Jesus in Genesis cont.

1. Introduction

a. As we have established, Jesus and the apostles clearly pointed to Jesus as *patterned, prophesied and present* in the Old Testament. To quote Augustine, *"The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is made manifest in the New."*

b. Perhaps the most significant and widely seen ways that New Testament authors point to the fulfilment of the Old Testament in Christ comes to us in their **typological** interpretation of the Old Testament. By which we mean that the person, event or institution is a type of Christ which is then revealed in the New Testament by Jesus.

c. When we say that someone is a type of Christ, we are saying that a person in the Old Testament behaves in a way that corresponds to Jesus' character or actions in the New Testament. When we say that something is "typical" of Christ, we are saying that an object or event in the Old Testament can be viewed as representative of some quality of Jesus. Believing that the bible was divinely inspired, we see in typology God writing His story throughout scripture whether the authors themselves understood their significance or not.

d. However, we must be careful to not take this approach too far and go beyond that which is revealed in the New Testament. The best way to stay within the biblical purpose of typology is to only consider something or someone as a type when the antitype is clearly evident from the body of scripture.

e. Today we are continuing in Genesis. Genesis means "beginnings" and as such we see many types of Christ in this book as it sets the foundation for God's redemptive story. We see that:

   i Jesus was there at creation – He spoke all things into being (Gen.1:3, Col.1:16)

   ii Messiah would be born of the seed of a woman (Gen 3:15, Luke 1:34-35)

   iii Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob (Gen 12:3, 17:19, 28:14, Luke 3:23-34)

   iv Messiah would come to open up the way between God and man (Gen.28:12, John 1:51)

   v Messiah would be a king in the line of Judah (Gen 49:10, John 1:49)

   vi Typified in the person of Melchizedek (Gen 14:18)

   vii The life of Isaac - the sacrificed son (Gen 22)

   viii The life of Joseph - the rejected brother (Gen 37)

f. Today we are going to consider two more of these types in Genesis.

2. Jesus the Narrow Gate

a. In Genesis 28 we read of an event in Abraham's grandson, Jacob's, life. Isaac, Abraham's son, was old and wanted to bless his firstborn son, Esau. So he told Esau to hunt, prepare a meal, and bring it to him and then receive his blessing. But Isaac's wife, Rebekah, favoured Esau's twin, Jacob, and wanted him to get the blessing. So she came up with a plan for Jacob to deceive his vision-impaired father and steal the blessing of the firstborn heir.

b. The plan worked, Esau was furious, and Jacob fled out of fear for his safety. On the surface, he left to find a wife from the old "home country." The deeper reality is that he was avoiding

trouble and was surrounded by uncertainty, conflict, passion, and guilt. Such was Jacob's emotional state when he stopped to camp.

Gen. 28:10-13 *[10] Jacob left Beersheba and went towards Haran. [11] And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. [12] And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! [13] And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring.*

c. That night, he had a vivid dream of a stairway leading to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. He woke up convinced that God was in that place that had looked so ordinary the night before. He called it Bethel, "house of God."

d. In his turmoil, Jacob had a divine encounter. Many centuries later, Jesus met Nathanael and told him he would see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

John 1:51 *[51] And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

e. He was making an extraordinary claim. He was pointing to Himself as the "way to God," the place where divine encounters occur, the open doorway between heaven and earth. Any Jew would have recognized the reference to Jacob's dream.

f. What Jacob perceived as an intersection between the heavenly and earthly realms became a sign of God's willingness to meet humanity in the midst of our tumultuous, burdensome, complicated situations. And Jesus offered Himself as the fulfilment of that sign. He presented Himself as an encounter with God when we're trying to flee from our problems.

g. Jesus' words to Nathanael are more than an interesting reference to Hebrew Scripture. They are an invitation to anyone bound in this realm with the longing to connect to another. Heaven really can touch earth because it did in encounters like Jacob's and then more powerfully in the presence of Jesus. Anyone united with Jesus can live at the intersection between human and divine—where angels ascend and descend and God's works flow into our lives.

h. Jesus is our connection between heaven and earth—the way for us to access heavenly realities and bring the eternal into our mundane, everyday lives. My prayer is that we would fully experience everything God intends in our relationship with Jesus and our connection with the divine realm.

i. Secondly there is a clear comparison here between the tower of Babel and Jacob's ladder. Babel reveals our inability to reach God. Bethel reveals that God is reaching down to us. Jesus promises here that He is the ladder. He is the one that bridges the gap between God and Men. No one sees God apart from the way that God has made.

1 Tim. 2:5 *[For] there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*

Eph.2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*

John 14:6-7 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*

j. Jacob when he awoke, recognised that God was in that place and that the ladder was the gate of heaven.

Gen.28:16-17 *Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." 17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."*

k. It is with awe and wonder that we accept God's precious invitation to come to Him through Jesus. Through the narrow gate that causes us to leave behind all our striving and pride and submit to His grace and mercy.

Matt. 7:13-14 *"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

3. Suffering Servant and Rejected Ruler

a. Joseph is one of the most striking types of Jesus in the Old Testament.

Gen 37:5-8 *Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, 'Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.' His brothers said to him, 'Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?' And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.*

b. Even from an early stage Joseph was different. Genesis 37:3 tells us that Joseph was Jacob's most loved son and from the dreams he had it was clear that he would one-day rule over his brothers and for this they hated him. Jesus encountered the same reaction both from those in his hometown as well as from his actual brothers. After trying to teach and minister in His hometown He was met with the following response -

Matt13:55-57 *'Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?' And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, 'Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honour.'*

c. While the nation's leaders called Jesus possessed, even some of those in His own family wouldn't acknowledge Him. We read in John 7:5 that His own brothers were asking for more signs.

d. Because of jealousy and envy, Joseph's brothers conspired to kill Joseph. (Gen.37:18-19) What they hated most were the dreams that elevated Joseph above themselves. They also hated the fact that their father Jacob dearly loved Joseph and their jealousy and anger led to a plan to destroy him.

e. In like manner the leaders of Israel hated Jesus because He didn't submit Himself to their rule but showed through word and deed that He was above them. His claims to be from heaven, to be greater than Abraham, or to be the one of whom Moses wrote, met with venomous reactions and culminated in a plot to take His life. (Matt.26:3-4)

f. The anger and jealousy reached its peak and Joseph was sold and betrayed for 20 measly pieces of silver! (Gen.37:26-28) And note also who it was that lead the betrayal - Judah! This is translated from the Hebrew name 'Yehuda', and it is the same name which can be translated Judas! No surprises then that Jesus, like Joseph, would be betrayed by one of those closest to him - this time for a great total of 30 silver pieces! (Matt.26:14-16)

g. This was of course, a fulfilment of the great prophecy in Zechariah where God himself is priced at 30 pieces of silver!

Zechariah 11:13 *And the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter' - the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD to the potter.*

h. While Joseph didn't understand it, God had other plans and would use this betrayal to exalt Joseph and through him give the means by which both Gentiles and Joseph's own Jewish family would be saved. I'm sure you see the picture of Jesus!

i. After being betrayed by his brothers and led to Egypt, Joseph soon finds himself being accused of a crime that he didn't commit. (Gen.39:17-20) The slander and lies presented lead to Joseph being thrown into prison. He had no say in the matter even though he was innocent. In like manner, after His betrayal, Jesus was falsely accused and slandered in a series of one-sided trials. Like Joseph He had done no wrong but that didn't stop His accusers! (Mark 14:55-64)

j. Joseph wasn't alone in prison though. Two other servants of Pharaoh, the cupbearer and the baker, were shortly thrown in there with him. (Gen.40:4-5) Each spoke to Joseph about a dream they had had which Joseph interpreted for them. This pictures Jesus in His prison, upon the cross, and the two thieves that were crucified with Him. (Matt.27:38)

k. The result of the two prisoner's dreams meant death for one, and release and exaltation for the other. This is a type of one of the most amazing salvations to ever happen (Luke 23:39-43) Like Joseph, one prisoner with Jesus would die, but one would find real life and be released and exalted into the greatest place - Paradise!

l. Joseph went from being condemned in prison to being exalted to Pharaoh's right hand in a single day (Gen 40:39-41.) Apart from Pharaoh, there were none above Joseph! What a picture of the Lord Jesus, who through the resurrection, went from the cross to His exaltation back at the right hand of the Father. After the resurrection Jesus said 'all authority on heaven and earth has been given to me...' And as the Egyptians bowed at the feet of Joseph, so the entire world will one day bow down at the feet of the Lord.

Phil 2:8-11 *'And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'*

m. Upon his exaltation to the right hand of Pharaoh, Joseph was given a gentile bride for his wife (Gen.41:45). This is a picture of the Lord Jesus who, upon His exaltation, took a bride for Himself (the church) from among the gentile nations.

n. This is where our study moves from the present, and into the future. Scripture reveals that God has set aside one final seven-year period where He will again deal with the nation of

Israel to bring them to repentance, and acknowledgement of their Messiah, Jesus. (Dan 9:20-27).

o. This is what we also see here in the life of Joseph (Gen.41:54) God used a seven-year period of famine and extreme hardship to force Joseph's brothers to seek out aid and help. This Jesus' natural brothers, the Jews, will do but again it will only be a time of extreme hardship that forces them to do so. Speaking of that last seven-year period, the Bible declares -

Jer. 30:7 *Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.*

p. One of best pictures has got to be the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers who had betrayed him (Gen 45:1-5,14.) The great famine had struck the area and Joseph's brothers had come seeking provision. On their first visit to see Joseph they didn't recognise him, but all was revealed when they met the second time! There was great weeping as they realised that the one who they had betrayed was not only alive, but ruled over the entire land. Like Joseph's brothers, Israel didn't recognise Jesus at His first coming, but oh the weeping and reconciliation that is to come at His second coming.

Zech. 12:10-12 *'I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.*

q. Joseph's brothers, upon their reconciliation with Joseph, were extremely repentant of the evil that they had done in plotting and betraying Joseph. Yet Joseph didn't hold the grievance against them but with grace stated that 'what they meant for evil, God intended for good, to save many lives!' (Gen.50:18-20) What an awesome picture of Jesus! Yes, Israel betrayed Him, planning to do Him harm. Yet God intended it for good, to save many lives! And that He has done, and continues to do, throughout the entire world!

r. Look also at Joseph's kindness to his brothers. Not only did he not hold anything against them, but he assured them that he would provide for them. The millennial blessings that will come to the Jewish nation after they have returned to the Lord are the fulfilment of this type. Speaking of the blessing that will come upon that nation after their acknowledgement and acceptance of Jesus, Paul writes,

Romans 11:12 *But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!*

s. Joseph is truly one of the greatest types in the Bible of the Lord Jesus Christ. From his betrayal at the hands of his brothers, to his exaltation and authority over the Egyptian empire; from his taking of a gentile bride, to his final reconciliation with his Jewish brothers; all is a glimpse from God of past, present and even future history!

4. Conclusion

a. Through His suffering, Jesus became a means of deliverance for many. He became the narrow gate through which we have access to the Father and His Kingdom. God's story does not end with His suffering but with His victory, a victory He shares with all those who will enter in.

Rom.8:37 …*in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*