

# PARASHAT VAYESHEV

(HE CONTINUED LIVING)

GENESIS 37:1-40:23

## ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

**Y**eshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

### Haftorah Reading

Amos 2:6-3:8

### B'rit Chadashah

Stephen on Joseph: Acts 7:9-16

### Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 37:1 Joseph, the Favorite Son Among Jacob's Offspring
- 37:5 Joseph's Dreams and His Brother's Jealousy
- 37:9 Joseph's Second Dream
- 37:12 Jacob Sends Joseph to Visit His Brothers
- 37:18 The Plot to Kill Joseph
- 37:22 Reuben Saves Joseph
- 37:25 Joseph Is Sold Into Slavery
- 37:31 The Lie Told to Jacob to Cover up the Truth
- 38:1 Judah and Tamar's Affair
- 38:6 Judah's Sons Marry Tamar, But Die for Their Sins Before They Can Produce Offspring
- 38:13 The Union Between Judah and Tamar
- 36:24 Tamar's Pregnancy and Birth of Twins
- 39:1 Joseph in Egypt in Potiphar's House
- 39:7 Potiphar's Wife Falsely Accuses Joseph of Moral Failure
- 39:20 Potiphar Sends Joseph to Prison
- 40:1 Joseph Interprets the Dreams of Pharaoh's Cupbearer and Baker

### Study Questions For This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

The spirit of Antimesiah (Antichrist) is on a dramatic rise in this day and age. It is even alive in the Hebrew Roots or Messianic Israel Movement where some are losing their faith in Yeshua. A few are even converting to Rabbinic Judaism, which denies the messiahship and deity of Yeshua and the divine inspiration of the Brit Chadashah

(New Testament). Some of the blame for this can be laid at the feet of a few of the modern-day descendants of the non-believing Pharisees (i.e., Rabbinic Jews) who use clever arguments to beguile unstable and unlearned souls into humanistic reasoning devoid of a living faith in Yeshua the Savior and Redeemer of man. Because of a spiritual blindness that Scripture prophesied would come upon the Jews producing hardness of heart toward Yeshua the Messiah, unbelieving Jews ignore the numerous prophetic shadow-pictures pointing to Yeshua the Messiah contained in their own Hebrew Scriptures.

The study this week is devoted to strengthening your faith in Yeshua, in his divine origination in the very heart, mind and essence of Elohim, and in the fact that he was foreordained to come to this earth to reconcile sinful man to his Heavenly Father through his self-sacrifice on the cross. All this was prophesied long ago in the Hebrew Scriptures. The ancient Jewish rabbis speak of a messianic figure coming called Messiah ben Yosef, the Suffering Servant, whose life and ministry would parallel that of Joseph, yet these same rabbis fail to see the connection between Joseph's life and that of Yeshua. Let's now chronicle the striking and uncanny parallels between Joseph and Messiah, the son of Joseph, the Suffering Servant (Many of these comparisons come from the book, *Gleanings in Genesis*, by Arthur W. Pink):

- ☞ Joseph had two names: Yoseph (meaning "to add, increase, do again") and Zaphnath-panaaneah (41:45) (meaning "revealer of secrets"). How do these names point to Yeshua's mission? To answer this, consider that the sin of the first Adam caused the depopulation of YHVH's eternal kingdom, while Yeshua, the Second Adam, came to do what in regards to YHVH's spiritual and eternal kingdom?
- ☞ What was Joseph's occupation before being sold into slavery (Gen 37:2)? What was Yeshua's spiritual "occupation"? (Not sure? Read John 10:1-18.)
- ☞ Joseph's father loved him more than all his brothers (37:3-4). What was the relationship between Yeshua and his Father? (Read Matt 3:17; 17:5 and John 10:17.)
- ☞ Joseph was the son of his father's old age (37:3). Relate this to Yeshua's Father. Remember, old age is a metaphor for eternity. (Read John 1:1; 17:5; Mic 5:2; 1 Peter 1:20; Rev 13:8.)
- ☞ Joseph wore a multicolored robe of distinction and honor (37:3). What did the Roman soldiers place on Yeshua at his beating (Luke 23:11; John 19:24), and what multicolored, glorious phenomenon surrounds and adorns him while he sits on his heavenly throne (Rev 4:3)?
- ☞ Joseph's brethren hated him and spoke ill of him because of the evil intent of their hearts (37:4). What about Yeshua? (John 7:7)
- ☞ Joseph dreamed and foretold of his future sovereignty (37:6-10). Did Yeshua ever speak of his future glory in his Father's kingdom? (Matt 26:64)
- ☞ Joseph was envied by his brethren. (37:11)? How about Yeshua? (Read Matt 27:17-18; Mark 12:6-7; John 12:18-19.)
- ☞ Joseph was sent forth by his father on a mission of love to ascertain the welfare of his brothers (37:14). Was Yeshua sent by his Father to this earth for a similar mission? (John 3:16-17; 1 John 4:10; Matt 15:24)
- ☞ Joseph's brothers rejected him. Did Yeshua's brethren reject him? (John 1:11; Isa 53:3)
- ☞ Joseph wandered in the wilderness seeking his lost brothers until he found them (37:15-17). What about Yeshua? (Matt 15:24; Luke 19:10)
- ☞ Joseph was conspired against by his brothers (37:18). Yeshua? (Read Matt 12:44; Mark 14:1; John 7:30,32; 10:39; 11:57.)
- ☞ Joseph's words were disbelieved and he was insulted (37:19-20). Did Yeshua's brethren accept his words? (Matt 27:39-44)
- ☞ Joseph was cast into a pit (37:24). What happened to Yeshua after his crucifixion? (Matt 27:60)
- ☞ Joseph was taken out of the pit alive bodily (37:28). What happened to Messiah Son of Joseph after being in the tomb for three days and nights?
- ☞ Joseph was sold for silver. This was Judah's idea (37:28). Was Yeshua sold? What was the name of the one who betrayed him for silver (Matt 26:14-16)?

- ☞ Joseph's coat was sprinkled in the blood of a goat as if the blood was his and presented to Jacob (37:31). Who also shed his blood before his Heavenly Father? Whose vesture is dipped in blood? (Rev 19:13).
- ☞ Once in Egypt, Joseph went from being a prince to becoming a servant and a pauper (39:1). What happened to Yeshua when he came from heaven to this earth (spiritual Egypt)? (Phil 2:6-7)
- ☞ Joseph prospered in his master's house. His master was well pleased with him (39:3-4). Was the Father well pleased with Yeshua? (Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; John 8:29).
- ☞ Joseph was greatly tempted, yet without sin (39:7-12). And Yeshua? (Heb 4:15)
- ☞ Joseph was falsely accused (39:16-18). What about Yeshua? (Matt 26:59-60).
- ☞ When falsely accused Joseph did not defend himself. What about Messiah Son of Joseph? (Isa 53:7; Matt 27:12,14)
- ☞ In prison, Joseph won the respect of the jailor (39:21-23). What did the Roman centurion say of Yeshua? (Luke 23:47)
- ☞ Joseph was numbered with the transgressors. Who was crucified along side of Yeshua? (Isa 53:12; Mark 15:28).
- ☞ Compare what happened to the two imprisoned with Joseph with the two thieves hanging on each side of Yeshua at the crucifixion. Joseph was the means of blessing to one (Pharaoh's cupbearer) and the pronouncer of judgment to the other (Pharaoh's baker) (40:13 and 40:19). What happened to the two thieves who hung with Yeshua? (Read Matt 27:38,44; Mark 15:27; 13:24-30; Luke 23:32-33; John 19:18).

### Conclusion

May your faith be strengthened immensely to know that in the sovereign and all-knowing foreknowledge of Elohim, your Heavenly Father, were the details of the life of Yeshua, the Savior and Redeemer, long before he came to this world in human form. YHVH had his plan of redemption all laid out, chronicled and precisely detailed well in advance of the actual events, and this divine plan was hidden all along within the very heart of the Hebrew Scriptures as a prophetic shadow-picture and ante-type waiting to be fulfilled in the fullness of times. No amount of clever reasoning on the part of those who deny the deity or redemptive work of Yeshua the Messiah can bury that fact! Yet it has been revealed to your mind and heart, by the Spirit of Elohim to know and understand these truths. May your spiritual walk be blessed and be fruitful in these understandings! And may you encourage and strengthen others with these truths!

### Some Additional Points to Ponder:

**1** Regarding the life of Joseph being a shadow-picture of the upcoming Messiah, the rabbis have some interesting thoughts. In the *ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary* we read the following,

In the future, too, it will be necessary for Joseph to lead in order to introduce the era of the Judean king. In Messianic times, the redemption [or Final Redemption, a rabbinic term describing various events that will occur prior to the return of Messiah Son of David (or Messiah Yeshua Son of David, King of kings and Master of masters) including the regathering of the exiled lost ten tribes of Israel, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the coming of Messiah and the establishment of the Messianic Age (or Millennium)] will be inaugurated by a Messiah descended from Joseph. He will die and be succeeded by the Messiah from the house of David (*[b. Talmud] Succah 52a*). Then, too, Joseph will be the necessary transition to make possible the eventual reign of Judah. (p. 1578)

What are the rabbis talking about here? Throughout the pages of Scripture we see a dynamic tension between the tribes of Judah and Joseph (Joseph includes the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) starting with Judah's suggestion of selling Joseph for money to Ishmaelite slave traders, to Judah's change of heart and drawing near to Joseph and evidencing a reconciliatory (Gen 44:18ff) demeanor, followed by Joseph's redemption (salvation) of his brothers in their time of need.

This same tension existed after the split of the united kingdom of Israel into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms in the time of King Rehoboam, and between Yeshua, Messiah Son of Joseph when

the Jews, interestingly enough, in a curious repeat of history, through another man named Judah (or Judas), were willing to sell their Messiah Son of Joseph, to the Romans for 30 silver shekels.

The Jews relate the above-quoted passage in the *Talmud* to Zechariah 12:10 recognizing this figure to be the Messiah Son of Joseph and that eventually they, the Jews themselves, will rejoice in this Messianic figure just prior to the coming of Messiah Son of David.

Why are the Jews, though their sages of the past talk openly about these things, blinded to the reality of who Messiah Son of Joseph is/was and to the role the Messiah of the House of Joseph (i.e., Ephraim and Manasseh) will play in the fulfillment of these prophecies? And why are there so many Christians and even some Messianics blinded to who Joseph and his descendants are prophetically and spiritually?

Let us not forget Jacob's prophecy over the sons of Joseph in Genesis 48:14–16 where he crosses his arms and makes the sign of the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav* ✠ (which pictographically symbolizes “the sign of the covenant”) or cross over them. In the same passage, Jacob speaks of the Messenger of Elohim who redeemed him from evil and where he likens Joseph's descendants to fish. Now we are compelled to ask you, dear reader, what group of people on earth today speaks of a Messenger from heaven who redeems them and has the cross and fish as their symbol? (See my study notes on this passage in Parashat Vayechi, Gen 47:28–50:26). Does there still exist a similar tension between the descendants of Judah (the Jews and those who align themselves with Judah) and the descendants (physical and spiritual) of the sons of Joseph (the Christians) today? If so, what are the spiritual and the end-time prophetic implications of this? How is history repeating itself and can we forecast how it will repeat itself just prior to the return of Yeshua so far as relations between the Jews and Christians are concerned?

- 2 Were Joseph and Judah aware of the prophetic roles their lives were playing out while they were acting the parts? The brothers sought to shatter the ambitions of Joseph the dreamer, and it was Judah's idea to sell him to slave traders. Likewise, Joseph must have felt that indeed his dreams were dashed when he found himself in the pit and then a slave in Egypt, and then a helpless prisoner far from home and family. Yet it was all part of YHVH's perfect plan and design. Greater purposes were being fulfilled on the macrocosm level of which no one on the microcosm level could possibly be aware. What lessons are there here for us? Though none of us are a Joseph or Judah, YHVH still has a plan and purpose for each of our lives. Do you have a vague sense of his destiny for you, as did Joseph? Have you allowed those around you to deter you from that course? Are you walking in YHVH's perfect will so that he can bring to pass his plans and purposes in your life? What refining processes have you been going through, as did Joseph, to prepare you for YHVH to fulfill his plan for your life?
- 3 Joseph had some enormous tests to pass: false accusations, near death experiences, crashed dreams, enslavement and imprisonment. What tests are you presently enduring: broken marriages, wayward children, financial duress, other family issues or health issues? Are you losing faith, or like Joseph, refusing to lose sight of the promises YHVH has given to you and despite all persevering onward?

## HAFTORAH READING — AMOS 2:6–3:8

### YHVH Speaks Out Against Israel's Social Ills

- 1 In the verses preceding this passage, YHVH judges the nations surrounding Israel for the evil committed against Israel. Then YHVH turns his attention to the Northern Kingdom and rebukes them for the evil they have done. Compare the sins for which YHVH rebukes the nations with those Israel has committed about which YHVH is displeased. Why the difference? Does YHVH have higher standards for his people?
- 2 2:6–8, In his mercy, YHVH was willing to overlook three very heinous sins, but there was a fourth sin that brought YHVH's judgment upon Israel. What was it?
- 3 In the Parashah above, Joseph's brothers oppressed him unjustly. He was the younger brother and defenseless. They greedily sold him for a few pieces of silver. The rich and privileged Israelites in their backslid condition were doing the same to their poor and helpless brethren in Amos' time. What did YHVH

think about this? In Amos 2:10 and 3:1, YHVH reminds Israel of its humble heritage as a helpless slave, yet in his mercy YHVH delivered them. What is our view toward the poor and helpless among us? The apostle James (Ya'acov) has a lot to say about how we are to treat the poor within the spiritual body of Messiah. Read about it in James 1:9–11, 27; 2:1–9; Compare James 5:1–6 with the sins of the super wealthy merchants of Babylon the Great of the end days as described in Revelation 18 (especially note verses 13, 23–24). How do the super-rich afflict the poor in our society today? Discuss the following: monopolistic capitalism, inflation, usurious interest rates, socialist economic policies where the wealth of the lower classes is redistributed among the poor, yet the wealth of the super-rich is left largely untouched and often untaxed. What does YHVH's Word say about the greed and oppression of the lower classes by those who are very wealthy?

- 4** 2:9, These rich and powerful leaders had deluded themselves into thinking that they were beyond the arm of YHVH's justice, yet YHVH warns them what will happen to them by reminding them of the judgment he brought against the Amorites. What can we learn from these passages about the wheels of YHVH's justice? How long did Joseph languish as a slave and prisoner before he saw his brothers brought to justice? Though the poor may be oppressed at the hands of the rich, does YHVH still look after those among them who are righteous? Was his hand upon Joseph accomplishing something much greater than Joseph could have known while in the midst of his trials? What hope can we take from these lessons?
- 5** 3:3, How do we walk in agreement with YHVH and each other? (Read Amos 2:4; John 14:15; 1 John 2:3–6.)
- 6** 3:4–8, YHVH's judgments upon a nation do not come without due warning and without cause. Adverse or punitive circumstances coupled with the sound of the watchman on the wall will cry loudly. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear will not be caught unawares. How is YHVH trying to spiritually awaken this nation? What are the foreboding warnings of impending judgment? What are you doing about it?
- 7** 3:7, Many in religious circles claim to be a prophet, but how many fit the biblical definition of the true prophets? How many are truly warning YHVH's people to turn from sin (Torahlessness) and return to him as Amos did in 2:4? How many, instead, are tickling ears by speaking of great revivals and good things to come upon those who will listen to them and give them large offerings? Read Jeremiah's warnings against the lying false prophets (Jer 23:9–40). Do many modern "prophets" more aptly fit the definition of the false prophets in Jeremiah?

