



Parasha: VAYECHI/AND HE LIVED
 Torah Portion: GENESIS 47:28-50:26
 Tanak: 1 KINGS 2:1-12, EZEKIEL 37:15-28,
 ZECHARIAH 14:1-11
 Brit Hadasha: JOHN 16:25-33, LUKE 23:13-34

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THE LAST WORDS OF LAST WEEK'S PARASHA were concerning Israel dwelling in the land of Egypt. The first verse of this week's portion is about Yosef dwelling in the land of Egypt for seventeen years. As we consider these two captioned verses, a question arises as to why YHVH makes this contrast. Why not just start with Israel's descriptive dwellings in Egypt?

This information is noted at the end of a generation. Interestingly, it does not begin with Ya'akov's resettlement in the land of Egypt, although Ya'akov's life up to this point has realized an amazing fulfillment. This portion of Torah commences the closing stages of a patriarchal group of generations that have been able to uniquely communicate with YHVH. Few others within the pages of our Torah, Tanak and Brit Hadeshah will have this type of audience with YHVH as Abraham, Isaac and Ya'akov did. Our forerunners such as Moshe, David and the prophets are all those that we esteem to be generators of our faith and forbearers of the news about a coming Messiah. Only Messiah, Himself, was and is in perfect union with the Father.

However, the transitory of this generation is different. We are about to enter into a time-line where there is about four hundred years of unrecorded history and silence for the children of Israel. Eventually, many contemporaries of that era could have argued a point of dispensational ideals. Even today's modern contemporaries argue and teach dispensational theologies that follow an abstract linear timeline and at each point of historical transition becomes a new dispensation of YHVH's interaction with mankind, which is at variance to YHVH being "the same, yesterday, and forever" Who brings His plans and purposes full circle into the arena of mankind as declared in Torah.¹

Each generation is responsible for imparting the legacy to each new generation of people enabling them

to walk in faith and trust in YHVH. Even as we have witnessed through Abraham, Isaac and *Israel*/Ya'akov's lives, we, too, are to convey the real events of personal accounts and not fabricated revisions of historical circumstances. This upcoming generation will further conceive the next generations as they base their spirituality on the real life experiences and knowledge of those lives that have truly known the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and *Israel*/Ya'akov. For many, that will not be nearly good enough to cause them to live a lifestyle devoted to an Elohim they have not heard nor seen. Yet, for others, this foreknowledge will be the building blocks for faithfulness and their ultimate redemption.

Our plight is not that dissimilar to those yet to be enslaved in Egypt. Although, we have knowledge of YHVH and, His Son, Yeshua, there are many around us who deny the reality of redemption or eternal life. Others within the faith deny the power of YHVH and the gift of His Spirit who writes the Torah on the walls of our hearts. The dispensationalists will cry out that the power of Messiah's day was for that time and we must be content with our present day knowledge and use that wisely to bring others to salvation.²

The truth concerning our circumstances is likened to our forefathers after the death of their Father, Ya'akov. We must have faith to comprehend that Yeshua has paid the ransom for the captivity of our sins and that the chains of slavery to sin are broken! Our strength is actualized in Yeshua and our faith is what sets that strength into action. It begins with faith in Yeshua, grows through prayer, becomes belief/assurance and realized in the power to overcome the evil one. "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."³ And through His Word "He made Him who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of Elohim in Him."⁴

¹Isaiah 46:10, Hebrews 13:8

²Timothy 3:5

³Matthew 6:33

⁴1 Corinthians 5:21

Shavu Halacha/Weekly Walking:

While we do not always understand the meaning of every word spoken to us by other people, for the most part, we try to assume they mean well or are trying to convey sentiment that is meaningful to them. This is not always the case, as when we deal with less scrupulous individuals or are guarding ourselves from the world's influences. Yet, when it comes from our immediate family members, we try to take reproof and rebukes with the wisdom that maybe YHVH is using them to speak to us. Our children, our parents, our closest friends and, even, our spouses can say things that can be very hurtful and humiliating. Through all of the hard words and upsets, these closest of relationships are kept in tact and known to be covenantal. They will not be severed, but they can be taken for granted or misunderstood.

If we know that someone close has our interests at heart, we must trust that the hurtful words are to be used for our maturity and not for the isolation or pain they immediately inflict if being used to bring about correction or a rebuke. Even as Ya'akov speaks blessings over several of his sons, he speaks very judgmental words and convicting discouragement that could cause paralyzing effects instead of a resolve to holiness. YHVH speaks hard words to us when we need to correct and amend our lifestyles and way of thinking. We must hear the words of others, not as mere critiques and judgment, but as blessings to walk out the commandments of YHVH and the lifestyle of Yeshua.

Day 1

- PARASHA:
GEN. 47:28-48:14
- TORAH STUDY
- PRAYER LEAVES

1. In the last verse of our last week's parasha, Torah describes the collective family of Yosef as Israel. In contrast to verse 47:28 the Torah refers to the personage of Israel as Ya'akov. As the end of his life becomes imminent his name, Ya'akov, will no longer be differentiated with the name, Israel, which YHVH had named him. Now as a fledging nation, Ya'akov's children are collectively referred to as Israel. When viewing a group of people, one can see the group as a whole, and then subsets which make up the group, plus splinter groups that rebel from the cluster, and moreover remnants that are called out from the group. Discuss the meaning of the name Israel in contrast to the name Ya'akov when referencing the peoples instead of the patriarch.

2. If we can now distinguish Israel as a small clan of relatives, then we can comprehend Ya'akov's sons gathered together to witness a pledge taken by Yosef not to bury his father in Egypt. In this light, who is bowing at the head of the bed?

Moreover, as Israel bows at the head of the bed, we see some symbolism being fostered. Namely, Ya'akov has many characteristics that are related to and by the Ruach haKodesh. The Ruach dwells with us and in us, just as He dwelt with and in the Ark of the covenant. Compare these two ideas with each other.

3. As Ya'akov makes Yosef swear that he will not be buried in Egypt, but in the burial place of his father's, it is important to note why. Discuss the reasons why Ya'akov would not want to be buried in Egypt and the reasons why he would want to be buried in the field of Machpelah before Mamre.

4. Upon death Torah states the age of the patriarch when they died up to this point. At this juncture, however, Torah confirms Ya'akov's age prior to death. Why would Ya'akov's age be distinguished differently prior to his death? Who else in Torah do we see being prepared for his death and having time to give similar accounts in the rest of his life?

5. As Ya'akov names guardianship of Yosef's two oldest sons, he takes them as his own sons, even as Reuben and Simeon. All the other offspring of Yosef will be called by their brothers' names in their inheritance. Going back to Yosef's varicolored tunic, we saw an illustration of the *nations* being worn by Yosef. We, also, saw through the series of events his tunic dipped in goat's blood which was presented to Ya'akov as evidence for his disappearance. Relate Ya'akov's adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh with the varicolored tunic that he made for Yosef.

6. When Ya'akov adopts Ephraim and Manasseh, he specifically cites Reuben and Simeon as sons to whom Yosef's are now likened. What is the significance to Ya'akov referring to Reuben and Simeon as he adopts Yosef's sons into his personage?

7. In verse 48:10, there is a repetition of a patriarch with eyes being dim. Ya'akov's father, Isaac, also had dimming eyes and had to feel Ya'akov's garment to determine if he was Esau or Ya'akov. Rivkah helped Ya'akov create this scheme for the firstborn blessing. Now, Yosef is physically bringing his two sons before Ya'akov for a blessing. Yosef seems to be relinquishing his firstborn blessing to his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Relate the significance and meaning of this event as contrasted to Ya'akov's deception to Isaac.

8. While it is virtuous to think that Yosef brings his sons to see their grandfather prior to his death, we clearly see that Yosef had a predetermined plan to present his sons for the blessing. By placing his sons in the order of birth facing Ya'akov, there is no guess work as to which one would or should receive the firstborn blessing. Yet, even with blurred vision, Ya'akov uses his own method of blessing the selected first born by crossing his hands. Ya'akov's right hand is revealed as the hand of blessing. Discuss the relevance in Ya'akov crossing his hands. Also, what is the significance of the right hand over the left?

***Sandals
Worshipping in Spirit***

As we present our gifts and offerings to YHVH, we usually place them in the order of importance that we devise or believe to be proper. Yet, our reckoning of what is valuable is not always the same value that YHVH places upon our actions and our gifts.

It should not surprise us when YHVH takes a specific aspect of our lives that pleases Him and blesses us, whereas, we often times attribute much lesser value to those areas of our life. YHVH is looking for those things in our lives that are completely yielded to Him. Many times, the objects and actions that we hold dearest to us are the very thing that are being used to ensnare us and directs our attention from YHVH.

We must observe closely where YHVH places His right hand of blessing onto our lives. In this we will readily see what is pleasing to Him and what must be yielded more specifically to His will.

Day 2

- PARASHA:
GEN. 48:15-22
- TORAH STUDY
- PRAYER LEAVES

Midrash Point:

As seen in Torah, Messiah has been revealed in many ways through the patriarchs as our destiny, as well as, our forefather's fate who walked in Torah.

While we know that it was expedient for Messiah to come, die and then live again for our sake, we should also ask why man historically cannot see Messiah as the Messenger and redeemer as He indeed is and was prior to His time on earth in the flesh.

1. The personal revelation of the covenant from YHVH is no longer given by YHVH, but is passed down as part of blessing. Verse 15-16 relates who Elohim is and translates the covenantal blessing to Yosef's sons. What does this tell us about blessing our children and others, coupled with how we are to receive YHVH's covenants and hear His Words?

2. We are shown an attribute of YHVH that has become a stumbling block for Israel. Within Ya'akov's blessing to Yosef's sons, he recognizes *Elohim* and *the angel* which redeemed him from all evil. The Hebrew word used here for angel is *mal'ak* meaning messenger or representative. Obviously, we see this aspect of YHVH later to be revealed as Messiah; yet, this brings the gospel full circle as Yeshua states that Abraham saw the day of Messiah and was glad.¹ Up until this point in Torah, we have seen the messenger of YHVH coming and speaking to Abraham and interacting with others. Now, we have acknowledgement of that messenger portraying a redeemer character. Discuss the type of relationship our patriarchs had with Messiah in contrast to our relationship with Him.

3. Yosef is a very powerful figure in Egypt. He did not gain the respect of Pharaoh as a father figure without extraordinary wisdom. However, Yosef's wisdom seems to pale in comparison to Ya'akov's wisdom as he crosses his arms to pronounce the blessings upon Ephraim and Manasseh. How do you attribute Ya'akov's wisdom as being prophetic and pre-revealed Torah in contrast to the wisdom of Yosef's.

4. As the blessing given to Ephraim pre-empts the firstborn blessing from Manasseh, he essentially obtains the birthright; he is also blessed with the promise of future descendants that will become a multitude of nations. What does this mean in relationship to Yosef's varicolored tunic made by Ya'acov and the Covenant YHVH made to Abraham Who stated through his seed *all the nations of the earth* would be blessed?

¹John 8:56

5. Yosef tries to forcefully correct his Father's mistake of hand placement. Many times, we are guilty of mistakenly laying claim, placing fault or proclaiming a blessing when we should not. Only YHVH is able to give wisdom as to the acceptable protocol resulting in the desired outcome. In every situation, no matter how commonplace the answer may seem, we must consult YHVH as to what direction to take or what should be said. Discuss the ways in which YHVH has changed birth orders in Torah, the reasons why and how it seems to be out of order by our standards, but righteous by His standard.

6. In Ya'akov's blessing upon Ephraim and Manasseh, he says that "By you Israel will pronounce a blessing, saying, 'May Elohim make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" For what reasons would this be considered a blessing then and what further reasons would this be a blessing now for Israel to use as a blessing?

7. In verse 21, Israel, not Ya'akov, states to Yosef, that he is about to die, but Elohim will be with Yosef and bring him back to the land of his fathers. Seeing that Torah states that Israel says this, what is the prophetic understanding of this passage?

8. What and when is Israel talking about when he discusses what he took from the Amorite with his sword and bow? Moreover, how much did he take from the Amorite so that this extra portion is given to Yosef? (Look at a map of the tribe's locations in the land.)

Day 3

PARASHA:
GEN. 49:1-18

TORAH STUDY

PRAYER LEAVES

1. The language used in the first verse alludes to the end of days. Many aspects about the blessings of the twelve tribes have been fulfilled; however, several are yet to be fulfilled as we approach the final days. As a part of Israel, we must be prepared for our impartation that belongs within the blessings of the twelve. As believers in Messiah, how do you see yourself facing the end of time as within one of the twelve tribes of Israel?

2. When Ya'akov speaks about Reuben, we see an aspect of Reuben that was to be used for YHVH's glory and, also, seen as quality character traits that he embodies. However, as the oracle continues, Ya'akov describes what went wrong and how Reuben has misused his gifts. In what ways do you see this as a preamble to the great day of judgment when YHVH lays us bear for all to see.

3. While both Simeon and Levi are spoken of simultaneously and both are given the same sanctions of swords and understanding of their anger and self-will, there is a difference to be understood. It could be understood that Simeon is dispersed within modern-day Judah, as well as, Levi and Benjamin. More importantly, we do lose the identity of who Simeon is within the nation of Israel, yet Levi's identity is retained. By means of Ya'akov's words, describe what their swords are and which one ultimately uses this correctly, and by the process of elimination, we will see who fails to use his sword wisely bears immediate reproach.

Furthermore, if Simeon bears his Father's reproof more immediately than Levi, how does Levi bear his "end of day" judgment from Ya'akov?

5. In Ya'akov's words concerning Judah are embedded many foreshadows of our Messiah, in the pre-incarnate, incarnate and reigning aspects of Him. Discuss how you see these within the following exhortations:

Lion's Whelp: _____

Lion: _____

Scepter: _____

Ruler's Staff: _____

Shiloh: _____

Foal/Donkey's Colt: _____

Vine: _____

Garments: _____

Wine: _____

Blood of Grapes: _____

Teeth White from Milk: _____

6. Zebulun will dwell at the seashore and be a haven for ships. Yet, when the tribes go in to possess the land, Zebulun's lot falls short of being on the Great Sea. Later, in the Tanak as seen in the Ezekiel 28:20-26 prophecy spoken against Sidon. What can be understood as the relationship between these two passages concerning the end of days?

7. Issachar is likened to a strong donkey, eventually becoming a slave. To what people could this relate; and, is there a continuation of this enslavement until the end comes?

8. As Dan is seen with the tribes that will judge his people, he is also seen as a serpent in the way and a horned snake in the path. He will bite the horse's heels, so that the rider falls backward. This verbiage is very reminiscent of the curse of the serpent in the garden. We see in the Revelation that as 12,000 are sealed from each tribe, that Dan is not accounted for in this remnant. What, if anything, do these two passages have to do with each other?

9. How could it be possible that the tribe of Dan represents a group of people who will be used as a tool by haSatan to cause other people to fall away or detour from YHVH? Moreover, why does Ya'akov say that Dan will judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel?

Midrash Point:

When Ya'akov finishes blessing Dan, he says, "For Your salvation I wait, O YHVH." Is this to be interpreted as part of Dan's blessing, or a final intercession/prayer made by Ya'akov?

Discuss the reasoning for each answer or how both answers can be correct.

Day 4

PARASHA:
GEN. 49:19-33

TORAH STUDY

PRAYER LEAVES

1. Gad's words for the end of days is a bit grim with the raiders raiding him and Gad raiding at their heels. One would wonder if Gad will ever be the head and not the tail. Discuss how this could be interpreted for Gad's benefit verses a bleak portrait of future events.

2. Ya'akov's disclosure about Asher is much more favorable. What should be seen as the food and as royal dainties? Moreover, how does this denote the character of Asher?

3. As Ya'akov describes Yosef, he says that his branches run over a wall. In Torah, we are told differences between walled cities and cities without walls. While some walls keep the inhabitants within the walls guarded and it also disengages the properties within that city to be eligible for inheritance within normal tribe allotted territories.¹ Explain how the abundant branches of Yosef overflowing the walls can be seen as stifling the Vine and inhibits Yosef's future generation's true inheritance?

4 Discuss the Messianic implications concerning Yosef within the following:

Fruitful Bough:

Spring:

Branches:

Archers:

Harassment:

Bow:

Arms:

5. While Judah is seen as the bearer of the Promised Seed found in Messiah, Yosef's blessings seems to issue him as the benefactor of the Promised seed. Discuss the blessing placed upon Yosef by Ya'akov in the verses 25-26. Why is Yosef given this blessing in contrast to his brothers who do not receive a blessing of this degree?

¹Vayikra 25:29-31

Additionally, is it plausible that Yosef's blessing has the potency to reach all of the other brothers' descendants throughout the ages and on into the end of days?

6. In Ya'akov's last statement to Yosef, he speaks of the blessings being upon the crown of Yosef's head and his being distinguished among his brothers. In what way could you see this taking place at the end of time and how would it be revealed? As you answer this question keep in mind the dream that Yosef had prior to his captivity in Egypt.

7. Benjamin is called a ravenous wolf, devouring the prey in the morning and dividing the spoil in the evening. Discuss this description of Benjamin in the time values of the beginning of Israel as a nation to the end of days.

8. While these words spoken by Ya'akov are likened to oracles of future events in the end of days, they are also referred to as blessings in verse 28. How do you see these as blessings for the tribes of Israel, especially those spoken to Reuben, Gad and Benjamin?

The words spoken by Ya'akov are also seen to be a charge or command according to verse 33. How could these words be seen as commands for the twelve sons?

9. In verse 33, Torah tells us that after charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed. Why would this be an important detail to document for future understanding?

**Sandals
Worshipping in Spirit**

The words that YHVH speaks forth through His servants have many relevancies. As we read His Word through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, Adonai meets us where we are with the level of understanding which we are able to grasp at the moment. We should be able to understand a level of what He speaks to us about almost immediately; however, there is divine significance to His words that will continue to speak to us in multifaceted ways throughout our lives as well as to our future seed.²

It is likened to Torah, where we have a surface meaning that cannot be diminished over time, yet there is also a spiritual understanding that must be applied. This is done over time and is applied over and over again. Each time the application process is repeated, more and more fulfillment, relevance and wisdom is brought forth. The Word has not changed; it is our hearts that have changed. This is the Spirit of the Law being applied to us. As we worship Him in Spirit and in Truth we are walking out the revelation of His Word in us.

YHVH's Word is forever. "The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our Elohim stands forever."³ It is our hearts and minds which must change with the revelation of His living Word.

²Isaiah 28: 9-10
³Isaiah 40:7

Day 5

PARASHA:
GEN. 50:1-14

TORAH STUDY

PRAYER LEAVES

1. We understand from Torah that touching the dead is rendering oneself unclean. Yet, in this passage of Torah, Yosef falls on his deceased father's face, weeps and kissed him. How is this reconciled in terms of mourning practices versus Torah principles?

2. When the word embalm is used, we tend to immediately think of the Egyptian embalming techniques. The Egyptian technique of embalming took about 70 days. Torah tells us that the process required 40 days and the Egyptians wept for Israel for 70 days. This would account for the time it would take for the Egyptian embalming practice to be completed with the 40 day curing time of the resin placed inside the head. Understanding the practice is to know that the internal organs were removed and placed into canopic jars, along with the brain. This brings us to the questions at hand. Why would Yosef want his YHVH fearing father to undergo an Egyptian religious custom?

How does this relate to the use of modern day embalming and the use of cremation as a burial process and are these practices to be used by Covenant keepers?

3. Verse 2 tells us that the physicians embalmed Israel i.e. Ya'akov. However, there are broader implications here that are alluded to by Torah in the embalming of Israel. This is the beginning of the captivity of the children of Israel. What aspects and implications could be derived from the embalming of Israel?

4. As a father to Pharaoh, Yosef now goes to the household of Pharaoh to ask them to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf. In what ways does this show a diminishment of power that Yosef once held in Egypt and why would his power be diminished?

5. Upon leaving Egypt, a processional can be seen with the household of Israel, minus the children and flocks. The multitude in processional includes the servants and elders of Pharaoh, his household and of the land of Egypt, as well. What and how does this foreshadow the events that will follow some 400 years later?

6. In verses 7-8, we are given precedence for the way Pharaoh responds to Moshe when requesting to go and worship in the wilderness. From both respects, how do you see the Pharaoh establishing control over the sons of Israel?

7. Ya'akov is being carried out of Egypt through the wilderness, and up to the Jordan, very much like the children of Israel during the Exodus. A major difference is the route. Obviously, this mourning processional did not have the Red Sea parted, armies of Pharaoh destroyed or the encounter with YHVH at Mt. Sinai. However, this event could be taken as a preliminary trailblazing for the future generations to look back to for hope and supplication before YHVH. Discuss how you see this as intercession in action and how we can intercede for others by our actions in daily walking out Torah and loving Yeshua.

8. Upon arriving at the threshing floor of Atad, the people mourned for seven days before crossing the Jordan and burying Ya'akov. Compare this scenario to that of Joshua 5:1-10.

9. As Yosef and his brothers return to Egypt, there had to be a kind of longing for where they had just buried Ya'akov and their homeland. Why would they have so easily agreed to just come back to reside in Egypt in contrast to using this opportunity to go back to the land of Canaan. Also, compare this to the yearning of the children of Israel in the wilderness grumbling to return to Egypt.

Midrash Point:

When YHVH redeems us from our sin and we walk in forgiveness, we are still confronted with our weaknesses and have to walk out temptation. This is similar to the sons of Israel returning to the land of Egypt after the burial of Ya'akov. They had to face a land without a patriarch and to uphold his standards of covenant and obedience to YHVH.

How do we live in a foreign land that looks like us and talks like us, but is far from our standards, without being conformed to them and being sucked into the bad habits and morals that we are constantly being bombarded with?

Day 6

- PARASHA:
GEN. 50:15-26
- TORAH STUDY
- PRAYER LEAVES

1. Yosef is seen as an ambassador representing both Pharaoh and his father throughout his life. While it is true that he must carry out the decrees of Pharaoh, he is second in command and is seen as the authority figure for Egypt. In addition, Yosef represents Ya'akov and the faith he has in YHVH. Yosef carries this faith into Egypt and acts as the mouth piece of Elohim while in power there. Yosef does not compromise nor does he falter in his beliefs. However, now that Ya'akov is gone, his brothers are, once again, fearful for their fate under the rule of Yosef. How do you see Yosef's brothers representing us in our faith placed in YHVH and His dealings with us?

2. As Yosef weeps upon hearing his brothers' words, we should see Yeshua weeping for Jerusalem and His people. Describe these emotions and what they mean as Yosef portrays our Messiah and our Creator in his actions.

3. In our walks, we have many turns and tumbles that feel, not only awkward and humiliating, but seriously hurt us. We know that being thrown into a pit and into Pharaoh's jail could not be comfortable for Yosef; likewise, his launch into servitude was humiliating in contrast to his position before his own father. In all of this Yosef does not seek revenge or retaliation. He wants to care and provide for his brothers and their households. What can we learn from this as we circumnavigate life's obstacles and battles, all while knowing that YHVH is in total control?

4. In what ways do you hear Abba's voice consoling and comforting you, and what actions do you see Him taking to do the same?

5. Instead of YHVH speaking to the sons of Israel concerning the Covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Ya'akov, we now see a new trend begin. Yosef is the one that assembles his brothers and declares the Covenant to be remembered and Who it was made by and to whom it was established. Considering this progressive transition of interactions and declaration, how should we respond to the words spoken by the patriarchs of our faith in contrast to having conversations with YHVH as Abraham, Isaac and Ya'akov experienced?

Does YHVH speak to us today and how is His voice heard? Does He repeat the Covenant and the promises to us in the same ways in which He disclosed them previously?

6. Yosef makes the sons of Israel swear, saying, "Elohim will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here." While this is taken to be an oath to carry the bones of Yosef up out of Egypt, there is more here to take into consideration. Yosef made the sons of Israel swear that Elohim would surely take care of them. One has to ask the question of how this was said. Was it likened to a prayer, or as a statement of faith and resolve, said in the presence of each other? The latter is a reminder to what *will* take place; whereas, the first is a questionable outcome for hope to reside within. What is your thinking about this oath? What other places in Torah can you find that have similar oath combinations with prayer and statements?

7. The coffin that verse 50 speaks of is translated from the Hebrew word *'aron* meaning chest or ark. This is reflected from the root word meaning to collect or gather. Thus, the understanding of the word *'aron* is to gather or collect into a chest and is similar to the Ark of the Covenant. The same Hebrew word is used many times to specifically name the Ark of the Covenant. How do you see Yosef's body being placed within this chest as being a reflection of the Ark of the Covenant?

Shabbat

PARASHA:

GEN. 47:28-50:26

RESTORATORY—
MIDRASH

PRAYER LEAVES

Our forefathers walked out the building blocks of our faith. Yet, they did not invoke some type of mysterious religion or belief system out of thin air. In retrospection, we realize that Abraham was chosen by YHVH to embark upon a walk of faith. While we can gain knowledge from those going all the way back to Adam and Eve, it is the footsteps of faith that have paved a road in the wilderness for us. Each generation, not only gained insight about YHVH and their spirituality from previous generations, but were also spoken to by YHVH to form a cohesive and comprehensive lifestyle for the faithful to be careful to fulfill. This sequence is called progressive revelation.

The succession of progressive revelation is not a new concept. In the past, it may have not been referred to as “progressive revelation” but the idea remains the same. We apply the same idea of learning from our past ancestral experiences, whose lessons of their lives have shaped our own life. As each generation progresses, hopefully, they are benefited by the previous generation.

Yet, even if we do learn from our past and carry on the legacy of our mortal forefathers, that will not always guarantee that we will know who we are or where we really came from, nor do we endlessly gain progressive revelation from our ancestors’ past experiences. This brings us to a poignant question at hand. Do you ever wonder who you actually are and where you truly came from? It’s as if the DNA inside of us remembers, but our spirits are suffering from spiritual amnesia. We want to remember but we can not. Currently, there is an eagerness of the populace to find their identity via ancestry dot com venues from the internet or from endless genealogical lists in attics around the world. But you and I need not search any further than the pages of the written word recorded in Torah. Our true heritage lies within the ancient scrolls of our rightful forefathers. These Patriarchs of our faith paved a path for us to walk and to emulate. As you begin to turn the pages of the upcoming Torah portions, you are hereby earnestly counseled to please remember these Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Israel/Ya’akov, and the lessons they taught us these last several weeks of study. Hidden within their lives are revealed truths of the identity of YHVH and ourselves. Actually, it is bittersweet to say farewell to these Patriarchs of our faith as we move on to our next parashot, because here within lays the initial revelations of whom He is and who we are in Him.

Nevertheless, before we truly discover who we are we must discover the true identity of YHVH. Torah begins this trek with Creation. Elohim by His own free will and by His absolute power called the whole universe into being; evoking into existence what was previously nonexistent.¹ Everything was well designed by this Supreme Intellect and continues on the basis of His purpose, not chance. YHVH controls the cosmos and truly cares about the centerpiece of His creation--mankind. Although the human race departed from YHVH’s ordered plan for them and must pay the consequences, YHVH has lovingly provided a way back home to paradise as we observe the steps of those who first began the journey before us. We also perceive that YHVH is the Supreme Being of Integrity. In other words, He says what He means, and means what He says. He loathes wickedness and wiped it off the face of the earth with the great deluge. He preserved uprightness with mankind through selected individuals whom He knew would preserve the righteous Seed of the woman as defined in Genesis 3:15. He is an awe-inspiring Covenant Keeping Being. He established covenant with Abraham and his descendants as an everlasting covenant.² The Seed of Promise was passed from Noah to Shem to Abraham and Sarah to Isaac and Rebecca to Ya’akov and Leah. Yet, YHVH loves an immense family and He places His royal seal of blessings upon Yosef and his two sons, as well as, the rest of his brothers begotten through Israel/Ya’akov. This is a thumbnail sketch of our YHVH as seen in B’resheet/Genesis and merely scratches the surface of His all encompassing identity.

As we keep in mind the awe-inspiring character of our Elohim, whom we love and adore, this brings us to the next question about who we are in the grand scheme of things. Remember throughout the Torah, the first five books of Scripture, begins our journey of discovering who we are. First of all, we do not exist because of us, but we exist because of His divine plan. We are the progenitors of the direct line of the seed of the woman, if indeed we have the seed, Messiah, abiding in our hearts. Thus, history, or more aptly stated His-Story, continues within us. Our eternal life truly begins at the conception of knowing Who He is. Yet, throughout the annals of time the lines (boundaries) became blurred and we wandered away from our true spiritual roots. Throughout the passages of Scripture we

¹B’resheet 1:1, Psalm 33:6, 9, & John 1:3

²B’resheet 17:4-14

are characterized as sheep that have gone astray.³ Yet Yeshua came to seek out “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”⁴

As we live in a world in search of meaning and true identity, we too, can tend to feel lost and misplaced. Yet as we are challenged to turn the curve just ahead, leaving the past behind, and pressing into our future; we realize that our true heritage and identity are within reach.⁵ Could that yearning and longing within you be to receive the blessing of Israel? Was this Yeshua’s purpose and plan when He said He came to seek and save the lost sheep of the House of Israel? We know that the tribe of Judah along with his counterparts, Levi and Benjamin, are still intact and are found throughout history. However, there were other sheep that were lost and He came to find them.

But have you ever considered what happened to the remaining tribes? Actually, they were mostly assimilated into the nations. They were lost, scattered, torn, maimed and placed into captivity of this world and are now unknowingly exiles in foreign lands. Yet, we who are being wooed and drawn back to the Hebraic roots of our faith by the Ruach of YHVH are rediscovering who we are. Our true yearning is to be grafted into our true family tree—Israel.⁶ Interestingly, all the tribes will return according to Scripture as seen in Ps. 122:4 James 1:1, John 7:35 and Rev. 7:4-8.

YHVH is a cyclical Entity who brings all things full circle. In the beginning He said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.” Have you ever pondered what happens to the moon when it disappears into the night sky and re-emerges as a sliver of light? Of course, the earth is obscuring the reflection of the moon’s surface. The moon is cyclical. It appears and disappears every month. The moon and the sun provide us seasons as promised by YHVH. We are living on this earth for only a brief season of time. The season at hand is for YHVH to re-gather the outcasts of Israel. A sliver of YHVH’s light can be seen.

The veil is being removed. At this hour He is seeking the wayward, the maimed—the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

YHVH promised that Abraham and his descendants would be likened to “the stars of the heavens and the sand of the seashore.”⁷ Our roots go deep and wide and they span the heavenlies like the stars and they lay abroad the seashores like

sand. This Abrahamic Covenant is perpetuated like a giant old wooden water wheel going around and around grinding wheat berries for bread. The rushing water is moving into each rung of the wheel as empowered by the Ruach Ha Kodesh and is passed on from one generation to the next. We are in transition, beloved, and the restoration of YHVH’s people has begun as progressive revelation is being imparted into our hearts.

In the book of Malachi we are told that “before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Adonai, He would send us Elijah the prophet. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts to the children to their fathers, lest He come and smite the land with a curse.” Then 400 years later a wild man came out of obscurity and began to proclaim “Repent, for the Kingdom of YHVH is at hand.” Now as we survey the face of the earth there is an arising of a remnant of believers in Yeshua who are turning back to the true Patriarchs of their faith. They are repenting from the religious hypocrisies of the church system, just like they did in the days of Yochanan the Immerser. Yeshua is gathering His wayward sheep who formerly have been known as the outcasts of Israel.⁸ He is responding to the hearts of those sheep at this hour that are sending out a distress call, a bleating signal for help. Be encouraged, for He has heard the groaning and the mourning of our lost estate in this generation as we sojourn in this lost and dying world. Since the days of Yochanan the Immerser until now the Kingdom of YHVH has been constricted; and the forceful plunder it!⁹ In other words, the sheep have become restless and the Shepherd is breaking down the wall of partition that has kept us from truly entering into the Kingdom of YHVH. The Days of Elijah are upon us!

Everything is illuminated in the light of the past. The teachings and instructions of YHVH is His Word and is our Light. His Light will guide you as you seek your true identity which lays within the leaves of the Scroll as likened to the tree of Life. It is time to be spiritual archeologists and dig up our past, present and future in the Word. Are you up to the challenge? The Patriarchs of our faith anticipated the personal illumination of your true identity that is found in the pages of His-story. May blessings overtake you as you discover your true identity and follow the Hebraic footprints of Yeshua.

³Isaiah 53:6

⁴Jer. 50:4, Matt. 15:24, & John 11:52

⁵Devarim 30, Rom. 10

⁶Rom. 11

⁷B’reisheet 22:17

⁸Micah 4:5-8, Psalm 147:1-3, & Devarim 30:3-5

⁹Matt. 11:16

