfulness and multiplication is a reality—an indicative. Furthermore, under Joseph’s reign, Abraham’s seed not only flourishes, but does so exceedingly (מאד).

Table 2: פרה and רבה in Genesis

1:28	Imperative
9:1	Imperative
9:7	Imperative
16:10 (רבה only)	Promise
17:2, 6	Promise
22:17 (רבה only)	Promise
26:4 (רבה only)	Promise
26:24 (רבה only)	Promise
28:3	Benediction
35:11	Imperative
48:4	Promise
47:27	Indicative

What began as a command to Adam transformed into a promise to Abraham and has now become a reality. In Genesis 47:27, the Israelites participate in the long-awaited fulfillment of the commission originally given to Adam in Genesis 1:28 and in the promises restated to Abraham. Through the mediation and leadership of Joseph—the royal seed—the people of God flourish into a new humanity. The Adamic commission to multiply image bearers begins, not in the garden, but in exile—and this because of the

reign and provision of the rejected, royal son.¹⁷⁵

At the same time, other narrative features show that Genesis 1:28 is only partially fulfilled—it is an anticipatory fulfillment. God restates his seed promise to Jacob at Luz (Gen 48:4) revealing that something more is still expected. Additionally, as Kaminski notes, “nowhere is it stated in Genesis that they have ‘filled the land’ (cf. Gen 1:28; 9:1)”¹⁷⁶—a narrative development that does in fact occur in Exodus 1:7.

Nevertheless, the language of the “be fruitful and multiply” blessing-commission bookends Genesis. In Genesis 1:28 we see the initial command, and in Genesis 47:27 we find its fulfillment, though presented such that readers expect more to come. Kaminski, who traces the development of Genesis 1:28 throughout Genesis, summarizes the evidence well: “Genesis 47:27 may be seen, therefore, as the first explicit statement that the primaeval commands to ‘be fruitful and multiply’ (Gen 1:28; 9:1; cf. Gen 35:11) have been executed. Thus we may conclude that Gen 47:27 marks the initial fulfillment of the promise of increase and of the primaeval commands.”¹⁷⁷

Joseph’s crucial role in fulfilling the seed promise is confirmed by later biblical authors. Psalm 105, depending on Joseph’s interpretation of his own story in Genesis 45:4–8, records that Yahweh “sent” Joseph ahead of the Israelites (Ps 105:17), presumably to preserve them through the famine (Ps 105:16, 20–22). As a result, “Israel came to Egypt . . . and the LORD made his people very fruitful [ויפר] and made them stronger than their foes” (Ps 105:23–24). The Psalmist thus identifies Joseph as Yahweh’s agent, preserving and prospering the seed of Jacob in the midst of famine. Joseph’s preserving influence on Israel is also highlighted in Exodus 1:8, when a new Pharaoh oppresses Israel because he “did not know Joseph.” Even the memory of Joseph

¹⁷⁵See similar observations by Stone, “Joseph in the Likeness of Adam,” 70.

¹⁷⁶Kaminski, *From Noah to Israel*, 123.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

in the court of Egypt prospered Israel. Once that memory faded, the blessing and prosperity Joseph mediated to his family vanished.

Seed conflict and sibling rivalry. Another major feature of the Genesis narrative as it pertains to the preservation and proliferation of the seed is the motif of conflict between seeds. The earliest expression of this “seed conflict” occurs in Genesis 3:15, where God indicates that a seed of the woman and a seed of the serpent will be at odds to the point of violence. As already discussed, while this passage ultimately points to a singular seed of the woman who will undo the serpent’s work, “within the overall context of Genesis the ‘seed of the woman’ refers to those who are righteous, whereas the ‘seed of the serpent’ denotes those who are wicked.”¹⁷⁸

The conflict between the two seeds develops between brothers in the very next chapter. Cain, the seed of the serpent, kills Abel, the seed of the woman.¹⁷⁹ Given the close linguistic parallels between Genesis 3 and 4¹⁸⁰ and the fact that the next *toledot* section does not begin until after Genesis 4, the Cain and Abel story is paradigmatic for Genesis’ portrayal of the effects of the fall. Many of Genesis’ major motifs originate in this episode—particularly sibling rivalry, jealousy, and the favoring of the younger son.

This sibling conflict is recapitulated numerous times in Genesis.¹⁸¹ Ishmael mocks the younger and favored son Isaac, leading to an estrangement between the two. Jacob and Esau fight even while in the womb (Gen 25:21–23). Jacob deceives Esau, who

¹⁷⁸Alexander, *The Servant King*, 18.

¹⁷⁹For a defense of the notion that Cain and Abel are representative of the two seeds described in Gen 3:15, and for a general survey of the seed conflict as it is traced out in Genesis, see Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 80–86. For a survey of modern literature on sibling conflict in Genesis, see Brian Sigmon, “Between Eden and Egypt: Echoes of the Garden Narrative in the Story of Joseph and His Brothers” (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2013), 18–35.

¹⁸⁰See for instance, the analysis in Sigmon, “Between Eden and Egypt,” 120–26.

¹⁸¹Genesis also witnesses to other, more indirect, forms of sibling conflict. For instance, Shem and Japheth are set at odds with Ham. Abraham quarrels with Lot, the son of his brother Haran. Likewise, Jacob (the representative of Abraham) quarrels with Abraham’s other brother Nahor (Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 75).

in turn plots his brother's murder. Even when Jacob returns to Canaan and is greeted happily by Esau, the two are far from reconciled. Jacob lives in Canaan while Esau turns to the land of Seir. As Mathews notes, "Although no conflict occurred in patriarchal times, the attention in Genesis to Esau's future generation, the Edomites and their rulers (chap 36), reflect the trouble Israel experienced in their wilderness passage (Num 20:14–21; cp. Num 24:18; Deut 23:7)."¹⁸² Moreover, even Leah and Rachel share a rivalry that incorporates the themes of favoritism for the younger and jealousy (cf. Gen 30:1). Each of these sibling rivalries or "seed conflicts" develops the paradigmatic conflict first announced in Genesis 3:15 and then portrayed in Cain's murder of Abel. While only the Genesis 4 conflict ends in murder, the threat of fratricide against the covenant seeds looms throughout each of these conflicts.

The seed conflict between Joseph and his brothers is, thus, climactic in Genesis. As a number of commentators note, the brothers' intense animosity for Joseph evokes the first fratricidal conflict in Genesis 4.¹⁸³ Gonzales goes so far as to label Genesis 37 "Cain *Redivivus*."¹⁸⁴ He summarizes the evidence:

In both cases, the unrighteous despised the righteous because God favors the latter (4:4–5; 37:4, 5, 8, 11). As Cain's anger and hatred intensify to the point of plotting murder (4:7), so the hatred of Joseph's brothers mounts (37:4, 5, 8, 11) until it results in an assassination conspiracy (37:18–20). Cain actually murders Abel (4:8); Joseph's brothers stop short of murder and sell him into slavery (37:21–28). Yet their deed amounts to a virtual murder.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸²Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 76.

¹⁸³For a brief sample of authors who recognize evocations of Cain and Abel in Gen 37, see Dahlberg, "The Unity of Genesis," 131; Thomas Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 358; Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 222; Stone, "Joseph in the Likeness of Adam," 67–68; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 696; John L. Ronning, "The Curse on the Serpent (Genesis 3:15) in Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics" (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1997), 206; Sigmon, "Between Eden and Egypt."

¹⁸⁴Gonzales., *Where Sin Abounds*, 213.

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 219. On the notion of "virtual murder" Gonzales notes, "First, the unwarranted theft of a man's freedom and consignment of his life to slavery is treated with the same gravity in the ancient Near East as the unwarranted theft of a man's life—as a capital offense punishable by death (Exod 21:16; Deut 24:7). Compare also stipulation no. 14 in 'The Code of Hammurabi,' which reads, 'If a seignior has stolen the young son of a(nother) seignior, he shall be put to death.' *ANET*, 166. Second, one of the most painful elements of death is the prospect of being separated from those whom the person loves, especially family

Other aspects of the conflict also parallel Cain and Abel.¹⁸⁶ The word brother (חַב) is prominent in both narratives, occurring eight times in the Cain and Abel story and twenty-one times in Genesis 37. Likewise “blood” (דָּם) is also prominent in both accounts (Gen 4:11; 37:22, 26, 31–33; 42:22),¹⁸⁷ and in each account Moses “portrays fratricide as the shedding of blood, and both [accounts] use blood as evidence that death has taken place.”¹⁸⁸

These linguistic and thematic parallels weave the narrative threads of Genesis 37 to the Cain and Abel narrative, with the conflict between Joseph and his brothers becoming the climactic episode of sibling rivalry. The brothers recapitulate Cain’s fratricide in their plot to murder Joseph, while Joseph undergoes metaphorical death in the pit, narrowly avoiding actual murder.¹⁸⁹

(Gen 21:16; 23:2; 50:1; 2 Sam 12:16–18, 22; Isa 38:11, 17–19). Joseph had to suffer this pain (41:51–52), as did his father (37:34–35; 42:36, 38), at least for a time. Third, for all intents and purposes, the brothers themselves treat Joseph as if he were ‘no more’ (42:13, 32). Fourth, by ending with Joseph’s consignment to slavery in Egypt (37:36) and transitioning to the Judah-Tamar narrative (ch. 38), the narrator has left the reader with the gnawing fear that Joseph—the one son who has not yet manifested a negative character (besides Benjamin) and who, therefore, remains the most likely candidate for the blessing—has been eliminated from the picture and is ‘no more!’” (ibid., 219–20). See further discussion of metaphorical portrayals of death and resurrection in the OT below.

¹⁸⁶Sigmon posits that the brothers’ “jealousy” (Gen 37:11; וִיקְנְאוּ) may evoke the name of Cain (קַיִן), which itself is “a pun on the Hebrew word for ‘jealousy’ (קַנְאוּ)” (Sigmon, “Between Eden and Egypt,” 135). This ignores, however, Gen 4:1 which indicates that Cain comes from קַנְהָה.

¹⁸⁷דָּם only occurs three other times in Genesis, all in Gen 9:4–6. Pirson comments, “An earlier account in Genesis told about fratricide. Hence it is hardly surprising to come across words like דָּם (‘blood;’ vv. 37.22, 26), נִכְהָה (‘smite;’ v. 37.21) and הָרַג (‘kill;’ vv. 37.20, 26), that were encountered before in Gen. 4, in which chapter the one who is described as רֹעֵה (‘shepherd,’ 4.2) loses his life” (Pirson, *The Lord of the Dreams*, 61).

¹⁸⁸Sigmon, “Between Eden and Egypt,” 137. Sigmon also posits that the Cain and Abel evocation explains the vexing episode in Gen 37:15–17 where Joseph wanders in a field before being directed to his brothers by an unnamed man. In Sigmon’s estimation, Moses’ description of Joseph as “in the field” (בַּשָּׂדֶה) echoes Cain’s murder of Abel “in the field” (Gen 4:8; בַּשָּׂדֶה). Sigmon notes, “This scene does not echo the murder of Abel directly, and Joseph’s sale into slavery does not even take place at this location. The episode does, however, use the field to emphasize the fact that Joseph is alone and vulnerable. . . . In this way, Joseph’s wandering in the field just before finding his brothers resonates with the journey of Abel into the field with Cain, from which he never returned” (ibid., 137–38).

¹⁸⁹In Ps 30:4b [3b] David identifies the “pit” with death. The word בּוֹר is both the opposite of “life” and parallel with “sheol.” In addition “pit” in the rest of the Hebrew Bible is often associated or synonymous with death (Isa 14:15, 19; 38:18, Ezek 26:20; 31:16; 32:18, 23–25, 29–30; Ps 28:1; 88:5 [4], 7 [6]; Prov 1:12; 28:17). The word “pit” is also associated with prisons (Gen 41:14; Exod 12:29; Isa 24:22; Jer 37:16; Zech 9:11), which also was seen as a place of death in the ANE. Mitchell explains, “ANE prisons were underground dungeons, and so there developed a widespread association between imprisonment and death” (David C. Mitchell, “Messiah Ben Joseph in the Book of Psalms” [paper

The dramatic twist in the Joseph story is that Joseph’s wise plan to “test” his brothers (Gen 42:15–16) coupled with Judah’s repentance (Gen 44:18–34) lead to a reversal of the Cain and Abel story. As Wilson notes, “the unresolved brotherly strife of previous generations is finally overcome by Joseph’s ruse in chapters 42–45, and by his refusal to exact vengeance on his brothers after Jacob’s death (50:15–21).”¹⁹⁰ In this way, the Joseph story reverses one of the primary literary motifs in Genesis. Sibling conflict has racked the covenant family and endangered the seed since Adam and Eve’s first children. Joseph undoes this cycle of violence, but only by exercising forgiveness after his own humiliation and exaltation. In this way, Joseph is an anti-Cain. He is truly his brothers’ keeper.¹⁹¹

presented at the Inter-Collegiate Senior Old Testament Seminar, Oxford University, February 22, 2010], 7n). See also Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), 69–73.

¹⁹⁰Wilson, “The Old Testament Genealogies in Recent Research,” 222.

¹⁹¹Moses beautifully portrays the theme of reconciliation by using clothing as symbolic of narrative developments. Throughout Genesis, and in the Joseph story in particular, clothing represents deception, stature, and change of fortune (good or ill). Joseph’s robe marks Jacob’s special love for Joseph and incites his brothers’ hatred (Gen 37:3–4). Joseph’s change of fortune for the worse is marked by two “disrobing” episodes. The brothers’ stripping Joseph of his robe accompanies his descent into the pit (Gen 37:23–24). Next, Joseph’s disrobing by Potiphar’s wife marks his descent into the prison (Gen 39:12). Joseph’s fortunes change, however, when he receives a new robe at the hand of Pharaoh, once again marking a position of superiority and rank (Gen 41:42). These clothing episodes form a chiasm in the life of Joseph:

A Joseph Receives Robe
 B Joseph Disrobed
 B' Joseph Disrobed
 A' Joseph Receives Robe

As Seybold points out, these clothing episodes are part of the structural fabric of the first half of the Joseph story, marking the Joseph’s change in fortune on his journey from Canaan to Egypt (see Table A3 in appendix 2).

Clothing marks more than a change of fortune for Joseph; it also serves the same function in the lives of his brothers. Joseph gives his brothers new clothes after the story’s climactic reconciliation (Gen 45:22). As Matthews notes, “Once they have been convinced of his true identity, Joseph gives . . . each [of his brothers] gifts of new garments as evidence of his forgiveness and favor toward them. This final step brings the story full circle and provides one final use of garments as a status marker. Joseph is now in a position to give clothing to his brothers” (Victor Matthews, “The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative,” *JOT* 65 [1995]: 35). The result is the following chiasm:

A Joseph Receives Robe
 B Joseph Disrobed
 B' Joseph Disrobed
 A' Joseph Receives Robe
 C Joseph Gives Robes

Joseph understands that their reconciliation has broader implications than mere family dynamics. The reconciliation of the seed serves the preservation of the seed. In both reconciliation episodes (Gen 45:5–8; 50:19–21), Joseph affirms that God sent him to Egypt to “preserve life” and thus save the covenant line. After Jacob’s death, the brothers fear that Joseph may exact retribution by endangering their life just as they endangered his (Gen 50:15). Again, the implication is that if that family is not truly reconciled, the covenant seed cannot flourish. But Joseph again assures them of his forgiveness and his confidence that God sent him to protect the covenant line (Gen 50:19–21). The Cain-like violence of the brothers is overcome by Joseph’s kindness. As a result, the seed survives and the promise continues.

Joseph and the Promise of Land

The Land Theme in Genesis

The land theme in Genesis¹⁹² begins (like kingship and seed) in the very first chapters of Genesis with the creation of Eden. Moses describes Eden, as we have seen, as a garden-sanctuary.¹⁹³ God commissions Adam to carry out his royal-priestly duties in Eden—an archetypal temple (cf. Ezek 28:13’s designation of Eden as the “garden of God”). Thus, Adam’s kingship not only includes the notion of “reign” but also “realm.” Adam’s dominion includes cultivating and caring for the land, protecting it from evil, and expanding the borders of God’s dwelling.

For more on the clothing motif in the Joseph narrative, see John Huddlestun, “Divestiture, Deception, and Demotion: The Garment Motif in Genesis 37–39,” *JSOT* 98 (2002): 47–62.

¹⁹²For a thorough investigation of the land theme in Genesis, see Oren Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land in God’s Redemptive Plan*, NSBT 34 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 61–75.

¹⁹³Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 66–79; J. V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis 1–3 with the Christ of Eschatology* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2007), 57–75. The prominence of the land theme runs throughout the Pentateuch. As Reichenbach rightly notes, “Although the kingdom of God extends throughout the universe (the heavens and the earth), the primary focus in the Pentateuch is on the land” (Bruce Reichenbach, “Genesis 1 as a Theological-Political Narrative of Kingdom Establishment,” *BBR* 13, no. 1 [2003]: 51).

Land is, thus, a central component to God’s creation enterprise. Adam is given “a domain over which humans are to realize their humanity.”¹⁹⁴ As Martin states, “The importance of Eden does not rest primarily on its being the dwelling place of humans, but on its being the place where God dwells on earth in a unique way and where he has fellowship with his image bearers.”¹⁹⁵ Additionally, Eden is a foretaste of the eschaton. If Adam remains faithful, in time the entire world will share the sacredness of the garden and be filled with God’s presence.

Thus King Adam’s realm is the land of Eden, a sanctuary. The fall, however, disrupts the relationship between the king and his realm. God drives Adam from the garden, (i.e. away from his presence), and establishes an angelic sentinel to bar him from returning (Gen 3:24). Additionally the land itself is cursed, no longer yielding produce with ease or regularity (3:17–19).

The ensuing narratives further develop the discordant relationship between man and land. Cain is a wanderer, living east of Eden (Gen 4:12, 16). Lamech prophesies that Noah will be God’s agent in providing relief from the cursed land (Gen 5:29). Further, the land turns hostile in the “de-creation” event of the flood. The world reverts to the primordial chaos of Genesis 1:2 and swallows humanity whole.¹⁹⁶

God works to undo this discord in the Abrahamic covenant. He promises Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession (Gen 15:7, 18–21; 17:8), thus supplying “a commodity that has been in short supply for human beings: a land to call [their] own.”¹⁹⁷ But this promise means more than mere real estate. The exile from Eden is being overturned. Canaan represents restoration to Eden and

¹⁹⁴Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 48.

¹⁹⁵Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land*, 38.

¹⁹⁶Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 73.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 48.

access, once again, to life in God's presence.¹⁹⁸

For the most part the patriarchs live out their time within Canaan's boundaries, (though acquiring only enough land for their burial plots).¹⁹⁹ This situation abruptly changes in the Joseph story, when famine forces Jacob's sons to go to Egypt, as it had with Abraham three generations prior (Gen 12:10–20).

The Promised Land in the Story of Joseph

With regard to the land promise, the Joseph story appears to be a retrogression in redemptive history. In fact, as Hamilton points out, Genesis is bookended by two major literary sections characterized by life outside the Promised Land.²⁰⁰ Both famine and fraternal strife drive the covenant family away from Canaan—displacing, and thus apparently returning, them to a pre-Genesis 12 state of life “east of Eden.” This migration reveals that threats to the seed also endanger the land promise. Thus the covenant family's sojourn in Egypt builds suspense. Will God be able to overturn these circumstances and fulfill the land promise?²⁰¹

Due to the Egyptian setting of the story, Joseph's relevance to the land promise is not immediately clear. As Wilson observes, “the promise of the land does not loom

¹⁹⁸“The theology of land in the early part of the OT anticipates the final chapters of the Bible, where the apostle John describes the new heaven and earth in language taken from Genesis 1–3” (J. G. Millar, “Land,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al., [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000]. Also O. Palmer Robertson, *The Israel of God: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2000], 4; Paul R. Williamson, “Promise and Fulfillment: The Territorial Inheritance,” in *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological, and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter W. L. Walker [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2000], 25).

¹⁹⁹Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 78–80, 86–88.

²⁰⁰Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 10.

²⁰¹While this sojourn outside of Canaan creates tension for the covenant promises, how the events unfold also highlights the fact that Abraham's family will be a blessing to the nations. Hamilton writes, “The crucial center section of Genesis (chs. 12–36) is bracketed geographically by two sections of the Near Eastern world with whose history that of Israel would be constantly interlocked. The impact created by these broad geographical contours is that Genesis is a book about world history. . . . The ultimate reason for the election of Abraham is that the nations of the earth (such as those falling within the geographical boundaries of chs. 1–11 and 37–50) might find the knowledge of God and his blessing” (Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 10).

large in the Joseph narrative, since the story takes not only Joseph, but also Jacob and his other sons, out of Canaan and into Egypt.”²⁰² Yet, as with the seed theme, the reconciliation episode in Genesis 45 results in a resurfacing of the land theme. Explicit references to the land promise, for example, appear in Genesis 46:4 and 48:4. In the first instance Yahweh promises to bring Jacob back to Canaan. In the second, Jacob recounts Yahweh’s covenant promise to him at Luz (Gen 35:9–15) as a way of transferring those covenant blessings to his children, which now include Joseph’s own Ephraim and Manasseh.²⁰³

Furthermore, the land theme is prominent in the final scene of the narrative, no doubt to transition to the story of the Exodus. Moses, it appears, subtly identifies Joseph with the fulfillment of the land promise in the death narratives of Jacob and Joseph. As Lunn has argued, Genesis 49:29–50:26 is a concentric pattern that places the final words of Jacob and Joseph in parallel (see figure 4), with Jacob’s funeral at the center²⁰⁴—a surprising narrative progression given the prominence of Joseph in the story thus far.²⁰⁵

²⁰²Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise*, 225.

²⁰³As Hamilton notes, “The only essential element of that theophany [Jacob] does not repeat is the name change from Jacob to Israel. In this way, Jacob minimizes his role and maximizes God’s role in that event. He does not say to Joseph: ‘Son, let me tell you what God did for me at Luz.’ Rather, he implies: ‘Son, let me tell you about our God and the precious promises he made for you and the family, and our family’s families’” (Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 628).

²⁰⁴On the center of the symmetrical pattern as the focal point of the structure, see David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 28; Jerome T. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001), 14; Peter J. Leithart, *Deep Exegesis The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor Press, 2009), 167–68; John Breck, *The Shape of Biblical Language: Chiasmus in the Scriptures and Beyond* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1994).

As Lunn also notes, by word count alone, Moses highlights the death and burial of Jacob as the most significant event in this section of the Joseph story. This section has 220 words in 15 verses compared to just 11 words in one verse for the death of Joseph (Nicholas Lunn, “The Last Words of Jacob and Joseph: A Rhetorico-Structural Analysis of Genesis 49:29–33 and 50:24–26,” *TynBul* 59, no. 2 [2008]: 164).

²⁰⁵This proposed concentric structure appears unique to Lunn, who also recognizes this proposal as a “previously undetected pattern” (Lunn, “The Last Words of Jacob and Joseph, 164). Ross similarly recognizes Gen 49:29–50:26 as the last narrative unit of the Joseph story but does not argue, as does Lunn, for any concentric pattern (Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996]).

Lunn demonstrates linguistic and thematic correspondences as well as internal literary features that support his proposal.²⁰⁶ The chiasm also follows a pattern of monologue-dialogue-narrative-dialogue-monologue.

A	The last words and death of Jacob (49:29–50:3) - Monologue
B	Joseph’s appeal to Pharaoh (50:4–6) - Dialogue
C	The funeral of Jacob (50:7–14) - Narrative
B'	The brother’s appeal to Joseph (50:15–21) - Dialogue
A'	The last words and death of Joseph (50:22–26) - Monologue

Figure 4: Concentric structure of Genesis 49:29–50:26

Each A section records the final words of a dying man to his family (introduced by ויאמר...אל) followed by a statement “consisting of a *futurum instans* participial clause: ‘I am about to be gathered to my people’ (49:29); ‘I am about to die’ (50:24).”²⁰⁷ After these statements both Jacob and Joseph give instructions for their burial, “invoking in each case the names of earlier Hebrew patriarchs and the promised land (49:30 and 50:25).”²⁰⁸ Finally each section records the death of the patriarch, also indicating that the body was embalmed (ויחנתו; Gen 50:2, 26).

Lunn argues that in the B sections the correspondence is “one of form more than content.”²⁰⁹ Each section contains an indirect request that invokes a father’s instructions. In Genesis 50:5 Joseph says, “My father made me swear saying” (אבי

²⁰⁶Reproduced from Lunn, “The Last Words of Jacob and Joseph.” For a complete accounting of the linguistic evidence, see *ibid.*, 164–66.

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 164. On the *futurum instans* Lunn notes the discussion found in Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 627.

²⁰⁸Lunn, “The Last Words of Jacob and Joseph,” 164.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 164.

השביעיני לאמר), whereas in Genesis 50:16 the brothers say, “Your father gave instructions before his death saying” (אביך צוה לפני מותו לאמר). Notably the syntax is the same in each instance (nominal clause) with אב functioning as the subject followed by the verb plus the discourse marker לאמר. Additionally, after Jacob’s instructions are relayed, both Joseph (Gen 50:5) and his brothers (Gen 50:17) introduce their appeal with ועתה with the particle נא.²¹⁰

Finally, with regard to section C, Lunn comments,

The central section . . . is structured around the movement from Egypt to Canaan, and back to Egypt, and its boundaries are marked by a clear instance of *inclusio*. This latter is created by the occurrence of the following textual features: (a) the name “Joseph” as a grammatical subject (v. 7 and v. 14; nowhere else in this passage); (b) the infinitival clause “to bury his father” (לְקַבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיו v. 7 and v. 14); (c) the clause “all...went up with him” (...וַיַּעֲלוּ אִתּוֹ כָּל־ v. 7; וְכָל־הָעֲלִיִּם אִתּוֹ v. 14), referring to the Egyptians; and (d) the phrase “and his brothers” (וְאָחָיו v. 8 and v. 14). Also to be observed is the tail-head linkage between the central C unit and its two adjacent units, B and B'. This is to say, the closing verse of B (v. 6) contains verbal links (“go up,” “bury,” “father”) with the beginning of C (v. 7), while the final verse of C (v. 14) likewise has links (“Joseph,” “brothers,” “father”) with the opening of B' (v. 15).²¹¹

As others have noted, Moses probably highlights Jacob’s burial for its typological significance. The removal of Jacob’s body from Egypt foreshadows the Exodus—an “acted prophecy” of the nation’s future deliverance.²¹² Just as the beginning

²¹⁰ Lunn, “The Last Words of Jacob and Joseph,” 164–65.

²¹¹ Ibid., 165–66.

²¹² Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 51. Lunn provides a thorough defense of the “foreshadowing” character of Jacob’s burial and a helpful summary of both his own arguments and the arguments of other scholars on this point. He summarizes the evidence:

Genesis 50 contains indicators which suggest that just as the earlier descent of Abraham into Egypt in 12:10–13:4 foreshadowed the later exodus event, so too the coming out of Egypt described in connection with the burial of Jacob is to be interpreted the same way. It looks both ways, back to the earlier Abrahamic account, and forwards towards the actual exodus itself. Here are the most noteworthy verbal connections and similarities in detail with the two other narratives:

(1) The use of the verb “go up” describing the journey out of Egypt. Genesis 13:1 states that “Abram went up from Egypt” (וַיַּעַל אַבְרָם מִמִּצְרַיִם). In the narrative of Genesis 50:7–14 this same verb is employed four times (vv. 7 [twice], 9, 14), also denoting the going up from Egypt. It occurs frequently with reference to the later exodus, such as in Exodus 13:18, “The sons of Israel went up from the land of Egypt” (עָלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם); cf. also 17:3; 32:1; 33:1, etc. The preposition אֶת “with” is joined to this verb when speaking of those foreigners who accompanied the Hebrews, as in Genesis 50:7 (וַיַּעֲלוּ אִתּוֹ) and Exodus 12:38 (עָלָה אִתָּם)

(2) The phrase “very substantial” (כִּבְדֵּי מְאֹד), literally ‘very heavy’ occurs in all three accounts. In Genesis 13:2 Abraham came out of Egypt with much wealth, flocks and herds, silver

of the patriarchal narratives foreshadow the exodus with Abraham's journey to and from Egypt (Gen 12),²¹³ so now the end of the patriarchal narratives foreshadow the journey to the promised land with Jacob's removal. These two "exodus episodes" form an *inclusio* around the entire patriarchal history.²¹⁴

This structure indirectly associates Joseph with the fulfillment of the Abrahamic land promise. The symmetrical pattern places Jacob and Joseph's final wishes in parallel (A and A'). Both men ask to be buried in the Promised Land (Gen 49:29;

and gold, which had been given him by Pharaoh (cf. 12:16). In 50:9 the same phrase describes the host of Egyptians who accompanied Joseph and his brothers in the funeral procession. The phrase also appears in Exodus 12:38 regarding the flocks and herds that the Hebrews brought with them out of Egypt.

(3) On the occasion of Abraham's descent into and ascent from Egypt it is stressed that "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12:6, וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אֵז בְּאֶרֶץ; cf. 13:7, "the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then living in the land", וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי אֵז יָשָׁב בְּאֶרֶץ). At the time of Jacob's burial a similar phrase, "the Canaanite living in the land" (Gen 50:11, יוֹשֵׁב הָאֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי) is found.

(4) It is in accordance with Jacob's command that his sons transported his body to Canaan, "His sons did for him as he commanded them" (Gen. 50:12, בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה . . . וַיַּעֲשׂוּ). The exodus was similarly a response of obedience. On that occasion it was Moses and Aaron who took the initiative in leading the people of Israel to Canaan "as Yahweh had commanded them" (Exod. 7:6, ... וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְּכַל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱתָם; cf. 6:13).

(5) The use of the noun "possession" (אֲחֻזָּה) in Genesis 50:13 referring to the plot purchased for burial points forward to the possession of the land of Canaan subsequent to the exodus (e.g. Lev. 14:34; 25:24; Deut. 32:49; Josh. 21:12; cf. Gen. 17:8; 48:4).

(6) Other common words and phrases include: "sheep and cattle" and "livestock" (Gen. 12:16; 13:2; 50:8; Exod. 10:26; 12:32, 38), "chariots and horsemen" (Gen. 50:9; Exod. 14:9, 17, 18, 23, 26, 28; 15:19), "infants" (Gen. 50:8; Exod. 10:24; 12:37), "camp" denoting the Egyptian army (Gen. 50:9; Exod. 14:20), "officials of Pharaoh" (Gen. 12:15; 50:7; Exod. 9:20; 10:7; 11:3, etc.), and Pharaoh's "house" (Gen. 12:15; 50:7; Exod. 8:24). It will be noted that some of these are used contrastively. At the time of the actual exodus, the Israelites took their children and animals with them, while on the occasion of Jacob's burial they remained in Egypt. Likewise, the Egyptian chariots and horsemen in the earlier account actually escorted the Hebrews, yet later were to pursue them.

(7) Finally, it has been noted that the procession in Genesis 50 takes the same approximate route as the later exodus, skirting round the southern end of the Dead Sea and approaching Canaan from the east side of the Jordan. It would seem then, in the light of these intertextual parallels, that this account in the last chapter of Genesis is intended by the author to be taken as a picture of 'Israel' coming up out of Egypt to Canaan.

(Lunn, "The Last Words of Jacob and Joseph," 174–78). See also Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 239. Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 579, 616.

²¹³This interpretation is also well received by most scholars. For a defense of the notion, see Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 142; Lunn, "The Last Words of Jacob and Joseph," 174–78; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 291–92; Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 273; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part 2*, 334–36; Waltke, *Genesis*, 217; Richard L. Pratt Jr., *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narratives* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1990), 100–101.

²¹⁴Lunn, "The Last Words of Jacob and Joseph," 178.

50:25). As a result, upon death Jacob (Israel) undergoes his own exodus to Canaan. The implication is that Joseph's death anticipates the same thing for the nation at large. Just as the death of Jacob led to an exodus from Egypt to the place of inheritance, so also Joseph's death is a harbinger of the real Exodus to come. Joseph's own last words highlight this point. "God will surely come to your aid," he tells his brothers, "and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Gen 50:24b; 25b; cf. Heb 11:22).

God uses Joseph to fulfill the other features of the Abrahamic covenant (kingship, seed, blessing). Joseph's role in securing the land is not as obvious. Yet, given that his story takes place almost entirely in Egypt and that he lives there until his death, the parallel between Jacob and Joseph's deaths and the resulting "exodus" may be Moses' way of connecting the life of Joseph with the fulfillment of the land promise. Joseph's dying words look forward to life in the Promised Land. His death signals hope for a national exodus from Egypt.

Joseph and "Blessing to the Nations"

Blessing in Genesis

Blessing, as Wellum and Gentry note, is most fundamentally "connected with life."²¹⁵ Blessing characterizes the fertility and vitality of the garden and is associated in Genesis 1:28 with the commission to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28). Indeed the entire creation project culminates in the "blessed" Sabbath day, a foretaste of the blessing Adam was meant to experience in the eschaton (Gen 2:3).

The fall shatters the Edenic state of blessing. Creation becomes characterized by the infertility and death of the curse (Gen 3:14–19). The curse represents humiliation and eventual defeat for the serpent (Gen 3:14), infertility and pain for the woman, marital

²¹⁵Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 241.

discord and social disharmony for humanity (Gen 3:16), toil for the man, and the corruption of the cosmos (Gen 3:17–19). The land will produce death with thorns and thistles. Indeed, the land originally meant to sustain an abundant life for humanity, will now swallow man up in death.

The same themes of humiliation and death characterize God’s curse against Cain (Gen 4:11) and Noah’s curse against Canaan (Gen 9:25). Gentry and Wellum summarize that “cumulative deprivation and increasing loss is therefore associated with the word ‘curse,’ bringing man from Eden to Babel.”²¹⁶ Further, and worst of all, these horizontal dimensions of the curse are all a result of the vertical dimension—alienation between God and humanity, as man now lives away from God’s presence and under his judgment.

Again, God establishes the Abrahamic covenant in response to the corruption and decay of the curse. God’s call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 is bathed in the language of blessing, using—as noted above—the word “bless” five times in response to the fivefold use of “curse” in Genesis 1–11.²¹⁷ God will bless Abraham (Gen 12:2) and thus begin to undo the curses of Genesis 3. As Waltke notes, blessing here “connotes redemption, a relationship with God that transforms the beneficiary and provides security.”²¹⁸

The blessing of Abraham is also characterized by the promise of divine presence and covenant access to God. As in Eden, blessing is not simply life in and of itself, but life *with* God. As the covenant passes from one generation to the next, God promises to be “with” each of the patriarchs. This promise of divine presence is always inextricably linked to the other covenant promises of land and seed (cf. 26:3–5; 24;

²¹⁶Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 242.

²¹⁷Gen 3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25. Wolff, “The Kerygma of the Yahwist,” 54–55; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 77; Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King*, 59.

²¹⁸Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 316.

28:13–15; 31:3; 46:3–4). Yahweh repeatedly implies that his presence should ground the patriarchs' assurance that he will fulfill his covenant obligations. In other words, only the presence of Yahweh can ensure the fulfillment of the promises—and his presence also guarantees that fulfillment.²¹⁹

Yet Abraham is more than a recipient of blessing; he is a conduit. He is blessed to be a blessing (Gen 12:3). Through Abraham, the families of the earth (משפחה), last seen in the table of nations (Gen 10:5: 18, 20, 31, 32), will also receive life.²²⁰ This “blessing to the nations” is shown throughout the patriarchal accounts as those outside Abraham's immediate family benefit from their positive relationship with him or his children (cf. Gen 18:16–33; 20:14, 17).

Blessing in the Joseph Story

Genesis 39:2–3 provides the first explicit mention of covenant blessing in the Joseph story. Yahweh is “with Joseph,” causing him to excel in his administration of Potiphar's house. The same phrase is repeated even when Joseph lands in prison: Yahweh is “with Joseph,” giving him favor with his superiors and success in his vocation (Gen 39:21, 23).

These affirmations of divine presence are significant. Divine presence characterizes God's covenant relationship with the Abrahamic family. Further, Yahweh's presence is the *sine qua non* of covenant fulfillment. Without Yahweh being “with” the patriarchs, there is no hope of seeing the promise of seed and land come to fruition. After Yahweh's opposition to Judah in Genesis 38 (the only other time the narrator mentions Yahweh in the Joseph story), the prospects of seed and land appear to be on shaky ground. The re-affirmation of divine presence with Joseph re-establishes God's

²¹⁹See further James M. Hamilton, “God with Men in the Torah,” *WTJ* 65 (2003): 113–33.

²²⁰For a discussion of blessing in the Abrahamic covenant, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 238–45; Carroll, “Blessing the Nations,” 20–30.

commitment to fulfill his promises but identifies Joseph as the conduit of those blessings. Like Isaac and Jacob before him, Joseph now, by virtue of God's presence, carries the hope for the fulfillment of God's promises.

In accord with the pattern established in Genesis 12:2–3, Joseph is blessed and a blessing. Potiphar appoints Joseph as a steward “over his house” (על-ביתו) and as a result Yahweh blesses Potiphar “for Joseph's sake” (Gen 39:4–5). Even Arnold, who favors a minimalist approach to the relationship between Joseph and the patriarchal narratives, admits that here we find an “allusion to the ancestral promises . . . Yahweh blessed Potiphar's household because of Joseph, who has no personal abilities to bless others.”²²¹ Later we again find Joseph established “over a house” (על ביתי)—the house of Pharaoh (Gen 41:40).²²² The result is the same: Joseph blesses the nations by providing grain during a “severe famine,” first for Egypt (Gen 41:56) then for “all the earth” (Gen 41:57).

After the reconciliation episode, blessings emerge as a prominent feature of the story. Indeed the final chapters are largely characterized by three blessing episodes, as Jacob blesses Pharaoh (Gen 47:7–10), Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48), and finally his twelve sons (Gen 49). The most striking of these is Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh. Just prior to this encounter Pharaoh treats the covenant family well, giving them the “best of the land” and hiring them to care for the royal court's livestock (Gen 47:6). Given narrative patterns thus far, and given God's promise to bless those who bless Israel, these events suggest that both Pharaoh and his nation will be blessed.

²²¹Arnold, *Genesis*, 331. See also Sailhamer: “Joseph's sojourn in Egypt, like that of his father Jacob's (30:27), has resulted in an initial fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise. . . . This is not a story of the success of Joseph, but rather of God's faithfulness to his promises” (Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 210–11). See also Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 461. Christopher Wright Mitchell, *The Meaning of BRK “To Bless” in the Old Testament*, SBLDS 95 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 70–71.

²²²Stone argues that “the term ‘house’ is a strange way to refer to Pharaoh's kingdom and unique to this instance, inviting a comparison between Joseph's rule in the two houses” (Stone, “Joseph in the Likeness of Adam,” 68).

Genesis 47:7–10 narrates, with some emphasis, the giving of that blessing to Pharaoh. Old man Jacob is brought before Pharaoh and blesses him (Gen 47:7).²²³ The narrative sequence is quite startling. Jacob, though a sojourner and the father of a small band of seventy, takes the initiative and blesses Pharaoh before Pharaoh even speaks to him. This blessing is not a trifling detail in the narrative but a point Moses emphasizes through chiasm. The exterior sections of the chiasm (Gen 47:7, 10) mention that “Jacob blessed (ברך) Pharaoh” while the interior sections (Gen 47:8–9) focus on Jacob’s age. McKenzie summarizes the significance of these two features, noting that “the reference to Jacob’s age apparently serves to heighten the significance of this blessing. A man whose closeness to God and favor in God’s eyes is attested by his attainment of an age greater than any Egyptian dared to hope for blesses Pharaoh.”²²⁴

A	Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and stood him before Pharaoh (לפני פרעה), and Jacob blessed Pharaoh (ויברך יעקב אתה-פרעה).	(7)
B	And Pharaoh said to Jacob (ויאמר פרעה אל-יעקב), “How many are the days of the years of your life? (ימי שני חייד).”	(8)
B'	And Jacob said to Pharaoh (ויאמר יעקב אל-פרעה), “The days of the years (ימי שני) of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life (ימי שני חיי), and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life (ימי שני חיי) of my fathers in the days of their sojourning.”	(9)
A'	And Jacob blessed Pharaoh (ויברך יעקב את-פרעה) and went out from the presence of Pharaoh (מלפני שרעה).	10

Figure 5: Genesis 47:7–10 Chiasm

²²³For a defense of ברך as something more than mere “formal courtesy,” see McKenzie, “Jacob’s Blessing on Pharaoh,” 392–95.

²²⁴Ibid., 394.

Ultimately what Moses portrays is a narrative outworking of the Genesis 12:3 promise. Through the family of Abraham, the nations of the earth are blessed. Dempster notes, “there are not just two individuals meeting here, but two nations, one of them embryonic and the other the most powerful nation on earth.”²²⁵ Yet, in a shocking twist, Jacob twice blesses Pharaoh. Again Dempster rightly notes, “the irony is impossible to miss. The hope for the world comes from Israel and not from Egypt. Blessing comes from a decrepit and broken Israel and not from a dominant and strong Egypt.”²²⁶ Joseph’s role in this episode is indirect, but no less significant. Jacob is present only because of Joseph’s administrative genius and favor with Pharaoh. In the context of Genesis 37–50, this account evinces Moses’ view of Joseph as the one who triggers the fulfillment—at least initially—of the Abrahamic promises.

In this light, the following account (Gen 47:13–26) describing Joseph’s agrarian reforms ought also to be interpreted as an outworking of Jacob’s blessing to Pharaoh. As McKenzie notes, “there is no other adequate explanation for the inclusion of an extensive account of Joseph’s land reforms.”²²⁷ Given that blessing characterizes Joseph’s interactions with Pharaoh and with Egypt, and given the explicit blessing to Pharaoh in Genesis 47:7–10, it would seem far-fetched to interpret Joseph here as a corrupt “tyrant” wielding power to oppress the less fortunate.²²⁸ More likely this narrative signals blessing to the nations along the lines of Genesis 12:3.²²⁹ Contrary to the rather

²²⁵Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 89.

²²⁶Ibid. See also Sailhamer’s comments, “it is significant that the central concern of the narrative is to show that Jacob ‘blessed Pharaoh’ (47:7, 9) when he was brought before him. Its importance can be seen from the fact that it is mentioned twice. Behind such an emphasis in the narrative is God’s promise to Abraham that he would bless those who bless the seed of Abraham. The passage shows that in Joseph and Jacob the promise to Abraham was being fulfilled with the nations around them” (Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 226).

²²⁷McKenzie, “Jacob’s Blessing on Pharaoh,” 396.

²²⁸Watt, “Joseph’s Dreams,” 68–69

²²⁹Meredith Kline, D. Guthrie, and J. Alec Motyer, “Genesis,” in *The New Bible Commentary*: rev. 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 112; McKenzie, “Jacob’s Blessing on Pharaoh,” 395–98; Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*, 176.

negative spin on these events by modern interpreters,²³⁰ the Egyptians themselves praised Joseph for employing his wisdom to save their lives (Gen 47:25).

Ultimately, Joseph is both blessed and a blessing. As the one whom God is “with,” Joseph mediates blessing to the nations, bringing prosperity to Potiphar and Pharaoh’s houses. Finally, Jacob (Israel) explicitly blesses Pharaoh and the nation he represents. As a result, through Joseph’s wise administration, the Egyptians find life in the midst of the famine. Israel’s purpose is coming to fruition. The covenant family, led by Joseph, both blesses and is blessed by the nations.²³¹

Other Possibly Significant Biblical-Theological Features of the Joseph Story

This chapter has focused on Joseph’s relationship to the Abrahamic covenant and to the overall storyline of Genesis. I have attempted to demonstrate Joseph’s biblical-theological significance by interpreting him according to his covenantal context, explaining his place in the Genesis story. Other scholars, however, have posited further connections between Joseph and earlier episodes and figures in Genesis (particularly Adam). Their observations are largely built on narrative analogy and linguistic points of contact and are thus more tenuous and not as closely tied to Genesis’ own unfolding of the covenant storyline. Given the lack of clear allusion or literary dependence in many of these examples, I submit these as *possible* biblical-theological connections between Joseph and the rest of Genesis.

Beale sees the blessing of Jacob in Genesis 49:22–26 (a notoriously vexing passage) as a depiction of the “career of Joseph and the destiny of his descendants” bathed in “new creational-imagery” and derived from Genesis 1:28.²³² In Beale’s

²³⁰See footnote 19 in this chapter.

²³¹Wenham concurs, “In Joseph . . . ‘the families of the earth found blessing’ (cf. 12:3): in his career the promises to Abraham of universal blessing to all nations began to see fulfillment” (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 493).

²³²Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 96–97.

estimation the depiction of Joseph as a “fruitful bough by a spring” (Gen 49:22) recalls the idyllic situation of Genesis 1–2 when Eden was well-watered and characterized by prosperity and abundance.²³³ He summarizes,

The double use of the participial form of “bear fruit” (*pārâ*) in verse 22 followed by the repeated mention of “blessing” in verses 25–26 also reflects the close placement of “bless” and “bear fruit” in Gen. 1:28. There is even evocation of “filling the earth” prosperously in the mention that “the blessings of your father [Jacob’s blessing on Joseph] have surpassed the blessings of my [Jacob’s] ancestors [beginning with Adam] up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.” Although Adam had failed to possess full end-time blessings, Joseph received them at some point in the future. Although an end-time climax is not as clear here as in the Judah prophecy, the Joseph prophecy may overlap with its fulfillment in conjunction with the Judah prophecy because it is so saturated with new-creational motifs related also to Joseph’s descendants that a culminating eschatological notion of a renewed creation is likely elicited. Furthermore, the reference to “surpassing the blessings . . . up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills” may suggest not some figuratively vague future condition but rather a zenith point of blessings beyond which no more blessing can be given and that will not be reversible.²³⁴

Whatever the eschatological implications of the prophecy may be, the association of Joseph with Edenic/new creation imagery discloses Moses’ own interpretation of the life and career of Joseph as one intimately associated with the restoration of Edenic blessing. In this sense Joseph is an anti-Adam, restoring covenant blessing and marking fruitfulness of the people of Israel.

Additionally, other scholars see a parallel between Genesis 3 and Genesis 50 that contrasts Joseph with the Serpent and, by implication, with fallen Adam. In Genesis 3 the Serpent entices Eve with the words “you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” The same sequence of being “like God” followed by the coupling of “good” and “evil” (a prominent and unique feature of the Genesis 2–3 [cf. Gen 2:9, 17; 3:5, 22]) appears in Genesis 50, where Joseph refuses divine status saying, “Am I in the place of God? You meant evil for me, but God meant it for good” (Gen 50:20). Further, whereas the serpent promises that Eve “surely will not die” (Gen 3:4), Joseph works to keep “many people

²³³Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, 97.

²³⁴*Ibid.*, 97–98.

... alive” (Gen 50:20).²³⁵

Whether Moses here intends to portray Joseph as an anti-Adam is uncertain, but the use of “good and evil” language²³⁶ does nicely draw the book of Genesis to a close.²³⁷ The language of “good and evil” represented rebellion and chaos at the book’s beginning,²³⁸ by its end we find Moses employing the language to signal that God sovereignly brings salvation out of chaos, light out of darkness, and even “good” out of “evil.” Ultimately Genesis’ solution to the problem of evil comes down to one thing: the glorious grace of a sovereign God who unfailingly keeps his covenant promises.²³⁹

Suffering, Glory, and the Promise-Keeping God: Synthesizing the Major Themes of the Joseph Story

At this point, we must synthesize these observations with the broader context of the Joseph story and with the whole Genesis narrative. This type of synthesis not only allows for potentially contradictory textual data to have its voice in shaping

²³⁵Bruce T. Dahlberg, “On Recognizing the Unity of Genesis,” *TD* 24 (1977): 363–64. Dahlberg also argues for an Adamic character to the Joseph story, noting that the only two instances of *כְּתוּמָה* in Genesis are when God gives Adam “garments of skins” (Gen 3:21) and when Jacob gives Joseph a coat with long sleeves (Gen 37:3) (*ibid.*, 365). This connection is tenuous at best.

²³⁶Interestingly “good and evil” also occurs in Moses’ final charge to the Israelites at the close of the Pentateuch in Deut 30:15.

²³⁷Arnold notes, “Using the antithetic dyad ‘good and evil’ as a paradigm, the text lifts the wrongful and unethical behavior of humans as something God is capable of comprehending as an opportunity for good. Joseph’s theological insight of v. 20 not only summarizes the themes of [the] Joseph Novel, but also of the book of Genesis overall, since the ‘good-and-evil’ dyad is central to the Eden narrative as well (2:9)” (Arnold, *Genesis*, 388).

²³⁸W. M. Clark, “A Legal Background to the Yahwist’s Use of ‘Good and Evil’ in Genesis 2–3,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 266–78.

²³⁹Others have posited more tenuous connections to the Adamic narrative. Stone and Sigmon, for instance see the temptation episode of Gen 39 as a contrastive but analogous narrative with the temptation of Adam and Eve in Gen 3. Joseph is given charge of everything in Potiphar’s house except the food that he eats (Gen 39:6)—a possible euphemism for Potiphar’s wife (cf. Gen 39:9). Thus, whereas Adam ate the forbidden food because he “listened to the voice of his wife” (3:17), Joseph resisted forbidden food and “would not listen” to Potiphar’s wife (39:10). The conclusion of each narrative is also inverted—Adam goes from naked to clothed as a sign of his guilt (Gen 3:21), Joseph goes from clothed to naked (Gen 39:12)—a sign of his innocence for readers, though evidence of his guilt in the eyes of Potiphar. See Stone, “Joseph in the Likeness of Adam,” 66–67; Sigmon, “Between Eden and Egypt,” 148–87. Sailhamer similarly offers parallels between Joseph and Adam that are more thematic, none of which are rooted in linguistic points of contact or covenantal developments (Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 215).

interpretation, it also keeps us from running afoul of scholarly myopia—a particular problem among biblical scholars who, as Doug Moo has asserted, often “learn more and more about less and less—until they know everything about nothing.”²⁴⁰

This type of synthesis is also necessary to engage faithfully in the task of biblical theology with exegetical integrity. Biblical theology seeks to authentically integrate the different themes and storylines of Scripture into a cohesive narrative according to Scripture’s own interpretive schema and literary development. If Joseph is indeed a typological royal figure who mediates blessing to the nations, how does this fact square with the other major themes of the Joseph narrative and with the larger story of Genesis? More specifically, how does Joseph’s anticipatory fulfillment of the covenant fit with the themes of divine providence, preservation, and the largely heretofore unmentioned theme of suffering? This final theme poses a particular challenge since it seems incongruous with the notion of Joseph as both blessed and a conduit of blessing.²⁴¹

Moses has intertwined both the theme of suffering and the theme of covenant blessings (kingship, seed, and land) throughout Genesis. The Joseph story, the dénouement of Genesis, provides the most explicit juxtaposition of these two themes. As Levenson summarizes, “The story of humiliation and exaltation of the beloved son reverberates throughout the Bible because it is the story of the people about whom and to whom it is written.”²⁴²

Many commentators have observed that the entrance of sin in Genesis does not

²⁴⁰Douglas J. Moo, review of *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* by N. T. Wright, *The Gospel Coalition*, November 6, 2013, http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/paul_and_the_faithfulness_of_god. Accessed November 9, 2016.

²⁴¹As most scholars note, suffering is a major theme in Gen 37–50. Later biblical summaries of the Joseph narrative underscore this point. Ps 105, for example, highlights that before Joseph is made “Lord” and “ruler” of Pharaoh’s house, he was first “sold as a slave. His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron; until what he had said came to pass” (Ps 105:17-19). Likewise, Stephen in Acts 7 emphasizes that the story of Joseph’s rise to power and provision for his family emerges from slavery, imprisonment, and “afflictions” (Acts 7:9-10).

²⁴²Jon Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 67.

undo God’s teleological purposes for creation, it just reroutes the path to that end.²⁴³ As Treat argues, the transformation of the command “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28) into the patriarchal promise unites God’s purposes in redemption with those of creation. Thus, the goal of establishing God’s global kingdom remains, but because of the fall, “a new way of arriving at the consummation was introduced.”²⁴⁴

This “new way” maintains the centrality of a king who mediates the reign and blessings of God, but it introduces the notion that this king will endure suffering on the path to the throne. Again Treat observes, “suffering will be a key ingredient in God’s victorious plan of redeeming his people and their royal task.” This idea appears first in Genesis 3:15: the seed of the woman will engage in mortal combat with the seed of the serpent. The seed of the woman will emerge victorious, but wounded. His victory will come with a cost—a “bruised heel” atop the “bruised head” of the serpent.

As Alexander argues, Genesis traces the line of the seed of the woman through Noah to the Patriarchs.²⁴⁵ These seeds are royal, inheriting Adam’s royal commission now in the form of covenant promises. Yet each of these seeds endures suffering on the path to enjoy God’s blessing. Genesis 22 particularly highlights these themes. God commands Abraham to sacrifice his only son—the promised seed. Isaac’s near death experience “echoes the suffering of the seed of the woman” and is nothing less than a narrative portrayal of death and resurrection.²⁴⁶ After God provides a substitutionary ram (with language that portends the Day of Atonement), he promises that Abraham’s seed “shall possess the gate of his enemies” (Gen 22:17)—a promise of royal victory over the foes of Abraham’s descendants. The portrait may be faint, but the elements of suffering,

²⁴³See Treat’s excellent discussion of this entire point in Treat, *The Crucified King*, 53–67.

²⁴⁴Meredith Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 155.

²⁴⁵Alexander, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis.”

²⁴⁶Treat, *The Crucified King*, 61.

substitution, and royalty all converge in the *Akedah*. Isaac, the promised seed of Abraham, embodies the future generations. The offspring of Abraham will suffer like Isaac, but they are promised royal victory over their enemies and salvation by substitutionary sacrifice. Their story will play out like a riff on Genesis 22—a story of death and resurrection.

Continuing the twin drum beat of seed and suffering, Joseph rises to the highest seat in the land *through* the experience of suffering. If Genesis 22 shows that the suffering of the seed is akin to death and resurrection, the Joseph story clarifies that the “death” of the seed comes at the hands of his own brothers.²⁴⁷ Thus the suffering of Joseph develops a pattern visible since Genesis 3:15 and in so doing sets expectations for

²⁴⁷As Dempster notes, the Old Testament’s conception of death and resurrection is much more dynamic than modern western notions. “The ancient Israelite conception of death and life should not be viewed in a reductionistic manner as the mere termination of physical existence, a view associated more with notions in modern, western medicine. In my judgment this is the major problem with the predominant view of scholarship which argues that belief in resurrection was an extremely late development in the OT. . . . The biblical view, however, is far more dynamic. Thus, there is a sense in which the world before the flood is a world filled with violence and curse, death and exile, and it is buried under the waters only to be reborn after its baptism by deluge (Gen 6-8)” (Stephen G. Dempster, “From Slight Peg to Cornerstone to Capstone: The Resurrection of Christ on ‘The Third Day’ According to the Scriptures,” *WTJ* 76 [2014]: 385).

Likewise, Levenson notes, “Death and life in the Hebrew Bible are often best seen as relational events and are for the selfsame reason inseparable from the personal circumstances of those described as living or as dead. To be alive in this frequent biblical sense of the word inevitably entailed more than merely existing in a certain physical state. It also entailed having one’s being within a flourishing and continuing kin group that dwelt in a productive and secure association with its land. Conversely, to be widowed, bereaved of children, or in exile was necessarily to experience death. Indeed, each of these states (even death) and others (notably, health or illness) could serve as a synecdoche for the condition brought about by any of the others” (Jon Levenson, *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006], 154–55). Thus, death and resurrection are often understood narratively through the suffering and salvation of individuals as they are brought from conditions characterized by the curse to conditions of blessing (i.e. life; see Dempster, “From Slight Peg to Cornerstone to Capstone,” 385–86).

For further defense of reading OT narrative as types of death and resurrection, see Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), 61–176; Byron Wheaton, “As It Is Written: Old Testament Foundations for Jesus’ Expectation of Resurrection,” *WTJ* 70, no. 2 (2008): 245–53; Mitchell Loyd Chase, “Resurrection Hope in Daniel 12:2: An Exercise in Biblical Theology” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013); idem, “The Genesis of Resurrection Hope: Exploring Its Early Presence and Deep Roots,” *JETS* 57, no. 3 (2014): 467–80; Nicholas Lunn, “Raised on the Third Day According to the Scriptures’: Resurrection Typology in the Genesis Narrative,” *JETS* 57, no. 3 (2014): 523–35.

Evidence from within the Joseph narrative also supports reading the sufferings and glory of Joseph as a type of death and resurrection. As noted in footnote 192, pits and prisons both in the OT and in the ANE were metaphors for the experience of death. Further, the characters’ experience from within the story is one in which Joseph appears to die and then rise again. Joseph’s father believes Joseph to be dead (Gen 37:33–34). Later in the story the brothers themselves think Joseph is dead (Gen 42:21–22). Joseph’s appearance, then, is a sort of resurrection. The brothers’ shocking report to their father is not just that Joseph is reigning in Egypt, but first, and perhaps most surprising, “Joseph is still alive!” (Gen 45:26).

the new Joseph to emerge from the line of Judah (Gen 49:8).

Joseph's royal administration fulfills the expectations set earlier in Genesis. He uses his position to bless and forgive the same brothers who threw him in the pit.

“Joseph's ascension to royalty is characterized by suffering and his reign is exercised over his brothers with forgiveness.”²⁴⁸ Joseph's story is the story of glory through suffering, exaltation through humiliation, the cross and the crown.

Additionally, while Moses keeps Joseph center stage in Genesis 37–50, the main actor is none other than Yahweh himself.²⁴⁹ The story is not just about how Joseph fulfills the Abrahamic promises, but about how Yahweh keeps his covenant and fulfills his promises *through* a rejected but royal seed. God's providence serves God's promises. The divine providence theme in Genesis 37–50 cannot be divorced from its covenantal context. Moses does not highlight God's providence to make an abstract point about God's sovereignty. Instead, he emphasizes that God's providence guarantees that God will fulfill his promises. The covenant is secure in the hands of the God who can sovereignly orchestrate the actions of evil men for his good purposes (Gen 50:20).

Ciampa rightly summarizes how all of this shapes expectations for the reader of Genesis. “That God will raise up a descendant of Abraham who will bring blessing to all the world, perhaps as God's own vice-regent reigning in the land promised to the patriarch, would be an easily imagined scenario, given what God had already done

²⁴⁸Treat, *The Crucified King*, 62.

²⁴⁹In Gen 45, after reuniting with his brothers, Joseph comforts his brothers by explaining God's larger purposes in their actions. No fewer than three times, Joseph says that “God” sent him into Egypt (Gen 45:5, 7, 8) to preserve life in the midst of the famine. The centrality of this passage for interpreting the Joseph narrative is visible from later biblical reflection on the Joseph story. The rehearsal of the story in Ps 105 demonstrates a clear dependence on this particular text. Patterson argues in his dissertation: “The plot of Genesis is...the need for the seed of the woman to be righteous and survive. This is emphasized throughout the narrative while the seed's actual righteousness and survival are increasingly brought into doubt, eventually reaching climax with the Joseph narrative. The tension is resolved when it is shown that YHWH himself will ultimately ensure the righteousness and survival of the promised seed” (Todd Patterson, “The Righteousness and Survival of the Seed: The Role of Plot in the Exegesis and Theology of Genesis” [PhD diss., Trinity International University, 2012], iv).

through Joseph while he was in a foreign land.”²⁵⁰ The two apparent opposites of suffering and blessing merge in this single character. Joseph is both sufferer and savior, the prisoner and the prince.

Joseph is the beloved son who suffers in exile before blessing the nations and being exalted. He is part of a pattern developed, at least in nascent form, in Genesis. The rest of the OT continues this trajectory as other characters (David, Daniel, Esther) repeat the pattern. Further, as Gathercole notes, this is the story of Israel itself. “A general pattern in the Old Testament [is that] God makes Israel as well as individuals go through exile, misery, and even death before displaying his glory through saving them. The overarching pattern of Israel’s history—sin, exile, return—is one case in point. Within that larger framework, the life story of Joseph is another.”²⁵¹ Joseph’s experience is Israel’s experience. He is thus, first and foremost, a type of Israel. His experiences of suffering and exile are shared by his kin, and in many ways, his righteousness and consequent covenant blessings exemplify what Israel *ought* to be in the world. If Joseph is indeed a type of the Messiah (as this dissertation proposes) it is first because he is a type of the nation.

Implications for a Canonical Understanding of the Joseph Narrative

In this chapter I have sought to interpret the story of Joseph according to its literary and covenantal context. We have seen that Joseph is intimately related to the promises of Abraham. Through Joseph come the first major fulfillments of the covenant promises.

This study yields three important implications. First, these observations

²⁵⁰Ciampa, “The History of Redemption,” 267.

²⁵¹Simon Gathercole, *Defending Substitution: An Essay on Atonement in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 60. Also Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, 67

illuminate the plot and literary character of Genesis as story. The Joseph story is not just the last item in Genesis, but the *resolution* of the Genesis story. Genesis takes readers on a journey from promise to fulfillment and from fratricide (Cain and Abel) to forgiveness (Joseph and his brothers).

Second, contrary to modern critical proposals, the Joseph story has strong connections to the preceding narratives. It develops the redemptive-historical storyline from Adam to Noah to the patriarchs. The full implications of the Joseph narrative are clear only in light of the literary and theological relationship between Gen 1–36 and 37–50.

Third, Genesis itself supplies textual warrant that Joseph is a type of the Messiah. If Joseph fulfills the Abrahamic hopes, he creates an expectation that other Joseph figures will do the same—though more completely—in the future. As a royal seed of Abraham, endowed with God’s very presence (Gen 39:2, 23), Joseph mediates blessing to the nations, preserves the offspring of Abraham, triggers the “multiplication and fruitfulness” of Israel’s seed, and is a harbinger of Israel’s Exodus from Egypt and inheritance of Canaan. Moses, through Jacob’s prophecy, projects this Josephite pattern of covenantal fulfillment into the future by patterning Israel’s “last days” messianic king after the life of Joseph (Gen 49:8). All of these elements contribute to our understanding of Joseph according his covenantal context which in turn gives warrant for a typological reading of the Joseph story.

CHAPTER 4

JOSEPH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

How important is Joseph in redemptive history? As noted in chapter one, some scholars see the scarce references to Joseph in the OT as indicating his relative unimportance in redemptive history. Again, as Westermann posits, “the Joseph narrative has found a remarkably faint echo in the writings of the OT and the NT. . . . He received no promise from God and so has no direct significance for the later history.”¹

This chapter argues that OT authors do in fact see Joseph as having “direct significance” for redemptive history. More fully, this chapter shows that later biblical authors interpreted Joseph’s life as orchestrated by God to fulfill his promises to Abraham. They also see his life as a pattern anticipating later biblical characters and events.

In order to unpack this proposal first I consider some of the explicit mentions of Joseph in the OT, unpacking the biblical-theological significance that biblical authors ascribe to the Joseph story. Second, I examine allusions to the Joseph story, particularly in the book of Daniel. I establish that Daniel saw himself as a new Joseph and composed his book in such a way as to associate himself with Joseph. After establishing the literary dependence of Daniel on the Joseph story, I consider the significance such allusions hold out for a biblical-theological understanding of Joseph. Third, I consider how Joseph fits into the pattern of the “exalted Jew in a foreign court,” which resurfaces throughout the canon.²

¹Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, trans. John Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), 252.

²It is not my intention to examine every proposed allusion to the Joseph story in the OT, particularly since I believe many of these proposed allusions are spurious or simply cannot be proven with

Explicit Mentions of Joseph

Joseph is explicitly mentioned nine times in the OT. These mentions fall into three categories. The first five mentions (found in Exodus and Joshua) all pertain to Joseph's relationship to the exodus, particularly the removal of his bones from Egypt and their burial in Canaan. Next, Joseph's life story is retold in Psalm 105's theocentric overview of Israel's history from the life of Abraham to the exodus. Finally, Joseph is mentioned in the Chronicles' genealogy in 1 Chronicles 2:2 and most notably in an annotation in 1 Chronicles 5:1–2. Since these final mentions do not hold out much significance for this dissertation, this section focuses instead on the mentions of Joseph in Exodus, Joshua, and Psalm 105.

Joseph and the Exodus

Genesis ends with Joseph forecasting Israel's return to Canaan (Gen 50:24–26). Exodus begins on the same note. Exodus 1:1–6 lists the sons of Jacob who traveled to Egypt, relying on elements of similar genealogies in Genesis 46:8, 26–27 and 35:23–26. Exodus 1:7, alluding to Genesis 1:28, 9:7 and 12:2–3, is an escalated restatement of Genesis 47:27. Moses highlights that, under Joseph's protection, Israel fulfills the Adamic and Abrahamic commission. They are fruitful (פרה), increase greatly (שרץ), multiply (רבה), and grow exceedingly strong. In a clear allusion to Genesis 1:28, Moses even states that they “fill the land” (ותמלא הארץ אתם).³

any degree of confidence. Further, many, even if true, yield insignificant biblical-theological significance. For a complete listing of proposed allusions in the Moses story, see Danny Mathews, *Royal Motifs in the Pentateuchal Portrayal of Moses* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 45–54. For proposed allusions in the David story, see Robert Alter, “Putting Together Biblical Narrative,” in *Cabinet of the Muses: Essays on Classical and Comparative Literature in Honor of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer*, ed. Mark Griffith and Donald Mastrorarde (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 119–21. Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: Norton, 1999). Peter Leithart, *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003). James M. Hamilton, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification Between Joseph, David, and Jesus,” *SBJT* 12, no. 4 (2008): 52–77. For proposed allusions in Jeremiah, see Mark Roncace, *Jeremiah, Zedekiah, and the Fall of Jerusalem* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 81–84. For a host of other possible allusions, see Arthur Van Seters, “The Use of the Story of Joseph in Scripture” (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1965).

³For a thorough discussion of the significance of Exod 1:7 as it relates to the Adamic and Abrahamic commissions, see Carol Kaminski, *From Noah to Israel: Realization of the Primaevial Blessing After the Flood*, JSOTSup 413 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 124–38.

Exodus 1:8 indicates that Israel flourished because of Joseph. Once the memory of Joseph is wiped from the royal court, Israel's fortune in Egypt transforms into persecution. A "new king" who "did not know Joseph" takes power and enslaves Israel (Exod 1:8). This moment triggers the events of the exodus which Joseph foretold.

Joseph's part in Israel's story, however, is not yet over. The story of Joseph's bones frames the entire exodus episode. Moses makes good on Israel's promise to exhume Joseph's bones in the exodus (Exod 13:19). At the end of the conquest, the Israelites bury Joseph's bones in Shechem (Josh 24:32). Scripture never reveals the biblical-theological significance of this reburial. The author of Hebrews, however, does commend Joseph for believing that God would restore Israel to Canaan (Heb 11:22).

Yet, the mention of Joseph's bones may hold out other implications as well. First, by reminding readers of Joseph at both the beginning and the end of Exodus, the biblical authors recall Joseph's significance in preparing the way for the exodus. Without Joseph, Israel would not have survived the famine. Additionally, as noted in chapter three, Joseph's death signaled the coming of the exodus. His final words reminded Israel to prepare for that event on the basis of God's covenant promise (Gen 50:24–26).

Second, these mentions of Joseph's bones may further attest that Joseph's life is a miniature portrayal of Israel's story. Israel's history is bracketed by two exiles: Egypt and Babylon. In both cases, God rescues his people according to his covenant promises. Joseph, like Israel, undergoes exile, persecution, and even death in Egypt. In the face of death, Joseph trusts in God's promise to restore Israel after their sojourn in a foreign land. God then keeps those promises, restoring Joseph to his true home in Canaan—even to the inheritance of his children, the land of Shechem (Josh 24:32). Joseph's post-mortem participation in the exodus shows that nothing, not even exile and death, can stop God from fulfilling his promise. Joseph, though dead, participates in the exodus and returns to Canaan.

At the same time, Joseph represents Israel at its finest. Unlike Israel, sin is not

the cause for Joseph’s exile. While in exile, Joseph blesses the nations. In captivity, he is unwaveringly faithful (Gen 39). He trusts in God’s promise of restoration to the land, even in the face of death (Gen 50:24–26). Joseph not only anticipates Israel’s future but demonstrates the pattern of righteousness Israel ought to mimic. Joseph’s life, therefore, not only foreshadows Israel’s future, but represents Israel *par excellence*—establishing a pattern of faithfulness Israel can choose to follow in the face of their own “death” in exile (cf. Ezek 37:11–14).⁴

Joseph in Psalm 105

Psalm 105 is part of a series of Psalms (Pss 104–106) that overview redemptive history from creation to the exile, tracing God’s faithfulness to his promises. As such, this Psalm provides an opportunity to uncover the “interpretive perspective” of a later biblical author on Joseph’s role in Israel’s history. Relying on earlier OT texts, the psalmist rehearses Israel’s history to uncover redemptive-historical patterns and their significance for his audience. This and other historical summaries in the Psalms placed audiences into the narrative to identify their situation with previous episodes in Israel’s history. As Hamilton notes, past events “were rehearsed in the Psalms to form a remnant

⁴On exile as an experience of “death” for Israel, see Mitchell Loyd Chase, “Resurrection Hope in Daniel 12:2: An Exercise in Biblical Theology” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013); idem, “‘From Dust You Shall Arise:’ Resurrection Hope in the Old Testament,” *SBJT* 18, no. 4 (2014): 9–29. Additionally, Bob Cole posits that Joshua’s obituary in Josh 24:29–33 links Joshua with Joseph, Moses, and Eleazar through verbal correspondence. For instance, Cole posits that the author portrays Joshua as a new Joseph in the burial scene recorded at the end of Josh 24:29. Joshua dies at 110 years of age—the same age at which Joseph died (Gen 50:26). In fact, minus the designation of עבד יהוה in Josh 24:29, which links Joshua to Moses, the announcements of the death of both Joshua and Joseph are identical:

בן מאה ועשר שנים	וימת יוסף	Gen 50:26
וימת יהושע בן נון עבד יהוה בן מאה ועשר שנים		Josh 24:29

These are the only two instances in the OT where an individual is recorded as dying at the age of 110. Further, Cole posits that the two figures are also paralleled because they are both buried—perhaps simultaneously—in the tribal region of Ephraim. For a complete exploration of these possible correspondences, see Robert Cole, “In Death, Larger than Life: Joshua 24:29–33 and the Rhetorics of Obituary” (paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, Toronto, 2002). While Cole points to a number of intriguing parallels between Joshua and Joseph, the evidence is too scarce to posit with any confidence that Joshua is being cast as a new Joseph.

in Israel that would look for God to save them in the future the way he had in the past. Worshipers enculturated by the Psalms would live in the scenes sung in the book's poetry."⁵

The anthologist's placement of these psalms is important. These psalms conclude Book IV, which focuses on God's sovereignty and commitment to re-establish the Davidic kingdom after its demise in the exile rehearsed at the end of Book III (cf. Ps 89).⁶ For the anthologist, the arrangement of these Psalms, which trace God's faithfulness to his promises from creation to the exile, is meant to stimulate the post-exilic community's faith in Yahweh's commitment to those same promises. By emphasizing the sovereignty of God over redemptive history and reminding Israel of God's gracious acts of salvation throughout their existence, the Psalmist assures his audience that just as God kept his promises to Abraham and Moses by exercising his sovereign power, so also he will keep his promises to David. He will bring Israel out of exile and re-establish David's throne.⁷ Additionally, rehearsing Israel's history at the end of Book IV prepares the way for the end of the exile—celebrated in book V (Ps 107) and ushered in by a new David (Ps 110).

The cumulative effect of these three psalms [104–106] is to present the restoration

⁵James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, NSBT 32 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 228. House also argues that biblical authors use “summary texts,” like Ps 105, to place “themselves and their audiences (either oral or optical) into that story to change or affirm their behavior, and they intend subsequent readers to do the same” (Paul House, “Examining the Narratives of Old Testament Narrative: An Exploration in Biblical Theology,” *WTJ* 67 [2005]: 229–45). Also Gordon J. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 53.

⁶For a compelling defense of this position, as well as a survey of the debate on David's role in Book IV, see David Alexander Gundersen, “Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106)” (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015); Jamie Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms*, *AcBib* 17 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 34–37.

⁷Wenham comments that “the great theme of this fourth book of the Psalter is God's kingship. He is king of heaven and earth. God is in control of all that happens throughout the whole universe” (Gordon J. Wenham, “Rejoice the Lord Is King: Psalms 90–106 [Book 4],” in *Praying by the Book: Reading the Psalms*, ed. Craig Bartholomew and Andrew West [Carlisle, PA, 2001], 109). See also Wilson, “These two psalms do not speak in explicit kingship terms, but Yahweh is clearly in charge of history, and acts to deliver and discipline his people” (Lindsay Wilson, “On Psalms 103–106 as a Closure to Book IV of the Psalter,” in *Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. Erich Zenger [Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010], 758).

of Israel from exile under the Davidic king as the fulfillment of all salvation history. By bringing mankind back to Himself through the son of David and the kingdom of God, the Lord accomplishes his goal in creation, fulfills His oath to Abraham, realizes the vocation of Israel, and remembers the covenant He swore to David.⁸

In Psalm 105, then, Joseph is part of a larger picture meant to stimulate Israel's hope for a future based on God's faithfulness in the past. In this light, we can see three important features of the psalmist's interpretive perspective on Joseph. First, the psalmist confirms Joseph's interpretation of his life's significance found in Genesis 45:1–8 and 50:20. Both Joseph and the Psalmist highlight God's providential orchestration of Joseph's rise to power in order to save the Abrahamic line. The Psalmist, for instance, indicates that God ordained the famine and sent Joseph to Egypt, downplaying the role of the brothers by using the passive גמכר.⁹ This retelling adheres to Joseph's so closely that it is likely dependent on Genesis 45. The psalmist affirms that God "sent" Joseph to Egypt (Ps 105:17 [שלה לפניהם איש]), echoing Joseph's words when he recounts the same event to his brothers in Genesis 45:7 (וישלחני אלהים לפניכם). Similarly, the statement "he made him lord over his house and ruler over all his possessions" (Ps 105:21 [שמו אדון]) recalls Joseph's words in Genesis 45:8 (וישימני לאב לפרעה ולאדון) (לכל-ביתו ומשל בכל-ארץ מצרים). This focus on divine providence and dependence on Joseph's interpretation of his life confirms the centrality of Genesis 45:4–8 and 50:20 for rightly understanding the Joseph story.

Second, like Genesis 37–50, Psalm 105 highlights God's providence not to make an abstract point about God's sovereignty but to show how God fulfills his covenant promises. The psalmist includes Joseph not ultimately to show that God is sovereign over human affairs but to demonstrate how God exercises his sovereignty to fulfill his covenant in seemingly impossible situations.

⁸Michael Barber, *Singing in the Reign: The Psalms and the Liturgy of God's People* (Steubenville: Emmaus Road, 2001), 125–26.

⁹Compare use of the *qal* ונמכרנו in Gen 37:27.

This focus on the Abrahamic covenant is evident at both the beginning and end of the Psalm. The psalmist calls on Israel to praise God because “he remembers his covenant forever . . . the covenant that he made with Abraham . . . an everlasting covenant, saying ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance’” (Ps 105:8–11).¹⁰ The rest of the psalm records how God makes good on his covenant promise by exercising his sovereign power. The end of the Psalm makes this same point. God’s saving acts in the Exodus were rooted in his commitment to his promises to Abraham (Ps 105:42).

Why does the Psalmist mention Joseph? In light of this theme, the reason is clear. The Psalmist sees Joseph, like Moses, as an agent used by God to fulfill his covenant promises. Sometimes God intervenes in history, without human instruments, to protect his people (Ps 105:14–15). More often, though, God employs specific people from Israel to mediate blessing to the nation, fulfill his covenant promises, and deliver the nation from destruction. In this psalm, Joseph and Moses are singled out as two men employed by God for those purposes.

Joseph’s life, therefore, is an expression of God’s covenant faithfulness. God sends Joseph to preserve the Abrahamic line, deliver the people of Israel, and mediate blessing to the nations. In other words, the Psalmist sees the Joseph story as a provisional and anticipatory fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. Joseph’s place in biblical theology is not merely to bridge readers “from Canaan to Egypt.”¹¹ His life is an expression of God’s faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham. God saves Israel through Joseph, like Moses, because “he remembered his holy promise and Abraham, his servant”

¹⁰The psalmist’s emphasis on the Abrahamic covenant is also revealed by his explicit mentions of the patriarch. Excluding the mention of the “God of Abraham” in Ps 47:10, Ps 105 is the only psalm to explicitly mention Abraham, which it does on three occasions (Ps 105:6, 9, 42).

¹¹George W. Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt: Structural and Theological Context of the Joseph Story*, CBQMS 4 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976). See also the comments by Brueggemann along these lines in Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Biblical Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1982), 291.

(Ps 105: 42).¹²

Third, the Psalmist indirectly presents Joseph as a “messianic” figure. He portrays him as a figure in a line of messiahs God uses to deliver the covenant line. As already mentioned, this psalm’s summary of Israel’s story is not merely to instruct Israel about her past. The psalmist is extolling God’s covenant faithfulness (Ps 105:1–8) by documenting how he keeps his covenant with his people, delivering them from danger. This pattern begins as early as Abraham and Isaac. God delivers them from the oppression of foreign kings on account of their being “prophets” and “messiahs” (בְּמִשִּׁיחַי) [Ps 105:14–15].¹³

The Psalmist’s designation of Abraham and Isaac as “anointed ones” or “messiahs” is striking for three reasons. First, this verse, along with the parallel verse in 1 Chronicles 16:22, is the only instance where the term מְשִׁיחַ is plural. Second, the term מְשִׁיחַ is generally reserved for Israel’s priests (Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15) or kings (1 Sam 2:10, 35; 12:3, 5; 16:6; 24:7, 11; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 1:14, 16, 21; 19:22; 22:51; 23:1; Lam 4:20; Dan 9:25, 26; 2 Chr 6:42; Hab 3:13) and is only here applied to the patriarchs. Third, elsewhere in the Psalms, מְשִׁיחַ is used only to refer to David or his eschatological heir (Ps 2:2; 18:51; 20:7; 28:8; 84:10; 89:39, 52; 132:10, 17).¹⁴

¹²Jacobson concurs that all of God’s acts of deliverance in this psalm are a function of his covenant faithfulness. He writes, “The Psalm should be understood as a lengthy praise meditation on the character of the Lord—because the Lord is a God who keeps promises. It would be easy to read the psalm primarily as a recitation of a narrative of God’s miracles, since the psalm does indeed offer lengthy testimony to those miracles. . . . But to focus primarily on the miracles is to miss the forest for the trees—the miracles are recited as evidence of the character of the God who is faithful and keeps promises: *He has remembered his eternal covenant—a promise he commanded for a thousand generations* (v. 8)” (Nancy Declaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth Laneel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014], 782.

¹³The episodes in view in verses 14–15 are clearly the wife/sister stories of Genesis 12, 20, and 26 (cf. נָגַע in Gen 12:17; 20:6; 26:11, 29; Ps 105:15). While Moses never applies “messiah” to Abraham, Abraham is called a “prophet” in Gen 20:7. Rolfson posits that the textual warrant for seeing Abraham as a messiah may reside in his being cast as a prophet (Gen 20:7), priest (Gen 12:7–8), and king (Gen 17:6). He also posits that the “more likely” explanation is that “the special status of anointed ones and prophets is extended to the entire people,” (cf. v. 6) (ibid., 790).

¹⁴The term “messiah” occurs only two other times in the OT where the term is not applied to an Israelite priest or king: (1) in 1 Chr 16:22, the parallel passage to Ps 105:15, and (2) in Isa 45:1, which refers to Cyrus as God’s “Messiah.”

While Abraham and Isaac were never literally anointed with oil, the psalmist likely applies the term to them since they typologically anticipate the role later embodied by messiahs like David. These messiahs functioned as covenant mediators, represented the nation, and were used by God to fulfill his promises. The plural “messiahs” (as opposed to the more traditional “messiah”) further demonstrates the psalmist’s understanding that the OT witnesses to multiple messianic figures prior to the Davidic monarchy. Though these men were never literally anointed with oil, they fulfilled a messianic role in the nation’s history.¹⁵

The psalmist never explicitly calls Joseph or Moses “prophets” or “messiahs,” but he presents them as continuing in the same vein as the patriarchs. Just as God protected Abraham and Isaac, so too he protected Joseph and Moses and thus delivered Israel through their ministries. The implication of continuing in the patriarchal pattern is that they have a share in the prophetic and messianic identity. God saves Joseph (and Israel) from the famine and Moses (and Israel) from Pharaoh because of his commitment to them as his messiahs. The same verdict spoken over Abraham and Isaac’s lives applies to them: “touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm” (Ps 105:15).

By implication, the Psalter’s post-exilic community is meant to see themselves in the line of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. Like Israel’s fathers and the nation at the time of the exodus, the post-exilic Israelites are called God’s “servants” and “chosen ones,” (Ps 105:6; cf. Ps 105:17, 26, 43).¹⁶ Like their father Abraham, they know what it is like to

¹⁵Hildebrandt also notes the effect this broadening of messianic identity would have for post-exilic Jews bereft of a reigning Davidic king. He writes, “The unique pluralizing of the form (‘anointed ones’) also shifts this regal term away from David to a more democratized identity with God’s sojourning people as the ‘anointed ones’ whom he protects from the hands of oppressive foreign kings” (Ted Hildebrandt, “A Song of Our Father Abraham: Psalm 105,” in *Perspectives on Our Father Abraham: Essays in Honor of Marvin R. Williamson*, ed. Steven A. Hunt [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 63).

¹⁶Rolfson posits that many of the indistinct subjects in the Joseph story are intentional double entendres. With regard to Joseph being a slave, Rolfson writes, “The poetic play on the term goes something like this: Joseph was God’s favored *‘ebed* (servant), and therefore he was forced to become an *‘ebed* (slave) in the rawest sense of the word” (Declaisé-Walford, Jacobson, and Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, 790). See also David Emanuel, *From Bards to Biblical Exegetes: A Close Reading and Intertextual Analysis of Selected Exodus Psalms* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 45.

“wander about from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people” (Ps 105:13).¹⁷ Through this identification, the Psalmist encourages Israel to see itself as part of a pattern of suffering and deliverance reiterated through Israel’s history and orchestrated by God’s sovereignty. The psalmist’s emphasis on divine providence anticipates God’s future work of redemption. The stories of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Israel all forecast the type of salvation in which post-exilic Israel can hope.

The Psalmist’s perspective on Joseph, therefore, confirms a covenantal understanding of Joseph’s role in Genesis. The psalmist adheres to Joseph’s interpretation of his life as one sovereignly orchestrated to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant. The psalmist further implies that Joseph, like Moses, is in a line of messianic figures, beginning with Abraham and Isaac, whom God employs to deliver the nation from danger and foreign hostility. The psalmist hints that Joseph’s story is microcosm of Israel’s. Joseph’s life is, at the very least, part of a pattern that reemerges throughout Israel’s story—one that stimulates hope for post-exilic Israel. Joseph’s story reminds them not only that God is sovereign, but that God’s providence often entails suffering before deliverance and glory.

Joseph and Daniel

Of all the books in the OT, Daniel has the highest concentration of allusions to the Joseph narrative. The exegetical evidence suggests that Daniel, noting the parallels between his own life as a dream-interpreting exile and Joseph’s, saw himself as a new Joseph and interpreted his own experiences in light of Joseph’s story. As a result, Daniel crafted his narrative to highlight these correspondences as a way of signaling his redemptive-historical significance for exilic Israelites.

¹⁷As Hildebrandt notes, “The Psalmist employs . . . shifts in terminology to develop themes with which he binds together two sojourning communities, Abraham and the post-exilic returnees, who are separated by over a millennium. Both are protected from foreign kings by God’s sovereign hand. The exilic community could find hope as they, like Abraham, sojourned and were in desperate need of God’s protection from foreign inhabitants of the land. This expression resonated from the narratives of patriarchal history, through the Davidic installation of the ark (1 Chron 16), and into the post exilic community via the poetry of Psalm 105” (Hildebrandt, “A Song of Our Father Abraham: Psalm 105,” 67–68).

Establishing Daniel's Literary Dependence on Joseph

In many respects, the Daniel narrative appears to be modeled on Joseph, particularly Daniel 2.¹⁸ We will examine these textual links below. But correspondences between Joseph and Daniel occur outside of Daniel 2 as well. Many features of Daniel's narrative attest to thematic and historical correspondences between these two characters.¹⁹

¹⁸Establishing literary dependence without the presence of direct quotations is always tricky business. As Dale Allison has quipped, interpreters must constantly employ a careful methodology so as to clearly answer the question, "When is an allusion an allusion and when is it an illusion?" (Dale C. Jr. Allison, *The Intertextual Jesus: Scripture in Q* [Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000], 9). In other words, criteria establish parameters that keep interpretive imagination in check and respect the intent of the author. Allusions not rooted in authorial intent are indeed mere "illusions" and accomplish little more than distracting readers from the meaning of the text.

As noted in chapter 2, I will largely rely on the now-famous criteria for recognizing allusions first articulated by Richard Hays.

(1) *Availability*. Was the proposed source of the echo (the OT text) available to the author and/or the original readers? . . . (2) *Volume*. The volume of an echo is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical pattern . . . (3) *Recurrence*. How often does [the author] elsewhere cite or allude to the same scriptural passage? . . . (4) *Thematic Coherence*. How well does the alleged echo fit into the line of argument that [the author] is developing? . . . (5) *Historical Plausibility*. Could [the author] have intended the alleged meaning effect? Could his readers have understood it? . . . (6) *History of Interpretation*. Have other readers, both critical and pre-critical, heard the same echoes? (Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989], 29–31).

I have intentionally left off Hays' last criterion, "satisfaction," due to its circularity. Readers are asked whether an interpretation "makes sense" in light of the proposed allusion, which then is meant to validate the proposed allusion that served as the basis of the interpretation. See also Richard Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 34–35. For another helpful discussion on Hays' criteria in G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 34–35. I am thankful for my colleague, Aubrey Sequeria, who helpfully pointed out the circularity of Hays' final criterion.

¹⁹While scholars differ on how the Daniel used the Joseph story, most recognize some sort of literary dependence. Collins notes, "Though some of these similarities derive from the common setting in a Near Eastern court and the common concern for dream interpretation, the verbal correspondences make it highly likely that the author of Daniel knew and was influenced by the story of Joseph" (John J. Collins, *Daniel*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993], 39). For a small sampling of authors who discuss or affirm a literary relationship between Joseph and Daniel see Ludwig Rosenthal, "Die Josephgeschichte, Mit Den Buechern Ester Und Daniel Verglichen," *ZAW* 15 (1895): 278–84; Moshe Gan, "Megillat 'Esther Be'aspeqlariyat Qorot Yoseph Be'misrayim," *Tarbiz* 31 (1961): 144–49; John J. Collins, "The Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic," *JBL* 94, no. 2 (1975): 218–34; Arndt Meinhold, "Die Gattung Der Josephsgeschichte Und Des Estherbuches: Diasporanovelle, Part I," *ZAW* 87 (1975): 306–24; P. R. Davies, "Daniel Chapter Two," *JTS* 27, no. 2 (1976): 392–401; Louis F Hartman, *The Book of Daniel*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 56, 145; John Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC 30 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 36–41, 43; Ken Frieden, "Dream Interpreters in Exile: Joseph, Daniel, and Sigmund (Solomon)," in *Mappings of the Biblical Terrain* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1990), 193–203; Robert Gnuse, "The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court: The Recurring Use of a Theme in Jewish Literature," *JSP* 7 (1990): 29–53; Jan-Wim Wesselius, "Discontinuity, Congruence and the Making of the Hebrew Bible," *SJOT* 13, no. 1 (1999): 24–77; idem, "The Literary Nature of the Book of Daniel and the Linguistic Character of Its Aramaic," *AS* 3, no. 2 (2005): 241–83; Harald Martin Wahl, "Das Motiv Des Aufstiegs in Der Hofgeschichte: Am Beispiel von Joseph, Esther Und Daniel," *ZAW* 112 (2000): 59–74;

First, both characters are Jews living in exile. Second, both are enlisted to serve government officials. Joseph serves Potiphar (the captain of the guard) and eventually Pharaoh, while Daniel serves in the royal court of Babylon (Dan 1:3–6, 17–20) and eventually Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:46–49). Third, though dreams are widespread throughout the OT, Joseph and Daniel are the only Jews able to interpret dreams. This fact, coupled with the reality that both characters exercise that gift as exiles in a foreign court for kings creates a close association between the two. Fourth, Scripture describes both characters as handsome. Joseph is “handsome in form and appearance (וִיפֵה מְרֵאָה)” (Gen 39:6). Daniel is “of good appearance (וְטוֹבֵי מְאֵרָה)” (Dan 1:4).²⁰ Fifth, both are given new names by their captors (Gen 41:45; Dan 1:7). Sixth, both characters are presented as models of faithfulness and piety. Joseph resists the advances of Potiphar’s wife by recalling that fornication was a “sin against God” (Gen 39:9). Similarly, Daniel is characterized by “faithfulness” such that even his enemies “could find no ground for

Naor Bezalel, “Joseph and Daniel: Court Jews and Dreamers,” *JBQ* 30, no. 1 (2002): 10–16; Marius Nel, “Daniel 1 as Wysheidsliteratuur: Bevestiging van Die Vergeldingsleer,” *OTE* 15, no. 3 (2002): 780–98; Michael Segal, “From Joseph to Daniel: The Literary Development of the Narrative in Daniel 2,” *VT* 59 (2009): 123–49; Michael Shepherd, *Daniel in the Context of the Hebrew Bible*, SBL 123 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 71, 78, 87, 115; Matthew Rindge, “Jewish Identity Under Foreign Rule: Daniel 2 as a Reconfiguration of Genesis 41,” *JBL* 129, no. 1 (2010): 85–104; Funlola Olojede, “Sapiential Elements in the Joseph and Daniel Narratives Vis-à-vis Woman Wisdom—Conjunctions and Disjunctions,” *OTE* 25, no. 2 (2012): 351–68; Matthias Henze, “The Use of Scripture in the Book of Daniel,” in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*, ed. Matthias Henze (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Daniel: Foundations for Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 56–57; Fernando Milán, “¿Un Daniel Polifónico? El Libro de Daniel y La Tradición Del Antiguo Testamento,” *ScrTh* 45 (2013): 335–62; James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, NSBT 32 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 221–35; Wendy Widder, “The Court Stories of Joseph (Gen 41) and Daniel (Dan 2) in Canonical Context: A Theological Paradigm for God’s Work Among the Nations,” *OTE* 27, no. 3 (2014): 1112–28. Commentary on the correspondence between Daniel and Joseph is also found among pre-modern exegetes. For a sampling of patristic interpreters who see correspondences between Daniel and Joseph, see Kenneth Stevenson and Michael Glerup, eds., *Ezekiel, Daniel*, ACCS 13 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 161–73. Some scholars posit that the similarities are not a product of literary dependence but shared genre. Labonté writes, “Il est donc possible que le texte de Dn2 et l’histoire de Joseph, dont Gn 41, datent de la même période de l’histoire d’Israël . . . Il n’est donc pas nécessaire de voir en Daniel 2 une copie de Gn 41. Les deux textes peuvent provenir de la même période, influencés tous les deux par une même courant littéraire, par une situation historique semblable” (G. G. Labonté, “Genèse 41 et Daniel 2: Question D’origine,” in *The Book of Daniel in Light of New Findings*, BETL 106 [Louvain: Leuven University/Peeters, 1993], 284). Cf. Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph*, VTSup 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 96; Gerald Morris, “Convention and Character in the Joseph Narrative,” in *Proceedings, Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies*, ed. Terrance Callan, 14 (Buffalo: Canisius College, 1994), 69–85.

²⁰See also 1 Sam 16:12, 18 which describes David as having a “good appearance” or “form,” as well as Esth 2:7, which similarly describes the beauty of Esther.

complaint or any fault” with him (Dan 1:4). He is also marked by his careful observance of the law. He refuses to “defile himself” with the king’s food (Dan 1:8–16) and continues in prayer even when it may cost his life (Dan 6:10). Seventh, both find favor before their superiors (Gen 39:21; Dan 1:9).²¹ Eighth, both are characterized by great wisdom, which is recognized by their captors (Gen 41:39, Dan 1:4, 17; 5:11). Ninth, both men serve in a foreign court for 93 years.²²

These thematic similarities between Daniel and Joseph are joined by a host of linguistic correspondences. These linguistic and sequential event correspondences are summarized in table 3.²³

A few linguistic correspondences are particularly worth noting. For instance, while חלם is not a rare word, its prominence in both passages is significant. The word חלם and its cognates occur 121 times in the OT. Forty-two of these occurrences appear in Genesis 37–50 and another 28 in Daniel. Thus 60% of all of the occurrences of חלם are found in Genesis and Daniel.

Perhaps even more significantly, the dreams “trouble” (פעם) the kings. This word is far less common in the OT, occurring only five times. Three are in Genesis 41 and Daniel 2 (Gen 41:8; Dan 2:1, 3).²⁴ Additionally, only Genesis 41:8 and Daniel 2:1, 3 employ רוח as the subject of פעם. These are the only instances in the OT where dreams function as the agent of trouble.

²¹The word הסד is used in both accounts. In Genesis, God gives Joseph הסד, resulting in his receiving favor (הן) from the keeper of the prison. In Daniel, God gives Daniel הסד before the chief of the eunuchs.

²²Wesselius, “The Literary Nature of the Book of Daniel and the Linguistic Character of Its Aramaic,” 250–51.

²³The following table has been appropriated, with modifications, from Joshua Philpot, “Was Joseph a Type of Daniel? Typological Correspondence in Genesis 37–50” (paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, San Francisco, 2011). I am enormously thankful for Philpot’s willingness to share his unpublished research with me on this topic. For similar lists of correspondences between Genesis 41 and Daniel 2, see Gnuse, “The Jewish Dream Interpreter in a Foreign Court, 29–53; Labonté, “Genèse 41 et Daniel 2: Question D’origine,” 271–84; Rindge, “Jewish Identity Under Foreign Rule,” 88–90; Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 230–31.

²⁴Compare the other instances of פעם in Judg 13:25 and Ps 77:5.

Table 3: Verbal correspondences between Genesis 41 and Daniel 2

	Genesis 41	Daniel 2
1	Pharaoh's dream occurs two years after Joseph's incarceration (41:1)—שנתים ימים	Nebuchadnezzar's dream occurs two years into his reign ²⁵ (Dan 2:1)—ובשנת שתיים
2	"Pharaoh had a dream" (41:1)—ופרעה חלם	"Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams" (2:1) ²⁶ —חלם נבצדנצר חלמות
3	Pharaoh's spirit was troubled (41:8)—ותפעם רוחו	Nebuchadnezzar's spirit was troubled (2:1)—ותתפעם רוחו; (2:3)—ותפעם רוחי
4	Pharaoh calls for his magicians (41:8)—חרטמים—and Egypt's wise men—הכמיה—to interpret—פתר—his dream	Nebuchadnezzar calls for his magicians (2:2)—חרטמים—satraps, and enchanters, who are later called "wise ones of Babel"—חכימי בבל—(2:12)—to interpret—פשר—his dream
5	"Pharaoh recounted to them his dreams" (41:8)	"The king gave orders . . . to tell the king his dreams" (2:2)
6	Professionals are unable to interpret Pharaoh's dream (41:8)	Professionals are unable either to declare or interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:4-11)
7	[New Character Introduction] Captain of the guard—שר הטבחים—is aware of a captive Jew with dream-interpreting abilities (41:10-12)	[New Character Introduction] Captain of the guard—רב־טבאיא—is aware of a captive Jew with dream-interpreting abilities (2:14)
8	Joseph introduced to Pharaoh by his ethnicity—a "Hebrew youth" (41:12).	Daniel introduced to Nebuchadnezzar by his ethnicity—"a man among the exiles of Judah" (2:25)
9	"Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph" (41:14)	"Daniel went in and requested of the king" (2:16)
10	"They hurriedly—ויריצהו—brought [Joseph]" (41:14)	"Arioch, in haste—בהתבהלה—brought Daniel" (2:25)
11	Joseph is asked if he can interpret the dream (41:15)	Daniel is asked if he can declare <i>and</i> interpret the dream (2:26)
12	Joseph downplays his abilities and attributes dream interpretations to God (41:16)	Daniel downplays his abilities and attributes dream interpretations to God (2:28-30)

²⁵On the supposed contradiction between Daniel 1:1 and Daniel 2:1, see Andrew Steinmann, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2008), 111.

²⁶Goldingay notes that the plural "dreams" may echo the "double dream in Gen 41" (Goldingay, *Daniel*, 30).

Table 7—Continued

13	The dream is recounted by Pharaoh to Joseph (41:17-24)	The dream is recounted by Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar (2:31-35)
14	Joseph tells Pharaoh that his dream is about what God will do in the future (41:25)	The <i>interpretation</i> is recounted by Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar (2:37-44)
15	The <i>interpretation</i> is recounted by Joseph to Pharaoh (41:26-31)	Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that his dream is about what God will do in the future (2:45)
16	The dream is “determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about” (41:32)	“The dream is true; and its interpretation is trustworthy” (2:45)
17	Joseph is worshiped as a result of his dream reporting (Gen. 41:40, 43), receiving homage—אברך (“Kneel!”)—from the people (41:40)	Daniel is worshiped as a result of his dream reporting (Dan. 2:46), receiving homage—סגד—from Nebuchadnezzar (2:46)
18	Joseph is given gifts (41:42)	Daniel is given gifts (2:48; cf. 5:16, 29)
19	Joseph is promoted to a ruler in a foreign land “over all the land of Egypt”—(על כל-ארץ מצרים [41:41])	Daniel is promoted to a ruler in a foreign land (על כל-מדינת בבל) [2:48; cf. 5:16, 29])

Other rare vocabulary also links the two passages, demonstrating Daniel’s literary dependence on Genesis 41. After their dreams, both Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar summon their “magicians” (Gen 41:8 [חרטמי]; Dan 2:2 [הרטמים]) and “wise men” (Gen 41:8 [חכמיה]; Dan 2:12 [חכמי בבל]) to interpret the dream. The word חרטם is rare in the OT, occurring 11 times and only with reference to the royal court magicians in Egypt and Babylon.²⁷ Both Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar require the magicians to “interpret” (Heb: פתר; Aram: פשר) the dreams. These cognates, along with their nominal forms פתרון and פשרא, occur 49 times in the OT. Forty-seven of those occurrences are in Genesis 40–41 or Daniel 2–5.²⁸ Just like Pharaoh’s magicians (Gen 41:8), Nebuchadnezzar’s magicians are incapable of interpreting the dream (Dan 2:1–11). Joseph and Daniel, however, succeed where the magicians fail (Gen 41:25–37; Dan 2:31–45). They are recognized by the pagan court officials as having the “spirit of God(s)” (Gen 41:38; cf. Dan 4:8, 9, 18; 5:11, 14).

²⁷Gen 41:8, 24; Exod 7:11, 22; 8:3, 14, 15; 9:11 (×2); Dan 1:20; 2:2.

²⁸The two other occurrences are in Dan 7:16 and Eccl 8:1.

Some elements in Genesis 41 have linguistic and thematic connections not only to Daniel 2 but elsewhere in Daniel as well. For instance, Daniel 5 records a set of gifts given to Daniel (by the Babylonian king) that resemble the gifts given to Joseph (Dan 5:16, 29). In Genesis 41:42, Pharaoh gives Joseph his signet ring, “clothes” (וילבש) Joseph in fine linen, and places “a gold chain around his neck” (הזהו על-צוארו). Excluding the signet ring, Belshazzar gives Daniel the same gifts. Daniel “was clothed” (והלבישו) with a purple robe and “a chain of gold was put around his neck” (דיידהבא על-צואאדה).²⁹

The evidence listed above demonstrates Joseph’s literary influence on Daniel. Daniel, understanding his life through the lens of Joseph, writes his narrative so as to evoke the Joseph story. By doing so, Daniel identifies himself as a new Joseph. Like Joseph, Daniel is exiled, interprets dreams, and rises to the highest ranks in the royal court. The question still remains, however, what significance this identification would have for Daniel and his readers.

Biblical-Theological Significance

As I argued in chapter 3, Joseph embodies hope for the nation in the midst of exile and famine. Just when the covenant promises seemed most imperiled by the prospect of starvation, Joseph’s authority in a foreign court secures salvation for the nation. Additionally, Moses indicated that Joseph’s life signals the coming of the exodus. At his death, Joseph reminds the nation of God’s promise to return them to Canaan, asking that his bones be taken back to the land (Gen 50:24–25)—evoking the anticipatory “exodus” of Jacob’s bones back to Canaan in Genesis 50:7–14. In sum, the story of Joseph is a story of hope for exiles.

In this light, we can see why Daniel might have interpreted his own life through the lens of Joseph. We can also see the theological significance this interpretation

²⁹See also the discussion in Rindge, “Jewish Identity Under Foreign Rule,” 89.

would have for Daniel's audience. As Joseph was "sent ahead" of the nation (Ps 105:17) to preserve them from harm, so too Daniel went to the royal court of Babylon in the first wave of exiles (605 BC) and served there before the other exiles arrived in 597 and 586 BC. Just as Joseph cared for the nation during its stay in Egypt, so too Daniel likely leveraged influence for his Jewish brothers during their exile in Babylon.³⁰ With Daniel in the royal court, Jewish exiles could maintain hope that God would somehow fulfill his promises to the nation and preserve them through trial, just as he had through Joseph in the first years of Israel's history.

Furthermore, Daniel's depiction of himself as a new Joseph also stimulates hope for a new exodus. Joseph embodied the hope of returning to the Promised Land (Gen 50:24–25). Indeed, as seen above, the exodus account mentions Joseph's post-mortem participation in the journey to Canaan (Exod 13:19). Even the conquest narrative concludes with Joseph's burial in the hill country of Ephraim (Josh 24:32). Joseph's life and death intersect closely with the exodus and the conquest. If Joseph teaches Israel anything about God's purposes, it is that God will restore his people to Canaan. Joseph died in exile, but was laid to rest in Canaan. Israel's exile is a death, but they too will come through it into the land of promise.

Hamilton strikes these same notes in his analysis of Daniel's reliance on Joseph. He writes,

To highlight correspondences between Joseph and Daniel was to fuel the flames of Israel's expectation. To invoke Joseph was to invoke the paradigm of which Joseph was a part, a paradigm that proceeded to the exodus, the Sinai covenant and the conquest of Canaan, and to invoke that procession was to point to the new exodus, the new covenant and the new conquest of the new Eden. Pointing to an Israelite figure with characteristics reminiscent of Joseph meant drawing attention to the

³⁰As is clear from Ezekiel, Daniel was known by fellow Jews outside the royal court as a man of great piety and wisdom (Ezek 14:14, 20: 28:3). Furthermore, if indeed Darius is Cyrus, as some scholars have posited, then it might be the case that Daniel leveraged his influence as one of Cyrus' three chief advisers (Dan 6:1–3) to bring about Cyrus' decree to release the Jews and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1–11). On Cyrus and Darius possibly being the same person, see Ernest C. Lucas, *Daniel*, AOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 136–37; Steinmann, *Daniel*, 293–96.

Lord setting events in motion to bring about the fulfillment of his promises.³¹

Joseph and Daniel stand at the two poles of Israel's OT history. Joseph and his brothers (the eponymous tribal heads) are the first generation of the Israelite nation. As such, they foreshadow the history of the nation they will sire—just as events in Abraham's life did the same (Gen 12:10–20; 22). As Genesis indicates, this tribal family did not blossom into a nation in Canaan, but in exile in Egypt (Gen 46:3; 47:27; Exod 1:8). And the family blossomed only because Joseph secured their well-being by advancing into the highest ranks of a foreign court. Joseph achieved his rank by interpreting the dreams of the king and being a man of recognizable wisdom. When famine forced them to Egypt, Joseph provided for them, and the nation multiplied from 70 to a great multitude (Gen 46:3; 47:27). Thus, Israel was born in exile (Gen 46:3). Yet, as Joseph predicts, they will not die in exile (Gen 50:24–25). God will rescue his people (even Joseph) and take them back to Canaan. Joseph's ministry to his family, therefore, was not ultimately settling them in Egypt but preparing them for the exodus.

Daniel stands at the opposite pole of Israel's OT history. In Daniel the story of Israel comes full circle. If Jacob's sojourn in Egypt is the birth of the nation (Gen 46:3), then the exile, by all appearances, is its death (cf. Ezek 37:1–14). Yet, Daniel's Joseph-like story suggests life after death—a new birth in exile. Daniel, like Joseph, is a young man sent ahead of the nation who secures its well-being by advancing into the highest ranks of a foreign court. Daniel achieves his rank by interpreting the dreams of the king and being a man of recognizable wisdom.

In some sense, the stakes are even higher for Daniel. His task is more difficult than Joseph's. Whereas Joseph only needed to interpret Pharaoh's dream, Daniel had to

³¹Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 225. Dumbrell also notes that the “most important” correspondence between Joseph and Daniel is that “both operated in an Israel that stood before an exodus, a major impending change” (William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002], 305). Goldingay writes, “The effect of these distinctive features is to give Dan 2 a more heightened tone. It is like Gen 41, only more so. This feature, combined with Gen 41's context on the eve of the exodus and Dan 2's in the exile, when Israel stands in need of a new exodus, means that Joseph could be seen as a type of Daniel.” Goldingay, *Daniel*, 43.

know the content of the dream without being told. Whereas Joseph's life was never in peril, Daniel risks his life and the lives of his friends (Dan 2:13). Whereas Pharaoh enjoined his servants to honor Joseph (Gen 41:40, 43), Nebuchadnezzar himself bows to Daniel (Dan 2:46).³²

Daniel himself understands rescue from captivity as a new exodus. He explicitly draws this parallel when he appeals to God's "mighty hand," which delivered Israel in the first exodus, to act on Israel's behalf in Babylon (Dan 9:15; cf. 9:1–2; 9:16–19). Further, as both Hamilton and Gentry have noted, the vision Daniel has next is developed within the framework of the prophetic expectation for a new exodus (cf. Isa 40:3–5; Hos 2:14–15).³³

These literary parallels between Joseph and Daniel ignite hope among exiled Jews for Israel's future. If the nation was birthed in exile in Egypt, then, despite all appearances to the contrary, it can experience new birth in exile in Babylon. If Joseph was a forerunner of the exodus, then Daniel, a new and better Joseph, portends a new exodus—one even greater than before. Philpot summarizes the evidence well:

Thus, the Hebrew canon is supported on two sides by two great exodus events, each of which is advanced by a dream-interpreting prophet. On one side stands Joseph, an exile in Egypt who saves the people of God, and who grounds his dying hope in God's covenantal promises. On the other side stands Daniel, an exile in Babylon who desires to save the people of God, and who grounds his hope on those same promises. Both envisage an exodus in the near future. Both make provisions to see it through.³⁴

³²Other scholars also see escalation or intensification from Joseph to Daniel. See Goldingay, *Daniel*, 43; Rindge, "Jewish Identity Under Foreign Rule," 90–98; Widder, "The Court Stories of Joseph (Gen 41) and Daniel (Dan 2) in Canonical Context," 1123–25. Rindge largely overstates his case and argues that the discontinuities between Daniel and Joseph reveal disagreement on how to interact with foreign powers. For Rindge, Joseph's approach to foreign interaction is one of assimilation, whereas Daniel's story promotes "moderate resistance" (Rindge, "Jewish Identity Under Foreign Rule," 98–103).

³³Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 105–34; Peter J. Gentry, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus," *SBJT* 14, no. 1 (2010): 26–44.

³⁴Philpot, "Was Joseph a Type of Daniel?"

The Exalted Jew in a Foreign Court

While only Daniel exhibits strong linguistic correspondences with Joseph, other stories of exiled Jews in foreign courts also share similarities with Joseph's story. For instance, Esther and Mordecai resemble Joseph. While there are only a few linguistic correspondences between the stories, Esther and Genesis 37–50 share a number of similar themes and narrative features. Like Joseph, Esther is essentially a slave in a foreign land. She is also “handsome in form and appearance” (והנערה יפת־תאר וטובת מראה) [Esth 2:7]; cf. (יוסף יפה־תאר ויפה מראה) [Gen 39:6].³⁵ She is cleaned up, presented to the king, “finds favor” before him (Esth 2:17; cf. Gen 39:3–4; Dan 1:9)³⁶ and makes requests that result in the salvation of her people.³⁷

Similarly, the description of Mordecai's daily refusal to bow to Haman resembles Joseph's repudiation of Potiphar's wife (ויהי באמרם אליו יום ויום ולא שמע אליהם) [Esth 3:4]; cf. יהי כדברה אל־יוסף יום ויום ולא־שמע אליה [Gen 39:10]). Also, Mordecai's life shares the same trajectory of Joseph's. Mordecai is an exiled Jew in a foreign court who rises to second in command over the nation (Esth 10:3). Even the account of Mordecai's exaltation shows some verbal correspondence to Pharaoh's promotion of Joseph (Esth 6:11 [cf. 8:2]; cf. Gen 41:42–43).³⁸

³⁵Cf. 1 Sam 16:12, 18; Dan 1:4.

³⁶Dunne posits that Esther is portrayed as an anti-Joseph. Her life resembles Joseph's, yet Esther chooses the path of complete assimilation, whereas Joseph maintains his Jewish integrity. With regard to the possible parallel between Esth 2:17 and Gen 39:3–4, Dunne comments, “There is an intriguing difference between Joseph and Daniel ‘finding favor’ in a passive sense, and Esther ‘taking favor’ in an active sense. When Joseph and Daniel ‘Find favor’ we are also told that it was God who granted the favor (Gen 39:3–4, 21; Dan 1:9)” (John Anthony Dunne, *Esther and Her Elusive God: How a Secular Story Functions as Scripture* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014], 31). Cf. Frederic W. Bush, *Ruth, Esther*, WBC 9 (Dallas: Word Books, 1996), 368.

³⁷Some scholars also assert a correspondence between Esther's words in Esth 4:16 and Jacob's in Gen 43:14 (Berg, *The Book of Esther*, 125; Arthur Van Seters, “The Use of the Story of Joseph in Scripture” [PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1965], 160; Jon Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997], 85). Given the lack of specific verbal correspondence between the two texts, Esther's “if I perish, I perish” and Jacob's “if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved” most likely merely reflect an idiomatic way of speaking.

³⁸Scholars have posited a number of other verbal correspondences between Esther. For instance, Gen 40:2 » Esth 2:21; Gen 40:20 » Esth 1:3; 2:18; Gen 41:34–37 » Esth 1:21; 2:3–4; Gen 41:46 » Esth 8:15; Gen 44:24 » Esth 8:6; Gen 44:34 » Esth 8:6; Gen 43:31; 45:1 » Esth 5:10; Gen 50:3 » Esth 2:12 (Rosenthal, “Die Josephgeschichte, Mit Den Buechern Ester Und Daniel Verglichen,” 278–84; Moshe Gan,

Genesis 41:42b–43	Esther 6:11 and Esther 8:2
<p><u>ויסר פרעה את־טבעתו מעל ידו ויתן אתה על־יד יוסף</u> <u>וילבש אתו בגדי־שש וישם רבד הזהב על־צוארו:</u> <u>וירכב אתו במרכבת המשנה אשר־לו ויקראו לפניו</u> <u>אברך ונתון אתו על כל־ארץ מצרים:</u></p>	<p><u>ויקח המן את־הלבוש ואת־הסוס וילבש את־מרדכי</u> <u>וירכיבהו ברחוב העיר ויקרא לפניו ככה יעשה לאיש</u> <u>אשר המלך חפץ ביקרו</u></p> <p><u>ויתנה ויסר המלך את־טבעתו אשר העביר מהמן</u> <u>למרדכי</u></p>

Figure 6: Possible verbal correspondences between Genesis 41:42b–43, Esther 6:11, and Esther 8:2

Jehoiachin also shows some similarity to Joseph.³⁹ Jehoiachin is an exiled Jew shown favor by a foreign king. Like Joseph, Jehoiachin is rescued from prison by the king (Evil-Merodach), given a change of clothes (2 Kgs 25:29; cf. Gen 41:14, 43), and granted a privileged place in the royal court (2 Kgs 25:28, 30).⁴⁰ Additionally, some scholars posit that Evil-Merodach’s “lifting the head” (נשא...את־ראש) of Jehoiachin echoes Pharaoh’s lifting of the cupbearer’s head (ישא...את ראשך [Gen 40:13]). Chan contends that the idiom נשא + ראש only occurs with the connotation “review a case and

“Megillat ‘Esther Be’aspaqlariyat Qorot Yoseph Be’misrayim,” 144–49; Berg, *The Book of Esther*, 125; Van Seters, “The Use of the Story of Joseph in Scripture,” 158–60; Levenson, *Esther*, 54–65, 72, 97.

³⁹Jan Granowski, “Jehoiachin at the King’s Table: A Reading of the Ending of the Second Book of Kings,” in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell, Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 173–88; Thomas Römer, “Transformations in Deuteronomistic and Biblical Historiography: On ‘Book-Finding’ and Other Literary Strategies,” *ZAW* 109 (1997): 10–11; K. Schmid, *Erzväter Und Exodus: Untersuchungen Zur Doppelten Begründung Der Ursprünge Israel Innerhalb Der Geschichtsbücher Des Alten Testaments*, WMANT 81 (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener, 1999), 142–43; John E. Harvey, “Jehoiachin and Joseph: Hope at the Close of the Deuteronomistic History,” in *The Bible as a Human Witness to Divine Revelation: Hearing the Word of God through Historically Dissimilar Traditions*, ed. Randall Heskett and Brian Irwin, LHBOTS 469 (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 54–55; Matthew Patton, “Hope for a Tender Sprig: Jehoiachin in Biblical Theology” (PhD diss., Wheaton College, 2014), 63–64, 302–304; Michael Chan, “Joseph and Jehoiachin: On the Edge of the Exodus,” *ZAW* 125, no. 4 (2013): 566–77

⁴⁰Sarna and Dempster both note that the open-ended conclusions of Kings and Chronicles foreshadow Israel’s hope for a future beyond exile. In the case of Chronicles (cf. 2 Chr 36:23), this hope is suggested by the use of “key verbs” עלה and פקד, which appear to draw from Joseph’s dying words anticipating the Exodus (Gen 50:24–25). See Nahum M. Sarna, “Bible: The Canon, Text, and Editions,” *EJ* (Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1972), 831; Stephen G. Dempster, “An ‘Extraordinary Fact’: Torah and Temple and the Contours of the Hebrew Canon: Part 2,” *TynBul* 48, no. 2 (1997): 210–11; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 48–49.

release from prison” with Joseph (Gen 40:13) and Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 25:27; and the synoptic account in Jeremiah 52:31).⁴¹

Traditionally, scholars have accounted for the resemblances between the Joseph, Esther, Mordecai, and Jehoiachin stories in one of two ways. First, some posit direct literary dependence. They believe the authors of Esther and the Jehoiachin narrative intentionally model their stories on Joseph’s, even borrowing the language of Genesis 37–50 where possible. Berg, for instance, notes that “the striking linguistic similarities between [Esther and Joseph], when taken with the quantity of more general correspondences, remain explained best by the thesis that the story of Joseph, in some sense, provides a literary model for the Book of Esther.”⁴² Additionally, Chan and Harvey argue that Jehoiachin’s similarities to Joseph are a result of a “deliberate incorporation” of material from the Joseph story.⁴³

The authors of Esther and Jehoiachin certainly may have borrowed from the Joseph story, but the evidence is not as strong as with Daniel. Neither story has the same clustering of verbal correspondences, rare words, and sequential event correspondences as Daniel 2 does with Genesis 41. Thus, while it is certainly possible and plausible that these accounts exhibit direct literary borrowing from Genesis 37–50, it is difficult to affirm that claim with any degree of certainty. The thematic and verbal correspondences may just be a function of the historical similarities.

Second, critical scholars have generally opted for the notion that the similarities between Joseph, Daniel, Esther, and the others are a function of their shared

⁴¹Michael Chan, “Joseph and Jehoiachin,” 566–77; Cf. Harvey, “Jehoiachin and Joseph: Hope at the Close of the Deuteronomistic History,” 54. Additionally, in the synoptic account in Jer 52:31, Codex Vaticanus includes the phrase *καὶ ἔχειρεν αὐτόν*, which the BHS editors see as a possible allusion to Gen 41:14.

⁴²Berg, *The Book of Esther*, 151; Rosenthal, “Die Josephgeschichte, Mit Den Buechern Ester Und Daniel Verglichen,” 278–84.

⁴³Chan, “Joseph and Jehoiachin,” 569; Harvey, “Jehoiachin and Joseph,” 53–54.

genre as court tales⁴⁴—stories that “deal with the exploits of a godly exile in a foreign court whose piety and wisdom enable him to emerge triumphantly from various tests and rise to personal prominence.”⁴⁵ Ascribing resemblances purely to shared genre, however, also has its problems.⁴⁶ This approach generally de-historicizes these texts, positing that these characters and their stories are fictional—“history-like” rather than actual history.⁴⁷ The problems with de-historicizing are too numerous to mention here and are beyond the scope of this dissertation. More to the point, simply classifying these narratives as court-tales or ascribing similarities to shared genre does little to unpack the biblical-theological significance of these texts.

We have seen that the literary influence of the Joseph story may provide some reason for the similarity between these narratives. Given the evidence, however, we cannot posit it as a sufficient explanation. For instance, if we apply Hays’ criteria for

⁴⁴John J. Collins, “The Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic,” 218–34; Collins, Daniel, 38–52; W. Lee Humphreys, “A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel,” *JBL* 92, no. 2 (1973): 211–23; H. P. Müller, “Märchen, Legende Und Enderwartung: Zum Verständnis Des Buches Daniel,” *VT* 26 (1976): 338–50; Susan Niditch and Robert Doran, “The Success Story of the Wise Courtier: A Formal Approach,” *JBL* 96, no. 2 (1977): 179–93; Lawrence Wills, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King: Ancient Jewish Court Legends*, HDR 26 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). Römer includes the Jehoiachin story in 2 Kgs 25:27–30 as sharing in court-tale genre (Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical, and Literary Introduction* [London: T&T Clark, 2005] 177). Some scholars see the correspondence as a result of the combination of shared genre and literary dependence. Talmon asserts, “[Joseph and Esther’s] similarities therefore are to be accounted for not only by their probable interdependence but also by their dependence upon one common literary tradition” S. Talmon, “‘Wisdom’ In the Book of Esther,” *VT* 13, no. 4 (1963): 455.

⁴⁵Scholars enumerate the conventions of the court tale genre in different ways. Patterson, for instance, states: “Such narratives usually include such elements as (1) a specific test involving faith, morality, or compromise of covenantal standards, (2) the friendliness of a resident court official, (3) besting the foreigners in contests or conflict, and (4) an unexpected extraordinary resolution to a besetting problem. The narratives themselves characteristically fall into two subgroups: (1) the court contest, in which the hero provides the interpretation to a seemingly insoluble problem, and (2) the court conflict, in which the hero’s purity is rewarded with deliverance” (Richard Patterson, “Holding on to Daniel’s Court Tales,” *JETS* 36, no. 4 [1993]: 447). Cf. Humphreys, “A Life-Style for Diaspora,” 217–20. Niditch and Doran posit an alternative enumeration of the genre conventions: “(1) A person of lower status . . . is called before a person of higher status . . . to answer difficult questions or to solve a problem requiring insight. . . . (2) The person of high status poses the problem which no one seems capable of solving. (3) The person of lower status . . . does solve the problem. (4) The person of lower status is rewarded for answering” (Niditch and Doran, “The Success Story of the Wise Courtier,” 180).

⁴⁶Morris, “Convention and Character in the Joseph Narrative,” 82.

⁴⁷Berg, *The Book of Esther*, 15. Interestingly, Patterson uses the court tale genre as evidence of the traditional dating of Daniel (Patterson, “Holding on to Daniel’s Court Tales,” 445–54).

discerning allusions, then we cannot with any degree of certainty suggest literary dependence: these stories neither attest to rare verbal correspondences (“volume”) nor show a clustering (“recurrence”) of language undeniably from the Joseph story elsewhere in the narrative. Further, what verbal correspondences do exist may simply be a function of historical similarities between the characters rather than “deliberate incorporation” of phraseology from Genesis 37–50.

Perhaps, more simply, the lives of Joseph, Daniel, Esther, Mordecai, and Jehoiachin represent a divinely ordained pattern in redemptive history—the pattern of the exalted Jew in the foreign court. Joseph is the first instantiation of this pattern. Daniel, perceiving his life as fitting a mold first established by Joseph, models his narrative on Joseph’s. Daniel’s account reveals his interpretive perspective on the Joseph story. For Daniel, Joseph’s experiences are prototypical.

Later, Esther, Mordecai, and Jehoiachin, resembling Joseph and Daniel, further establish the pattern of the exalted Jew in the foreign court. Once all of these figures emerge onto the scene, readers can retrospectively discover the thematic and narrative correspondences. The repetition in their accounts “add[s] to the impression that this is the kind of thing God does for his people. Each installment in the pattern builds escalating anticipation.”⁴⁸

In this light, the correspondences discussed above are not primarily a function of literary dependence (with the exception of Daniel) or shared genre. Instead, they reveal a providentially ordered pattern within redemptive history. Whenever Israel finds itself in exile, God works in a way paradigmatically exhibited in Joseph. He sends a representative into exile. That representative suffers, is exalted, and then delivers the nation or signals the hope of deliverance.

What is the significance of this pattern? In addition to the similarities

⁴⁸Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven*, 224.

mentioned above, the primary feature shared by each story is that each takes place while Israel is in exile. This fact may explain why no Joseph-like characters emerge between the exodus and the exile—and the apparent clustering of Joseph-like characters in narratives after 586 BC. As already argued, Joseph and Daniel, who first establish the pattern of the exalted Jew in the foreign court, signal hope for return from exile. Like Joseph and Daniel, then, Esther, Mordecai, and Jehoiachin likely reiterate that hope in their own narratives. Their privileged place in foreign courts reminds readers that Israel has been in similar circumstances before. Just as Joseph embodied the hope of return to the land, so also these later counterparts do the same.⁴⁹

What does this pattern contribute to a canonical understanding of the Joseph story? First, it solidifies Joseph's role as one embodying the hope of exodus and signaling God's coming redemption and fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. Genesis 50:24–25 makes this point from within the Joseph story itself. These later figures point to that same reality.

Second, these correspondences may reveal Joseph as part of a typological pattern anticipating some form of New Covenant fulfillment. As Beale notes, one criterion for discerning types within the OT is whether a person, event, or institution is part of a cyclic pattern in redemptive history.⁵⁰ Beale, relying on Von Rad, illustrates this point by appealing to the cyclic pattern of charismatic Israelite leaders being called, commissioned, and achieving some victory for Israel, before finally failing to bring about

⁴⁹As Chan notes, "Hope lies in the fact that the Book of Kings ends as Genesis does—with some of Israel in Egypt and with an impending new exodus that is signaled by the benevolent treatment of Jehoiachin. . . . The Book of Kings achieves its denouement on a note of hope that, at some point in the future, Israel would again experience a second exodus and a new opportunity to live in the land. . . . [2 Kgs 25:27–30 is] not meant to describe the end of an era. In fact, quite the opposite is true: [these verses] open the possibility of a new one" (Chan, "Joseph and Jehoiachin," 575–76). Cf. Granowski, "Jehoiachin at the King's Table," 185.

⁵⁰Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*, 20–21; Cf. Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper Row, 1963), 372–74.

eschatological fulfillment of God's promises.⁵¹ This pattern portends some future fulfillment.

If this is the case, then Joseph's place as the first in a pattern of exiled Jews who deliver the nation hints at something greater to come. Viewed through the lens of later exiles such as Esther, Mordecai, and especially Daniel, Joseph is a prototype in a pattern expecting resolution. Daniel himself appears to acknowledge this by modeling his own narrative after Joseph's story so as to inculcate in his readers hope for a new exodus. Daniel suggests that the type of work God did through Joseph will be repeated in his own life. Esther and the others witness to this same theme. The presence of this pattern in the canon, then, may intimate a typological character of the Joseph story. Joseph is a prototype in a pattern of exiled Jews who either deliver the nation or function as signposts of God's future redemptive work.

Implications for a Canonical Understanding of the Joseph Narrative

This chapter has explored the use of the Joseph story by later OT authors in order to understand their interpretive perspective on his life. This study has yielded several important points for a canonical understanding of the Joseph narrative.

First, Psalm 105 clearly interprets Joseph within the framework of the Abrahamic promises. The author sees Joseph, like Moses, as Yahweh's instrument for fulfilling his covenant promises. God fulfills (partially and temporarily) his covenant with Israel by preserving the seed through Joseph. Joseph's ministry, therefore, provides an anticipatory fulfillment of the promises. Furthermore, Joseph is identified as part of a line of deliverers called "messiahs." This designation further signifies the anticipatory and typological nature of the Joseph story. Joseph, along with Moses, is part of a biblical-theological trajectory of men through whom Yahweh delivers his people and keeps

⁵¹Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 20–21.

covenant with Israel.

Second, Joseph's post-mortem participation in the exodus, later uses of the Joseph story by Daniel, and the similarities between Joseph and later exilic figures all tie Joseph closely to the exodus. Joseph embodies Israel's hope for deliverance. His life is a signpost of Israel's redemption. Further, the story of Joseph's bones and the canonical pattern of exiled Jews in a foreign court all suggest that Joseph's story is typological. Joseph's experiences in exile anticipate Israel's later exilic experiences in Babylon and Medo-Persia. The journey of Joseph's bones echoes Israel's journey from exile in Egypt to rest in Canaan. Joseph is a prototype of God's work with his people in exile.

CHAPTER 5

JOSEPH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

This chapter examines the two significant, explicit mentions of the Joseph story in the New Testament, Acts 7:9–16 and Hebrews 11:22.¹ In my analysis of Acts 7, I show that Stephen (and by implication Luke) understands Joseph in the same terms presented in chapter 3: (1) as a figure employed by God to fulfill the Abrahamic covenant and mediate blessing, and (2) as a type of Christ. In my analysis of Hebrews 11, I show that the text presents Joseph as an example of faith in the covenant promises in the face of death.²

Acts 7

Acts 7 is a pivotal chapter in the book of Acts. Luke emphasizes its importance in a number of ways. First, Stephen's speech is the longest in Acts. This fact is

¹Joseph is mentioned two other times in the NT, John 4:5 and Rev 7:8, both of which are of relative biblical-theological value.

²While a good deal of literature from Second Temple Judaism (2TJ) comments on the Joseph story, much of it is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Most of it is either commentary on Gen 37–50 or retellings of the Joseph story that portray Joseph as a model of piety and virtue. Interestingly, these Second Temple texts also attest to a “Messiah ben Joseph” tradition. “Messiah ben Joseph” is an eschatological figure, marked by suffering, whose death immediately precedes the advent of the victorious “Messiah ben David.” It is noteworthy that a “Messiah ben Joseph” tradition exists in the theological milieu that surrounded the NT authors. Yet, the NT authors clearly never appropriate or even interact with that tradition. For literature on Joseph in 2TJ, see Harm Hollander, “The Portrayal of Joseph in Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Literature,” in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 237–63; idem, “The Ethical Character of the Patriarch Joseph: A Study in the Ethics of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *Studies on the Testament of Joseph*, ed. G. W. E. Nickelsburg Jr., SBLSCS 5 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975); David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*, JSOTSup 252 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 304–350; idem, “Les Psaumes Dans Le Judaïsme Rabbiniq,” *RTL* 36, no. 2 (2005): 166–91; idem, “Firstborn *Shor* and *Rem*: A Sacrificial Josephite Messiah in 1 Enoch 90:37–38 and Deuteronomy 33:17,” *JSP* 15, no. 3 (2006): 211–28; idem, “The Fourth Deliverer: A Josephite Messiah in 4Q175,” *Bib* 86, no. 4 (2005): 545–53; idem, “Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis Differ: Messiah Ben Joseph in the Babylonian Talmud,” *RBJ* 8 (2005): 77–90; idem, “Messiah Bar Ephraim in the Targums,” *AS* 4, no. 2 (2006): 221–41; idem, “A Josephite Messiah in 4Q372,” *JSP* 18, no. 3 (2009): 181–205.

noteworthy given the number of other speeches in the book.³ Second, Acts 7 is a major turning point in the story. Stephen's speech relativizes the temple and establishes Jesus as the new locus of God's presence, which provides the theological grounds for the advance of the gospel in Samaria and beyond. Third, Stephen's death catalyzes the dispersion of the church beyond Jerusalem.⁴

In this chapter, Stephen defends himself against false accusations of disparaging the temple and the Law (Acts 6:13–14). He does this by rehearsing Israel's history, selectively highlighting parts that challenge his audience's understanding of the temple and the Law. His defense is one of the earliest instances of biblical theology in the life of the church—a biblical theology that devotes significant attention to Joseph (Acts 7:9–16). Thus, Acts 7 reveals not just how Stephen and Luke (and by implication the other apostles) understood the Joseph story in and of itself, but how they understood it to fit within the broader biblical storyline. Stephen, therefore, gives us a glimpse of how the apostolic community understood Joseph's significance in redemptive history.

In order to unpack the theological significance of Stephen's use of Joseph, I examine Stephen's speech in four stages. First, I consider the form and structure of the chapter, highlighting features that help shed light on Stephen's seemingly unusual method of defense and on his interpretive method. Second, I briefly explain Stephen's argument, tracing it through each section of his speech. Third, I uncover Stephen's interpretive perspective on the Joseph story by exegeting Acts 7:9–16 and then considering how this section contributes to Stephen's argument. Finally, I establish the

³Stephen's speech contains 1014 words compared to 470 words in Paul's speech in Acts 13:16–41 and 429 words in Peter's speech in Acts 2:14–36 (Eckhard Schnabel, *Acts*, ZECNT 5 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012], 355). In fact, as Roloff notes, Stephen's speech is roughly 5 percent of the entire book! See Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 117.

⁴For more on Acts 7 as a major turning point in the narrative, see Alan Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke's Account of God's Unfolding Plan*, NSBT 27 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 165.

biblical-theological significance of Stephen's use of the Joseph story, particularly focusing on whether Stephen presents Joseph as a type of Christ.

Form and Structure

Form. Acts 7 is notoriously difficult to interpret given the form of Stephen's defense. Stephen rehearses Israel's history from Abraham to the Exile, never seeming to explicitly counteract the charges leveled against him. As a result, some scholars posit that much of his speech is a largely irrelevant rehearsal of the past. This sentiment is represented by Conzelmann, who argues that "the content of the speech (with the exception of the closing remarks) has no connection with the charges against Stephen" and condemns any attempt to understand the speech as polemical as "artificial."⁵ Additionally, Pervo concludes that Stephen's argument "contains little more than an indubitably partisan review of biblical history up to the construction of the first temple, followed by a brief but sharp attack on the auditors."⁶ Haenchen, apparently exasperated with the speech, exclaims "Stephen is supposed to be answering the question of whether he is guilty of the charges, but a very large part of his speech has no bearing on this at all!"⁷

Yet, while Stephen's speech does not directly refute the accusations against him, it does posit an alternative reading of the OT that flies in the face of his accusers' theological convictions. As his own audience understood, Stephen's sharp condemnation of Israel was not merely a tacked-on conclusion to an otherwise innocuous history lesson. It was the climax of a biblical-theological argument that unraveled his opponents'

⁵Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 57.

⁶Richard Pervo, *Acts*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 174.

⁷Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1971), 286. Similarly Dibelius argues that Stephen's speech was "irrelevant" and had "no purpose whatever" with regard to the charges (Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* [London: SCM Press, 1956], 167–69).

perception of the temple and of themselves.

Recent literature on the ancient genre of “Rewritten Bible” (RB) and its literary cousin “Summaries of Israel’s Story” (SIS)⁸ sheds some light on the paraenetic and polemic function of speeches, like Stephen’s, that to modern ears may seem like dispassionate history lessons.⁹ RB and SIS are, as their names imply, theologically interpreted recitals of Israel’s history and were fairly common forms of literature in the OT (cf. Ps 105), NT (Matt 1:1–17; Acts 7, 13; Heb 11), Second Temple Judaism (1 Macc 2:50–61; 1QS 1:21–2:6), and early Christian communities (1 Clem. 4–6, 9–12, 17:1–19:2; 31:1–32:4).¹⁰ Even though there is significant overlap between the form and function of SIS and RB literature, SIS is typically distinguished as its own genre (or subgenre) by its brevity (compared to much fuller RB texts) and because it typically exists within a larger piece of literature.¹¹

As Hood explains, authors employ SIS to bring the patterns of Israel’s past to bear on present circumstances and to affirm or condemn the behavior of the community by association. Thus the paraenetic function is to provide “moral instruction through positive and negative examples. . . . Stephen intends for his audience to see the Jewish rejection of Jesus, God’s chosen agent, in line with the Israelites who rejected God’s chosen agents Joseph and Moses.”¹² Ultimately, this point strengthens the idea that the

⁸“Summaries of Israel’s Story” is the translation of Jeska’s technical designation *Summarien der Geschichte Israels* (SGI) (Joachim Jeska, *Die Geschichte Israels in Der Sicht Des Lukas. Apg 7,2b–53 Und 13,17–25 Im Kontext Antik-Judischer Summarien Der Geschichte Israels*, FRLANT 195 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001]). See also discussion on translating between the two phrases in Jason B. Hood and Matthew Y. Emerson, “Summaries of Israel’s Story: Reviewing a Compositional Category,” *CBR* 11, no. 3 (2013): 336–37.

⁹For a survey of recent research on RB and SIS, see Hood and Emerson, “Summaries of Israel’s Story.” Also see Jason Hood, *The Messiah, His Brothers, and the Nations: Matthew 1:1–7*, LNTS 441 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 35–62.

¹⁰For a complete list, see Hood and Emerson, “Summaries of Israel’s Story,” 340–44.

¹¹Hood cleverly compares SIS to RB “as the trailer of a movie compares to a full-length film. Generally speaking, film trailers are much more highly focused than their fuller, more complicated *Urtexts*, and are often tailored by marketing departments to the interests of a specific audience watching the film in which the trailer appears” (Hood, *The Messiah, His Brothers, and the Nations*, 48).

¹²*Ibid.*, 56.

original audience would have themselves understood that Joseph's and Moses' lives anticipated some facet of their experience. The crowd is enraged, however, when they unexpectedly find themselves on the side of the "bad guys" in the speech, with Jesus (and eventually Stephen) on the side of the "good guys," Joseph and Moses. These heroes of the faith do indeed anticipate events in first-century Israel, Stephen claims, but they anticipate the life and death of Jesus, not the Jewish people. This explains the form of Stephen's defense. By appealing to patterns from Israel's history, Stephen shows that it was his detractors, not he, who had dishonored the Law and the temple.

Yet, as will be argued, the speech contains more than moral judgment—quite a bit more, in fact. Stephen makes claims about the identity of Christ that are rooted in Scripture's unfolding of redemptive history. This too is a common characteristic of Christian SIS, particularly in the NT. For instance, Mark 12:1–12, Acts 13:16–41, and Revelation 12 all focus on the culmination of Israel's story in Jesus and the implications of this culmination for his people.¹³ We should expect then (as would Stephen's audience) some sort of typological interpretation of the characters, institutions, or events Stephen mentions. Again, as Hood mentions, in SIS "ancient interpreters use *ancient characters and events to adumbrate or guide the salvation-historical present and future.*"¹⁴ If Stephen's speech does not exhibit typological exegesis of Joseph and Moses, we must ask why it breaks with the pattern so firmly established in similar summaries throughout the NT and early Christian literature.

Structure. Scholars offer various proposals for the structure of Stephen's speech. Many of these proposals focus on similarities to or dependence on Greco-Roman

¹³"Providing a Christian spin on the 'restorationist tendency' noted by [N. T.] Wright, the canonical Christian SIS are all clearly messianic in nature, focusing Israel's story on Christ and his mission (vocation)" (Hood, *The Messiah, His Brothers, and the Nations.*, 59).

¹⁴*Ibid.*, emphasis original.

rhetoric.¹⁵ While these proposals are helpful, Peterson rightly cautions that “observations about the rhetorical character and structure of Acts 7 are helpful as far as they go. But a detailed analysis of the argument, with its highly selective use of Scripture, repetition of key words, and progressive development of important themes, suggests . . . a literary and theological structure.”¹⁶

Peterson is exactly right. Stephen’s speech does have a literary and theological structure: it is a series of spiritual biographies with (1) a theological focus and (2) a covenantal structure.¹⁷ Stephen moves through the stories of Abraham (vv 2b–8), Joseph (vv 9–16), Moses (vv 17–43), Joshua (v 45a), David (vv 45b–46), and Solomon (v 47), showing how each man is used by God in the plan of salvation as developed through Israel’s major covenants.¹⁸

The “theological focus” of the speech is a product of Stephen’s frequent commentary on divine activity in history. Throughout this series of biographies God is the main character. As Parsons notes, “with the exception of settled in 7:4a, God is the subject of every main verb in 7:2–8a.” Later he adds that “the Lukan Stephen uses the

¹⁵Dupont was the first to suggest a Greco-Roman rhetorical outline in Jacques Dupont, “La Structure Oratoire Du Discourse d’Étienne (Actes 7),” *Bib* 66 (1985): 153–67. A number of scholars have followed Dupont’s proposal to one degree or another, including Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 260–61; Darrell Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 277; Craig Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary 3:1–14:28*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 1332–33. Others have also have followed Dupont but with some revision. See Fearghus Ó Fearghail, *The Introduction to Luke-Acts: A Study of the Role of Lk 1, 1–4,44 in the Composition of Luke’s Two-Volume Work*, AnBib 126 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991); compare Pervo, *Acts*, 179.

¹⁶David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 245.

¹⁷Schnabel, *Acts*, 355; Pervo, *Acts*, 170; Mikeal Parsons, *Acts*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 90; Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 167. Cf. Peterson, who argues that Stephen’s speech is modeled after prophetic *riḅ* formula (Brian Peterson, “Stephen’s Speech as a Modified Prophetic *RĪḅ* Formula,” *JETS* 57, no. 2 [2014]: 351–69. Thompson notes that this biographical focus characterizes other speeches throughout Luke-Acts (cf. Acts 13:20–25) and also “reflects the way Luke himself is recounting the history of the church in Acts as the fulfillment of God’s purposes in Jesus and his people” (Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 167n).

¹⁸This focus on God’s plan of salvation is not unique to Acts 7 but is a major feature in the rest of Luke-Acts as well. See John T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts*, SNTSMS 76 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

rhetorical device of inflection (*polyptoton* or *klisis*) in which the subject is inflected in all cases” to highlight that God himself is the focus of his speech.¹⁹ Thus, Stephen’s biographical focus serves his theological focus. He highlights that these OT figures are significant not for who they are in and of themselves, but because of what God does through them.²⁰

Additionally, each of these biographical figures is developed according to the Old Testament’s major covenantal epochs. Specifically, Stephen traces through three covenants (Abrahamic, 7:2–16; Mosaic, 7:17–45a; and Davidic, 7:45b–50) the themes of (1) God’s presence and (2) the rejection of leaders by their people. As we will see, Stephen shows that these figures are each intimately associated with God’s presence, rejected by the people, and ultimately vehicles through which God fulfills his promises to the nation.²¹

Surveying the Argument: An Overview of Stephen’s Speech

In Acts 6, the synagogue of the Freedmen makes a number of false accusations against Stephen (Acts 6:9). First, they accuse Stephen of speaking “blasphemous words against Moses and God” (Acts 6:11). Next, they claim he speaks against “this holy place and the law,” arguing that he said that “Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us” (Acts 6:13–14). Ultimately, then, the

¹⁹Nominative: 7:2, 6, 7, 9, 17, 25, 32 (×2); genitive: 7:43, 46, 56; dative: 7:20; accusative: 7:40. See Mikeal Parson, *Acts*, PCNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 90–91; Ju-Won Kim, “Explicit Quotations from Genesis within the Context of Stephen’s Speech in Acts,” *Neot* 41, no. 2 (2007): 353; Michael R. Whinton, “Rewriting Abraham and Joseph: Stephen’s Speech (Acts 7:2–16) and Jewish Exegetical Traditions,” *NovT* 54 (2012): 151.

²⁰As Kim notes in his summary comments on Acts 7:2–8, since Abraham is never an “explicit subject” of an action, “the author is clearly not wishing to draw attention to the role of Abraham, as much as the all-important role of Abraham’s God” (Kim, “Explicit Quotations from Genesis within the Context of Stephen’s Speech in Acts,” 353).

²¹While few scholars have noted this feature of the story, I was delighted to discover that Bruno also understands Stephen’s biblical theology to have a “covenantal substructure” (Christopher Bruno, “Biblical Theology According to the Earliest Christians: Stephen’s Speech as a Model for OT Biblical Theology” [paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, 2015]).

accusations primarily focus on Stephen's teaching regarding (1) the temple ("God" [6:11], "this holy place" [6:13], "this place" [6:14]) and (2) the law ("Moses" [6:11], "the law" [6:13], and "customs that Moses delivered" [6:14]).

As I will show, Stephen answers each accusation by (1) tracing the theme of God's mobile presence across biblical history and (2) highlighting Israel's regular rejection of covenant mediators, particularly Moses. First, with regard to God's presence, Stephen shows that the OT never confines God's presence to a particular location, not even the temple.²² Instead, God's special presence is dynamic. Stephen highlights this dynamism, showing how it anticipates something greater than the localized Solomonic temple. Second, with regard to Moses, Stephen shows that both Moses and the law point beyond themselves to a figure who will fulfill the law. Like the temple, both Moses and the law are anticipatory. They were never intended to be an end in themselves.

God's presence and Israel's rebellion in the Abrahamic covenant. Stephen begins his speech by showing that the OT never limited God's presence to the temple or even to Canaan. Instead, God appears to Abraham in Mesopotamia as "the God of glory" (Acts 7:2), a phrase intimately associated throughout the OT with the temple (1 Kgs 8:10–13; Isa 6:1–3; Ezek 1:4–28; 8:1–4; 10:1–22). This detail suggests that God's

²²Luke has been developing the temple theme since the beginning of Acts. The temple is a major feature of Acts 3–5, highlighted by the *inclusio* of Acts 2:46 and 5:42, which both mention the "day by day" gathering of Christians in the temple for worship and fellowship. Stephen's speech, which focuses on the temple, is a hinge in the Acts narrative. Acts 7 climactically concludes the temple focus of Acts 3–5. As Thompson writes,

The account of Stephen's speech and death . . . culminates two main themes which have been running throughout Acts 3–5: (1) Stephen's death brings to a climax the opposition that has been intensifying throughout Acts 3–5. Thus opposition has moved from threats to Peter and John (4:21) to the arrest and imprisonment of all the apostles (5:18), to flogging as well as desires to put all the apostles to death (5:33, 40), and now to the first death of a Christian for his proclamation of the Lord Jesus (7:59–60). Despite this opposition, however, the message about the Lord Jesus has continued to spread (4:4; 5:20, 28, 39, 42). (2) Stephen's speech focuses primarily on the significance of the temple and concludes by directing attention to the reigning Lord Jesus. . . . The theological view expressed in Stephen's speech . . . concerning the relativization and replacement of the temple in Jesus . . . prepares the way for the spread for the gospel outside Jerusalem and the inclusion of Samaritans and outcasts." (Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 164–65).

presence in the OT is not static. God is present with Abraham in Mesopotamia, that is, beyond Canaan. At the same time, God promises to bring Abraham's descendants to Canaan to "worship" him—an anticipation of temple worship (7:7).²³ This promise thus suggests that the story of God's presence will develop across redemptive history. The "God of glory" may appear to Abraham in Mesopotamia, but he will not be present there forever. Readers should expect redemptive-historical development as well as eschatological resolution.²⁴ Stephen also notes that even when Abraham does move to the Promised Land, he does not own even "a foot's length" (7:5), further showing that God is with Abraham and working through him prior to any settled possession of Canaan.

Verses 6 and 7 anticipate Israel's journey into and exodus from Egypt. God promises Abraham that after the Exodus, Israel will worship him in "this place" (τόπος [7:7]), likely a reference to Horeb (Exod 3:12) while at the same time alluding to the charges that Stephen spoke against "this place" (the temple) in Acts 6:13.²⁵ Thus, Stephen shows that while he may have spoken against the temple, God's supposedly unique τόπος in 6:13, God himself speaks of other dwelling places (τόπος [7:7]) in the OT.

The transition to Joseph is rather seamless and does not mark any major epochal shift, as do the transitions to Moses (v. 17) and David (v. 45b). Verse 8 traces the family line from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob to the twelve "patriarchs" who all share in the "covenant of circumcision" given to Abraham. Yet, unlike their great-grandfather, these patriarchs fail to experience God's presence because they reject Joseph, the one with whom God dwells (v. 9). Verse 9, then, introduces the theme of the Israelite leader rejected by a rebellious Israel. Joseph's brothers, called "the patriarchs,"

²³G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 216.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 216–17.

²⁵Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 168–69.

were “jealous” of Joseph and sold him into Egypt (v. 9). God, however, rescued Joseph from his “afflictions” and exalted him over Egypt (7:9–10).

Stephen illustrates that even when the fledgling nation of Israel consisted of only twelve representative patriarchs, they spurned the blessings of the covenant by rejecting a divinely appointed, Spirit-endowed leader. Additionally, the notion that God was “with Joseph” in Egypt advances the theme of the dynamism of God’s presence. First God appears to Abraham in Mesopotamia; now he is “with” Joseph in Egypt (v. 9). He is not confined to one location—or even to the land of Canaan.

God’s presence and Israel’s rebellion in the Mosaic covenant. Stephen dedicates the majority of his speech to Moses, as might be expected given the accusation that he blasphemed Moses and spoke against the law. Stephen identifies a major redemptive-historical development from Abraham and Joseph to Moses by indicating that, with the birth of Moses, “the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham” (v. 7:17). The promise in view is likely the promise of the Exodus in the Abrahamic covenant of Genesis 15, mentioned in Acts 7:6–7. The Abrahamic era is coming to a close as the fulfillment of those promises begins to emerge in the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai.

Stephen develops many of the themes from 7:2–16 at length in 7:17–45a. He treats Moses’ life in three forty-year blocks (vv. 23, 30, 36), each of which contains some element of rejection by the people of Israel (vv. 27, 35, 39). As Stephen summarizes, “Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt” (v. 39). Moses may have taken the people out of Egypt, but he could not get Egypt out of the people. The covenant community rejected their God-appointed leader and thus also rejects God. As Stephen recounts the golden calf incident, Israel embraces idolatry and rejoices “in the works of their hands” (v. 41)—an idiom associated with

idolatry in both testaments.²⁶ He then quotes Amos 5:25–27 (vv. 42–43) to demonstrate that idolatry characterizes Israel from its wandering in the wilderness to the time of its Exile.

Further, when Israel rejects Moses, they also reject God’s presence. Prior to the tabernacle, Moses is the point of contact for God’s presence on earth (notably, again, a presence that is both dynamic and active outside the boundaries of Canaan). God meets Moses on “holy ground” (v. 33) in the desert (v. 30). Again Stephen uses *τόπος* in verse 33 to refer to the “holy ground,” recalling the accusation of 6:13 and implying that God’s presence in the OT was never confined to the *place* of the temple.

Finally, Stephen mentions the next stage in the story of God’s presence: the tabernacle (v. 44). Notably, he depicts the tabernacle as transient, moving from the wilderness with Moses to Canaan with Joshua (v. 45). Even after the construction of the tabernacle, God’s presence is mobile. Further, the tabernacle reveals yet again that the story of God’s presence in the OT progressively unfolds across redemptive history, thus demanding eschatological resolution.

God’s presence and Israel’s rebellion in the Davidic covenant. Acts 7:45b marks the transition to the Davidic covenant and another major step forward in redemptive history. With the building of the tabernacle, the story of God’s presence grew static. This sanctuary housed God’s presence throughout the Mosaic era (7:45a)—and “so it was until the days of David” (v. 45b). Here the theme develops again: the status quo suddenly changes as the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7, alluded to in v. 46) results in the building of the temple.

²⁶Beale notes, “Among the approximately 54 times the Hebrew phrase ‘work of the hands’ (*ma’āshe + yād*) occurs, almost half refer to idolatrous works: Deut 4:28; 27:15; 31:29; 2 Kgs 19:28; 22:17; 2 Chr 32:19; 34:25; Pss 115:4; 135:15; Is 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; Jer 1:16; 10:3; 25:6–7, 14; 32:30; Hos 14:3; Mic 5:13; Rev 9:20; cf. Is 44:9–10)” (Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 224). See also Acts 17:24. For a complete discussion on the theological significance of that which is “made with hands” and that which is “made without hands,” see *ibid.*, 222–28.

In Acts 7:45b–50, Stephen shows God’s dwelling place is not fixed until Solomon finishes the temple (7:47). Yet even then, the Israelites fail to understand that God’s presence cannot be limited to a single building, since “the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands (χειροποιήτοις)” (7:48). With these words Stephen again emphasizes Israel’s pattern of rejecting God by rejecting his covenant leaders and institutions. The word χειροποίητος is, without exception, used with reference to idolatry in the LXX (Lev 26:1, 30; Isa 10:11; 16:12; 19:1; 21:9; 31:7; 46:6).²⁷ By using χειροποίητος, Stephen is accusing the Israelites of idolizing the temple, thus associating them with the idolaters of Moses’ day (cf. 7:41 [τοῖς ἔργοις τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν]). Just as Israel rejected Joseph and Moses, so also they rejected God’s purpose for the temple.

In sum, Stephen’s argument in 7:45b–50 runs along these lines: David found favor with God by desiring to build a temple (7:46). Solomon executes David’s vision by building the temple and establishing a stationary location for God’s dwelling. (7:47). Yet even Solomon’s temple is insufficient to function as the ultimate, final dwelling place of God given its geographical limitation. Stephen then quotes from Isaiah 66:1–2 in Acts 7:49–50, which is much more than an “abstract point about God’s omnipresence.”²⁸ Rather, the fact that God cannot be limited to the temple “relativizes the temple as the only location for God’s presence.”²⁹ Thus Stephen concludes by showing that the theme of God’s presence demands eschatological resolution. Schreiner explains this point well:

Stephen did not exalt tabernacle worship over the building of the temple. He reminded his hearers that God is not beholden to a temple, and that he worked in Israelite history before a temple was erected. God transcends the temple, for as sovereign Lord of the universe, he cannot be contained by a building. Stephen did not reject temple worship per se but rather implied that temple worship cannot be construed as the capstone of God’s work with his people. Stephen’s critique of the

²⁷David Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 195; Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 169.

²⁸Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 166. For a thorough and compelling examination of Isa 66 in Acts 7, see Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 216–32.

²⁹Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 169.

law, then, was rather subtle. He suggested a change in the status of the temple in light of the fulfillment of salvation history with the coming of Jesus.³⁰

God's presence and Israel's rebellion in the new covenant. Stephen's speech finally turns to a direct condemnation of his audience—one reminiscent of prophetic denunciations in the OT. Like their unfaithful fathers, Stephen's audience is stiff-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ears, and resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51; cf. Exod 33:3, 5; Neh 9:16–17; Jer 6:10; 9:26; Isa 63:10). Stephen makes explicit the connection between his audience and the OT Israelites: “As your fathers did, so do you” (Isa 7:51b). Just as the patriarchs rejected God's righteous deliverers, so too Israel rejected Jesus, “the Righteous One” who was “announced beforehand” throughout the OT (7:52–53). Like fathers, like sons.

Thus, as Stephen concludes (vv. 51–53, 56),³¹ the themes of divine presence and rejection of deliverers converge. Israel has rejected Jesus, “the Righteous one,” (7:52) whom Luke and Stephen identify as the new locus of God's presence (7:55–56).³² Stephen exposes Israel's rejection of Jesus as a rejection of the one who fulfills the purpose of the temple. The irony is thick. Those who accused Stephen of maligning the temple and the law have themselves maligned the law by rejecting Jesus, the true temple “announced beforehand” by the law (7:52).³³ Thompson summarizes the argument well:

³⁰Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 633–34.

³¹On 7:56 as the proper conclusion to the Stephen speech, see Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts*, SNTSMS 146 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 141; Schnabel, *Acts*, 361–62.

³²Thompson writes, “This reference to the glory of God and the presence of God is a deliberate reference to themes found in Stephen's speech. The glory of God, which Stephen said had appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia at the very beginning of his speech (v. 2), is now associated with Jesus. Stephen then points (‘Look’) and declares that heaven (the place of God's throne, v. 49) is open and Jesus is in God's presence now in a position of power and universal authority in glory as the risen and reigning ‘Son of Man’ (cf. Dan. 7:13). In pointing to Jesus, therefore, Stephen points away from the temple, not just because God is bigger than the temple but because in the kingdom of God, which Jesus inaugurated, Jesus is the one who fulfills the goals of the temple” (Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 170).

While Luke and Stephen highlight that God's presence centers around Jesus in heaven (as opposed to on earth), Luke also describes Stephen as “full of the Holy Spirit” (7:55). This phrase indicates that God mediates his presence to his people such that they are now his dwelling place on earth.

³³“In rejecting Jesus, therefore, it is Stephen's accusers, rather than Stephen, who are the ones

Thus Stephen shows that he is not *against* Moses or the temple because (1) in proclaiming the suffering Lord Jesus, he proclaims the One whom God's suffering messengers, such as Moses, have always pointed to (and his accusers therefore belong to those who have always been the cause of that suffering and are the ones who are opposed to Moses); and (2) in proclaiming the ascended Lord Jesus as the One with universal authority and the One who is in God's presence and who provides access to God's presence, he proclaims the culmination and fulfilment of the various locations for meeting God throughout Israel's history, including the temple (and his accusers belong to those who have been characterized by the idolatry of false worship in Israel's history). . . . In response to both charges, Stephen points beyond Moses and the temple to Jesus, the One whom Moses and the temple anticipated.³⁴

Stephen's Interpretive Perspective on the Joseph Narrative

In light of this survey of Stephen's defense, we are now in a position to consider more thoroughly how Stephen's use of the Joseph story integrates with the rest of his argument. In this section I will first consider Stephen's use of Genesis 37–50 by providing an exegesis of Acts 7:9–16. Then, based on that exegesis, I will examine how the Joseph section (7:9–16) contributes to Stephen's argument.

Exegesis of Acts 7:9–16. As already noted, the transition from Abraham (v. 8) to Joseph (v. 9) does not mark any epochal shift. Verse 8 indicates that Abraham has only one son, Isaac, who in turn sires Jacob. Jacob fathers the first Israelite community. His twelve sons represent the nation and share in the “covenant of circumcision” (7:8). This first generation, however, characterizes the nation they will sire by establishing a pattern of disobedience. They are introduced as “jealous” (ζηλώσαντες) of Joseph and sell (ἀπέδοντο) him into slavery (7:9a). Stephen's language is nearly identical to Gen 37:11, except he substitutes οἱ πατριάρχαι for οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ. Notably, the LXX never uses οἱ πατριάρχαι for Joseph's brothers, thus Stephen's edit likely anticipates his identification

guilty of being ‘against Moses’. They have rejected the one to whom Moses and the law pointed” (ibid., 168).

³⁴Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 171–72.

of his audience with their “fathers” (7:51) who reject their leaders.³⁵ From the first moment it is even possible to speak of Israel as a nation, its corporate life is characterized by rebellion and rejection of God’s leaders. Israel’s earliest “fathers” reject their divinely appointed leader, in turn, spurning the very presence of God (7:9).

In 7:9b, Stephen quotes, with slight modification, Genesis 39:2, 3 (cf. 39:21, 23), “God was with [Joseph].”³⁶ This key phrase develops the theme of God’s presence, highlighting two facts. First, God approves of Joseph, a point further emphasized in verse 10. Second, God’s presence extends beyond the temple and even Canaan. Stephen drives this point home by repeatedly emphasizing God’s being with Joseph *in Egypt*. As Stott notes, “if Mesopotamia was the surprising context in which God appeared to Abraham (7:2), Egypt was the equally surprising scene of God’s dealings with Joseph. Six times in seven verses Stephen repeats the word ‘Egypt,’ as if to make sure that his hearers have grasped its significance.”³⁷

Verse 10 continues to focus on God’s presence with Joseph. God is not only with Joseph, he also “rescues” him (ἐξείλατο), “gives” him favor with Pharaoh (ἔδωκεν), and “appoints” him (κατέστησεν) as ruler over Egypt and the whole house of Pharaoh. God’s commendation of Joseph (vv. 9b–10) starkly contrasts with the patriarchs’ rejection of him (v. 9a). The implication is clear. God gifts his presence to those he favors, not to the nation irrespective of their faithfulness. In fact, the contrast highlights that God often fulfills his promises through people the nation has rejected.

³⁵The phrase ἀπέδοντο εἰς Αἴγυπτον is a telescoped summary of the events of Gen 37:28, 36 which reports the selling of Joseph first into the hands of the Midianites/Ishmaelites and then into Egypt. Stephen’s telescoped version of the events matches Joseph’s own retelling of his story in Gen 45:4, Ἐγὼ εἶμι Ἰωσηφ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν, ὃν ἀπέδοσθε εἰς Αἴγυπτον.

³⁶Genesis uses κύριος instead of θεός. Stephen/Luke may have modified the passage given how in the early Christian community, as evidenced by the NT, θεός was regularly used for the Father, whereas κύριος was a title typically reserved for the Son.

³⁷John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts*, BST (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 133.

In verse 10, Stephen also mentions that God gave Joseph “grace and wisdom” (χάριν καὶ σοφίαν) before Pharaoh. The attribution “grace” derives from Genesis 39. In fact, Acts 7:9b–10 shows remarkable similarity to Genesis 39:21. Both passages indicate that “God was with Joseph” (ἦν κύριος μετὰ Ἰωσηφ’ [Gen 39:21]/ἦν ὁ θεὸς μετ’ αὐτοῦ [Acts 7:9b]) and as a result God “gave him favor” (καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ χάριν ἐναντίον + genitive [Gen 39:21; Acts 7:10]) before his superior. Consistent with Stephen’s telescoped retelling of the story, he applies the language to Joseph’s favor before Pharaoh, rather than to events in Potiphar’s house described in 39:21.

Stephen adds that God bestows “wisdom” (σοφία) on Joseph (v. 10). As many scholars note, wisdom is a major theme in Genesis 37–50.³⁸ Yet, strangely, σοφία occurs nowhere in LXX Genesis 37–50. The translator instead uses φρόνιμος for חָכָם and συνετός for חָכָם (cf. Gen 41:33, 39). Some scholars have asserted that Stephen’s inclusion of “wisdom” reflects his interpretive dependence on Second Temple traditions.³⁹ Indeed, Second Temple authors commonly attribute σοφία to Joseph (Jubilees 40:5; *De Iosepho* 106; 169; 269; Artapanus (Frg. 2.1 [Eusebius, *P.E.* 9.23.1]). Yet this attribution in Second Temple literature and Stephen’s own use of σοφία may merely reflect Psalm 105:22 [104:22 LXX], which indicates that Joseph taught Pharaoh’s elders “wisdom” (σοφίσαι; [Ps 104:22 LXX]).⁴⁰

More importantly, Stephen’s use of σοφία is probably a rhetorical device meant to associate the protagonists of the story. As others note (and as we will see), Luke and Stephen describe Joseph, Moses, Stephen, and Jesus in ways that parallel one

³⁸An analysis of linguistic data alone in the Joseph story demonstrates this is the case. See Sigmon, *Echoes of Eden*, 188–300; Robert Alter, *The Art of the Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 159; chiefly Lindsay Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise: The Intersection of Wisdom and Covenant in Genesis 37–50* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004).

³⁹See Whinton, “Rewriting Abraham and Joseph.”

⁴⁰Whinton claims that in 2TJ texts “Joseph is described as a possessor of great wisdom, . . . a characteristic which the LXX does not attribute to him.” This claim is technically correct though not sufficiently nuanced in light of LXX Ps 104:22. Whinton, “Rewriting Abraham and Joseph,” 156.

another.⁴¹ Stephen attributes “grace and wisdom” to Joseph, recalling Luke’s own description of Stephen’s “grace” (Acts 6:8) and “wisdom” (Acts 6:10) while also anticipating the “wisdom” of Moses (Acts 7:22) or the “grace” given to David.⁴² As Burns notes, that wisdom is “attributed by Luke to Joseph, Moses, Stephen, and Jesus is not likely coincidental.”⁴³ Indeed, these similarities between the “protagonists” enhance Stephen’s argument that Israel always rejects their righteous prophets (Acts 7:51–52).

Further, Stephen’s description of Joseph as having *χάρις* and *σοφία* recalls Luke’s own depiction of Jesus in Luke 2:40, 52. These verses are the only other times Luke uses this word pair.⁴⁴ Furthermore, while divine presence is a major theme of Stephen’s speech, Joseph is the only person Stephen describes God as “with.” Luke, however, uses that language once elsewhere, in Acts 10:38, when God is “with Jesus” (*ὁ θεὸς ἦν μετ’ αὐτοῦ*). In fact, the NT rarely speaks of God being “with” a particular person—Acts 7:9 and 10:38 are the only instances when God is “with” an individual in the synoptic Gospels and Acts.⁴⁵

⁴¹These parallels are discussed in almost any substantive treatment of Acts 7. In addition to those scholars already mentioned in previous footnotes, see Earl Richard, “The Polemical Character of the Joseph Episode in Acts 7,” *JBL* 98, no. 2 (1979): 263; David Moessner, “‘The Christ Must Suffer’: New Light on The Jesus-Peter, Stephen, Paul Parallels in Luke-Acts,” *NovT* 28, no. 3 (1986): 220–56; Robert Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 83; John Polhill, *Acts*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 191, 209–10; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SPS (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 117; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 238; Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 167, among others.

⁴²Burns concurs: “The motive for this description may be related to the reason Moses’ education was specified” (Dan Garrett Burns, “Evoking Israel’s History in Acts 7:2–53 and 13:16–41: The Hermeneutics of Luke’s Retelling the Story of God’s People” [PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2006], 150); also Pervo, *Acts*, 182; Bock, *Acts*, 287.

⁴³Burns, “Evoking Israel’s History in Acts 7:2–53 and 13:16–41,” 150.

⁴⁴Pervo, *Acts*, 182; Whitenton comments, “The inclusion of *σοφίαν* in Acts 7:10 allows the Lukan Stephen to use an encomiastic *σύγκρισις* between Joseph and Jesus” (Whitenton, “Rewriting Abraham and Joseph: Stephen’s Speech (Acts 7:2–16) and Jewish Exegetical Traditions,” 165; Parsons, *Acts*, 94; Heike Braun, *Geschichte Des Gottesvolkes Und Christliche Identität*, WUNT 279 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010], 209–10).

⁴⁵Nicholas Lunn, “Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts: Foundations of a Biblical Type,” *JETS* 55, no. 1 (2012): 31. Lunn further notes that “we do find distinct divine attributes present with men, such as ‘the hand of the Lord was with . . .’ (Luke 1:66; Acts 11:21). The only other clear expression of God being with someone, apart from the platitude of John 3:2, is John 8:29, ‘the one who sent me is with me.’ Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 251n; Braun, *Geschichte Des Gottesvolkes Und Christliche Identität*, 209–10.

The remainder of Acts 7:9–16 focuses on Joseph’s deliverance of his family. Whereas God delivered Joseph from all his “afflictions” (θλιψις; 7:10), he now uses Joseph to deliver his family from their “afflictions” (θλιψις; 7:11). This deliverance comes when famine sends Joseph’s brothers to Egypt on two separate occasions (7:11–13). Stephen concludes with a summary of the reconciliation episode in Genesis 45.

Because Acts 7:9–16 lacks “deliverance” language, some scholars believe Stephen does not see Joseph as a savior figure in Israel’s history.⁴⁶ This claim missteps by demanding that Stephen explicitly mention “deliverance.” In reality, Stephen’s commitment to his source material leads him to communicate that idea more subtly. As demonstrated in chapter 3, the focus of Genesis 42–45 (summarized by Stephen in vv. 11–13) is not that Joseph saves his brothers from the famine *per se*. Rather, these chapters focus on how he reconciles with his estranged family. Moses then shows how *through* reconciliation Joseph saves the family and preserves the covenant line. For Joseph’s family, reconciliation is the means of salvation. Stephen’s summary adheres closely to Genesis—highlighting, not glossing over, the centrality of reconciliation. At the same time, Stephen mentions the “affliction” of the patriarchs and says that “our fathers could find no food” (v. 11), establishing that he sees the reconciliation episode as an act of deliverance for the patriarchs. Further, Stephen surely has deliverance from famine in view as he recounts what follows the reconciliation: the patriarchs become “known to Pharaoh” (v. 13) and Joseph summons his father’s 75-member clan to Egypt (v. 14, summarizing Genesis 46).

Verses 14–16 record the descent of Jacob and his family into Egypt. Jacob, Joseph, and his brothers all die in Egypt but are eventually “carried back” to Shechem to be buried. As Schnabel notes, the mention of Shechem “seems to underline the point that

⁴⁶Darrell Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*, LNTS (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 217–18; For a reading more sympathetic to the notion that Stephen portrays Joseph as a deliverer see, Schnabel, *Acts*, 370–71.

God's fulfillment of his promises is not focused exclusively on Jerusalem or Judah; rather, the place where the Samaritans live is part of God's history with his people."⁴⁷

Remarkably, Stephen tells the entire Joseph story without making Joseph the agent of a single verb. In fact, Joseph is the subject of only two finite verbs, the passive *ἀνεγνωρισθη* in 7:13 and the middle *μετεκαλέσατο* in 7:14. Instead, Stephen focuses on God's actions, particularly the way God accomplishes his purposes through his appointed leader.⁴⁸ Stephen uses this focus to contrast the story's two agents, God and the patriarchs. The patriarchs are jealous of Joseph and sell him into slavery. On the other hand, God is "with" Joseph, delivers him from suffering, and exalts him in Egypt. As a result, Joseph saves his family. In sum, Stephen sees in Joseph's story (as in Moses') that God primarily works not through the Abraham's family at large (who are characterized as rebels) but through rejected, Spirit-endowed covenant mediators like Joseph.

Acts 7:9–16 in the context of Stephen's argument. Stephen's interpretive perspective on Genesis 37–50 is that Joseph is the foremost example of the rejected prophet in the Abrahamic era. Similarly, Stephen sees Joseph, the appointed deliverer of his brothers, as the locus of God's presence and, as such, the mediator of blessing. Joseph's life is thus representative of a pattern repeatedly played out in Israel's history. God employs a covenant representative, distinguished by exemplary character and an experience of God's personal presence, to bring about his purposes for Israel, despite Israel's rejection of that representative.

As Stephen notes, Moses' life repeats this pattern. Moses, like Joseph, is distinguished by remarkable character (7:20, 22, 35–36; cf. 7:10), unique access to God's

⁴⁷Schnabel, *Acts*, 372. Schnabel later writes, "There may be a 'negative' typology at work as well: while the patriarchs died and were buried in a grave whose location is known, Jesus died and was buried but did not remain in the grave."

⁴⁸Gustavo Martín-Asensio, "Participant Reference and Foregrounded Syntax in the Stephen Episode," in *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament*, JSNTSup 170 (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 245–46.

presence (7:30–33, 35, 38, 44), and deliverance of the nation (7:24–25, 35), yet he is rejected by the “fathers” (7:25, 27–28, 35, 39). The pattern of their lives plays out like a motif across the pages of the OT. Their favor with God, deliverance of Israel, and rejection by their brothers is the *type* of thing that happens throughout Israel’s history. The nation at large is rebellious while God works to keep his promises through covenant representatives.

Stephen makes this point explicit in the final verses of his speech. “You stiff necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you” (v. 51). The phrase “your fathers” (οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν) recalls the rebellious “fathers” (πατήρ/πατριάρχης) already mentioned throughout Stephen’s speech (vv. 9, 11, 12, 15, 19, 39). As noted earlier, Stephen likely designates Joseph’s eleven brothers as πατήρ (vv. 8, 9) or πατριάρχης (vv. 11, 14, 15), as opposed to the typical LXX designation ἀδελφοί, in order to make the connection between them, the fathers of Moses’ era, and Israel in his own day abundantly clear. Stephen concludes that modern Israel is just like the brothers of Joseph and the idolatrous Israelites in the time of Moses. They have rejected the one whom the prophets anticipated, “the righteous one,” Jesus Christ.

As Stephen goes on to explain, Israel “resists the Holy Spirit” by “persecuting the prophets” (7:52). With these words Stephen shows how both themes of rejection and divine presence are connected throughout Israel’s history. Stephen saw that agents of God like Joseph and Moses had a unique experience of God’s Spirit. Rejecting them was tantamount to rejecting God. This pattern culminates with Jesus. Jesus is in the line of Joseph and Moses, while Israel behaves like Joseph’s brothers and the idolaters at Sinai. Like Joseph and Moses, Jesus is distinguished by remarkable character (7:52), divine presence (7:55–56), and salvation, yet Israel rejects him (7:52).

As Matera notes, this pattern of rejecting covenant figures who bring “offers of salvation” is one of the primary themes of Luke-Acts, stretching all the way back to the

beginning of Jesus ministry.

Jesus' inaugural sermon (Luke 4:16–30) is the story within the story that reveals the plot of Luke-Acts: Jesus comes with a gracious offer of salvation because his ministry is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: it is the "today" of salvation (4:16–21). . . . This pattern of a gracious offer of salvation that is refused and then offered to others is repeated in the lives of the Spirit-filled figures that dominate Acts: Peter, John, Stephen, and Paul. At the beginning of Acts, the apostles come with a renewed offer of salvation and a second chance for Israel to repent, but the religious leadership rejects them. Stephen also comes with a gracious offer of salvation only to be rejected. His speech shows that this pattern has occurred repeatedly in Israel's history (Acts 7:1–53). Prophetic figures such as Joseph and Moses and most recently Jesus have come to Israel with a gracious offer of salvation, only to be rejected. The same pattern occurs in the ministry of Paul, who goes from synagogue to synagogue preaching the gospel, only to be rejected. Consequently, he threatens to go to the Gentiles (13:46; 18:6; 28:28). The story of Luke-Acts, then, is a story of a gracious offer of salvation that is rejected and then offered to others. Those who accept his offer—Jew and Gentile alike—are the reestablished Israel. Those who refuse it separated themselves from this reestablished Israel. . . . Stephen's speech is the story of Luke-Acts in miniature.⁴⁹

Thus, Stephen shows that Joseph's story isn't just *part* of Israel's story, in some sense it *is* Israel's story. Joseph and his brothers, the first generation of the nation, represent the nation's story in miniature. Israel's rebellion against covenant representatives and Spirit-endowed deliverers is not just a story that repeats throughout Israel's history, it is a story that develops and climaxes with the nation's ultimate rejection of *the* deliverer Jesus. As Matera goes on to observe, "in these speeches first Stephen and then Paul (13:16–47) present selective summaries of Israel's history to show how that history came to its climax in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth."⁵⁰ In light of this, Stephen's interpretive perspective on Genesis 37–50 is that Joseph's life and the actions of his brothers are a miniature portrayal of the history of the nation. As Stephen indicates in 7:51–53, Joseph and Moses are not just single episodes in Israel's story, they are small-scale, anticipatory reproductions of Israel's story.

⁴⁹Frank Matera, *New Testament Theology: Exploring Diversity and Unity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 56–58.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 58.

Biblical-Theological Significance

The most significant biblical-theological implication of Stephen's argument is that Joseph is a type of Christ. The story of Joseph and his brothers represents a pattern through Israel's history, anticipating the culmination of that history in Israel's rejection of Jesus. Several scholars affirm that Stephen interprets Joseph typologically. For instance, Fitzmyer comments, "The enslaving of Joseph connotes the rejection of him by his own kin, by 'patriarchs' of Israel itself. Joseph thus becomes the type of Jesus, the rejected one, in Stephen's argument."⁵¹ Even scholars who prefer not to speak of Joseph as a type in Acts 7, understand him to be in a prospective, pattern-fulfillment relationship with

⁵¹Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, AB 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 373. Earlier Fitzmyer writes, "Joseph, sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers, settles in a land belonging to others, the sign of the great diaspora. Indirectly, Stephen begins his accusations against those listening to him with Joseph, who is the type of Jesus, the rejected one" (ibid., 366).

Seeing Joseph as typological in Stephen's argument is common in scholarly literature. For instance, "It is possible that Luke was thinking typologically. Joseph was a prototype of the 'suffering righteous'" (C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 1, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994], 347).

"The whole purpose of Stephen's speech now becomes clear. His historical survey had illustrated Israel's constant rejection of God's chosen leaders. Moses, Joseph, the prophets are all types of and pointers to Christ; and Stephen pointed out to his hearers that they had already killed him" (Polhill, *Acts*, 206).

"Apparently this is typological exegesis with respect to the archetypal figures of Joseph and Moses" (Heinz-Werner Neudorfer, "The Speech of Stephen," in *Witness to the Gospel*, eds. I. Howard Marshal and David Peterson [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 275–94).

"A typological link with the Lord Jesus Christ may also be implied here. Joseph was rejected by his own people but empowered by God to save those who rejected him. Jesus was raised from suffering and death to bring eternal salvation to those who rejected him (cf. 4:10–12)" (Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 252).

"Theologically, Joseph is presented as a type of Jesus, the rejected deliverer" (Burns, "Evoking Israel's History in Acts 7:2–53 and 13:16–41," 152).

"Luke uses this prototype of the 'righteous sufferer' to suggest that the story of Joseph foreshadows (and thus prophesies) the story of Jesus" (Pervo, *Acts*, 181).

Schnabel sees here a typological relationship between Joseph and Jesus' disciples, between Joseph and Stephen, and between Joseph and Jesus. "Even though Stephen (Luke) does not make such connections explicit, the jealous patriarchs can be seen as prototypes of the contemporary Jewish leaders who plotted to eliminate Jesus (Acts 2:23, 36; 3:13–15; 4:10–11; 5:30), and Joseph as a prototype of Jesus' followers, whom the Jewish leaders oppose out of jealousy (5:17; cf. 13:45; 17:5). . . . Joseph is a prototype of the righteous and wise person who suffers and is thus a prototype of Stephen (cf. Acts 6:3, 8, 10); being eventually vindicated, Joseph becomes a prototype of Jesus, who was vindicated by God (2:24, 36; 3:15; 4:10–11; 5:31) because 'God was with him' (10:38; cf. Luke 2:40). . . . The patriarchs' emigration to Egypt participates in the dual aspect of the fulfillment of God's promise and of the typological foreshadowing of the story of Jesus, which characterizes in particular the Joseph section of Stephen's speech. . . . The role of Joseph, who rescues Israel from affliction, corresponds to the role of Moses (cf. v. 36) and especially Jesus" (Schnabel, *Acts*, 370).

See also Kilgallen, who affirms a Christological reading of the Joseph story throughout his work (John Kilgallen, *The Stephen Speech: A Literary and Redactional Study of Acts 7,2–53*, AnBib 67 [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976]); idem, "The Function of Stephen's Speech (Acts 7,53)," *Bib 70* (1989): 185–87; Osvaldo Padilla, *The Acts of the Apostles: Interpretation, History, and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 161–67.

Jesus. Schreiner, for instance, notes, “the rejection both Joseph and Moses experienced from their contemporaries . . . anticipated the rejection of Jesus by Stephen’s contemporaries.”⁵²

Other scholars, however, deny a typological significance to the Joseph story in Acts 7. Bock, for instance, demurs that “no thorough typology is present. . . . Whether a more complete Joseph typology existed in the pre-Lucan stage of this speech cannot be determined, but if it did, Luke made no use of it.”⁵³ Likewise Marshall comments, “It is possible for the reader to see where the characters in the story can be regarded as ‘types’ . . . but despite strong hints . . . the possibility is not followed up.”⁵⁴

Bock and Marshall’s reasoning, however, largely misses the mark. Marshall seems to dismiss the possibility of typology unless the author explicitly employs typological language. This, however, makes demands of the biblical authors they would not place on themselves. It assumes that they cannot *show* a type without explicitly *telling* their audience about it. Bock, on the other hand, is merely dissatisfied (and perhaps for good reason) with the arguments he has encountered affirming a Joseph typology. For instance, Bock indicates that scholars generally posit “three elements” which point to a Joseph typology: Joseph’s deliverance of the patriarchs, his innocent suffering, and the two comings of Joseph which parallel two comings of Christ.⁵⁵

Bock correctly asserts that building an argument on those grounds would be a

⁵²Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 298. Also, “The rejection of both Joseph and Moses by their contemporaries forecasted the repudiation of Jesus in Stephen’s day” (ibid., 633).

⁵³Darrell Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*, LNTS (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), 217–18. Also, “Thus it seems the question of a thorough Joseph typology here must be answered negatively” (ibid., 218).

⁵⁴I. Howard Marshall, “Acts,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 571. So also Conzelmann, “The emphasis [in the Joseph section] does not fall on typological significance, but on the notion that God carries through his saving work contrary to human probability” (Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987], 53).

⁵⁵Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 217–18.

fool's errand. They have nothing to do with the actual content of Stephen's speech. Bock, however, overlooks that typology need not be based on any of these features. Further, Bock seems to assume that the deliverance theme is necessary for the presence of a type. He writes, "If the deliverance of the Patriarchs had been intended typologically, some type of deliverance terminology like that used in Luke or the NT would surely have been used."⁵⁶ Yet other OT persons, events, and institutions explicitly affirmed as types in the NT do not employ deliverance language either. Adam, for instance, is a type on account of his federal headship (Rom 5:12–21), not because he is a deliverer, an innocent sufferer, or associated with "two comings." As Hamilton rightly concludes, "If these broader questions are not the author's agenda in Acts 7, it does not seem fair to reject the possibility of typology because Acts 7 does not address these broader questions."⁵⁷

As I have argued, Stephen presents Joseph as a type by showing how his life anticipates Israel's history, which culminates in the nation's rejection of Jesus. As Bock mentions,

There can be little doubt that Joseph fits into the general pattern of this speech which seeks to show that the Jews, beginning as far back as the Patriarchs, rejected the very men through whom God was working or revealing himself. This point is acknowledged by virtually every exegete of this passage. [Joseph] is mentioned because his history exposes the pattern of disobedience that began with the earliest Israelites, the Patriarchs. . . . This pattern is Stephen's only concern.⁵⁸

In this, Bock is precisely right, though he misses that this "pattern of disobedience" is the foundation for Stephen's typological conclusion: "As your fathers did, so do you!" (7:51). Joseph is a type because, like Moses and like Jesus, he is a spirit-endowed covenant representative who is rejected by the nation through whom God fulfills his promises. Joseph's life is, therefore, a pattern—an event which prophetically

⁵⁶Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 217.

⁵⁷James M. Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus," *SBJT* 12, no. 4 (2008): 75.

⁵⁸Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 218.

forecasts later events in Israel’s history, particularly the climactic rejection of Jesus.⁵⁹

As already noted, other features of the speech have hinted at the typological character of these figures. Stephen reminds his audience of Moses’ typological role in redemptive history citing Deuteronomy 18:15, “This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers’” (Acts 7:37)—a judgment that, given his argument, appears to apply as equally to Joseph as it does to Moses.

Additionally, linguistic similarities between Joseph, Moses, Jesus, and Stephen abound. We have already seen how Joseph, Moses, Stephen, and Jesus share the attributes of grace and wisdom (6:8, 10; 7:22; cf. Luke 2:40, 52). Stephen refers to Moses as “ruler and redeemer” (ἄρχοντα και λυτρωτήν [7:35]), echoing Peter’s description of Jesus as “Ruler and Savior” (ἀρχηγὸν και σωτήρα [5:31]). The fathers’ “rejection” (ἀρνέομαι [7:35]) mirrors Israel’s own “rejection” of Jesus (ἀρνέομαι [3:13–14]).⁶⁰ Likewise Luke associates Moses with Stephen, characterizing both by “wonders and signs” (6:8; 7:36). The similarities between characters are so numerous that Schnabel sees Joseph corresponding to Jesus’ followers, to Moses, to Stephen, and to Jesus.⁶¹ Finally, numerous scholars point out the many similarities between the martyrdom of Stephen and the crucifixion of Jesus, such as his petition for the Lord to receive his spirit (7:59; cf. Luke 23:46), his crying out with a “loud voice,” and his intercessory prayer for his persecutors (7:60; cf. Luke 23:34).⁶²

⁵⁹Bock may now be slightly more open to a typological reading of Joseph in Acts 7. In his more recent commentary he states, “One can sense a parallel to Jesus in Stephen’s view [of Joseph]” (Bock, *Acts*, 286–87).

⁶⁰Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 167.

⁶¹Schnabel, *Acts*, 370–71.

⁶²For a complete account of scholarly conversation on these points and a thorough exploration of these linguistic and thematic similarities, see Mitchell Chase, “Luke-Acts Parallels between Jesus and Stephen” (ThM thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008).

With this web of linguistic connections, Luke hints at the typological relationship the characters share with each other.⁶³ The rejection of Joseph and Moses foreshadow Israel's rejection of Jesus, while Stephen's martyrdom recalls Jesus' death, marking him as a true disciple—one who shares in the Spirit but is also a partaker of Jesus' suffering. Thus, for those who have been tracking with the speech, Stephen's typological conclusion (“As your fathers did, so do you”) is nothing unexpected. As Thompson correctly notes, Stephen's prophetic indictment of his audience “is only making more explicit what he has developed throughout his speech.”⁶⁴

In sum, two things may be said of Stephen's interpretive perspective on the Joseph story. First, Stephen interprets Joseph within the framework of the Abrahamic covenant. Joseph is an archetype of the rejected prophet during the Abrahamic epoch. He is both blessed with God's presence (even outside Canaan) and a blessing to others. He even blesses Abraham's seed, whom he saves from the famine.

Second, Stephen's speech reveals how the apostolic community interpreted the Joseph narrative: a miniature portrayal of Israel's history culminating in the rejection of Jesus. They saw in Joseph a prophetic forecasting of the life of the Messiah. Joseph, like Jesus, is a Spirit-endowed prophet who fulfills God's covenant promises in spite of (even through) rejection by his brothers. Luke Timothy Johnson summarizes this point well:

In the case of both Joseph and Moses, Luke has edited his account in such fashion as to show how each fits into a pattern of twofold sending and rejection, so that these biblical exempla point forward to the twofold sending and rejection of the prophet Jesus. By this editing of the biblical narrative, Luke not only reinforces the fundamentally prophetic character of Scripture and its heroes, but by doing this supports the ideological position of his community that Scripture is best understood when read as pointing toward the risen prophet Jesus. . . . And he does all this within the tight limits set by the text of the LXX itself, whose wording he consistently employs.⁶⁵

⁶³Even Marshall, who ultimately rejects a typological reading, suggests that these connections (particularly the parallel between Joseph and Jesus with regard to divine presence [7:9 cf. 10:38]) are “strong hints” in the direction of typology (Marshall, “Acts,” 571).

⁶⁴Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, 167–68.

⁶⁵Luke Timothy Johnson, *Septuagintal Midrash in the Speeches of Acts*, The P re Marquette

Hebrews 11

Hebrews 11:22, though very brief, is the only other substantive comment on the Joseph story in the NT. The author writes, “by faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.” In this section, I will consider the author of Hebrews’ use of the Joseph story and how it functions in the argument of Hebrews 11. I will also examine whether, as some scholars claim, this verse reveals a typological understanding of the Joseph story.

Joseph appears in Hebrews in yet another overview of the OT. Like the other characters mentioned in the chapter, Joseph is upheld as an exemplar of faith. The author of Hebrews commends Joseph for believing God’s promise to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. The author could have appealed to any number of more dramatic moments in Joseph’s life. Yet, since death is a major theme throughout Hebrews 11, he likely highlighted this one because it occurred at the time of Joseph’s death.⁶⁶ This event also nicely rounds out the author’s attention to the patriarchs (11:8–16), ending not only with Joseph but with Joseph’s death at the end of Genesis.

Drawing on Genesis 50:24–26,⁶⁷ as well as Exodus 13:19 and Joshua 24:32, the author highlights two features of Joseph’s faith. First, Joseph “mentioned” (ἐμνημόνευσεν) the exodus. Second, he “gave directions concerning his bones,” requesting his family exhume them and rebury them in Canaan. The author places these lines in parallel by using *περί* + genitive to introduce both.

Lecture in Theology 2002 (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2002), 29.

⁶⁶Matthew Easter, *Faith and the Faithfulness of Jesus in Hebrews*, SNTSMS 160 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 85; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews*, Biblical Theology of Christian Proclamation (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 359.

⁶⁷As noted in chap. 4, Gen 50:24–26 is also alluded to in Exod 13:19 when Joseph’s bones are exhumed. It is alluded to again in Josh 24:32 when the Israelites rebury the patriarch in Shechem.

	Ἰωσήφ
A	ἐμνημόνευσεν
B	περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ
	καὶ
B'	περὶ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ
A'	ἐνετείλατο.

Figure 7: Hebrews 11:22 chiasm

This parallel emphasizes the relationship between the two clauses. In the first Joseph expresses his confidence in God’s promise. In the second, he expresses his desire to participate in it. As O’Brien comments, “Despite his position of prominence in the Egyptian court, Joseph regarded himself as a resident alien in Egypt. His true home lay elsewhere.”⁶⁸

Joseph’s confidence is likely rooted in the covenant promise of Genesis 15:13–16. There, God indicated he would bring the Israelites back to Canaan after a time of sojourning in a foreign land. Thus, Joseph “could speak of the exodus, not because he had experienced it, but because God had promised it.”⁶⁹ His faith, rooted in God’s covenant promise, was exactly the type the author of Hebrews commends to his audience. It was “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (11:1). In sum, the author holds up Joseph as an exemplar because he expressed confidence in an unseen land of rest based on God’s covenant promise and desired, even after his death, to be a partaker in those blessings.

Additionally, Chris Richardson argues that Hebrews 11 makes redemptive-historical claims. He posits that the figures of Hebrews 11 (and by implication Joseph) are not merely paraenetic exemplars but types of the Messiah. As he argues, Hebrews 11

⁶⁸Peter O’Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 427. William Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, vol. 47b, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), 366; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 608.

⁶⁹Craig Koester, *Hebrews*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 186.

is an “encomium” on Jesus such that the “main purpose for including these examples” is not to commend their faith to the readers but to present “these ancestors as typological anticipations of Christ.”⁷⁰ “Simply put,” he explains, “when Hebrews 11 is properly integrated with the rest of the epistle [particularly Hebrews 12:1–3], it is clear that Jesus is the *τέλος* or climax of Israel’s history and that the Old Testament exemplars of faith anticipate and prefigure his person and work.”⁷¹

Certainly, Hebrews 12:1–3 does treat Jesus as the supreme exemplar of the faith demonstrated in OT saints. But this does not necessarily make *them* types of *him*.⁷² The author of Hebrews is not developing a redemptive-historical argument that traces patterns in OT history that prophetically foreshadow new covenant realities.⁷³ Instead, he is showing Jesus as the supreme exemplar of faith, just as Jesus is the supreme exemplar of all virtues in Scripture. In other words, Hebrews 12:1–3 does indicate a Christological *telos* for Hebrews 11. Not all Christological claims, however, are necessarily redemptive-historical. For this reason, any appeals to Hebrews 11 to support a typological reading of the Joseph story are unwarranted.

In sum, then, the author’s interpretive perspective on the Joseph story is that he is an exemplar of faith. In life and in death he trusted God to fulfill his covenant promises to Abraham—particularly the promise of future rest in a place of inheritance.

Allusions to the Joseph Story in the Parable of the Tenants

While the NT explicitly mentions Joseph only four times, scholars have proposed a number of possible allusions to the Joseph story in the gospels. Most of these

⁷⁰Christopher A. Richardson, *Pioneer and Perfecter of Faith*, WUNT 338 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 109.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 110. For Richardson’s complete argument, see *ibid.*, 109–224.

⁷²For this insight I am indebted to personal correspondence with Bobby Jamieson.

⁷³Contrast, for instance, how the author treats Melchizedek’s typological significance in Heb 7.

proposed allusions are not compelling under scrutiny or are simply unverifiable given the evidence available.⁷⁴ The parable of the tenants, however, does contain the most

⁷⁴Scholars have noted several other possible allusions to the Joseph narrative in the gospels. Many of these suggested allusions are so passing or small that it is difficult to determine whether the correspondence is intentional or coincidental. Other suggested allusions are fanciful and imaginative. One of the most promising suggestions is Luke 2:51, which describes Mary's reaction to the boy Jesus in the temple episode with language reminiscent of Jacob's reaction to Joseph's dreams in Gen 37. The phrase *διατήρῃ* . . . τὸ ῥήμα occurs only in Gen 37:11 and Luke 2:51. In each instance a parent (*πατὴρ αὐτοῦ* // *μήτηρ αὐτοῦ*) takes an acute interest in the activities of the life of his or her son given the son's apparent unique relationship with divine activity. See Lunn, "Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts," 36-37; Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah?," 66-67; B. F. Meyer, "But Mary Kept All These Things..." (Acts 2:19, 51)," *CBQ* 26, no. 1 (1964): 43. Meyer points out that Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Gen 37:11 includes the phrase "...in his heart."

Lunn argues that Stephen's reference to God making Joseph a ruler over Egypt (*κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ἡγούμενον ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον*) in Acts 7:10 echoes the language of Gen 41:43 (*κατέστησεν αὐτὸν ἐφ' ὅλης γῆς Αἰγύπτου*). The language of Gen 45:8-9 (*ἐποίησέν κύριον*) is used only one other time in Luke's writings (Acts 2:36) in reference to God "making" (*ἐποίησέν*) Jesus as "Lord" (*κύριον*) and Christ. Lunn argues the connection between Gen 45 and Acts 2 is further strengthened by the fact that "these are the only texts in both Testaments where precisely this phrase is found" (Lunn, "Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts," 32).

Some scholars also see an allusion to Joseph in Luke's passing statement in the genealogy that Jesus was "about thirty years of age" when he began his ministry (Luke 3:23 cf. Gen 41:46). The OT and NT only identify three characters as 30 years old—Joseph, David, and Jesus. Hamilton comments, "In each case the age is noted at the beginning of the figure's public service: Joseph as he begins to serve Pharaoh, David as he begins to reign over Israel and Judah, and Jesus as he begins to bring in the kingdom" (Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah?," 67).

Others see the thief's request to Jesus, "Remember me" (*μνήσθητί μου + ὅταν*) as an allusion to Joseph's request to the cupbearer when he foretells his future deliverance (Gen 40:14). See Lunn, "Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts," 33; Raymond Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 1002–1003. For a host of other proposed allusions in Luke-Acts (few of which are compelling), see Lunn, "Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts," 27–41.

Other scholars see allusions to Joseph in the Gospel of Matthew. For instance, though there are few linguistic parallels between the Matthean infancy narrative, there are quite a few narrative and thematic similarities between the patriarchal Joseph of Genesis and Joseph of the first Gospel. 1) Both Josephs have a father named Jacob; 2) both Josephs experienced revelation through dreams; 3) both Josephs went to Egypt because of their dreams; 4) both Josephs were subject to persecution and the threat of death; (5) both Josephs preserved their families—the foundation of the community of (new) Israel; (6) both Josephs are associated with the character Rachel. See Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, 2nd ed., The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 111–112.

Another possible parallel between Joseph and Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew is the selling of Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. In the Genesis narrative, *Ἰούδας* (Judah) encourages his brothers to sell (*ἀποδίδωμι*) Joseph to the passing Ishmaelites (Gen 36:26–27). In return the patriarchs receive 20 pieces of gold (*εἴκοσι χρυσῶν*) for the life of their brother (Gen 36:28). In the Matthean account another character by the name *Ἰούδας* (Judah) betrays (*παραδίδωμι*) Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (*τριάκοντα ἀργύρια* [Matt 26:14–15]). The more prominent allusion in this passage is likely Zechariah 11:12–13. See B. Murrelstein, "Die Gestalt Josefs in der Agada und die Evangeliengeschichte [Matt 27:3; John 19:23]" *Angelos* 4 (1932), 51–55. For other proposed allusions or further defenses of those mentioned above, see Thomas Römer and Jan Rückl, "Jesus, Son of Joseph and Son of David, in the Gospels," in *Torah in the New Testament: Papers Delivered at the Manchester-Lausanne Seminar of June 2008*, ed. Michael Tait and Peter Oakes, LNTS 401 (London: T&T Clark, 2009); William Bronn, "Forgiveness in 'My Brothers' of Matthew 28:10 and Its Significance for the Matthean Climax (28:16–20)," *BTB* 40, no. 4 (2010): 207–214; Preston Sprinkle, "The Use of Gen 42:18 (Not Leviticus 18:5) in Luke 10:28: Joseph and the Good Samaritan," *BBR* 17, no. 2 (2007): 193–205.

probable allusion to Joseph—a point well-attested by scholarly literature. Thus, the following section will examine the validity of this allusion in the parable of the tenants and its interpretive significance for both the parable and the Joseph story.

As Snodgrass notes, interpreting the parable (Matt 21:33–46; Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–19) is particularly difficult given that “any discussion of the parable is necessarily a complex one in that it involves the relation of the three Synoptic accounts, an assessment of the account in the Gospel of Thomas, the meaning of *παραβολή*, the religious and economic background in Palestine, the self-designation of Jesus, and the theological shaping of the parable by the tradition and the evangelists”⁷⁵ These are indeed daunting interpretive challenges. My interest in the parable, however, is significantly narrower and can leave many of these issues aside. I am particularly concerned with the parable’s use of the OT and what significance this has for both the (canonical) meaning of those OT Scriptures and for the meaning of the parable itself. Though I believe the parable’s role is similar in each of the synoptic accounts, for the sake of efficiency I will focus on the Matthean account, noting any important departures in meaning or phraseology in other synoptic accounts.

In general, the parable of the tenants furthers one of the main goals of Matthew: to show how Jesus “fulfills” the OT by successfully recapitulating Israel’s history. Matthew displays this goal repeatedly in the first chapters of the gospel. He demonstrates that Jesus “fulfills” Israel’s history by embodying their corporate experiences, like the exodus and the exile (Matt 1:22; 2:15; 17, 23; 4:14; etc.). These fulfillment formulas anticipate the rest of the book which, in the whole and in its parts, constantly witnesses to Jesus as the summation of redemptive history.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Klyne Snodgrass, *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants: An Inquiry into Parable Interpretation*, WUNT 27 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 1. For a helpful summary of interpretive perspectives on the parable of the tenants, see idem, “Recent Research on the Parable of the Wicked Tenants: An Assessment,” *BBR* 8 (1998): 187–216.

⁷⁶R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1989), 166–205; Joel Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel: Use of Israel’s History in Matthew 1:1-4:11*, WUNT 257

In order to creatively retell Israel's history while presenting Jesus as that history's fulfillment, the parable of the tenants draws from the well of OT imagery.⁷⁷ As Wright notes, parables such as this one "are Israel's-story-in-miniature, Jesus' telling of the Israel-story in order to undermine the present way of understanding the nation's identity."⁷⁸

In this parable, the owner of a vineyard sends his servants to harvest the fruit, but they are beaten, killed, and stoned by the tenants. Then the master sends his son—thinking the tenants will respect him—but he is thrown out of the vineyard and killed. In response to the tenants' treachery, the owner removes and destroys them, giving their positions to others (Matt 21:41, 43–44). After the parable, Jesus adds that the rejected son becomes the "chief cornerstone" of God's work (21:42). After Jesus tells the parable, the chief priests and Pharisees rightly discern that Jesus is speaking about them (Matt 21:45). They are in league with the tenants. Their forefathers persecuted the servants (the prophets), and they now conspire against Jesus (Matt 21:46).

The main OT background to the parable is Isaiah 5. In that passage, Isaiah similarly refers to planting a vineyard, putting up a fence, digging a winepress, and building a tower (Isa 5:1–2). In Isaiah, the vineyard imagery hearkens back to Eden,

(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Marie-Louise Gubler, "Vom Hunger in Der Wüste Zum Mahl Im Namen Jesu : Essen Und Trinken in Der Bible," *Diakonia* 36 (2005): 15–19.

⁷⁷Contra Herzog and Hester, who see the parable's imagery rooted in the socio-political situation surrounding mistreated peasant farmers in Israel (James D. Hester, "Socio-Rhetorical Criticism and the Parable of the Tenants," *JSNT* 45 [1992]: 27–57; William R. Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994]. Snodgrass rightly notes, "These readings sound politically correct, but they are a usurpation of the parable. They ignore completely the context of the metaphors and imagery within the OT and Judaism, and they show no bridge between their suggestion and Jesus' message. How is one to know that Jesus [or the evangelists] addressed the plight of the tenant farmers? Further, as both Evans and Rowlandson show, it is a gratuitous assumption to presume that the tenants were peasants" (Snodgrass, "Recent Research on the Parable of the Wicked Tenants," 198. Brooke is right that the parable is laden with OT imagery: "In the parable of the vineyard in whatever canonical form we read it, we are dealing with mixed metaphors, all gloriously intermingled" (George Brooke, "4Q500 1 and the Use of Scripture in the Parable of the Vineyard," *DSD* 2 [1995]: 282–83).

⁷⁸N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2, *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 179; cf. N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, vol. 1, *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 74–77.

conjuring up notions of God’s presence and his covenant relationship with his people.⁷⁹ God’s purpose for Israel is to revivify the Edenic paradise. He wants them to produce the fruit of righteousness and be the locus of his presence in the world. Isaiah records, however, that the vineyard fails to respond to God’s mercies and produce a good crop. Instead of fresh fruit it produces “wild grapes” (Isa 5:4). In response, God judges and destroys the nation (Isa 5:5–6). The story of the vineyard in Isaiah is the story of Israel: its disobedience and exile.

Like Isaiah, Jesus uses vineyard imagery to recount Israel’s unfaithfulness and coming destruction.⁸⁰ In Matthew, however, the vineyard is unfruitful because of its corrupt stewards—Israel’s leaders. The repeated sending and rejection of servants (Matt 21:34–36) reveals that their corruption has marked Israel throughout its history. The final element in the parable, the sending of the son, reveals a new phase of Israel’s history. Jesus’ obvious reference to himself with the parabolic “son” (Matt 3:17; 4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 17:5; 28:19; Mark 1:1, 11, 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:61; 15:39; Luke 1:32, 35; 3:22; 8:28; 9:35; 10:22) shows that his ultimate aim in retelling Israel’s history is Christological. Israel’s pattern of disobedience toward God and obstinacy toward the prophets culminates in their rejection of Jesus.

Jesus makes this point even more clearly when quoting Psalm 118:22–23 at the

⁷⁹The LXX also suggests that the vineyard is like a temple. In Isa 5:6 in the MT, the Lord “lays waste” the vineyard, whereas in the LXX he “leaves” the vineyard. On this point, and for additional analysis of the differences between the MT and LXX of Isa 5, see W. J. C. Weren, “The Use of Isaiah 5,1–7 in the Parable of the Tenants (Mark 12,1–2; Matthew 21:33–46),” *Bib* 79 (1998): 7–8. Other ancient interpreters also saw in Isaiah’s vineyard a reference to God’s special presence with his people. Brooke, for instance, notes that “4Q5000 . . . almost certainly uses the Isaiah 5 vineyard material in interpretative association with a description of the temple, either heavenly, or, more probably, earthly, which is the suitable place for the people . . . to bless God” (Brooke, “4Q500 1 and the Use of Scripture in the Parable of the Vineyard,” 272). Additionally, Tg. Jon., Isa 5:2 and t. Suk. 3:15 also see the temple theme in view in Isa 5. For a modern discussion of this point, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 183–88.

⁸⁰Blomberg notes, “The account in Isaiah is remarkably similar to Jesus’ story” Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 71.

conclusion of the parable (Matt 21:42).⁸¹ Psalm 118 celebrates God’s deliverance of Israel from foreign oppression, though the psalmist does not provide any specific historical details. This deliverance is summarized in verses 22–23 which speak of a rejected stone that becomes the cornerstone in God’s temple community. Jesus interprets the words of the Psalm as ultimately fulfilled in himself, the rejected son (i.e. the rejected stone) at the center of God’s saving agenda. As Blomberg notes on Jesus’ use of Psalm 118, “Here is classic Davidic typology or, if one thinks the psalm originally referred to Israel as a nation, one may see the continuance of Matthew’s theme of Jesus recapitulating the experience of Israel.”⁸²

Ultimately, then, the parable is a rereading of Israel’s history with a Christological focus. The patterns of Israel’s unfaithfulness and the rejection of God’s appointed spokesmen and leaders anticipate Israel’s rejection of Christ. Jesus’ death is the climactic episode of Israel’s sordid tale of repeated unfaithfulness.

The question is whether the language and imagery of the parable of the tenants also alludes to Joseph. If so, how does this allusion contribute to (1) our interpretation of the parable and (2) our understanding of Joseph in redemptive history? As scholars have noted, aspects of the parable seem to echo the story of Joseph⁸³—particularly the mention

⁸¹For a defense of the quotation’s authenticity, see Greg Lanier, “The Rejected Stone in the Parable of the Wicked Tenants: Defending the Authenticity of Jesus’ Quotation of Psalm 118:22,” *JETS* 56, no. 4 (2013): 733–51.

⁸²Blomberg, “Matthew,” 74.

⁸³For a sample of scholars who affirm or discuss a possible allusion to the Joseph story in the parable of the tenants, see Rudolph Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, HTKNT 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1976), 219; Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium Nach Markus*, vol. 2 (Zurich: Benziger, 1979), 147; Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC 34B (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 236; W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 19–28*, vol. 3, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 1997), 183; Alexander Weihs, “Die Eifersucht Der Winzer: Zur Anspielung Auf LXX Gen. 37,20 in Der Parabel von Der Tötung Des Sohnes (Mk. 12, 1–12),” *ETL* 76, no. 1 (2000): 5–29; John Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine*, WUNT 195 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 231–35; Blomberg, “Matthew,” 71; Hamilton, “Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah?,” 66; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28*, vol. 3, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 40–41; Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, “Genesis in Mark’s Gospel,” in *Genesis in the New Testament*, ed. Maarten Menken and Steve Moyise, LNTS 466 (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 37–38; Nicholas Lunn, “Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts: Foundations of a Biblical Type,” *JETS* 55, no. 1 (2012): 35–37; Jonathan Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 201; Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 43; Richard Hays, *Reading*

of the owner’s “son” (Matt 21:37) or, as Mark and Luke have it, the “beloved son” (υἰὸν ἀγαπητόν [Mark 12:16]; τὸν υἰὸν μου τὸν ἀγαπητόν [Luke 20:13] cf. Gen 37:3–4). Of course, Joseph does not have a monopoly on “beloved son” language in the OT (cf. Gen 22:2, Ps 2:7, 2 Sam 7:14, or Hos 11:1). Yet, the son’s description (and the surrounding details) in the parable make an allusion to Joseph likely.

The description of the master sending his son (ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὸν υἰὸν αὐτοῦ [Matt 21:37; cf. Mark 12:6; Luke 20:13]) is similar to Jacob’s own “sending” of Joseph in Gen 37:13 (ἀποστείλω σε πρὸς αὐτούς). While the vocabulary is not particularly unique, other factors bolster the connection. In both instances a father (the subject) “sends” (ἀποστέλλω) a son (the object) to a people (“to them,” πρὸς αὐτούς) who will reject him. Only in Genesis 37 and the Parable of Tenants do we see this exact pattern of events in this language.⁸⁴ The responses of the tenants and Joseph’s brothers to the arrivals of the beloved sons are also strikingly similar. The brothers of Joseph “see” (προεἶδον) him from a distance and then “speak” (εἶπαν) about how they can destroy him (Gen 37:18–19). The same sequence is followed by the tenants who “see” (ιδόντες) the son coming and “speak” about his destruction (εἶπον [Matt 21:38; cf. Mark 12:7; Luke 20:14]).⁸⁵ Further—and perhaps most striking—in both instances the hostile company uses the exact same phrase in their deliberation: “Come, let us kill him” (δεῦτε ἀποκτείνωμεν αὐτόν [Gen 37:20; Matt 21:38; Mark 12:7; Luke 20:14⁸⁶])—a phrase that occurs only in Genesis 37:20 and in the parable of the tenants.⁸⁷ Finally, as the brothers

Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2014), 9–11. Snodgrass asks “Is Gen 37:20 relevant?” Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 277.

⁸⁴Lunn, “Allusions to the Joseph Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts,” 36.

⁸⁵Mark does not mention the tenants “seeing” the son. Also Luke uses διαλογίζομαι as opposed to εἶπον (Luke 20:14).

⁸⁶Some manuscripts of Luke include δεῦτε. See \aleph C D L Θ f^{13} 33 Ψ e sy^{s.c.p.h**} sa^{ms} bo. This inclusion, however, is likely the result of synoptic harmonization.

⁸⁷The phrase ἀποκτείνωμεν αὐτόν does occur in Judg 16:2. This passage, however, both lacks δεῦτε and conceptual similarities with the Joseph story and thus should not be taken into consideration.

take Joseph (καὶ λαβόντες αὐτὸν [Gen 37:24]) and throw him into the pit—a metaphorical murder⁸⁸—so the tenants take the son (καὶ λαβόντες αὐτὸν [Matt 21:39; cf. Mark 12:8]), throw him out of the vineyard, and murder him.

Donahue and Harrington posit that the verbal connections hint at a Joseph/Jesus typology, “especially with regard to the theme of two innocent sufferers” or with regard to the jealousy motif seen in both Joseph’s brothers and vineyard tenants.⁸⁹ This interpretation, however, does not take into account the parable’s primary significance as a retelling of Israel’s history, focusing particularly on her regular rejection of God’s prophets.⁹⁰ The point of the allusion is not to make a generic typological association between Joseph and Jesus. Instead, Jesus is retelling Israel’s history as refracted through the Joseph story, Isaiah 5, and Psalm 118, among other possible OT sources, as a way of showing himself as the culmination of a pattern deeply embedded in Israel’s history. Jesus likely draws on Genesis 37, Isaiah 5, and Psalm 118 since they each witness, in their own contexts, to this pattern. An allusion to Joseph, therefore, further witnesses to this pattern. Like Isaiah 5 and Psalm 118, the Joseph story is the story of Israel in miniature. Their rejection of “beloved sons,” anointed leaders and deliverers of the nation, begins as early as Joseph. As Hays summarizes, “the parable thereby places the story of Jesus within the unfolding story of Israel and presents his death as the climax of a pattern of unfaithfulness and judgment familiar to any reader of Israel’s prophetic literature. The pattern is as old as the story of Joseph’s resentful brothers.”⁹¹

In this light, Jesus is in fact suggesting a typological reading of the Joseph

⁸⁸See footnote 244 in chapter 3.

⁸⁹John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SPS 2 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 339.

⁹⁰Kloppenborg similarly protests Weihs’ analysis of the Joseph allusion since “he neglects the more obvious typological function of the figure of Joseph, representing the persecuted and vindicated one” (Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard*, 233).

⁹¹Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness*, 11.

story. The foundation of this type, however, is not simply the verbal correspondence between the parable's "beloved son" and Joseph. Instead, Jesus alludes to the Joseph story as part of a larger pattern in Israel's history of rejected prophets—a pattern which witnesses to Israel's rejection of Jesus (much like Stephen's argument in Acts 7).⁹²

The use of "beloved son" language may also intimate a soteriological facet to the parable. As Hays notes, "the identification of Jesus as the 'beloved son' (Mark 12.6; Luke 20.13)—linking him both to Isaac and to the Davidic king [and we would add Joseph]—hints that his death is to be understood not merely as a tragic episode of violence but as an event of saving significance for Israel"⁹³ This point is also attested to in the quotation of Psalm 118 where the rejected stone becomes the cornerstone of God's renewed work in the temple. The allusion to Joseph, therefore, coupled with the quotation of Psalm 118:22–23 witnesses not only to the pattern of the rejection of God's prophets, which culminates in Christ, but also to a pattern of vindication. Both Joseph and the stone are rejected and then made a center-piece in God's redemptive plan. This pattern forecasts the destiny of the Christ himself.

In summary, the parable of the tenants contains a probable allusion to the Joseph narrative. This allusion reinforces Jesus' notion that Israel has always rejected its prophets. Like Israel in Isaiah 5, they are faithless and unrighteous.⁹⁴ The allusion also

⁹²Hamilton writes, "This parable, with its linguistic connection to the Joseph story, with the event sequence correspondence of the father sending the son, who is then rejected, and with the redemptive historical import of Jesus as the last of a long line of figures whom the owner of the vineyard has sent to his tenants, indicates that Jesus understood himself as the typological fulfillment of this pattern, which means that Jesus understood himself as the typological fulfillment of a pattern to which the Joseph story made a key contribution" (Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah?," 66).

⁹³Hays, "The Canonical Matrix of the Gospels," 54.

⁹⁴Contra Aheearne-Kroll who suggests, "Even if there is a typological relationship between the son in the parable—and, implicitly, Jesus—and Joseph, it does not seem to affect the parable or the understanding of Jesus' death alluded to within it in any significant way since the dominating intertext for the parable is Isa 5 rather than Gen 37. Joseph's interaction with his brothers and his near death might add color or contrast to the parable, but little else" (Aheearne-Kroll, "Genesis in Mark's Gospel," 38).

reveals part of the interpretive perspective of Jesus and the Gospel writers on the Joseph story: they see Joseph as part of a typological pattern in Israel's history—which reaches its zenith in Israel's rejection of Jesus. This parable then witnesses to a “Joseph typology,” not merely on account of a few verbal parallels, but because Joseph is part of a pattern played out numerous times in Israel's history which ultimately comes to fulfillment in the Messiah.

Implications for a Canonical Understanding of the Joseph Narrative

The preceding analysis yields some significant biblical-theological conclusions. First, contrary to much modern scholarship, both Acts and Hebrews speak well of Joseph's character. In Hebrews, Joseph is an example of faith worthy of imitation. In Acts, Joseph is favored by God and mediates blessing to the nations. Second, both authors interpret Joseph within the framework of the Abrahamic covenant. Hebrews specifically focuses on Joseph's faith in the Abrahamic promises, specifically the land promise. In Acts, Joseph is the archetypal covenant mediator rejected by the nation. Finally, Acts and the parable of the tenants reveal that the apostolic community saw Joseph's life as a prospective pattern of Israel's history. In Acts, Joseph, like Moses and Jesus, is a Spirit-endowed prophet who fulfills God's covenant promises despite (even through) rejection by his brothers. In the parable of the tenants, Jesus alludes to Joseph as part of a pattern in Israel's history that anticipates the rejection of the Messiah, Israel's true “beloved son.” Thus, according to Acts 7 and the parable of the tenants, Joseph is a type of the Messiah.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

As noted in chapter 1, most twentieth-century scholarship suggested that the Joseph story did not continue the storyline of the patriarchs or develop the story of God's covenant with Abraham. In light of these suggestions, Brevard Childs once asked, "What is the shape of the final chapters [of Genesis] and what is their function within the book as a whole? . . . If Joseph is not the bearer of the promise in the same way as his forefathers, what then is his role in Genesis?"¹

This dissertation has sought not only to answer Childs' question about the role of Joseph in Genesis but also to account for Joseph's redemptive-historical contribution to the entire canon of Scripture. Contrary to much historical-critical scholarship, I have argued that the Joseph story functions as the resolution to the plot of Genesis. In the Joseph story, Moses continues to focus on the Abrahamic promises and describes how those promises are fulfilled through Joseph—the rejected, royal deliverer. Moses portrays Joseph as an anticipatory fulfillment of the promises. Joseph's ministry multiplies the seed of Israel, blesses the nations, and prepares Israel to inherit Canaan. In light of these features of the story, Moses suggests that Joseph's life is typological—one that points to a future and more complete fulfillment of God's promises. Later OT authors confirm this interpretation in their own discussions of or allusions to the Joseph narrative. Finally, NT authors also confirm these same features and explicitly indicate the typological character of the Joseph story.

¹Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 156.

Summary of the Argument and Biblical-Theological Conclusions

Chapter 1 explained the rationale for this project and introduced readers to the supposed “problem” of Joseph’s prominence in Genesis and relative absence in the rest of the canon. In this chapter, I surveyed the dominant approaches to the Joseph story with regard to his role in Genesis in particular and, more generally, in the canon. Most historical-critical scholars posit, like Redford, that “the theological outlook of the writer of Gen 37–50 is different from that of the Patriarchal narrator.”² Alternatively, other scholars saw a great deal more unity between the patriarchal narratives and the Joseph story. This chapter also surveyed the history of the interpretation of the Joseph narrative. As I noted, almost all pre-modern interpreters saw Joseph *primarily* as a typological character—a tradition which continues among many evangelical interpreters of Scripture.

Chapter 2 laid out the methodology of this dissertation. In this chapter I sought to defend the approach to biblical-theology as “faith seeking understanding of the redemptive-historical and literary unity of the Bible in its own terms, concepts, and contexts.”³ This chapter also defended my approach to typology as one regulated by the interpretive practices of the NT authors. I argued that types are historical, prospective, textual, covenantal, and that they exhibit escalation in moving from type to antitype

Chapter 3 examined the story of Joseph within the context of Genesis. I examined Joseph’s place within the *toledot* structure of Genesis, his relationship to the Abrahamic covenant, and his role in the storyline of Genesis. By considering Joseph’s relationship to the land, seed, blessing, and kingship promises of the Abrahamic covenant, I concluded that Joseph was an anticipatory fulfilment of the covenant promises. Furthermore, I demonstrated how Joseph reverses fraternal conflict and

²Donald B. Redford, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph*, VTSup 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 247.

³Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 35.

famine—two predominant themes in Genesis. In light of these and other evidences, I argued that, even within the context of Genesis itself, Joseph is a typological figure.

Chapter 4 examined the explicit mentions of Joseph in the OT in order to discern how later biblical authors interpreted the Joseph story. I argued that Psalm 105 interprets Joseph within the framework of the Abrahamic promises. The psalmist sees Joseph as God’s instrument for fulfilling those promises in a provisional, anticipatory way. Further, this chapter also explored allusions to the Joseph narrative in Daniel and considered Joseph’s contribution to the canonical motif of the exalted Jew in a foreign court. I concluded that OT authors interpreted Joseph’s life as a harbinger of the exodus and as an archetypal figure whose life anticipated later events in Israel’s history.

Finally, chapter 5 examined two explicit references to Joseph in the NT: Acts 7 and Hebrews 11. In Hebrews 11, Joseph is presented as an example of faith in God’s promises. My analysis of Acts 7 showed that Stephen interpreted Joseph’s story as a microcosm of Israel’s history. Joseph and Moses exemplify Israel’s rejection of their deliverers, a pattern which culminates in their rejection of Jesus. Jesus makes the same point in the parable of the tenants. Israel’s constant rebellion against God’s messengers typifies their ultimate rejection of the “beloved son”—an event anticipated by the patriarchs’ rejection of Joseph. These passages, then, explicitly confirm what appears suggested throughout the OT—namely, that Joseph is a type of the Messiah.

Concluding Reflections and Suggestions for Further Research

My hope is that this dissertation exposes the need for research in the following areas. First, this dissertation discussed the role of the Joseph story within Genesis’ *toledot* structure. Throughout chapter three, I also made suggestions that unpack the internal structure of the Joseph narrative. For instance, I considered the literary structure of smaller units within the story and how recurring motifs (such as clothing and dreams) structure the narrative. I also suggested there was a structural logic to the relative

disappearance of the divine name, covenantal terms, and theophanies in Genesis 37–45 and the reintroduction of those elements in chapters 46–50. Further research, however, is needed for a complete account of Joseph’s literary structure. An investigation of Genesis 37–50 which presupposes its literary unity, takes into account its literary motifs, and carefully investigates the story’s discourse-grammatical features would further unpack the significance not only of the story as a whole but also of its constituent parts.

Second, this dissertation interpreted the Joseph narrative according to the intent of the original author and according to the interpretive perspective of later biblical authors. I also sought to interpret the Joseph story according to Scripture’s covenantal framework. Applying the same interpretive principles to other portions of the OT, particularly OT historical narratives, would go a long way in constructing a truly “biblical” theology—particularly in circles which discount the theological value of OT narrative.⁴ What I hope to have demonstrated in this dissertation is that a rigorous commitment to authorial intent, the application of strict and theologically-principled methodological controls, and confessional orthodoxy on the character of Scripture yields significant biblical-theological results. Many other sections of the OT, even other portions of Genesis (such as the Jacob story), need a fresh examination which eschews historical-critical presuppositions and instead reads these narratives on their own terms. Further, my position that typology must be grounded within Scripture’s covenantal framework (and not merely on verbal correspondences or thematic similarities) might be of some value for arbitrating other disputed issues in biblical theology or typology.

John Owen noted that “the only unique, public, authentic, and infallible interpreter of Scripture is none other than the Author of Scripture Himself . . . that is, God

⁴For a helpful discussion on what it means to be truly “biblical,” see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 81–126.

the Holy Spirit.”⁵ This dissertation has sought to be faithful to that interpretive principle by allowing the covenantal structure of Scripture and the interpretive perspective of later biblical authors to shape my reading of the Joseph story. Evangelicals, particularly reformed evangelicals, have a unique opportunity to contribute to the field of biblical theology given our commitment to the unity of Scripture, divine inspiration, and the centrality of Christ in both redemptive-history and hermeneutics. My hope is that this dissertation has constructed a truly “biblical” account of Joseph’s place in Christian theology built on those theological and hermeneutical principles.

⁵John Owen, *Biblical Theology or the Nature, Origin, Development, and Study of Theological Truth in Six Books* (Pittsburgh, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1994), 797. See also Coxe’s comments, “The best interpreter of the Old Testament is the Holy Spirit speaking to us in the new” (Nehemiah Coxe and John Owen, *Covenant Theology From Adam to Christ* (Owensboro, KY: RBAP, 2005), 36.

APPENDIX 1

TOLEDOT STRUCTURE OF GENESIS

Table A1 summarizes the linguistic evidence for *waw*-initial and asyndetic *toledot* in Genesis.¹

Table A1: *Waw*-initial and asyndetic *Toledot* in Genesis

		Preface (1:1–2:3)
i	∅	These are the toledot of the Heavens and the Earth (2:4–4:26)
ii	∅	This is the book of the toledot of Adam (5:1–6:8)
iii	∅	These are the toledot of Noah (6:9–9:29)
	waw	<u>And</u> these are the toledot of Noah’s sons (10:1–11:9)
iv	∅	<u>And</u> these are the toledot of Shem (11:10–11:26)
	waw	<u>And</u> these are the toledot of Terah (11:27–25:11)
	waw	<u>And</u> these are the toledot of Ishmael (25:12–18)
	waw	<u>And</u> these are the toledot of Isaac (25:19–35:29)
	waw	<u>And</u> these are the toledot of Esau (36:1–8; 36:9–37:1)
v	∅	These are the toledot of Jacob (37:2–50:26)

¹Table taken from Jason DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledot* Structure of Genesis,” *JETS* 56, no. 2 (2013): 233.

Table A2 summarizes DeRouchie’s two-level interpretation of the toledot structure of Genesis.²

Table A2: DeRouchie’s text-linguistic proposal on the *Toledot* structure of Genesis

		<i>toledot</i> Structure	Genre
		Preface. Biblical Worldview Foundations (1:1–2:3)	
1	i	These are the <i>toledot</i> of the H and E (2:4–4:26)	N (+GL/S)
2A	ii	This is the book of the <i>toledot</i> of Adam (5:1–6:8)	GL (+N)
	iii	These are the <i>toledot</i> of Noah (6:9–9:29)	N
		<i>And</i> these are the <i>toledot</i> of Noah’s Sons (10:1–11:9)	GS (+N)
2B	iv	These are the <i>toledot</i> of Shem (11:10–11:26)	GL
		<i>And</i> these are the <i>toledot</i> of Terah (11:27–25:11)	N (+GS)
		<i>And</i> these are the <i>toledot</i> of Ishmael (25:12–18)	GS
		<i>And</i> these are the <i>toledot</i> of Isaac (25:19–35:29)	N
		<i>And</i> these are the <i>toledot</i> of Esau (36:1–8; 36:9–37:1)	GS (+N+GS)
	v	<i>And</i> these are the <i>toledot</i> of Jacob (37:2–50:26)	N (+GS+N)
KEY: N = Narrative; GL = Linear Genealogy; GS = Segmented Genealogy			

²Table taken from DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission,” 246.

APPENDIX 2

CLOTHING IN THE JOSEPH STORY

Table A3 summarizes the role clothing plays in the transitional scenes of the Joseph story.¹

Table A3: Clothing and scene transitions in the story of Joseph

Ruler	Jacob		Potiphar		Prison-keeper		Pharaoh
Deputy	Joseph		Joseph		Joseph		Joseph
Other "Subjects"	Brothers		Servants		Prisoners		Citizens
Symbols of Position and Transition		Long Sleeved Robe		Cloak		Shaved and Changed Clothes	
Symbols of Ambiguity and Paradox		Pit		Prison		Egypt	

¹Chart taken from Donald Seybold, "Paradox and Symmetry in the Joseph Narrative," in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives*, ed. Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, James S. Ackerman, and Thayer Warshaw (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), 1:68.

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ABSTRACT

COVENANT, TYPOLOGY, AND THE STORY OF JOSEPH: A LITERARY-CANONICAL EXAMINATION OF GENESIS 37–50

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This dissertation defends the notion that Joseph, understood according to a literary-canonical analysis, functions as the resolution to the plot of Genesis and that this story typologically influences how later biblical authors narrate redemptive history culminating in the NT's portrayal of Jesus as an antitypical Joseph. My research explores two questions: First, what is the literary and biblical-theological significance of the Joseph narrative as the conclusion to Genesis? Second, how do later biblical authors interpret and reuse the Joseph narrative?

Chapter 1 explains the rationale for this project and introduces readers to the supposed “problem” of Joseph’s prominence in Genesis and relative absence in the rest of the canon. In this chapter, I survey the dominant approaches to the Joseph story with regard to his role in Genesis in particular and, more generally, in the canon. Most historical-critical scholars posit that Joseph’s story is largely disconnected from the rest of the Genesis narrative. This chapter also surveys the history of the interpretation of the Joseph narrative. I note that almost all pre-modern interpreters saw Joseph *primarily* as a typological character—a tradition which continues among many evangelical interpreters of Scripture.

Chapter 2 explains the methodology of this dissertation. In this chapter, I defend my understanding of biblical-theology and my approach to typology as one regulated by the interpretive practices of the New Testament authors. I argue that types

are historical, prospective, textual, covenantal, and that they exhibit escalation in moving from type to antitype

Chapter 3 examines the story of Joseph within the context of Genesis. I explore Joseph's place with the *toledot* structure of Genesis, his relationship to the Abrahamic covenant, and his role in the storyline of Genesis. By considering Joseph's relationship to the land, seed, blessing, and kingship promises of the Abrahamic covenant, I conclude that Joseph is an anticipatory fulfilment of the covenant promises. Furthermore, I demonstrate how Joseph reverses fraternal conflict and famine—two major themes in Genesis. In light of these and other evidences, I argue that, even within the context of Genesis itself, Joseph is a typological figure.

Chapter 4 investigates the explicit mentions of Joseph in the OT in order to discern how later biblical authors interpreted the Joseph story. I argue that Psalm 105 interprets Joseph within the framework of the Abrahamic promises. The psalmist sees Joseph as God's instrument for fulfilling those promises in a provisional, anticipatory way. This chapter also explores allusions to the Joseph narrative in Daniel and considers Joseph's contribution to the canonical motif of the exalted Jew in a foreign court. I conclude that the OT authors interpreted Joseph's life as a harbinger of the exodus and as an archetypal figure whose life anticipated later events in Israel's history.

Finally, chapter 5 investigates two explicit references to Joseph in the NT: Acts 7 and Hebrews 11. In Hebrews 11, Joseph is presented as a moral exemplar on account of his faith in God's promises. My analysis of Acts 7 shows that Stephen interpreted Joseph's story as a microcosm of Israel's history. Joseph and Moses exemplify Israel's rejection of their deliverers, a pattern which culminates in their rejection of Jesus. Jesus makes the same point in the parable of the tenants. Israel's constant rebellion against God's messengers typifies their ultimate rejection of the "beloved son"—an event anticipated by the patriarchs' rejection of Joseph. These passages, then, explicitly confirm what appears suggested throughout the OT—namely, Joseph is a type of the Messiah.

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ORGANIZATIONS

The Evangelical Theological Society

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Adjunct Faculty, Boyce College, Louisville, Kentucky, 2013–2014

Adjunct Faculty, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, 2013–

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Youth Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Seymour, Indiana, 2010–2011