



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

August 7, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

The Gospel According to Broadway: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat is the only show of this series that uses the Bible as its source material. *Joseph and Jesus Christ Superstar* are both productions of the team of Andrew Lloyd Weber and Tim Rice. Two other Biblical shows, *Godspell* and *Children of Eden* were by Stephen Schwartz, and could have easily fit into this series.

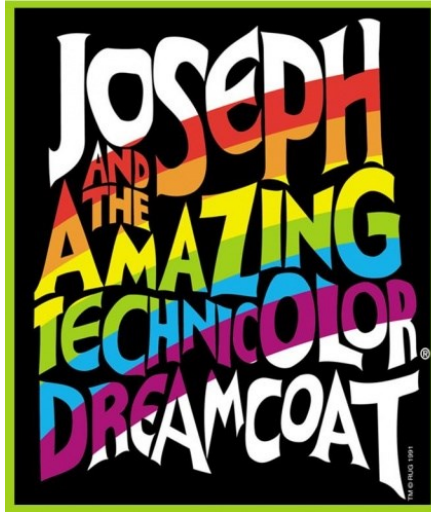
Joseph draws from last third of the book of Genesis (chapters 37-50). This is often called the “Joseph Novella” that is within Genesis. It is distinct within the broader context of the book of Genesis because it tells a very cohesive story. When reading Genesis, the Joseph Novella just feels like its own section. It is a perfect story to dramatize.

Andrew Lloyd Weber and Tim Rice created a fun, light-hearted, fast-paced show with a variety of musical styles, dance, and anachronistic costuming. The Pharaoh-as-Elvis is a fun surprise to first-time show-goers. The ho-down “mourning” of the loss of Joseph feels like it could have been pulled from *Oklahoma!* There are also the gripping ballad of faith and determination as Joseph sings from jail.

The overall tone of the show however, is set by color, joy, and a children’s choir that helps tell the story of “Jacob and Sons,” and “Go Go Go Joseph!” All of this creates a fun depiction of triumph over tragedy, and the reconciliation of a family beset by immature grudges and jealousy. It is a wonderful and fun show. It also obscures a dark story about generational trauma and systemic oppression.

Joseph is the favorite son of Jacob, evidenced by the amazing technicolor dreamcoat. As a result of this favoritism (and Joseph’s dreams about their future servitude toward him), the brothers hate Joseph. This turns into something deeper than a typical sibling rivalry, and the brothers sell Joseph into slavery.

Through a circuitous and entertaining sequence of events, Joseph rises to power and helps the Pharaoh become very wealthy and powerful. From this position, Joseph is able to save his family and the brothers who once betrayed him. There is reconciliation and a joyful reunion between Joseph and his father Jacob.



Joseph was nominated for Best Musical during the 1982 Tony Awards, but lost out to *Nine*.

While Joseph is able to see God’s role in protecting him and guiding him to glory, Jacob is pretty much let off the hook for his role in poisoning the family. His favoritism toward Joseph created a toxic atmosphere. Jacob himself was a part of a toxic family. He was the favorite of his mother. His twin brother Esau was the favorite of his father Isaac. That rivalry led to pain, heartache, treachery, and a difficult life for Jacob. The mistakes of Isaac carried to Jacob, who then laid them on his own sons.

Generational pain is real, and it is not often handled well. Many families would rather gloss over the pain. Like the duplicitous dancing and fake mourning of the brothers in “One More Angel in Heaven,” families would rather put on a good show than actually deal with their pain.

Joseph and his brothers eventually reconcile, but the violent act that they did against Joseph has deep repercussions. The power that Joseph helped Pharaoh gain led to his family becoming slaves. While the Joseph story is the end of Genesis. The beginning of Exodus (400 years later) reveals that the powerful Pharaoh has now enslaved Joseph’s family.

Systems of oppression and injustice have deep roots. The Exodus is one of the great events of our Biblical story. It is the story of God saving God’s people from slavery. We often forget that they were slaves in Egypt because of their own duplicitous and violent actions.

Families need to be able to address their generational trauma. Healing is possible, but it doesn’t happen at a hoe-down. It happens with hard work and truth-telling, not glossing over with an amazing technicolor façade.