

will be able to receive the favor and peace with our enemies that results from walking obediently and faithfully in His ways.

*May we joyfully give the Father all the praise, honor, and glory that He deserves for His mercy toward us. May the Lord be blessed for the favor and peace He grants us!*

## **V'yigash** וַיִּגַּשׁ He approached “Positioning for Restoration”

Genesis 44:18-47:27  
Ezekiel 37:15-28

This week's Torah portion, *V'yigash*, is a relatively short reading that deals principally with the reunion of the sons of Jacob/Israel, as Joseph in his capacity as the Egyptian viceroy reveals himself to his brothers as the one they cast away into slavery. This occurs through a series of deliberate steps, Divinely designed to bring repentance and reconciliation to the entire family. In surveying *V'yigash*, Torah readers and students should be able to consider its overriding theme of restoration between family members and God, which is something that surely permeates much of the Holy Scriptures. Most especially not to overlook is how not only are the various brothers reconciled, but Joseph is also reunited with his father Jacob, and the family is relocated to the land of Goshen where they were protected from the ravages of famine. In an ironic twist, we see how these followers of Abraham's God begin to appreciate His sovereign hand of protection, which preserved them and their emerging progeny, in spite of their propensity to often be guided by the dictates of their sinful hearts.

If you think about the events described in *V'yigash*, and place yourself in almost any of the principal parts in the drama that unfolds—you will not be able to miss the obvious reality that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is certainly about fulfilling His covenantal promises to His chosen people. *How else can you explain all of the unique circumstances?* As the brothers are circumstantially forced to seek sustenance from Pharaoh's grain reserves in Egypt, little did they realize that it was their brother Joseph who was providentially placed in a position to be their protector, deliverer, and ultimate provider. The one who was sold into slavery and disposed of, is now most literally **the family's only hope for survival**.

Interestingly, as you ponder the various scenes described between Joseph and his brothers, Joseph and his father and the Pharaoh, and ultimately Joseph and the inhabitants of Egypt as the famine rages on—you might pause to consider whether there might be any significant, prophetic future implications of what occurs. Certainly, the Jewish Rabbis have done precisely this in centuries past, when they discerned that the right Haftarah portion for *V'yigash* was Ezekiel 37:15-28. They knew that the prophesied restoration of all Israel in the future is definitely one of the primary things that the Jewish community needed to consider, as God will be faithful to fulfill His covenantal promises. When the Sages heard or read the prophecies of Ezekiel, which described a future time when Judah, Israel/Ephraim/Joseph, and their various companions would be reunited and restored to the Holy Land—they were somehow piqued of how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers while in Egypt.

As Messianic Believers today, who are having to consider *V'yigash* and its message that undoubtedly carries implications beyond the history of the Pentateuch—what do we really need to be focusing on? Might there be something important that will illuminate current developments in the emerging Messianic movement, and the restoration to Israel that is truly prophesied to occur according to the Scriptures?

## The Rise of Judah

You should recall that in last week's Torah portion, *Mikkeitz* (Genesis 41:1-44:17), we witness that Judah had begun to assert himself as the spokesperson and leader of the brothers who remained in Canaan. When Jacob issued his concern about the lack of food, it was Judah who spoke for the brothers:

“Now the famine was severe in the land. So it came about when they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, ‘Go back, buy us a little food.’ **Judah spoke to him, however, saying, ‘The man solemnly warned us, “You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you”’**” (Genesis 43:1-3).

As the dialogue continued and the discussion about how to overcome some of the challenges of complying with the demands of the Egyptian official (unknown by them to be Joseph) ensues, it was Judah who magnanimously offered himself as “surety” for the life of Benjamin:

“And Judah said to his father Israel, ‘Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. **I myself will be surety for him;<sup>78</sup> you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever**” (Genesis 43:8-9).

Here in an act of self-sacrifice and protection on Judah's part, we can see definite clues when a future son of Judah, Yeshua the Messiah, will offer Himself up for the sins of the world. As *Mikkeitz* ended, Judah definitely took the lead among his brothers. With the narrative describing “Judah and his brothers,” *Yehudah v'echayv* (יְהוּדָה וְאֶחָיו), we find him in charge of the negotiations with the viceroy of Egypt (Joseph):

“**When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house**, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him. And Joseph said to them, ‘What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?’ **So Judah said**, ‘What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found’” (Genesis 44:14-16).

When *V'yigash* (Genesis 44:18-47:27) begins, we find again that it was Judah who continued in the dialogue with the yet unrevealed Joseph. The clear rise and preeminence of these two brothers would manifest itself later in how the nation of Israel implanted in the Promised Land will have two main components to it, being largely known as Judah (later Judea) and Joseph (or Ephraim, after Joseph's youngest son):

“**Then Judah approached him, and said**, ‘Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh’” (Genesis 44:18).

<sup>78</sup> Or, “I myself will guarantee his safety” (NIV).

As this interaction took place, it was Judah and Joseph who discussed the challenges that faced Jacob, who still grieved over the loss of his son Joseph (who he thought was dead). The dialogue proceeded and Judah eloquently described the pain of watching his father suffer the loss of his beloved son, and how he would suffer more if the brothers did not return with the youngest, Benjamin (Genesis 44:19-34). Most importantly, it was Judah who declared to Joseph that he alone would offer up his life for the life of his brother Benjamin (Genesis 44:30). Here at this critical juncture, Judah was the one who attempted to acquire a degree of mercy from the shrouded Joseph toward his family.

Viewing the events in *Mikkeitz* and into *V'yigash*, one can find that the two brothers Judah and Joseph emerged into taking some very prominent roles in their generation. What they did appropriately complimented the other, as together they assured the survival of the future of the nation of Israel. Many readers have concluded that the unique characteristics of Judah and Joseph include prophetic foreshadowings of later events and occurrences throughout God's plan of salvation history.

## Joseph Recognizes God's Hand

At the point when Judah declared his willingness to offer his life for that of his brother Benjamin, this was when *Joseph finally broke down* and could no longer withhold himself. **Joseph revealed himself to his brothers.** Was this a result of Joseph witnessing how his brother Judah, the one who had originally suggested that he be sold into slavery (Genesis 37:26-27), had matured into a man of compassion? Whatever the actual reason or combination of factors, the emotional reality of what Joseph was witnessing was too difficult for him to contain:

“Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, ‘Have everyone go out from me.’ So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. **Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?’** But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Please come closer to me.’ And they came closer. **And he said, ‘I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.** Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life’” (Genesis 45:1-5).

It is most interesting how the Lord molded both Judah and Joseph through completely different circumstances, into the figures of their generation—who would later symbolize the future divisions of Israel that will eventually be reunited in the end-times. Joseph understood beyond a shadow of doubt that it was God Himself who was responsible for all of the episodes of his life, which positioned him into the place to be a preserver of the family of Israel. His statements clearly made this known:

“And now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; **for God sent me before you to preserve life...And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.** Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, **“God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay”**’” (Genesis 45:5, 7-9).

Joseph recognized that it was God who had orchestrated the affairs of his life to position him to be the viceroy of Egypt, and be the ultimate deliverer of the family of Israel when the famine strikes. Joseph, whose rise to prominence came through the trials of affliction coupled with the blessing of God to interpret dreams, was no doubt the son who was used by Him to salvage Israel at this point in time.

What does the example of Joseph revealing himself as God's appointed deliverer communicate to us, as Twenty-First century men and women of faith? Have you ever received an inkling from the Lord that you will be placed in an important position in the future, to help someone or communicate something critical to those needing direction? How many of us might complain about some of the ups and downs of the growth and development of the Messianic movement, not realizing that we have to have a long term perspective, and that some of the things we say—be it explaining who Yeshua is as the Messiah to Jewish friends, or the importance of our Hebraic Roots to Christian colleagues—are to be kept to ourselves until the appropriate time?

How much patience and forbearance do you think a man like Joseph had to possess in order to ably handle his brothers? How much do you think you might need in handling various situations and circumstances in life?

## A Supernatural Union

Certainly, the prophecy of Ezekiel 37:15-28, which composes the Haftarah selection for *V'yigash*, has come to be emblematic of the ultimate reunion and restoration to God's people as promised by Him. Torah students are reminded year after year that the final restoration of Israel is a prophetic expectation not to be overlooked or ignored. How this involves today's Messianic movement, particularly with Jewish Believers coming to faith in Yeshua the Messiah in great numbers, and many evangelical Christians embracing their Hebraic Roots, is one which has provoked a wide number of responses. While there are many details in this prophecy that need to be explored by readers, the undeniable theme of Ezekiel's oracle is how a great supernatural unity is to transpire, one which ultimately represents God's sovereignty and cannot be broken by any mortal:

"The word of the LORD came again to me saying, 'And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, "For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions"; then take another stick and write on it, "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions." Then join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. And when the sons of your people speak to you saying, "Will you not declare to us what you mean by these?" say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.' And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. And say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations, and they will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. And they will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God. And My servant David will

be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them. And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever. And I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever” (Ezekiel 37:15-28).

As we contemplate this prophecy, we are reminded that its fulfillment can by no means be an instantaneous event. Instead, as it transpires, then the people ask: **“Will you not show us what you mean by these?”** (Ezekiel 37:18, RSV). This question indicates almost as many perplexing thoughts that must have been the initial reaction of the sons of Jacob/Israel, as Joseph revealed himself to them in Pharaoh’s courtyard.

I would submit that if we have begun to actually witness the final stages of Israel’s restoration in our day, that this question has been answered in a large number of ways: some good and some not so good. Some do not know what to do, and so they choose to ignore the relevant Biblical passages. Others have entered in, have over-simplified things, and have opportunized things quite a bit. And still, others have tried to develop the patience needed to recognize that the restoration of Israel’s Kingdom is something that can only occur in the Father’s perfect timing, and have tactfully done the best they can in living forth the prophecy’s ethic of unity.

*Let us be those who truly seek His face, and are given the gifts and temperance needed! May we each possess the discernment to know what our place may be in the anticipated restoration of Israel, so that the Lord can use us to help it along at the appropriate season, rather than deter it through any ungodly flesh patterns that cause confusion.*

**V'yechi** וַיַּחֲיֶיךָ  
**He lived**  
**“Blessing Israel”**

Genesis 47:28-50:26

1 Kings 2:1-12

This week’s *parashah*, *V’yechi*, brings us to the end of the Book of Genesis. For twelve weeks, this first book of the Torah has instructed readers about the Creation of the universe and Planet Earth, to an emphasis upon the one family which was chosen to be God’s representatives to humanity at large. From Adam to Noah to Abraham and finally Jacob, the Almighty has progressively demonstrated how He works through specific individuals in order to accomplish His will and purposes. Now as Genesis comes to a close, the Patriarch Jacob, inheritor of the covenants and blessings bestowed upon Abraham and Isaac, is now in a position to extend those same blessings to his progeny who will give rise to the future nation of Israel.