

Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation
(Under same management for over 5784 years)

SHABBAT SERVICE

Parasha VaYigash Genesis 44:18 - 47:27

Lolo Community "Synagogue"

December 23rd – 10:30AM

12:30PM Oneg Shabbat & Interactive Torah Study

Eat This Book – Tuesdays 7PM – 8PM (Zoom)



God's awesome plot accomplished His purpose, fulfilling His promise to Abraham to make from him a great nation through which Messiah would one day bless both Jew and Gentile.



Vayigash "And he (Judah) drew near...."

וַיֵּגֶשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר בֵּי אָדוֹנָי יְדַבֵּרְנָא עִבְדְּךָ דָּבָר בְּאָזְנֵי
אָדוֹנָי וְאַל-יִחַר אַפְךָ בְּעַבְדְּךָ כִּי כְמוֹךָ כִּפְרַעְוֹה:

**Vayigash elav Yehudah vayomer bi adoni
yedaber-na avdecha davar b'oznei adoni
ve'al-yichar apcha b'avdecha ki chamocha keFar'oh.**

"**And** Judah **drew near** to him and said, 'Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh.'"

Haftarah – Ezekiel 37:1-5,10-15

(1-5) The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. And He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry. And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, Thou knowest.” Again He said to me, “Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.’ Thus says the Lord God to these bones, ‘Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life.

(10-15) So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life, and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’ “Therefore prophecy, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My People; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. “Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. “And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord, have spoken and done it,” declares the Lord.”

Psalm 122:1-7

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem that is built as a city that is compact together; to which the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord – and ordinance for Israel – to give thanks to the name of the Lord. For there thrones were set for judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you. May peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces.”

B’rit Chadashah – Matthew 25:1,2,4

Then the kingdom of Heaven will be comparable to ten virgins,
who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent....

The prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

Vayigash -- Genesis 44:18-47:27

Joseph can be thought of as a forerunner of Messiah in the sense that he was a righteous man, who resisted Satan's influences (the **yetzer hara**), endured physical suffering, and was used by God to provide physical salvation for God's people. In **Vayigash**, Joseph would reconcile with his brothers to prepare the way for his father, Jacob, to come to Egypt, preserve the Jewish people, and thus fulfill God's promise to Abraham to "...**make your descendants as the dust of the earth...**" (13:16), and preserve and prosper them in a foreign land (15:13-14).

Joseph understood the importance of repentance (**tshuvah**) before reconciliation could occur. About 22 years had passed since Joseph's brothers had last seen him, when

they stripped him of his coat, dropped him into a pit, and then sold him into slavery. Therefore, when they came into his presence in Egypt, they did not recognize him. Joseph was dressed like an Egyptian monarch, and immediately put his brothers on the defense by accusing them of being foreign spies. His purpose for not immediately disclosing himself to his brothers was to ascertain whether during the intervening years his brothers had repented of their jealousy and evil deeds, thereby allowing for reconciliation. He introduced a time of stress into their lives to see if their behavior had changed, so that reconciliation would be possible, but how would his brothers respond? The most loving thing Joseph could do for his brothers was to give them the opportunity to repent because only then would they be eligible for reconciliation. The same is true for us today. Only after true repentance before God, who knows our hearts, are we able to ask God for forgiveness based upon the sacrifice He has prescribed. When God is satisfied, He grants atonement. The question for us is whether we can grant "atonement" to those who may have wronged us. Our prayer for us might be: Lord, help me to let go of what needs to be given over to you and to forgive, as I've been forgiven.

However, we will see that reconciliation must be preceded by repentance, resulting in a change in behavior, not just simply saying "sorry." Joseph tested the behavior of his brothers to decide if they had truly repented from the action they took against him. He had put the brothers into a cistern-like prison - a pit - (42:21) to remind them of what they had done to him (37:24) and listened (in Hebrew) to their feelings of guilt because of their similar treatment of him, when they sat down to eat while hearing Joseph's crying in the pit. He bound Simeon in front of them and kept him in prison as surety that the brothers would return with their youngest brother, Benjamin, and gave the other brothers grain to take back to Jacob in Hebron. Would the brothers return for Simeon or consider him payment for their grain, just as the brothers had profited by selling Joseph? When they did return, bringing their brother Benjamin with them, Joseph devised a plan by which he could enslave Benjamin but allow the rest of the brothers to return home with grain. Would they return home without Benjamin being glad to be rid of another favorite son?

Vayigash, the Torah portion for this week begins with the reaction of Judah, who had taken the leadership role of first-born in the family, and therefore had become responsible to Jacob for the welfare of Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son of Rachel and most favored son. While Judah may have considered that the stress he and his brothers were going through was justified because of their treatment of Joseph, Judah knew that Benjamin had no part in the brothers' selling Joseph into slavery. Judah displays his repentance by his protective actions to keep Benjamin safe from slavery, risking everything to preserve the favored son of his mother's rival, Rachel.

"And (Judah) drew near" to "the Egyptian," (Joseph) to attempt to intercede for Benjamin. Judah told Joseph that because of the love of his father for Benjamin, Jacob would die if he lost Benjamin. Judah, on behalf of the brothers, offered to take Benjamin's place as Joseph's slave. (1) Joseph had heard the brothers' confession of guilt for putting him into the pit and selling him. (2) He saw that the brothers treated

Benjamin well, a change of behavior from the way they treated him (Joseph). (3) Then hearing Judah's offer to vicariously atone for the "sin" of Benjamin, Joseph was convinced of the repentance of his brothers. Joseph could no longer control his emotions. He revealed himself to them.



Ani Yosef. Ha'od avi chai

"I am Joseph! Is my father still alive"? (45:3)

Revelation -- Reconciliation

After Joseph's revelation of himself, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt," his brothers must have been dumbfounded and afraid for their lives. Joseph had total and absolute power over them. But Joseph's attitude toward his repentant brothers illustrated his total faith in the sovereignty of God! While a prisoner, Joseph's faith sustained him and kept him going, even though he could not have known why God allowed him to be sold into slavery and imprisoned on false charges. We have seen Joseph's stress illustrated by his passionate plea to the chief butler, "I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon" (**Gen. 40:15**). Only later could Joseph understand God's divine purpose for his years of kidnap, injustice, and separation from his family. "God sent me before you to preserve life...to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt" (45:5,7-8).

Having a "**God perspective**" rather than a **self-perspective** was the key to the **faith-rest life** of Joseph. Isn't it also true for us that we usually fixate on how circumstances effect us, rather than looking for God's perspective within the circumstances He has allowed? Even if we are incapable of knowing God's purposes at any given time, **wouldn't we be more at peace within ourselves, if we turned over our current "circumstances" in trust to God?** Perhaps this is what allowed the Maccabee clan to successfully fight against the mighty army of Antiochus and the Syrian persecution. **Faith and trust in God overcomes our fear and allows us to be at peace within the "storms of life!"**



Invitation to Egypt

Joseph instructed his brothers to return to their father and **tell Jacob that he was alive and, "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. And you shall live in the land of Goshen...."** "There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come..." "Tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt....and bring my father down here **(45:10,11,13)**. " Joseph kissed his brothers, wept with them, and talked with them. After many years of separation, **repentance made reconciliation possible!** Note the **necessary elements for forgiveness: confession** (acknowledging guilt); **repentance** (proven by a change of behavior); **atonement** (covering/removal of the sin, something God grants).

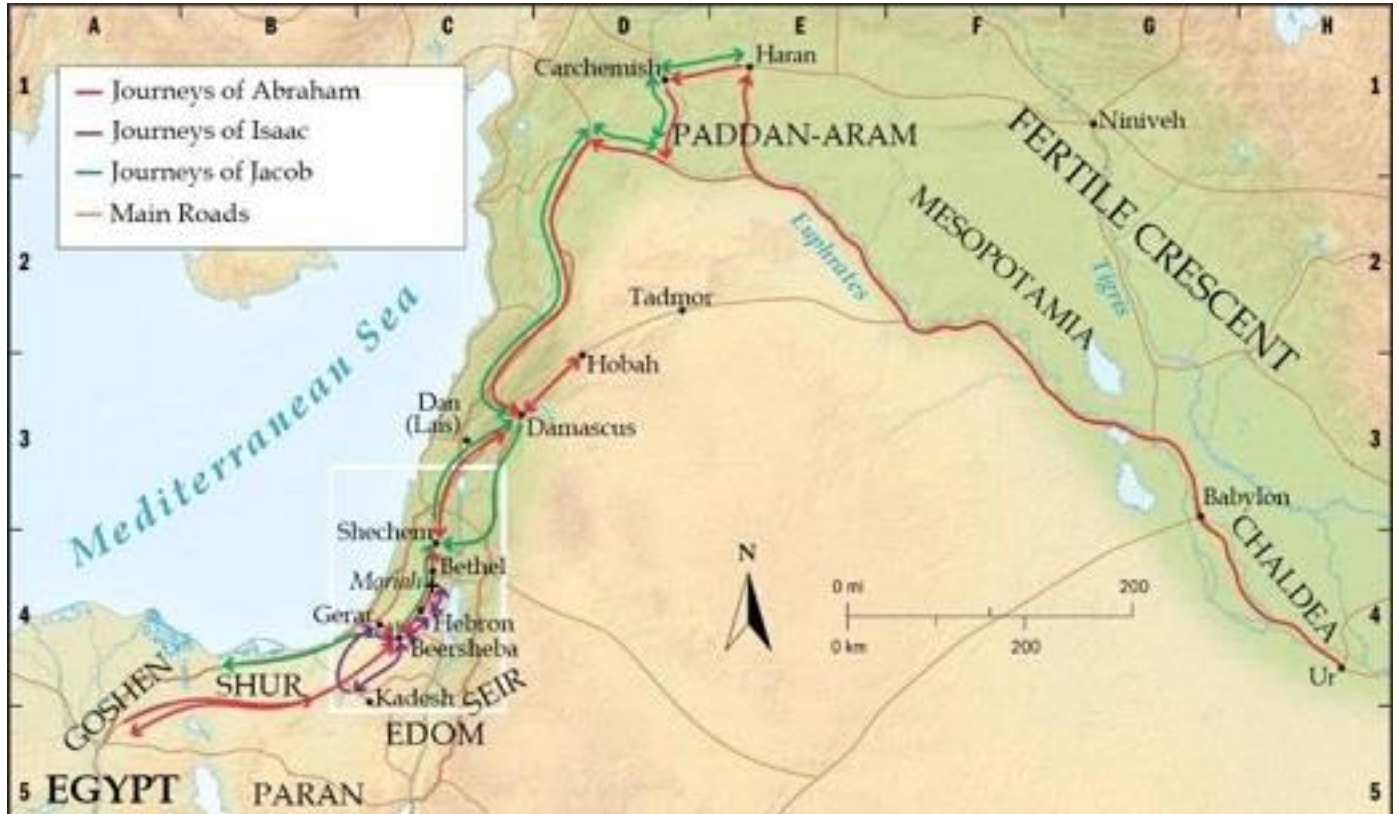


"He fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept..."

The commotion was heard in the house of Pharaoh, who was pleased that Joseph's brothers had come. Pharaoh authorized Joseph to provide wagons to transport Jacob and all his household to Egypt, saying that Pharaoh would give Jacob the best of the

land of Egypt. **[We, too, should not concern ourselves with "goods," for what God provides for us will always be what is for our best good at that time.]**

Joseph, who knew the proclivities of his father and brothers, gave them parting instructions. He told his brothers to tell his passive father to not delay. He told his brothers, whom he knew would have to tell Jacob that they had previously lied about Joseph's death, not to quarrel on the way back home.



Israel Journeys to Egypt

When Jacob heard that Joseph was still alive, he was stunned and did not believe his sons, until he saw the wagons Joseph sent to transport them. He said..."my son Joseph is still alive. I will go see him before I die."

On the way to Egypt, Jacob had the family stop at Beersheba, where God had previously told Isaac not to go into Egypt. Isaac had died just 10 years before Jacob left for Egypt. Surely Jacob wanted God's confirmation whether he should go to live in Egypt, even though his father, Isaac, had been told not to go to Egypt. Jacob had already made the decision to leave Hebron for Beersheba and therefore was already on his way to Egypt, unless God intervened. Stopping in Beersheba gave him the opportunity to hear God's call. God called to him, "Jacob, Jacob." Jacob's reply was the classic "**hineni**." (With open arms), "Here I am", Lord, whatever you want, I will do....I'm ready and willing!" This should always be our response too, as we read God's word and hear the still, small voice of the Ruach (Spirit) calling to us. And like Jacob, we already should have determined to be obedient to God and already should have taken action to make ourselves available to Him. Matthew 25 tells of the 5 prudent virgins, who had prepared themselves ahead of time to be ready to meet their bridegroom. The

lesson for us from Jacob is to prepare ourselves to be ready to hear God's call; ready and willing to do all He asks of us.



The Awesome Plot -- God's Plan for Protection & Prosperity

In the several previous Torah portions, I mentioned why I thought God had to take His people out of the "promised land" and into Egypt. The corruption of the dysfunctional family of Jacob by the Canaanites and their idolatrous and immoral practices had become the normal way of life for Jacob's family. Reuben the first-born, seduced his father's concubine, Bilhah, the mother of two of his brothers. Simeon, married a Canaanite woman (**46:10**). Judah also married a Canaanite woman, Shua (**38:2**), and had the habit of visiting pagan temple prostitutes, mistaking Tamar for one of the temple prostitutes. Hence the "awesome plot:" God's plan to take His people to Egypt, where He had prepared a special place for their protection and prosperity. Jacob received the invitation from Pharaoh and Joseph (**45:17-18**) and the command from God (**46:3-4**) to go to Egypt. He went into Egypt with his whole extended family, met his son, Joseph, and was escorted to live in Goshen, which was considered the best land in all of Egypt.



Jacob and five of his children met with Pharaoh and blessed him, as Pharaoh blessed the Jewish people (47:7).

Our Plans Within God's Direction

In previous Torah portions, we have discussed how many of us make our own plans, and then we ask God to bless our plans. **Vayigash** illustrates how much better it is to make our plans within God's direction. Joseph has come to the realization that his own misfortune was a part of God's plan for the preservation for his whole family. Knowing that separating his family within Egypt from Egyptian, pagan culture would be within God's plan for preserving his family both physically as well as

spiritually, Joseph decided on a wise plan (**Matt. 10:16** “be wise as serpents..”) which would remove his family from being influenced by the Egyptian culture, as they were influenced by Canaanite culture. Joseph instructed his brothers, “And it shall come about when Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’ that you shall say, ‘Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers’, that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is loathsome (**toeva** – an abomination) to the Egyptians” (**46:33-34**). Joseph knew that the Egyptians would not want to be in contact with his sheep-smelling family, hence the Jewish people would not be assimilated into Egyptian culture.

Jacob's family was given a permanent assignment of land and a permanent allotment of food in the district of Rameses, the best part of Goshen. They lived in a protected, fertile land by decree of Pharaoh, where they were fruitful and became a prosperous nation, able to worship God unadulterated by Canaanite or Egyptian, pagan influence. **God's awesome plot accomplished His purpose of fulfilling His promise to Abraham to make from him a great nation through which Messiah would one day bless both Jew and Gentile.**

For those of us in the "**galut**" (exile....living outside of Israel), it is interesting to note that Israel first became a nation of millions of people while in exile in Egypt. For those of us who are believers in Messiah, Yeshua, we know that this world is not our final home, either. We, too, are living in exile from our final abode with God. **Still, let us live in exile as God's people, apart from contamination with godless culture, obeying God's direction, and looking forward to our final return to Zion!!**

SHABBAT SHALOM



Am Yisrael Chai