

PARASHAT VAYIGASH

ויגש

Genesis 44:18-47:27

by
Ya'acov Natan Lawrence
& his kids

Note to the adult teacher: It will be necessary for you to give the scriptural context and background for each of the points listed below.

Great Discoveries in This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 44:18 Judah Approaches Joseph
- 45:1 Joseph Identifies Himself and Reconciles With His Brothers
- 45:18 Pharaoh Joins in Welcoming the Brothers
- 45:21 Joseph Sends His Brothers Back to Canaan Laden With Gifts
- 45:25 Jacob Receives the Good News About Joseph
- 46:1 Jacob and His Family Move to Egypt
- 46:27 Seventy Members of Jacob's Family Live in Egypt
- 46:29 Jacob Arrives In Egypt
- 46:31 Joseph Settles His Family in Goshen
- 47:7 Jacob and Pharaoh Meet
- 47:13 The Famine Rages On

Exploring This Week's Parashah:

1 Exploring How the Stories of the Bible Repeat Themselves

Genesis 44:18-47:27 is called Parashat (meaning "Torah portion") Vayigash (meaning "he approached") because it tells the story of how, after being separated for many years, Joseph and his brothers were brought back together. While apart, Joseph didn't know if his brothers were still alive, and the brothers didn't know if Joseph was still alive. When his brothers first saw Joseph as the ruler of Egypt, they didn't recognize him. When Joseph told them who he was, the brothers experienced a wonderful family reunion full of tears of joy.

For thousands of years, the Jewish Bible scholars have believed that many of the stories in the Torah would in a certain sense repeat themselves in the end times. They believed that what happened to YHVH's people in ancient times would actually happen again in the future. It is called history repeating itself. Like a wheel that turns around and around, some things

happen again, and sometimes even again and again. For example, how many times do we recall in the Bible the people of Israel serving YHVH for awhile, then falling away from him? They would turn to pagan gods, the Pagan nations around them would attack them, and sometimes Israel would become captives and slaves to their enemies. Israel would then cry out to YHVH, repent of their sins, and he would deliver them from the hands of their enemies.



Ephraim

In ancient times, the Jewish religious teachers divided the Torah into weekly portions called a Parashah. Then they took the first several words of each Torah portion and that become the title for each week's Torah reading. Well, some time after that, the Jewish sages (or wise men) found some Scripture passages in the Prophets section of the Bible that reminded them of each week's Torah portion, and they added it to the weekly Torah reading. The portion from the prophets they named the Haftorah, which means "conclusion or concluding portion."

This week's Haftorah is from Ezekiel 37:15-28. The Jewish leaders chose Ezekiel 37:15-28 because it reminded them of when Joseph and his brothers were reunited in Egypt. Ezekiel's prophecy is about a future family reunion that is to happen at the second coming of Yeshua.

You see, Israel used to be one nation divided into 12 tribes. This is kind of like the United States, which is 50 separate states that together make one nation. But sadly, in the time of King Rehoboam, the son of King Solomon, the ten tribes of Israel in the north who were led by the tribe of Ephraim had a disagreement and broke away from the tribes in the south led by the tribe of Judah. The northern tribes become a separate nation. Sometimes these nations were friends, but often they were enemies and sometimes even fought against each other.






Judah

Eventually, the northern kingdom—called Ephraim or the house of Israel—fell into such sin and idolatry that YHVH allowed a pagan nation (Assyria) to defeat them and take them into captivity. The same thing happened later to the Southern Kingdom called the house of Judah, except Judah was taken captive to a different pagan nation (Babylon).

These two nations never had anything to do with each other again. And for about 2700 years they have been separated. Like Joseph and his brothers, they didn't even know where each other was or if they were still alive.


Ezekiel was a prophet, who under the inspiration of YHVH, predicted what would happen to the two nations of Israel in the end times just before the coming of the Messiah. Let's explore Ezekiel's prophecy to see what is about to happen in the near future to the people of YHVH.


2 Exploring Ezekiel's Prophecy of the Two Sticks


-  (a) What did YHVH ask the prophet Ezekiel to do? (Read Ezekiel 37:15 and 16.)
-  (b) Who do the two sticks represent? (Read Ezekiel 37:16 and 19.)
-  (c) What did YHVH ask the prophet to do with the two separate sticks? (Read verse 17.)

Now when Ezekiel wrote this prophecy, Ephraim and Judah were two separate nations. In


fact, the people of the northern kingdom of Israel (represented by the stick of Joseph or Ephraim, who was the son of Joseph) had already lost their nation and had been taken as slaves into Assyria. Similarly, the people of Judah were about to be defeated by Babylon and to be taken as slaves to that pagan nation. The two groups of Israelites—the house of Judah and the house of Ephraim—are separate and are mostly invisible to each other to this very day. Yet, what did YHVH, through his prophet Ezekiel, say would happen to those two nations? If this prophecy has not been fulfilled in the past, then this must mean—if the Word of Elohim is truth and not a lie—that it will happen in the future. But when??? That is the big question that we're going to explore now.


 (d) Remember that the people of Ephraim had already gone into captivity and that the people of Judah were being taken captive when Ezekiel received this prophetic word from YHVH. So what amazing thing did YHVH tell the prophet that would happen to the Israelites in the future? (Read Ezekiel 37:21.) Where did the children of Israel end up after being taken from the land of Israel? (Read the same verse.)

 (e) Where did YHVH promise to bring the children of Israel back to, and would they be one or two nations when they came back? (Read verse 22.) This prophecy has not happened yet!


 (f) When they come back, will they still be worshipping pagan gods and idols? (See verse 23.)


 (g) Who will be their king? (Look at verse 24.)


 (h) Where is David now? (Read Acts 2:29.) How could David be their king? When will David come back to life? (Note 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.)


 (i) Has the resurrection of the dead occurred yet? Has the second coming of Yeshua occurred yet?

For David to be king over Israel, he has to come back to life from the dead. This resurrection of the dead will occur at the second coming of Yeshua.


 (j) How long will David rule over the united kingdom or nation of Israel? (Read Ezekiel 37:25, last sentence.) Has this happened yet? Is David living forever ruling on earth yet?

 (k) What does YHVH promise he will do with his people? (See Ezekiel 37:26-27.)

 (l) The word tabernacle means "dwelling place." YHVH promises to live among his people. Has this happened yet? If not, then when does this happen? (Read 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the last verse. Also read Revelation 19:1-21 and 20:1-6, which talks about Yeshua's second coming and his establishing his kingdom upon this earth.)


 (m) If David is going to be the king over the whole nation of Israel in the Millennium, then who is going to be king over each tribe? (Read Matthew 19:28.) At the same time, who is going to be the King over all the kings? (Read Revelation 19:16.)

We have been talking about Ephraim who was the head tribe of the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel. But who is Ephraim today? Let's see if we can discover who that might be.

In Genesis 48 Jacob, while prophesying over Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh crosses his hands over their heads making the symbol of the ancient or paleo-Hebrew letter tav  (which looks like our letter "t" in our English alphabet), which resembles a cross. The picture-symbol of that ancient Hebrew letter literally means "sign of the covenant." Next,

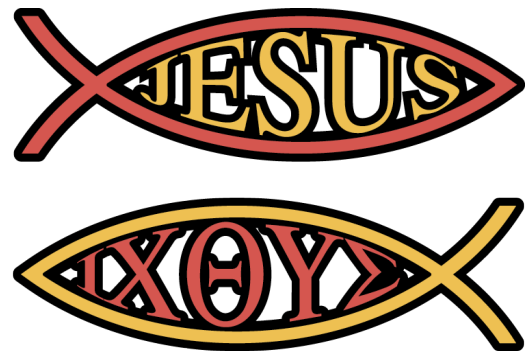



Jacob speaks of the Messenger (the Hebrew word "malak" mistranslated as "angel") of YHVH (or, Yeshua before he came to this earth as the Son of YHVH) who had redeemed him, and finally he predicts that the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh would be like "fish in the midst of the land" (Genesis 48:14-16).


 (n) Now let's take all these clues from Jacob's prophecy and see if we can figure out to which modern group of people he is referring. Which religious group on earth today is as numerous as fish and even uses the fish as their symbol on their car bumper-stickers, for example? Which group speaks of a Messenger from YHVH as their Redeemer or Savior and has the sign of the paleo-Hebrew letter tav \aleph , which is a cross? This is a multiple choice question. (Choose the answer that fits).

- the Moslems?
- the Hindus?
- the Buddhists?
- the religious Jews?
- Christians?

Many of these people are the literal descendents of Ephraim and Manasseh. Furthermore, the Apostle Paul states that all redeemed believers in Yeshua are the children or offspring of Abraham (see Gal 3:7,29). Paul also teaches that all Gentiles who come to Yeshua become a part of the nation of Israel—thus they become Israelites. (See Ephesians 2:11-19.)



 (o) Do you want to be alive during this wonderful and exciting time ahead to be able to see come to pass Ezekiel's prophecy of the two sticks becoming one stick? Do you want to be in the resurrection of the righteous dead to see David who will be the king over Israel and the twelve apostles resurrected along with Joseph, Abraham, Moses, Noah, Daniel, and Ezekiel?

 (p) Yeshua said in a couple of places that it was his goal and that of his followers to gather in the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (See Matthew 10:6 and 15:24.) In Isaiah 53:6—the great prophecy about Yeshua dying to pay the price for our sins—we read that we are all like sheep who have gone astray spiritually, who have turned away from YHVH and walked in sin and rebellion against him. But Yeshua is the good shepherd who is regathering his sheep. He wants to feed and to protect them from eternal death (John 10:1-18; 1Corinthians 15:54-57). Out of love for us, his sheep, he gave his life and this includes you and me! (See John 10:15 and 3:16.)

 (q) How do we become a part of his spiritual sheep flock? (Read Romans 10:9-13.)



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Asher	Father	Levi	Shepherds
Benjamin	Five Years	Manasseh	Simeon
Best of the Land	Gad	Old Age	Sojourn
Canaan	Goshen	Pharaoh	Sons of Israel
Descendants	I am Joseph	Provide	Sustenance
Egypt	Issachar	Provisions	Youngest
Ephraim	Journey	Reuben	Zebulun
Famine	Judah		