

PARASHAT VAYIGASH

(HE APPROACHED)

GENESIS 44:18-47:27

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua 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

Ezekiel 37:15-28

B'rit Chadashah

On Israel coming to salvation: **Romans 9:1-29**

On the Gentiles being grafted into the olive tree of Israel: **Romans 11:13-24**

On the Gentiles becoming a part of Israel: **Ephesians 2:11-22**

Yeshua on the regathering of lost Israel: **Matthew 10:6; 15:24**

Outline of 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

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

This week's Torah portion focuses on several key themes. Keep these in mind as we proceed.

- ☞ Reuniting lost family members
- ☞ Healing and reuniting divided families
- ☞ Reconciliation
- ☞ Forgiveness of past wrongs, offenses and misunderstandings

- 1 Who is approaching whom at the beginning of this Parashah? (See Gen 44:18.) What is the significance of this? Remember who the descendants of Judah were (the Jews or Southern Kingdom) and Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh who became the Northern Kingdom/House of Israel and eventually the “lost sheep of the House of Israel”).
- 2 Prophetically-speaking, who is the most notable descendant of the tribe of Judah? (See Rev 5:5.). Did Yeshua, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, seek you or did you seek him when you were lost? (See Rom 5:8; Luke 19:10; Matt 18:11.)
- 3 Why is Judah coming near to Joseph (who he does not yet recognize as Joseph)? What were Judah’s heart motives in coming near? (See Gen 44:18–34). Was Yeshua motivated to come near to us out of love for his Father, as well? (See John 8:28; chapter 17.)
- 4 Did Judah offer to lay down his life as a ransom for his youngest brother? (See Gen 44:33.) Who does this point to prophetically? Who else freely gave his life as a substitute for his brothers? (See Mark 10:45; Matt 20:28; 1 Tim 2:5; John 10:11, 15, 17–18; 1 John 3:16.)

Please note that Judah is an antetype (prophetic forerunner) of Yeshua the Messiah.

- ☞ Both sought to please their fathers.
- ☞ Both acted out of unconditional love for their younger brother.
- ☞ Both stood to gain nothing personally, but rather stood to lose much, if their plan did not work. Judah, a prince, would become a slave in Egypt; Yeshua would become a slave to death and hell, if he sinned.

It is interesting to note that classic Christian commentator Matthew Henry draws a similar analogy between Judah’s actions here and Messiah Yeshua, as well (*A Commentary On the Whole Bible*, vol. 1, p. 243, by Matthew Henry).

Judah’s love for his father and Benjamin and his willingness to lay down his life as a ransom to become a slave in Egypt to Joseph is analogous to Messiah Yeshua’s love for the lost sheep of the House of Israel to whom he came to reach out and to ransom in order to bring them back into the fold of Israel (John 10:15–16; Matt 10:6; 15:24).

- 5 What was the burden on the Apostle Paul’s heart in this regard? (Read Romans 9:1–5.) Who does Paul later go on to talk about and extend his heart burden to in Romans 9:23–24? Remember that the term *Gentile* simply means “ethnic or people groups, or the people of the nations.” Who is Paul specifically referring to here? Paul had the same intense love for his Jewish brethren as he did for those “people groups of the nations” whom he equates with the lost, adulterous and apostate House of Israel (the Northern Kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel). Compare Romans 9:25 with Hosea 2:23 (the former being a direct quote from the latter) in context with the whole book of Hosea, which is addressed particularly to the apostate House of Israel and who had become “lost” among the nations, of which Joseph in Egypt is a prophetic antetype.
- 6 **44:32–34, *Became surety for the lad.*** Christian commentator Matthew Henry on this passage states, “Judah’s faithful cleaving to Benjamin, now, in his distress, was recompensed long afterwards by the tribe of Benjamin keeping with the tribe of Judah, when the other tribes deserted it” (*Matthew Henry Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*, p. 56). It is amazing that some 800 years later this fraternal love between the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin continued to work in the collective psyches of these tribes such that the heart of the younger was still knit in loyalty with that of older brother. What does this say about generational blessings (and curses) or attitudes that are passed on down to one’s descendants? If curses can be passed on down to the third or fourth generation (Exod 20:5), how about blessings? The Book of Proverbs states that, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit,” (Prov 18:21) and that, “A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit,” (Prov 15:4). Generations of our descendants can be affected positively or negatively by the inclination of our hearts and the words of our mouth. It had been Judah’s idea to sell Joseph to slave traders. In the meantime, Judah’s heart had changed so that he was willing to lay down his life for his brother, Benjamin, Joseph’s only full brother. This change of heart on Judah’s part and the resulting outpouring of love for

his youngest brother had lasting positive results. (Discuss.) What are the prophetic implications of this relationship between Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) and Judah?

7 Did Judah recognize Joseph, or did Joseph have to reveal himself? (Read Gen 45:1–4.) Was Judah “blind-ed” to whom Joseph was? Why? What is this a prophetic picture of? (See Rom 11:25.) As we have seen in the previous studies Joseph was a type of the Messiah, as well as the father of Ephraim and Manasseh, the dominate tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel who went apostate and become “lost sheep” among the nations of the world (Hos 7:8; 8:8; Ezek 34:16 and numerous other Scriptures). Therefore, who does Joseph prophetically represent in our passage under consideration? This is a prophetic picture of the “lost sheep of the House of Israel” or the Messiah who would come and seek out those sheep. And whom does Judah represent? Is Judah a prophetic shadow of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who would later come as the Messiah to redeem his “brother” who would be lost in spiritual Egypt? Or does he represent the Southern Kingdom of the House of Judah who is “blind” to his Messiah? These are potentially difficult questions to answer. One could easily force these Scriptures in Genesis to fit into a false prophetic scenario.

This has been a head scratcher for the Jewish rabbis, as well. They have seen in the story of Joseph, the Suffering Servant, a Messiah Son of Joseph figure who they felt would be a descendant of Ephraim and who would come to redeem the lost sheep or exiles of the House of Israel in preparation for a second Messiah to come whom they refer to as the Conquering King or Messiah the Son of David, (Mesorah Publications *ArtScroll Bereishis*, vol. 1(b), pp. 2121–2122). They see these Messiahs as two separate individuals. Yet in our story of Joseph and Judah can we see the antetypes of these two Messiahs acting out their roles at the same time? Could Judah and Joseph point to both comings of Messiah Yeshua? At his first coming, did not Yeshua, the Suffering Servant, come to redeem a remnant of lost Judah in addition to a much larger portion of “the lost sheep of the House of Israel”? Yet at his second coming, will this same Messiah Son of Joseph come back as the Lion of Judah to be revealed to his Jewish brothers who had previously rejected him?

8 **45:1–15**, Joseph, as an antetype of Yeshua, had mercy on the penitent sinners who had formerly wronged him. Joseph wept for joy and embraced his brothers (verse 14) when being reconciled to them. Past hurts and wrongs were forgiven. Can you not see yourself in this story coming to Yeshua, your Savior and Redeemer, with a repentant heart and him warmly embracing you and welcoming you into his spiritual family and kingdom? (Read Ezek 18:27–32 and Ps 103:10–18.) As we progress in our spiritual walk how easy it is to take for granted YHVH’s love and compassion that initially saved us and at the same time continues to sustain us in his grace. (Selah. Pause and reflect.)

9 **45:24**, *Do not be agitated on the journey (The Schocken Bible)*. Joseph dismissed his brothers with the warning not to quarrel with each other on the journey back to Canaan, as brothers can be prone to do. They had reconciled with Joseph, their savior and a foreshadow of Yeshua, our Savior and Redeemer, but they still had a long foot-journey ahead of them of many dry and dusty miles. As the miles drug on and the fatigue of the flesh would begin to the surface, how easy it would be for the brothers to begin quarreling with each other. What was one of Yeshua’s final admonitions to his disciples before his crucifixion in this regard? (See John 13:34–35; 14:27; 15:12–13.) How much energy do we as redeemed believers waste quarreling with one another instead of advancing the kingdom of Elohim? How would your life improve if you were to just forgive those who have offended you or those who want to hurt you or your ministry, to just walk away in love, and focus your attention on the job your Heavenly Father has given you to do in his kingdom?

10 The Jewish rabbis speak of the final redemption, which is to occur just prior to and at the coming of Messiah Son of David as he comes to establish the Messianic Era (Millennium). The rabbis teach that part of that final redemption includes the reunification of the two houses of Israel into one kingdom under Messiah Son of David. Where do we find this prophesied in the Scriptures? (Read Ezek 37:15–28, which interestingly enough is this week’s Haftorah portion!) This speaks of the family reunification or reconciliation of Judah and Ephraim at Messiah’s return. (Hos 5:15–6:4; 1:11; Acts 3:21; Ezek 37:25). This will be a supernatural work of the *Ruach* (Spirit) of Elohim (Ezek 36:19–32).

11 After the reunification of the divided family, where did the reunited and reconciled family move to? (Read Gen 46:34.) Goshen was in the Nile River delta area and was, and to this day is, the prime farm land of Egypt. It was a veritable promised land compared to the arid regions of Canaan. Could this be a tiny shadow picture of the Millennium? The Jewish rabbis and sages have a sense that history for the people of Israel is continually repeating itself, over and over again in cyclical patterns as YHVH works his purposes out among his people. He is continually endeavoring to reveal his plan of redemption and reconciliation to those who have eyes to see, and continually reaching out the loving hand of reconciliation to the next generations of Israelites. This is but one more picture of the cyclical pattern of redemption that we see YHVH working out in the pages of Scripture all pointing toward a final climax at the end of the age where all of the Children of Israel will worship YHVH in spirit and in truth (John 4:23) under the rulership of King Yeshua the Messiah, Son of Joseph/David.

12 **45:13–26**, During the remaining years of the famine, all of the Egyptians became indebted to Joseph as he judiciously doled out the stored wheat to those in need. In order to save their lives, the inhabitants of the famine-ravished land gave their lives and land to be servants of Joseph (who was a type of Yeshua) in exchange for food (Gen 47:23). Yeshua, likewise, has bought us with the price of his blood (1 Cor 6:20; 1 Pet 1:18–19; Rev 5:9). Are we not called to be his bondservants—a term the apostles apply to themselves numerous times? What does that mean in practical terms in your life?

HAFTORAH READING—EZEKIEL 37:15–28

IN ANCIENT BIBLICAL TIMES, THE JEWISH religious leaders divided the five books of the Torah (Genesis to Deuteronomy) into portions that would be read each Sabbath in the synagogues (the houses of biblical teaching). Originally, in the course of a three year period, this system would allow the Jewish people to read and study the entire Torah. In modern times in most synagogues, the Torah is subdivided in such a way that the reading-teaching cycle is accomplished in one year instead of three.

During the period of the Maccabees (in the intertestamental period in the second century B.C.), the Greeks who ruled Judea, in an effort to forcibly hellenize the Jews, forbade them from reading the Torah upon pain of death. Not wanting to forget the Torah, the Jews devised a system where Scriptures passages from the writings of the prophets were found that would remind them of the Torah portion for that week. These passages from the prophets are called the Haftorah readings, and they are read, along with the corresponding Torah portion, each week in Jewish synagogues all over the world each Sabbath to this day.

Genesis 44:18–47:27 is called Parashat Vayegash and recounts the reunification of Joseph and his brothers in Egypt after having been unknown to each other and separated for many years. To remind the Maccabean Jews of Parashat Vayegash, they attached Ezekiel 37:15–28, which is a prophecy about the reunification of the House of Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom of Israel) with the House of Judah (the Southern Kingdom of Israel). As the reader will recall, the northern ten tribes of Israel seceded from the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin during the reign of King Rehoboam, son of King Solomon. They never reunited, but the prophet Ezekiel received a word from Elohim that in the latter days just before the coming of the Messiah and the Messianic Age (or Millennium) these two kingdoms would again be reunited with King David as their ruler. This has yet to happen, but it will happen, just as YHVH's Word says.

The *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* informs us that the connection between Parashat Vayegash (Gen 44:18–47:27) and this Haftorah reading is that both discuss the reunification of Jacob's sons, the twelve tribes of Israel. Judah and Benjamin from the Southern Kingdom of Israel could receive hope in knowing that eventually their long-lost comrades of the Northern Kingdom would again become part of the nation in fulfillment of YHVH's promises. Ezekiel 37 speaks of an era in the future when a king from the House of David, who will be a servant of Elohim and who will unify the people in allegiance to the Torah. Idolatry will be gone and the Temple will stand; the standard of life will be obedience to the laws of Torah and the results will be that the entire world will know that YHVH is Elohim (pp. 1144–1145). *The Soncino Edition Pentateuch* adds that the reunification of Judah and Ephraim will not only involve a political, but a spiritual reunion and revival resulting in the very *shkinah* of

YHVH's Divine Presence being clearly manifested among them for all the nations of the world to see (p. 179). Have these prophecies come to pass yet? Let's explore this issue.

Key Terms Defined

Before we start studying this passage, let's identify and define who the key players are:

- ☞ **Judah:** A son of Jacob. This name refers to both the tribe of Judah and to the Southern Kingdom. Scriptural context will determine which is meant.
- ☞ **Children of Israel:** This term is found 603 times in Scripture and is used 472 times from Genesis through Second Samuel in obvious reference to the united kingdom (prior to the split of the Northern ten tribes from the Southern two tribes [in addition to the Levites]). There are times, however, when, after the division of the kingdom, this term refers specifically to either the Kingdom of Israel (Northern Kingdom) or the Kingdom of Judah (Southern Kingdom), but not to both (e.g. in reference to the Southern Kingdom only see 1 Kgs 18:20; 19:10,14; 20:15,27,29; and in reference to the Northern Kingdom only see 2 Kgs 17:7,8,9,22,24).
- ☞ **Joseph:** The eleventh son of Jacob and the father of Ephraim and Manasseh who fathered two tribes of their own. These two tribes took the place of what might otherwise have been known as the "Tribe of Joseph."
- ☞ **Ephraim:** This name is used 180 times in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) and is specifically referring to this specific Israelite tribe or as a metaphor for the Northern Kingdom of which the tribe of Ephraim was the leading and largest tribe (Isa 7:9, 17; 9:9; 11:13; Ezek 37:19; Hos 4:17; 5:12,13,14; 6:4; 7:1; 10:11; Zech 9:13). When blessing the two sons of Joseph, Jacob placed his right hand of power and strength upon the head of Ephraim signifying the position of primogeniture for him and his descendants (Gen 48:17).
- ☞ **House of Israel:** This term is used 146 times in Scripture. Prior to the division of the united kingdom after the death of Solomon this phrase referred to all twelve tribes of Israel. Afterwards (during the time of the prophets) it was used in contradistinction to the phrase "House of Judah" in reference to the Northern Kingdom. In the Messianic Scriptures, Yeshua makes reference to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt 10:6; 15:54). In some references in the Messianic Scriptures this term refers to all twelve tribes of Israel (Acts 2:36; 7:42; Heb 8:10) in some references it refers to just the Northern Kingdom (Heb 8:8). The context of the passage of Scripture surrounding this phrase determines its meaning.
- ☞ **Mountains of Israel:** This is a poetic metaphor referring to the twelve tribes of Israel (Ezek 34:13,14; 36:1,4,8).

Study Questions

- 1 What we have in Ezekiel's end-time prophecy are two groupings of tribes that when combined become one tree or nation over which King David will reign. When Ezekiel wrote this prophecy what was the state of the twelve tribes of Israel? Were they united or divided? What does this passage say will happen to these two sticks or trees? Has this prophecy been fulfilled yet?
- 2 Can you think of any other passages where YHVH's people are likened to a tree where two kinds of branches must be brought back together? (Read Romans 11.)

Now let's briefly look at how Scripture likens YHVH's people to an olive tree:

- ☞ **Olive Tree:** Scripture likens the nation of Israel to an olive tree (Jer 11:10). Because both houses of Israel have broken their covenants with YHVH (Jer 11:10) both will have their branches broken off from YHVH's spiritual olive tree (Jer 11:17). At a latter time both will have to be grafted back into the olive tree through the redeeming work of Yeshua the Messiah (Rom 11:13-24).
- ☞ **Olive Branch, wild:** Paul uses this term as a reference to the Gentiles (people of the nations, Rom 11:17,24) and describes how they must be grafted into the spiritual olive tree, which represents the nation of Israel.

☞ **Olive Branches, two:** The nation of Israel was split into two branches (Zech 4:3, 11–14) but will be joined back together to become one nation or a single olive tree again (Ezek 37:15–28).

3 Has this tree been totally joined back together again with King David ruling over them (Ezek 37:24–25)? When will this happen? Are all twelve tribes back in their own land of Israel yet as this prophecy foretells will happen (Ezek 37:22)? When will this happen? Have all twelve tribes of Israel completely disassociated themselves from the pollution and defilement of paganism and are they now serving Elohim in perfect righteousness (Ezek 37:23)? When will this happen? And finally, has YHVH Elohim placed his sanctuary among his people forever and currently tabernacling with the twelve tribes of Israel in the land of Israel (Ezek 37:27–28)? When will this happen?

4 If you are still not clear which people the stick of Ephraim and the stick of Judah represent in modern times after reading Romans 11 (after all, this is an end-time prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled), let's give you another clue. Is there any question who the stick of Judah (etymologically the biblical word *Jews* derives from the word "Judah") represents today? What about the stick of Ephraim? Who is that? Perhaps the following short study will clear up this mystery.

In Genesis 48 Jacob, while prophesying over Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh crosses his hands over their heads making the symbol of the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav* ✠ (which looks like our letter "t" in our English alphabet), which resembles a cross and pictographically means "sign of the covenant." Jacob then speaks of the Messenger (the Hebrew word *malak* mistranslated as *angel*) of YHVH (i.e., the preincarnate Yeshua) who had redeemed him and then he likens the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh to "fish in the midst of the land" (Gen 48:14–16). Which religious group on earth today is as numerous as fish and even uses the fish as their symbol, speaks of a Messenger from YHVH as their Redeemer and has the sign of the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav* ✠, which is a cross? Furthermore, the Apostle Paul states that all redeemed believers in Yeshua are the children or offspring of Abraham (e.g. Gal 3:7,29).

Now some Bible teachers dogmatically teach that the modern Jews comprise all the twelve tribes of Israel and that somehow all these prophecies have been fulfilled, or will be fulfilled upon *only* the Jewish people. Is this a reasonable assumption in light of biblical truth and in light of what Paul teaches in Romans 11?

5 What was one of the great promises YHVH made to Abraham and to his sons concerning their descendants? Let's review some of these promises:

And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you, and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Gen 12:3)

That in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. (Gen 22:17)

And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto your seed all these countries; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. (Gen 26:4)

How many Jews are there on earth today? It is estimated that there are between 12 to 15 million. How many Arab descendants of Ishmael are there? Don't most Moslems claim Ishmael to be their father? There are more than one billion Moslems on earth today. If Isaac received a greater blessing than Ishmael, how is it that his descendants are so few, by comparison to those of his rival, if the Jews are the total fulfillment of the "stars of heaven" prophecy? Now if the Christians were added to the numbers of the Jews, how many would that be? More than twice the numbers of those who claim to be descendants of Ishmael and about one-third the population of planet earth. Does this sound more like a fulfillment of YHVH's promise to father Abraham concerning his descendants?

What Do the Jewish Rabbis Say?

Do the Rabbinic Jews believe that they are the only ones to fulfill the Ezekiel 37, two-sticks prophecy? What do they teach about this subject? Let's read:

“Ibn Ezra: Many nations will descend from him [Abraham] (i.e., the word מלל [melo], *fullness*, connotes *abundance*, the phrase meaning: And his seed will become the abundance of the nation [Neter; Karnei Or].) (*ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, vol 2, p. 2121 on Gen 48:19).

“R[abbi] Avraham b. HaRambam somewhat similarly: The expression denotes abundant profligacy to a point that they will have to inhabit lands of other nations it is an allusion to Ephraim’s expansive territory (Ibid.).

“Radak: This refers to the Exile when the lands of others will be filled with his scattered descendants ... See also Hos 7:8: “Ephraim shall be mingled among the nations” (Ibid.).

“What kind of blessing was this prediction that one day [Jacob’s] descendants—the Ten Tribes—would be scattered among the nations? R[abbi] Munk explains: while it is true that the dispersion was caused by the unfaithfulness and sinfulness of Ephraim’s descendants (Hos. 7:8ff), Jacob’s blessing was not in vain for “they will return to God” and will have their share in the world to come ([*Talmud Sanhedrin* 110b). And R. Eliezer adds: ‘Even the darkness in which the Ten Tribes were lost will one day become as radiant as the day’ (according to the version of *Avos d’Rabbi Nosson* 36). And in the perspective of history, did not these exiled children of the Patriarchs enlighten the nations among whom they were scattered? They did so by teaching their conquerors the fundamental ideas of the knowledge and love of God, ideals they had never forsaken. Hence they too have a messianic vocation and their Messiah the ... Messiah son of Joseph (*Succah* 52a), also called Messiah son of Ephraim (*Targum Yonasan* on Exodus 40:11), will play an essential role in humanity’s redemption, for he will be the precursor of the ... Messiah Son of David ... (Ibid. pp. 2121–2122).

In the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, in an article entitled “Tribes, Lost Ten” we read the following (written by: Executive Committee of the Editorial Board, Joseph Jacobs):

According to the Bible, Tiglath-pileser (II Kgs xv. 29) or Shalmaneser (ib. xvii. 6, xviii. 11), after the defeat of Israel, transported the majority of the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and Habor, on the stream of Gozan, and in the towns of Media. In their stead a mixed multitude was transported to the plains and mountains of Israel. As a large number of prophecies relate to the return of “Israel” to the Holy Land, Believers in the literal inspiration of the Scriptures have always labored under a difficulty in regard to the continued existence of the tribes of Israel, with the exception of those of Judah and Levi (or Benjamin), which returned with Ezra and Nehemiah. If the Ten Tribes have disappeared, the literal fulfillment of the prophecies would be impossible; if they have not disappeared, obviously they must exist under a different name. The numerous attempts at identification that have been made constitute some of the most remarkable curiosities of literature.

In the Apocrypha, it is presumed that the Ten Tribes still exist as tribes. Thus Tobit is stated to be of the tribe of Naphtali, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs assume their continuous existence. In the Fourth Book of Ezra (xiii. 39–45) it is declared that the Ten Tribes were carried by Hosea, king in the time of Shalmaneser, to the Euphrates, at the narrow passages of the river, whence they went on for a journey of a year and a half to a place called Arzareth. Schiller-Szinessy pointed out that “Arzareth” is merely a contraction of “ere aretz,” the “other land” into which YHVH says He “will cast them [the people] as this day”; see Deut. xxix. 27, which verse is referred by R. Akiba to the Lost Ten Tribes (*Sanh. x. 4*; comp. “*Journal of Philology*,” iii. 114).

In regards to Deuteronomy 32:26 which says, “I said, I would scatter them into the corners ...” (KJV) *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* comments, “This refers to the exile of the Ten Tribes, who were scattered to an unknown place where they have never been heard from again” (p. 1105).

On the phrase of the same verse, “I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men ...” the same *Chumash* states, “This is a reference to the exile of Judah and Benjamin, the Davidic kingdom from which today’s known Jews are descended.” It goes on to say that though nations would seek to destroy Israel entirely YHVH would never allow Israel to become extinct or disappear. Israel’s perpetual existence is constant reminder of YHVH’s plan and eventually Israel will thrive and fulfill YHVH’s intention for it” (pp. 1105–1106).

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch in his commentary on the Pentateuch on the same verse translates the phrase, “I would scatter them into the corners ...” as, “I would relegate them into a corner ...” and then says that the Hebrew here refers to the “extreme end of a surface, the side or corner ...” He, too, relates this fate to the Ten Tribes who would be scattered “to some distant corner of the world, where, left entirely to themselves, they could mature towards serious reflection and ultimate return to Me ...” (*The Pentateuch/Deuteronomy*, p. 650).

Conclusion

It is hopefully clear from this study that the two sticks prophecy of Ezekiel 37 is yet to occur. This is obvious from the passage itself, since many of the events it predicts have yet to occur, and this has been the interpretation of the leading Orthodox Jewish rabbis and sages over the millennia.

Whoever the House of Ephraim and his companions are, Scripture says that YHVH knows who they are, that they will be regathered to the land of their inheritance in the last days, and reunited with their brother, Judah. As a single national entity, they will then be ruled by an obviously resurrected King David (Ezek 37:24–25), and YHVH will make a new covenant with them and YHVH’s tabernacle or dwelling place will be with them (Ezek 37:26–28). It should be obvious that these events have yet to occur.

Furthermore, we know from the Book of Revelation that after the Millennium, heavenly New Jerusalem will descend to this earth and will become the habitation of the glorified saints and of YHVH-Yeshua. It is clear that the twelve tribes of Israel and all their grafted-in companions will be regathered at this time, for the only way into that city will be through twelve gates named after the twelve tribes of Israel. There is no “Gentile Gate” (Rev 21:12). So through which gate will you enter the New Jerusalem?

