

Opening Scripture Reading/Prayer:

Exodus 31:12-17

The Sabbath

¹² And the Lord said to Moses, ¹³ “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you . . .’ ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. ¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”

Leviticus 19:1-4

The LORD Is Holy

¹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, **You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.** ³ Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and **you shall keep my Sabbaths**; I am the LORD your God. ⁴ Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: I am the LORD your God.

Isaiah 56

Salvation for Foreigners

¹ Thus says the LORD:
“Keep justice, and do righteousness,
for soon my salvation will come,
and my righteousness be revealed.
² Blessed is the man who does this,
and the son of man who holds it fast,
who keeps the Sabbath, not profaning it,
and keeps his hand from doing any evil.”
³ Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say,
“The LORD will surely separate me from his people”;
and let not the eunuch say,
“Behold, I am a dry tree.”
⁴ For thus says the LORD:
“To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose the things that please me
and hold fast my covenant,
⁵ I will give in my house and within my walls
a monument and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that shall not be cut off.
⁶ “And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it,
and holds fast my covenant—
⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.”
⁸ The Lord God,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares,
“I will gather yet others to him
besides those already gathered.”

Isaiah 58:13-14

¹³ “If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath,
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
and call the Sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the Lord honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,

or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;
¹⁴ then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth;
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Isaiah 66:22-23
²² “For as the new heavens and the new earth
that I make
shall remain before me, says the LORD,
so shall your offspring and your name remain.
²³ From new moon to new moon,
and from Sabbath to Sabbath,
all flesh shall come to worship before me,
declares the LORD.

Ezekiel 20:20
*I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my
judgments, and do them; and keep my SABBATHS holy; and they shall
be a SIGN between me and you,
that ye may now that I am the LORD your God.*

Jesus Lord of the Sabbath
“For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” **Matthew 12:8**

Shadows
Freedom from Human Rules
“Let no one therefore judge you in eating or in drinking, or in respect of a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths
which are a shadow of what is to come but the Body of the Messiah.”
Colossians 2:16-17 (KJV)

Here, he is telling us that the **Appointed Times** (Feast Days) and the Sabbath are a **shadow of things to come**. A shadow is of the same image as what it is portraying. So, doesn't this imply these will be observed in the future kingdom? And note the text says that these commands **ARE** a **shadow of things to come**, **not** “were a shadow” or “used to be a shadow” of things to come. He then says, “**let no man judge you**” (in these things: new moon; Sabbath; feasts) “*but the Body of Messiah*.” The word “is” has been added to the original text and did not appear in the Greek.

*The **Body of Messiah** is to judge each other with regard to these things. A second witness to this can be found in the following verses:*

“But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone called ‘a brother,’ if he is one who whores, or greedy of gain, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you **not judge**, to **pick out** by separating, to be of **opinion**, to **judge** those who are inside? But Elohim judges those who are outside. And put away the wicked one from among you!” **1 Corinthians 5:11-13**

“*not judge*” - (*krinō* (2919): to distinguish (to approve what is correct and reject what is wrong - *discern*).

“*to pick out*”: choose.

“*opinion*”: decide.

“*to judge*”: “bringing to trail” - expressing severe disapproval of (someone or something), typically in a formal statement).

Let's Remember what God told the People to do before they got delivered out of Egypt, which we are reminded to do prior to Christ's 2nd Coming:

1. I Will Provide the Way Out and All the Way Into the Promise Land

Exodus 11:2 - Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.”

2. Know the Times

Exodus 12:1-17 - The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, “**This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.**”³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.

...⁷ “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it . . .

...¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast . . .

...¹⁷ And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever.”

Word Study by Ryan Roberts of Key 2 Changes

Opening Reading:

Fellow Brothers and Sisters,

Hebrews 12:13 states:

And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

The context for this passage is the writer of Hebrews encouraging the believers to remain on the "straight path" of holiness and righteousness towards God, not allowing the weaker aspects of our walk with Him to turn us "out of the way." But notice the writer gives hope regarding those lame and weaker parts of us - it can be healed. How? By maintaining course and continually walking the straight path - that of holiness and righteousness towards God.

As the writer continues his thoughts on the matter, he reminds us of the mighty shaking of the voice of God at Mount Sinai, but in verse 25:

See that ye refuse NOT him that speaketh.

Meaning the Lord! Because His Word is the straight Way, it is the Truth, it is LIFE! The shaking is reminiscent of threshing wheat and removing the chaff. In verse 27, we're told it is so that *those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

Yes, *our God is a consuming fire* (v. 29)! He will burn up the chaff, that which is useless and evil. But if we walk the straight path and not stray due to our own lameness, we shall overcome, and His fire will not consume us in wrath, but will purify us as refined gold. See you on the sabbath!

Your Brother in Christ,
Brandon

We Celebrate Hanukkah in remembrance of the historic victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucid Greek Emperor Antiochus IV and those who desecrated the Temple, making it into a pagan shrine.

Part of the wonder of **Hanukkah** is that this small, untrained force was able to defeat the most powerful army on earth at that time.

Another is that when the Maccabees rededicated the Temple, the one-day supply of consecrated oil used to relight the Menorah miraculously continued to burn the entire eight days necessary to produce additional consecrated oil. We see the parallel to this story in Jesus' Parable of the

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“Transformed from Darkness to Light”

Ten Virgins, and the sustaining power and salvation of the “Oil”, which we will see played out towards the end of this message in relationship to prototype parallel of the **Hannukah** story, and the Endtimes Prophecy of the “*Abomination of Desolation*”:

Matthew 25:1-13

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

¹“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their **lamps** and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³For when the foolish took their **lamps**, they took no **oil** with them. ⁴but the wise took **flasks of oil** with their **lamps**. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their **lamps**. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your **oil**, for our **lamps** are going out.’ ⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he answered, ‘Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ¹³Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Matthew 24:13

“But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

God honored the efforts of the Maccabees to restore the Temple, taking what little oil they had, and making it last an impossibly long time.

Elijah's successor, Elisha, also helped a widow who only had a small jar of oil. The woman's husband, a prophet, had died and the creditors were demanding her sons in payment.

Elisha told her to ask all her neighbors for empty jars and then go home and pour oil into all the jars until they were full. Then he directed her to sell the oil, pay her debts, and live on what was left.

Likewise, we, as Believers in Yeshua (Jesus), have many times experienced God's grace in our lives in ways that resemble a small supply of oil lasting beyond all expectation.

Corrie ten Boom and her sister, perhaps, experienced such a miracle.

The Nazis forcibly and illegally interned them at Ravensbrück concentration camp for women during World War II. What was their crime? The ten Boom sisters had hidden Jews in their home during the German occupation of Holland in World War II.

In her 1971 book, *The Hiding Place*, Corrie describes how her sister Betsie had managed to bring to the concentration camp a small bottle of vitamin drops. Although she needed those few drops as much as anyone in that camp, Betsie never refused anyone and willingly shared the drops with all who asked.

Miraculously, and beyond all comprehension, the drops continued to emerge from this small bottle, weeks after the bottle should have been naturally emptied. (*The Hiding Place, chapters 12-13*)

It is worth recounting some of the miraculous activities associated with the lives of these two women.

The Ten Boom family

Corrie, who died in Orange County, California on her 91st birthday, tells in *The Hiding Place*, of secret worship services they held at Ravensbrück, which brought light to that dark place.

“Either Betsie or I would open the Bible. Because only the Hollanders could understand the Dutch text we would translate aloud in German. **And then we would hear the life-giving words passed back along the aisles in French, Polish, Russian, Czech, and back into Dutch. They were little previews of Heaven, these evenings beneath the light bulb.**”

Betsie was the older sister and in poor health. She died in the camp. Her last words to Corrie were, “... [we] must tell them what we have learned here. We must tell them that there is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still. They will listen to us, Corrie, because we have been here.” (*The Hiding Place; 1971, p. 217*)

Victory in Our Weakness

Just as Corrie ten Boom, a middle-aged woman in her fifties, was able to stand up to the mighty fascist German Nazi system, surviving decades after she was ground into the dust, so too the story of **Hanukkah and the Maccabees reminds us of how the God of Abraham is able to take a weak force and, in confrontation with what was then the strongest army in the world, give them a miraculous victory.**

Regardless of our status or circumstances, when we operate in faith despite our own weakness, God steps in and does the rest.

As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “That is why, for Messiah's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**” (*2 Corinthians 12:10*)

Corrie recalls how her soul survived the brutality of the Nazis in her frail body:

“Betsy and I were prisoners for the Lord, we were so weak, but we got power because the Holy Spirit was on us. That mighty inner strengthening of the Holy Spirit helped us through.” (*Corrie Ten Boom personal letter, 1974*)

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To act in faith, we don't have to wait until we are strong, for He will make us strong despite our weakness. Neither do we have to wait until we have prospered in some astounding way. Like the widows in First and Second Kings, we can use what little we have, knowing that God will take care of us, providing for our every need.

God can take our small amount of oil and make us lights shining in the darkness of this present age.

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.” Ephesians 5:8

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Saturday, December 4, 2021 – Happy Birthday Mom!!

Week 10 - Miketz (At the End)
Genesis 41:1-44:17; Zechariah 2:10(14)-4:7; John 1:1-18

“Transformed from Darkness to Light”

“And it came to pass at the end of [miketz] two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed a dream: and, behold, he stood by the river.” Genesis 41:1

In last week's study, Joseph's brothers became jealous of him. They plotted against him because his father favored him above his other sons and because his prophetic dreams revealed his own grand destiny. So they threw Joseph into a pit and then sold him into slavery. While serving honorably as a slave, Joseph was falsely accused and sent to prison for a crime he didn't commit.

In this week's reading, Joseph is finally about to come to the end of his many trials and enter into his grand destiny. In fact, the name of the reading, **Miketz**, found in the opening verse of this week's Torah reading, hints at this since this Hebrew word means **“at the end of”**.

Joseph is brought out of the darkness of an Egyptian dungeon to illumine the strange dreams of the Pharaoh. **In just one day, Joseph is promoted from prison to palace; his life was transformed suddenly from darkness to light.**

The three Torah sections (Vayeishev (“And He Lived/And He Settled” – Genesis 37:1-40:23), Mikeitz (“At the End” – Genesis 41:1-44:17) and Vayigash (“Then He Drew Near” – Genesis 44:18-47:27)) that relate the story of Joseph and his brothers . . . are always read before, during or immediately after the festival of Chanukah.

Since “to everything is its season, and a time for every purpose” (Ecclesiastes 3:1), certainly the arrangement of the festivals of the year, which are the “appointed times of G-d” (Leviticus 23:4), as well as the festivals and fasts instituted by the Sages, all have a special connection to the Torah readings in whose weeks they fall, since everything is masterminded by G-d. Thus the story of Joseph is destined to be repeated (prophetically through this season of “Light/Dedication”) . . .

(Shaloh)

A Light in the Darkness

Because Miketz coincides with Hanukkah or the Festival of Lights this year, **this week's portion includes a special Haftarah (prophetic reading) about the prophet Zechariah's vision of a grand Menorah.** He says,

Zechariah's Vision Of The Golden Menorah:

Then the angel who was speaking with me returned, and roused me as a man who is awakened from his sleep. And he said to me, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side.” Then I answered and said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, “What are these, my lord?” So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” Then he answered and said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!”’” Also the word of the LORD came to me saying, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. “For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel – these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth.” Then I answered and said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?” And I answered the second time and said to him, “What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil from themselves?” So he answered me saying, “Do you not know what these are?” And I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones, who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.” Zechariah 4:1-14

A representation of the vision that Zechariah saw is **“The Rainbow”**. The oil for the lamps comes from two olive trees standing alongside the lampstand and is collected in a golden bowl at the top of the shaft. From there it flows to each of the branches. The golden bowl is part of the shaft, which is Jesus Christ, who in turn is upholding the seven branches, which are the Church. The bowl serves to connect the branches to the shaft and provides a collection place for the oil. The bowl is a representation of the heart of Christ, piping life-giving fluid to the body. In the case of the vision, it is oil to keep the lamps lit.

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The two olive trees represent the sources of the supply for the oil to keep the lamps burning. These two trees are the Law and Prophets, which stand with Jesus Christ, the Word of God, Moses represents the Law in human form and Elijah represents the Prophets in human form. As Christians we know Zechariah's vision in another form: On a high mountain (Probably Mount Hermon), Jesus is transfigured before His disciples and they see Him standing with both **Moses and Elijah** (Matthew 17:1-5).

In the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) five of them lacked sufficient oil to keep their lamps burning and were therefore considered foolish. It appears that these are the ones who do not continually persist in getting more oil from Jesus and the Scriptures, but have become **satisfied** in what they already have. They have quit asking God for more of the Spirit. *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”* **Luke 11:13**

Although Zechariah's vision concerns the seven-branched golden lampstand there is a major portion of the conversation within it, devoted to Zerubbabel. Who is this person and what does he have to do with the vision? Let's take a look!

Zerubbabel, which can be translated as “one born in Babylon”, was an actual man who was born in Babylon and lived in the time of Zechariah. He was a descendant of King David and he did **lay the foundation for and finished the second temple** during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah about 520 BCE.

“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.” **Zechariah 4:9**

But Zechariah had a longer-term fulfillment of the prophecy in mind when he spoke those words. He was looking forward to Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the son of David who would build the Temple of God. Zechariah's prophecy hearkens back to the time that King David wanted to build a house for God. But God replied, *“When your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up **one of your descendants** after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. **He shall build for Me a house**, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.”* (1 Chronicles 17:11-14) King David took this to mean that one of his sons, namely Solomon, not the Lord Jesus Christ, would build God a house. Solomon built the first Temple.

The name Zerubbabel also has another meaning, (Zerub) “seed of” (Bab El) “the gate of God”. The gate of God is God's mouth. In other words, God spoke the word and Jesus Christ was formed in Mary's womb. It is Christ who will build God a house. By the way, Jesus is also a descendent of Zerubbabel.

Zechariah 4:10 says, *“For who has despised the day of small things? But **these seven** will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel - these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth.”*

Simply put it means that the **Holy Spirit and the Church** will look forward to the completion of God's house. We find similar language in the book of Revelation concerning the man with the measuring line and the two witnesses:

*Then there was given me a **measuring rod** like a staff; and someone said, **“Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months. And I will grant authority to my **two witnesses**, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”** **These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. Revelation 11:1-4***

by Michael Gibson, Key2Changes.com

God also speaks of the supernatural working of the *Holy Spirit* to accomplish His plans, such as the building of the Second Temple by Zerubbabel:

“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.” **Zechariah 4:6**

In the Holy Sanctuary, the light of the Menorah became a symbol of God's Divine Presence; its light shone not only inside the Temple, but tradition says it also shined out the windows and into Jerusalem where people could bask in its rays during the dark nights.

During this time of year, when the winter nights are the longest, we sense our need for light more intensely.

Light of the World

Hanukkah is a celebration of light.

Again, **Did Jesus celebrate Hanukkah?** The only reference in Scripture to Hanukkah is found in the New Testament, and it indicates that He more than likely kept the festival.

The Gospel of John reveals that Jesus walked in the courts of the Temple during Hanukkah:

“Now it was the **Feast of Dedication** in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And *Jesus walked in the Temple, in Solomon's porch.*” **John 10:22-23**

While He was there, some asked Him directly if He were the Messiah.

Jesus pointed to the works He had done as proof, but explained that they did not believe in Him because they were not His sheep.

In this week’s New Testament portion, **Jesus the Messiah proclaimed His mission as one of healing the brokenhearted and setting captives free.**

The verses He cited came directly out of the book of the Hebrew prophet Isaiah.

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the **Sabbath day**, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because *He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted; To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.*” **Luke 4:16–19; see also Isaiah 61:1**

The Hebrew prophet Isaiah wrote of a “Great Light” that would one day come to lift people out of the gloomy darkness:

“Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed ... The people who walked in darkness have seen a **great light**; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.” **Isaiah 9:1–2**

Who is this “great light” of which Isaiah prophesied? The Light would come in the form of (*initially a conception, when light first entered the World, and then . . .*) a child, who would eventually rule the nations in righteousness and justice, seated on the throne of His father, David, for all eternity.

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice, from that time forward, even forever.” **Isaiah 9:6–7**

Jesus (the Messiah—the Anointed One) said, **“I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”** **John 8:12**

MessianicBible.com

Week 10 - Miketz (At the End)
Genesis 41:1-44:17; Zechariah 2:10(14)–4:7; John 1:1–18

“Transformed from Darkness to Light”

“And it came to pass at the end of [miketz] two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed a dream: and, behold, he stood by the river.” **Genesis 41:1**

Genesis 41:1

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

41 After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile,

AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THE END OF TWO YEARS (41:1)

Every affliction to befall man has a set time to end; as it is written, “An end He set to darkness, and every limit He investigates” (Job 28:3). This is said regarding Joseph, who was ten years in prison [when he asked the chief butler to intercede for him] but G-d investigated and saw that it is necessary for him to be imprisoned for another two years...

“In every sorrow there is profit” (Proverbs 14:23) This, too, is said in regard to Joseph, who suffered in prison and then profited from it [in becoming] ruler over Egypt...

(Midrash Tanchuma)

BEHOLD, HE STOOD OVER THE RIVER (41:1)

The wicked see themselves as standing over their gods, as it says, “And Pharaoh dreamed; and, behold, he stood over the river” (the Nile being the arch idol of Egypt). But as for the righteous, their G-d stands over them, as it says (regarding Jacob’s dream), “Behold, G-d stood over him (Genesis 28:13) - (Midrash Rabbah)

Genesis 41:2-18

²and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows, attractive and plump, and they fed in the reed grass. ³And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows. And Pharaoh awoke. ⁵And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time. And behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. ⁶And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. ⁷And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. ⁸So in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

⁹ Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “I remember my offenses today.¹⁰ When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, ¹¹ we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own interpretation. ¹² A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. ¹³ And as he interpreted to us, so it came about. I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged.”

¹⁴ Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. ¹⁵ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” ¹⁶ Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” ¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile. ¹⁸ Seven cows, plump and attractive, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass.

AND PHARAOH SAID TO JOSEPH: “IN MY DREAM, I AM STANDING ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER AND, BEHOLD, THERE CAME OUT OF THE RIVER SEVEN COWS...” (41:17-18)

In contrast, Joseph saw in his dream (recounted in the beginning of the previous Parshah) that, “We were binding sheaves in the field. . . .” Both Pharaoh and Joseph beheld the future in their dreams, but with a significant difference. To Pharaoh life is a river, with himself standing on the riverbank—outside of its flow, a passive bystander to what transpires. To Joseph life is a field within which he toils, laboring at “binding sheaves”— gathering its diverse stalks and binding them into an integral whole.

Many are seduced by the enticements of Pharaonic life. “We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for free,” the children of Israel grumbled (Numbers 11:5) when G-d had stripped them of the shackles and security of slavery. Life is a free lunch in Pharaoh’s Egypt; there are no choices in your life, but neither is there the anxiety and responsibility they entail. You simply stand on the riverbank and watch the cows and years follow and consume one another.

Pharaoh’s vision may be every vegetable’s utopia, but there is little satisfaction and no fulfillment in his free fish. It is only in the toilsome labor in the field of life that the most important freedom of all is to be found: the freedom to achieve and create.

from the teachings of the Lubovitcher Rebbe

Genesis 41:19-39

¹⁹ Seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰ And the thin, ugly cows ate up the first seven plump cows,²¹ but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as ugly as at the beginning. Then I awoke. ²² I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good. ²³ Seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, ²⁴ and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”

²⁵ Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁶ The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. ²⁷ The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. ²⁸ It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. ²⁹ There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, ³⁰ but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, ³¹ and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. ³² **And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.** ³³ Now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. ³⁵ And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. ³⁶ That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.”

Joseph Rises to Power

³⁷ This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. ³⁸ And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” ³⁹ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are.

AND PHARAOH SAID TO JOSEPH...THERE IS NONE AS UNDERSTANDING AND WISE AS YOU (41:39)

“Understanding” (navon) is one who can deduce one thing from another; “wise” (chacham) is one who possesses wisdom. A navon who is not a chacham is like a mighty warrior who is unarmed; a chacham who is not a navon is like a weakling with armaments; a navon and chacham is a strong and armed warrior.

(Midrash)

Genesis 41:40-45

⁴⁰ You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹ And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” ⁴² **Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck.** ⁴³ And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of

Egypt.”⁴⁵ And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah. **And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera** priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

AND HE GAVE HIM TO WIFE ASENATH THE DAUGHTER OF POTIPHERA (41:45)
Most commentaries identify Poti-Phera with Potiphar, Joseph's former master.

According to a Midrashic account cited by a number of the commentaries, Asenath was the daughter of Dinah from Shechem. Banished from Jacob's house, Asenath wandered to Egypt and was raised by Potiphar and his wife. When the daughters of Egypt threw their jewelry at Joseph, Asenath threw a golden amulet which identified her as a granddaughter of Jacob, and Joseph took her as his wife.

Genesis 41:46-48

⁴⁶ Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, ⁴⁸ and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it.

AND [JOSEPH] COLLECTED THE FOOD... THE PRODUCE OF EACH CITY'S SUR-ROUNDING FIELDS HE PLACED WITHIN IT (41:48)

... the produce of man requires some “local dust” as a preservative, lest it rot.

The greater a person's achievements, the more susceptible they are to corruption. A fruitful yield in life—material or spiritual—may breed an arrogance that corrodes all that is good and G-dly in it. The solution is a dose of dust. One who saturates his successes with humility and self-effacement, guarantees their preservation as positive and constructive forces in his own life and the lives of his fellows.

(from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Genesis 41:49-52

⁴⁹ And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

⁵⁰ Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore them to him. ⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the firstborn **Manasseh**. “For,” he said, “*God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house.*” ⁵² The name of the second he called **Ephraim**. “*For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.*”

In the Land of Hardship and Affliction, God has Made Me FORGET all My Hardship & God has Made me Fruitful. AND TO JOSEPH WERE BORN TWO SONS... (41:50)

In galut (exile), a person is deprived of his “home” — of the environment that preserves his faith, nourishes his growth and spurs his achievements. But precisely because it deprives him of the support of his natural environment, the state of *exile* compels the person to turn to the inner reaches of his soul and extract from there reserves of commitment and determination never tapped in more tranquil times.

This is one positive function of *exile*. In addition, exile broadens a person's horizons, bringing him in contact with things and circumstances he never would have encountered at home. Many of these are negative things and circumstances, contrary to the values of his homeland and tradition; but everything in G-d's world possesses a positive potential. When a person learns to resist and reject the negative aspects of these alien things, he can then redeem the “sparks of holiness” they harbor at their core by utilizing their essence toward good and G-dly ends.

Joseph in Egypt experienced these two stages in the positive exploitation of *exile*. In naming his first son Manasseh (“forgetting”), Joseph referred to his struggles in an environment intent on eradicating all memory of home and roots, and how his battle against forgetting and disconnection uncovered his deepest potentials. His second son, Ephraim, so named “because G-d has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction,” represents the second dividend of *exile* — the manner in which the “land of affliction” itself is exploited as a source of growth and productivity..

from the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

And why was Joseph in that Egyptian prison in the first place? Because eleven years before that, his repeated retelling of his own two dreams had intensified his brothers' envy of him, provoking them to sell him into slavery. Indeed, Joseph carries every detail of his two dreams with him wherever he goes, and they serve as the basis for his seemingly strange treatment of his brothers and father many years later, when he is ruler of Egypt and his brothers come from famine-stricken Canaan to purchase food.

The result of all this dreaming was the Egyptian galut (exile) — the first *exile* experienced by the Jewish people and the source of all their subsequent exiles.

FROM THE CHASSIDIC MASTERS

... galut (exile) was born out of a succession of dreams because ***exile (galut) is the ultimate dream.***

from Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi

Genesis 41:53-42:3

⁵³ The seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt came to an end,⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. ⁵⁵ When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do.”

⁵⁶ So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷ Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

42 When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” ² And he said, “Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die.” ³ So ten of **Joseph's brothers** went down to buy grain in Egypt.

AND JOSEPH'S TEN BROTHERS WENT DOWN TO BUY GRAIN IN EGYPT (42:3)

Why are they called “Joseph's brothers” and not “Jacob's sons”? In the beginning they did not treat him with brotherly love but sold him subsequently, however, they regretted it. Every day they would say, “Let us go and inquire about him and restore him to his father.” And when Jacob bade them go down to Egypt, they all resolved to show him brotherly love [and seek to find him].

(Midrash Rabbah)

Genesis 42:4-5

⁴ But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with his brothers, for he feared that harm might happen to him. ⁵ Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

AND THE SONS OF ISRAEL CAME TO BUY GRAIN, AMONG THOSE THAT CAME... (42:5)

Joseph knew that his brothers were coming to Egypt. What did he do? He placed guards at the ten gates of the city and ordered them to record the names of all who entered. In the evening they brought him their lists. One read, “Reuben the son of Jacob”; another, “Shimon the son of Jacob,” and so on. He ordered that all the storehouses be shut down except for one, and he gave their names to the official in charge of that storehouse, instructing him: “When these men written down here come, bring them to me.”

Several days passed but they did not come. He sent his men to search for them and they found them in the street of harlots. What were they doing there? They thought: “Maybe because Joseph was of handsome appearance he was set in a [harlot's] tent.” They were arrested and brought to Joseph.

Genesis 42:6-9

⁶ Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. “Where do you come from?” he said. They said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.” ⁸ And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. ⁹ And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed of them. And he said to them, “You are spies; you have come to see the nakedness of the land.”

AND JOSEPH'S BROTHERS CAME, AND BOWED THEMSELVES DOWN BEFORE HIM... AND JOSEPH REMEMBERED THE DREAMS WHICH HE HAD DREAMED ABOUT THEM, AND HE SAID TO THEM, “YOU ARE SPIES...” (42:6-9)

... Joseph waited for his brothers to come to Egypt to purchase food. But when they came and bowed to him there were only ten of them, so he knew that the first dream had not yet been fulfilled. He therefore had to devise a ploy that would compel them to bring Benjamin—without revealing his identity. Only after Benjamin had come and bowed together with his other brothers could Joseph notify his father and cause the second dream to be fulfilled as well.

Also the other ploy he devised—by planting the goblet in Benjamin's sack—was not to cause them suffering, but to be certain that his brothers did not harbor any jealousy toward Benjamin because of their father's preference of him, as they had towards himself. He therefore had to test their love and devotion towards Benjamin before he could allow him to go with them.

BUT THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM (42:8)

The brothers could not comprehend Joseph's manner of serving G-d. Like their fathers before them, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph's brothers were shepherds—a vocation which takes a person far from the tumult and vanities of society to a life of seclusion and communion with nature. As such, they could turn their backs on the mundane affairs of man, contemplate the majesty of the Creator, and serve Him with a clear mind and tranquil heart.

They could not understand how Joseph can be a man of the world, a “fortuitous achiever” in commerce and politics, and at the same time remain completely bound to G-d in his every moment and every endeavor.

(Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi)

Genesis 42:10-43:26

¹⁰ They said to him, “No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹ We are all sons of one man. We are honest men. Your servants have never been spies.”

¹² He said to them, “No, it is the nakedness of the land that you have come to see.” ¹³ And they said, “We, your servants, are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more.” ¹⁴ But Joseph said to them, “It is as I said to you. You are spies. ¹⁵ By this you shall be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶ Send one of you, and let him bring your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. Or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies.” ¹⁷ And he put them all together in custody for three days.

¹⁸ On the third day Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear God;¹⁹ if you are honest men, let one of your brothers remain confined where you are in custody, and let the rest go and carry grain for the famine of your households,²⁰ and bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you shall not die.” And they did so.²¹ Then they said to one another, “In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us.”²² And Reuben answered them, “Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood.”²³ They did not know that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them.²⁴ Then he turned away from them and wept. And he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.²⁵ And Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, and to replace every man’s money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. This was done for them.

²⁶ Then they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed.²⁷ And as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack.²⁸ He said to his brothers, “My money has been put back; here it is in the mouth of my sack!” At this their hearts failed them, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, “What is this that God has done to us?”

²⁹ When they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying,³⁰ “The man, the lord of the land, spoke roughly to us and took us to be spies of the land.³¹ But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we have never been spies.’³² We are twelve brothers, sons of our father. One is no more, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.’³³ Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I shall know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for the famine of your households, and go your way.’³⁴ Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I shall know that you are not spies but honest men, and I will deliver your brother to you, and you shall trade in the land.”

³⁵ As they emptied their sacks, behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack. And when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were afraid.³⁶ And Jacob their father said to them, “You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and now you would take Benjamin. All this has come against me.”³⁷ Then Reuben said to his father, “Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.”³⁸ But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is the only one left. If harm should happen to him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.”

Joseph’s Brothers Return to Egypt

⁴³ Now the famine was severe in the land.² And when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, “Go again, buy us a little food.”³ But Judah said to him, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’⁴ If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food.⁵ But if you will not send him, we will not go down, for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.’”⁶ Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?”⁷ They replied, “The man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?’ What we told him was in answer to these questions. Could we in any way know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”⁸ And Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.⁹ I will be a pledge of his safety. From my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.¹⁰ If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice.”

¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds.¹² Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight.¹³ Take also your brother, and arise, go again to the man.¹⁴ May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

¹⁵ So the men took this present, and they took double the money with them, and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

¹⁶ When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and make ready, for the men are to dine with me at noon.”¹⁷ The man did as Joseph told him and brought the men to Joseph’s house.¹⁸ And the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph’s house, and they said, “It is because of the money, which was replaced in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us servants and seize our donkeys.”¹⁹ So they went up to the steward of Joseph’s house and spoke with him at the door of the house,²⁰ and said, “Oh, my lord, we came down the first time to buy food.²¹ And when we came to the lodging place we opened our sacks, and there was each man’s money in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it again with us,²² and we have brought other money down with us to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks.”²³ He replied, “Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them.²⁴ And when the man had brought the men into Joseph’s house and given them water, and they had washed their feet, and when he had given their donkeys fodder,²⁵ they prepared the present for Joseph’s coming at noon, for they heard that they should eat bread there.

²⁶ When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them and bowed down to him to the ground. ²⁷ And he inquired about their welfare and said, “Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?” ²⁸ They said, “Your servant our father is well; he is still alive.” And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves.

“IS YOUR FATHER WELL, THE OLD MAN OF WHOM YOU SPOKE? IS HE STILL ALIVE?” (43:27-28)

... when Joseph asked, “Is your father well?” he was inquiring after Jacob; “The old man of whom you spoke?” was a reference to Isaac. To which they replied: “Your servant our father is well, he is still alive.” (Isaac had died ten years earlier, a year before Joseph was released from prison).

(Midrash Rabbah)

Genesis 43:29-32

²⁹ And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!” ³⁰ Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there. ³¹ Then he washed his face and came out. And controlling himself he said, “Serve the food.” ³² They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

THE EGYPTIANS CANNOT EAT BREAD WITH THE HEBREWS, FOR THAT IS AN ABOMINATION TO THE EGYPTIANS (43:32)

Because the Hebrews eat the animal (the sheep) which is worshipped by the Egyptians.

(Onkelus)

Genesis 43:33-44:17

³³ And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth. And the men looked at one another in amazement. ³⁴ Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank and were merry with him.

Joseph Tests His Brothers

⁴⁴ Then he commanded the steward of his house, “Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack, ² and put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, with his money for the grain.” And he did as Joseph told him.

³ As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away with their donkeys. ⁴ They had gone only a short distance from the city. Now Joseph said to his steward, “Up, follow after the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? ⁵ Is it not from this that my lord drinks, and by this that he practices divination? You have done evil in doing this.’”

⁶ When he overtook them, he spoke to them these words. ⁷ They said to him, “Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing! ⁸ Behold, the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? ⁹ Whichever of your servants is found with it shall die, and we also will be my lord's servants.” ¹⁰ He said, “Let it be as you say; he who is found with it shall be my servant, and the rest of you shall be innocent.” ¹¹ Then each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. ¹² And he searched, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³ Then they tore their clothes, and every man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

¹⁴ When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there. They fell before him to the ground. ¹⁵ Joseph said to them, “What deed is this that you have done? Do you not know that a man like me can indeed practice divination?” ¹⁶ And Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how can we clear ourselves? God has found out the guilt of your servants; behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he also in whose hand the cup has been found.” ¹⁷ But he said, “Far be it from me that I should do so! Only the man in whose hand the cup was found shall be my servant. But as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

Two Messiahs – I know Jesus, but who is Messiah ben Joseph?

Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled and the Parallel between Joseph and Yeshua, the savior of the world:

Prophecy #1:

The Hebrew prophet Isaiah wrote of a “*Great Light*” that would one day come to lift people out of the gloomy darkness:

“Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed . . . The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.” (*Isaiah 9:1-2*)

Who is this “great light” of which Isaiah prophesied? The Light would come in the form of a child, who would eventually rule the nations in righteousness and justice, seated on the throne of His father, David, for all eternity.

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will

be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice, from that time forward, even forever.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Yeshua HaMashiach (the Messiah – the Anointed One) said, **“I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”** (John 8:12)

Commented [RR1]:

Prophecy #2:

In this week’s New Testament Scripture Reading, **Yeshua the Messiah proclaimed His mission as one of healing the brokenhearted and setting captives free.**

The verses He cited came directly out of the book of the Hebrew prophet Isaiah.

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted; To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD” (*Both a Literal Fulfillment, and yet a Futuristic Messianic Prophecy of the Millennial Reign of the Messiah, a true Jubilee, Restoration of All things and Cancellation of All Debts – Luke 4:16-19; see also Isaiah 61:1*)

Prophecy #3:

Daniel 9:24-27

The Seventy Weeks

²⁴“Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and **to atone for iniquity** (this is the Feast of Atonement – to be fulfilled at the Messiah’s Second Coming), to bring in everlasting righteousness, **to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.** ²⁵ Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. ²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks, **an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing.** **And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.** Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And **he (the Anti-Christ) shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering.** And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

Daniel 9:24-27 is (definitely) a prophecy, both about the coming of the Messiah to Jerusalem and of the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. In verse 24 it describes a time when the “Anointed One” (messiah in Hebrew) will come to Jerusalem to “*finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness*” and to “*seal up vision and prophecy.*” What else could this be about? **If there ever was a clear-cut messianic prophecy it is this one.** The only way to avoid this conclusion is to either deny that the Old Testament predicts the coming of a Messiah or to choose ahead of time to ignore any evidence which points toward Jesus of *Nazareth* (of the messianic root of Jesse – a Messianic Title and not a geographical landmarker) as the Messiah.

What are the seventy weeks?

The angel Gabriel approaches Daniel in the latter half of the ninth chapter after Daniel prays for Israel. Gabriel mentions “seventy sevens” will take place before God will put an end to sin and bring everlasting righteousness (**Daniel 9:24**).

Scholars agree that the sevens appears to mean years. Therefore, $70 \times 7 = 490$ years. Although Christians typically refer to the period of God bringing everlasting righteousness as *70 weeks*, they really mean *70 X 7 years*.

The prophecy divides up these 490 years in a handful of ways:

- **49 years (7 X 7):** The time it takes to rebuild Jerusalem since the time the Babylonians had destroyed it (**Daniel 9:25**), which occurs in the Book of Nehemiah.
- **434 years (62 X 7):** A time designated for waiting for the Anointed One to come (**Daniel 9:26**). The Anointed One appears to mean Jesus, here.
- **After those 434 years:** They put the Anointed One to death and destroy the city. The first half of this alludes to Jesus’ death on the cross. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D., including the temple, which had been rebuilt in Nehemiah.
- **The last year (1 X 7):** Usually referred to: Daniel 9:27 Prophecy, “**And he (the Anti-Christ) shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering;**” which transpires in Revelation, when the **antichrist** comes, persecutes Christians, and Jesus returns for His second coming. Theologians dispute whether this has already taken place or whether we have yet to see its fulfillment as we wait in the 69-70-year gap. This article assumes we have not yet reached the 70th week.

Why do the 70 weeks matter?

Theologians have added up the dates for the first **69 weeks**. According to the timeline of Jewish calendars, the 69th week would lead up to Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem, followed by his death and resurrection soon after.

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This means a prophecy given to Daniel back in the third or second early century B.C. came to fruition in 30 A.D., hundreds of years later. The mathematical possibilities of just one prophecy of this nature alone coming true would take an impossibly small probability to happen in reality. **Therefore, the first 69 weeks strengthen the reason to believe in Christ's death, resurrection, and plan of salvation for our lives.** He fulfilled the impossible.

But the weeks also matter historically. Daniel, and his people, had endured a great deal of tribulation, leading up to and after Jesus' death and resurrection on the cross. Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem and taken many people captive. The Seleucid Empire attempted to force the Israelites to conform to Hellenistic culture, which led to the Maccabean revolt (celebrated in the holiday of Hanukkah). Romans overtook Israel and, later, destroyed the temple and scattered the Jewish people in an event known as the diaspora.

The Seleucid Empire was a Greek state in Western Asia, during the Hellenistic Period, that existed from 312 BC to 63 BC. The Seleucid Empire was founded by Seleucus I Nicator, following the division of the Macedonian Empire that existed previously, which had been founded by Alexander the Great. After having received the Mesopotamian region of Babylonia in 321 BC.

The Seleucid Empire was a major center of Hellenistic culture. Greek customs and language were privileged, while the wide variety of local traditions had been generally tolerated, an urban Greek elite had formed the dominant political class, and was reinforced by steady immigration from Greece.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seleucid_Empire

They needed something to hope in. They knew when they reached the end of the 70 weeks that everlasting righteousness was in sight (Daniel 9:24).

It matters for Christians today, too. When the tribulation period comes, we will need to rest in the fact that Jesus will restore all things at the end of the seventy weeks.

What to expect at the start at the 70th week?

Daniel gives a number of clues as to what will happen during that final seven years:

1. A War (WW III) will take place (Daniel 9:26 – Revelation 9:13-21, “Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God . . . Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates . . . prepared for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, were released to kill a third (2 Billion (WW III), WW I = 8 Million & WW II = 50 Million) of mankind . . . by these plagues . . . The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”).
2. The antichrist will come and make a covenant with the Jewish people. He has a description here.
3. The antichrist, known as the “abomination of desolation” in Daniel, will put an end to sacrifices and offerings in the temple.*
4. Jesus returns immediately following the events of the 70th week.

*Some theologians have attributed the title of the abomination of desolation to Antiochus Epiphanes IV, who entered the temple, stopped sacrifices, and put an altar to Zeus in the temple, an abomination in Jewish culture.

Revelation details more of the antichrist's way in which he operates or works. For instance, he will try to change laws and times, to prevent prophecies from being fulfilled.

Daniel 7:25

²⁵ He (Satan) shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

He will try to take the place of God, and he will persecute the saints of God severely.

Revelation 12:1-14

The Woman and the Dragon

¹ And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ² She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. ³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. ⁴ His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. ⁵ She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne. ⁶ and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

¹⁻⁶ She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne. ⁶ and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days. There is a 2,000 year gap between Verse 5 and Verse 6 of this passage; from “her child was caught up to God and to his throne,” to “and the woman fled into the wilderness . . . to be nourished for 1,260 days,” we SEE here described the Birth and Ascension of the Messiah, Jesus, and the 2,000 years later we SEE, in Verse 6, the description of the time period of the “Great Tribulation” and just before the “Battle of Armageddon”, were we SEE one of the three time stamps calculated from the “Abomination of Desolation”:

Revelation 12:6, “and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days (the precious time of the Return of the Messiah, and the end of the “Battle of

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Armageddon”, 1,260-days from when the two-witnesses (Moses & Elijah) appear on the scene during the Passover season – the Cup of Elijah).”

Daniel 12:11-13, ¹¹“And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be **1,290 days** (the precious time of the Return of the Messiah, and the end of the “Battle of Armageddon”).¹² Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the **1,335 days** (the precious end of the “Wrath of God” on the Earth and the Beginning of the Messiah’s “Millennial Reign” on the Earth).¹³ But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.”

Satan Thrown Down to Earth

⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called **the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.**¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.¹² **Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”**

¹³ And when **the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth,** he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.¹⁴ But the woman was given the **two wings of the great eagle** so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for **a time, and times, and half a time** . . .

. . . ¹⁷ Then **the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**¹⁸ And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Revelation 12:7-12, ⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called **the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him . . .**¹² **Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!:** notice this is the “wrath” of Satan and not the “wrath” of God, which will follow the 2nd Coming of the Messiah, just following the “Day of Atonement”.

2 Peter 3

The Day of the Lord Will Come

¹ This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,² that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles,³ knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.⁷ **But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.**

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.¹⁰ **But the day of the Lord will come like a thief,** and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹¹ **Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.**

Final Words

¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.¹⁷ **You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.**¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Revelation 12:13-14, ¹³ And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.¹⁴ But **the woman** was given the **two wings of the great eagle** so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be **nourished for a time, and times, and half a time**”; here in Verse 13 we read about two Nations that will be Key players in the Fulfillment of Endtimes Prophecy, that of “*the woman*”, *Israel*, and “*two wings of the great eagle*”, the *United States of America*, both Known Symbols Today, as it would relate to who these two Nations are; as well as, again, here in Verse 14 we SEE the prophecy of 1,260 days referred, or as it is written, “*a time, and times, and half a time*”, again, the *precise time of the Beginning of the “Battle of Armageddon*”.

Revelation 12:6, “and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for **1,260 days** (the precise time of the Beginning of the “Battle of Armageddon”).”

Revelation 12:17, ¹⁷ Then **the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**”; here we SEE “*the*

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dragon”, the devil and Satan, bringing great tribulation and persecution to two peoples, referenced in symbolism of “the woman” and “those who keep the commandments of God”, the Jews, and “her offspring” or “hold to the testimony of Jesus”, followers of Jesus, also known as Christians.

Matthew 24:21. “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.”

When the 70th week approaches, be prepared for a great deal of persecution and martyrdom than Christian history has ever seen before.

But also be prepared for God’s restoration of all things, at the conclusion of the 70th week, where He will bring about righteousness and renewal for all eternity.

<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/end-times/what-are-the-70-weeks-of-daniel-what-does-this-end-times-prophecy-mean.html>

Yeshua and Yosef (Jesus and Joseph)

Many parallels can be drawn between Yeshua and Joseph.

At the time of Joseph’s release from prison into the service of Pharaoh he was 30 years old, just as Yeshua was 30 when he began His public ministry in the service of the King.

Also, Joseph’s appearance and personality had been so changed during his time in Egypt that his brothers no longer recognized him.

They stood right in front of Joseph, seeking the salvation from their famine that only he could provide, and yet they had no idea he was their brother.

Likewise, Yeshua’s Jewish brothers and sisters today hold in front of them the Scriptures that reveal who He is, and yet they are unable to recognize Him as their Jewish Messiah.

One reason for this modern-day blindness is the way Yeshua has been portrayed by Christians over the centuries: He seems to have ceased being the observant Jew who faithfully kept the commandments of God in the Torah and has, instead, been labeled as the Gentiles’ “god.”

Yeshua’s identity has been changed so much that the great majority of Jewish people cannot fathom that this “Jesus” could possibly be the Jewish Mashiach (Messiah) for whom they have been waiting, longing and praying for over 3,000 years.

Nevertheless, the Prophet Zechariah told us that one day, all the Jewish people will recognize Him:

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over Him, as one weeps over a firstborn.” (Zechariah 12:10)

Messianic Bible, Bibles For Israel

Two Messiahs – I know Jesus, but who is Messiah ben Joseph?

“Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.” (Luke 24:12)

Did you know that a resurrected Messiah is not only a Christian belief? It is also very Jewish!

When Rabbis studied Zechariah 12:10-12 and realized that the Messiah must die, many of them were left baffled. They wondered: *How could a triumphant Messiah Son of David die?*

Zechariah 12:10-12

Him Whom They Have Pierced

¹⁰“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced (be pierced through, slain), they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. ¹¹ On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo (the location of the “Battle of Armageddon”). ¹² The land shall mourn, each family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves;

Some Rabbis solved the dilemma by creating two Messiahs:

Messiah ben Joseph, according to Rabbis, is the suffering redeemer that the Hebrew prophets often spoke of – someone who would battle the enemies of Israel and prepare the way for Messiah ben David.

Messiah ben David is expected to establish a blissful utopia on earth, known as the Messianic Kingdom (Isaiah 2:4, 9:1-7, 11:6-9).

Isaiah 2:4

⁴He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

Isaiah 9:1-7

For to Us a Child Is Born

¹But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.

³You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you

as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 11:6-9

⁶The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

⁹They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

What makes this dilemma even more confusing is that the Rabbis of the late second Temple period **believed that Messiah ben David would be a warrior as well.**

A 20th century Jewish scholar put it this way:

“Under the charismatic leadership of the second Messiah, Messiah ben David, the great wars will continue. God fights the battles of His Messiah and the ultimate victory comes to pass.”

How do these ideas apply to Believers in Yeshua as the Messiah?

By looking more closely at this second **Messiah ben Joseph** in Rabbinic thought, we can better understand what the Jewish People expect of Messiah and whether or not there really are two Messiahs as many Rabbis claim, or **just one Messiah who fulfills both roles**, as Christians claim.

To understand who this Messiah ben Joseph is supposed to be and do, we’ll start with the life of his forefather, Joseph.

First Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

#1 Dreams of Grandeur, Plots of Murder

A riches to rags to riches story in Genesis 39–50 has provided Rabbis with the imagery needed to draw the idea of the suffering servant they have named **Messiah son of Joseph.**

Joseph had dreams of grandeur given to him by God Himself. He would be exalted above his brothers, and they would be humbled before him. His brothers despise him for this.

They plot to kill him but, instead, sell him into slavery in Egypt where he rises to the glory of the second in command of all Egypt. Only Pharaoh, who is called the sun and the moon, their god, was greater.

Not recognizing Joseph in the palace of Pharaoh, his brothers all bow to him, begging to buy food to save their family from a severe famine **(a famine of Truth . . . “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” Amos 8:11 . . . “³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, ⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.” John 5:39-40)**

Joseph not only saves the lives of his family, but also neighboring nations affected by the famine. In doing this, the nations around Egypt bow down to Joseph as well.

This sounds a lot like what a Messiah would do – save the nations.

But **Messiah ben Joseph** is known for his suffering, and Joseph did suffer greatly.

Second Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

#2 For the Joy Set before Him, He Endured . . .

Hebrews 12:1-2

Jesus, Founder and Perfecter of Our Faith

“ . . . let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

When Joseph reveals his dreams of grandeur to his brothers, they throw him into a pit while they plot to kill him and, in a sense, they succeeded. After selling him as a slave, they bloody his coat and show it to their father Jacob, implying that Joseph had been ravaged by beasts and died.

Joseph also suffers imprisonment for a crime he didn’t commit, and he endures the emotional pain of not seeing his father or youngest brother, whom he loved greatly.

For the next two decades, Joseph endures an intense spiritual battle.

He needs to get a God’s eye view of the rejection he has suffered and forgive his brothers.

He also has to battle within himself to remain faithful to God through the injustices and temptations he faced, while at the same time growing in favor with God and man.

After 22 years of separation, Joseph encounters his brothers and must now decide how he will react – in revenge or in *chesed* (Grace), which is God’s kind of loving kindness – a covenantal commitment for another’s well-being that endures sin and betrayal and shows compassion and mercy.

We are reminded of what this kind of love is. In all **26 verses of Psalm 136** we see it: “Give thanks to Yehovah, for He is good; His loving kindness [*chesd’oh* – grace] endures forever.”

While Joseph suffered emotionally and spiritually, in Judaism it is understood that **Messiah ben Joseph**, who is the descendant of Joseph, will suffer death.

This understanding fits into the Rabbinic teaching called (Ma’aseh Avot Siman l’Banim, which means) **What our fathers did, our sons also.**

Rabbis teach that some of what our Avot (Fathers) experienced (such as Joseph), one of their descendants (such as **Messiah ben Joseph**) may also experience in some way, physically and/or in moral character.

Let’s consider more ways that Joseph’s experiences foreshadow the Messiah’s experiences as well as his identity and purpose.

Third Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

#3 Like Joseph, Messiah Would Suffer

While Joseph suffered spiritually, Rabbis point to the prophets who write about the physical death of God’s suffering servant. A rare few refer to the Prophet Isaiah:

“Surely our diseases he did bear, and our pains he carried; Whereas we did esteem him stricken, *Smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded because of our transgressions. He was crushed because of our iniquities: The chastisement of our welfare was upon him. And with his stripes we were healed (healed spiritually).*” (Isaiah 53:4-5)

However, when talking about the suffering servant, most Rabbis refer to the Prophet Zechariah. He writes that in the last days, after God wages war against the nations who come against Jerusalem: the people of Israel will mourn for one they have pierced:

“They will look on me, because they have *pierced him*, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.” (Zechariah 12:10)

There is much discussion about who this pierced one is and who the people of Israel are mourning for.

As we look at Rabbinic writings, we are told that he is Messiah ben Joseph, who dies in the battle of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38-39; Talmud (Sukkah 52a).

Though he is killed, it is not the end of this Messiah. He will be resurrected!

Fourth Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

#4 Resurrection of Messiah According to Rabbis

Christians often think that Jewish people reject the idea that Messiah would be resurrected. But it is an ancient belief that persists to this very day.

In the Canadian Jewish News on January 17, 2002, we read: “Our long-awaited messiah and redeemer arrived! Most Jews failed to recognize that he was the messiah, but we, his disciples, did. Tragically, he died before completing the redemptive process. But he will soon be resurrected and will continue and complete his messianic tasks.”

This newspaper article records the ideas and thoughts held by a Hassidic sect of Jewish people called Lubavitch, who believe that their Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson was and is the Messiah.

Upon his death in 1994, his disciples immediately proclaimed that he would rise again. At first, this resurrection was to take place in three days.

Soon after his death, they launched a worldwide multimillion dollar campaign with full-page newspaper ads declaring their faith in his Messiahship. That campaign continues today on buses and billboards throughout Israel and Jewish communities worldwide.

Fifth Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

#5 This idea of a resurrected Messiah is not new.

As far back as AD 590-630, a Jewish apocalyptic book was written in the style of Ezekiel and Daniel called Zerubbabel. In it, **Messiah ben Joseph (called Nehemiah ben Hushiel in this book) dies in battle with the King of Edom (Armlus). However, Messiah Ben David arrives soon after and raises him from the dead.**

Rabbis believe that Messiah ben Joseph will fight in the great battle against Gog and Magog described in Ezekiel 38-39, and that he will die defending Israel against her enemies, only to be raised by Messiah ben David.

Why do ancient and modern Rabbis alike think that Messiah will be raised from the grave?

Sixth Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

#6 Resurrection of Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures

Rabbis have not made up the idea that Messiah will be raised from the dead.

They refer to Scriptures such as Psalm 16:10: “For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”

As well, the Talmud says that when Messiah ben David sees Messiah ben Joseph slain, he will ask the Lord of the Universe for ben Joseph to receive “the gift of life.”

The Lord then answers that “your father David has already prophesied this concerning you” when David wrote, “He asked you for life, and you gave it to him – length of days, for ever and ever.” (Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 52a; Psalm 21:4, v. 5 in the Hebrew Bible)

Seventh Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

#7 Yeshua Fulfilled the Role of Messiah ben Joseph

While the Jewish community is expecting Messiah ben Joseph to be raised from the dead at some future time by Messiah ben David, Christians believe **both of these Messiahs are one and the same.**

If we follow the Rabbinic teaching of (Ma’aseh Avot Siman l’Banim that says), “What our fathers did, our sons also,” we find striking parallels between Joseph and Yeshua that no other Messianic figure can claim for himself:

Despised and Sold

Joseph was despised by his Hebrew brothers (sons of Jacob, named Israel) and sold to Egypt for silver.
Yeshua was despised by the Jewish leaders: Pharisees, Sadducees and the Sanhedrin and sold for silver.

Considered Dead

Joseph was cut off by his brothers and considered dead by the family.
Yeshua was rejected and cut off by the Jewish leaders and was dead, lying in a tomb for three days.

Brought Salvation to the Nations

Joseph was raised to the height of power and authority, second in command only to Pharaoh. As a result of Joseph's wise management of the resources under his control, many nations attached themselves to Egypt to be saved.

As Joseph states to his brothers after they buried his father Jacob (Israel),
“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Genesis 50:20)

Yeshua was given all authority to rule God's Kingdom in heaven and on earth.

As a result, today over 2-billion people claim to be Christians. Many have attached themselves to Yeshua (Jesus) to be saved and personally know Him and His Father in Heaven.

“For this reason Christ died and returned to life, so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.” (Romans 14:9; see also Matthew 28:18; John 1:12, 3:35)

Resurrected

Joseph was freed from his prison sentence to life in the palace by Pharaoh.

Yeshua was freed from death and the tomb by God.

Conclusion in Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

Why Don't Rabbis Accept Yeshua as Messiah?

Even though the lives of **Joseph** and **Yeshua** parallel in so many Messianic ways, Rabbis don't believe Yeshua can be this Messiah who is the son of Joseph because they say **He didn't complete the required To Do list of the Messiah, that messianic task list, which has been compiled from various Talmudic references, says that Messiah will do the following:**

#1 Prepare the world for the coming of Messiah, Son of David. (Numbers 24:17–19):

17 I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near;
a star shall come out of Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;
it shall crush the forehead of Moab
and break down all the sons of Sheth.
18 Edom shall be dispossessed;
Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed.
Israel is doing valiantly.
19 And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion
and destroy the survivors of cities!”

#2 Gather Israel from all corners of the world to build the Temple or at least make provisions for Messiah Son of David to enter the Temple. (Zechariah 6:13; Ezekiel 41–48; Mishneh Torah Hilchot Melachim)

#3 Battle with the wicked nations of the world, the enemies of Israel, especially Esau, Edom, Gog and Magog. (Obadiah 1:18–21; Talmud Mas. Sotah 42a)

#4 Die in the battle but be resurrected (see earlier discussion)

Since the rebirth of Israel in 1948, over 3.2 million olim (immigrants) have made Aliyah (immigrated) to Promised Land. Nearly half (more than 6 million) of the world's Jewish population now lives in Israel. (Jewish Virtual Library)

After Messiah ben Joseph resurrects, Messiah ben David will come to finish off the tasks appointed to the Messiah. According to Rabbis over the centuries, those tasks include the following:

- Rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem
- Restore the Jews to the Law

- Defeat the Enemies of Israel
- Defeat evil and bring about world peace

Since Yeshua (Jesus) did not complete these tasks, most Rabbis reject Him as a candidate for Messiahship.

You, like the Rabbis, may question why Yeshua didn't fulfill all the Rabbinic requirements of *Messiah ben Joseph*. *The answer is quite simple.*

First, the Rabbis who were deciding what messiah would and would not do, were against Yeshua being Messiah.

Rabbis began recording their opinions and debates about Messiah and other topics from AD 10–200 in what would become the Talmud.

But the idea of the suffering **Messiah ben Joseph** likely started later.

In a famous **second century debate** titled Dialogue with Trypho, we read a conversation about Yeshua as the Messiah.

In the dialogue, the Jewish Trypho (*who is thought to be a Rabbi from the central Israeli town of Yavneh*) simply cannot reconcile that a Messiah who is supposed to be glorified would become cursed on a tree, as is written in **Deuteronomy 21:22–23**:

“When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not defile the land that the Lord your God is giving you for possession.”

Neither Trypho nor the Christian Justin Martyr mentions **Messiah ben Joseph** in their dialogue; instead, Trypho looks forward to the coming of Messiah.

This leads some scholars to believe that **the idea of this second Messiah (ben Joseph) began to be fleshed out as commentators added their ideas of Messiah over the next 200–400 years.**

Second, **notice that the Rabbis don't mention the defeat of sin in their task list**, which is the primary purpose of Yeshua, even going back to the first Messianic prophecy of a redeemer who would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15).

From a translation at the time of Yeshua called Targum Yonatan we read:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between the seed of thy son, and the seed of her sons; and it shall be when the sons of the woman keep the commandments of the law, they will be prepared to smite thee upon thy head; but when they forsake the commandments of the law, thou wilt be ready to wound them in their heel.

“Nevertheless for them there shall be a medicine, but for thee there will be no medicine; and they shall make a remedy for the heel in the days of the King Meshiha.” (Genesis 3:15, PJE)

***** The Rabbis who wrote their task lists either didn't believe Messiah came to deal with sin, or they refused to voice this idea for fear that Yeshua could be Messiah.*****

Moreover, the tasks that should be included in these lists are still disputed even within Rabbinic literature.

What if the Rabbis have misinterpreted the Scriptures?

What if there is only one Messiah, who has already come once to fulfill some of the tasks and will come again to finish the job?

“He was wounded because of our transgressions, He was crushed because of our iniquities: The chastisement of our welfare was upon him, And with his stripes we were healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

Conclusion in Understanding of Messiah ben Joseph:

Yeshua: One Messiah, One Task List

When we let Scripture interpret Scripture, one Messiah with one task list appears. *Some of those tasks have already been fulfilled by Yeshua (whose name means Salvation):*

- He was the suffering servant (Isaiah 52:13–53:12; 1 Peter 2:22–25; Romans 5:6–8; Philippians 2:6–11)
- He defeated sin by His death and resurrection (Isaiah 53; 1 John 3:8; Hebrews 2:14–15)

And Yeshua will come again to complete His final Messianic duties:

- He will defeat Israel's enemies (Zechariah 9–12; Revelation 20)
- He will set up the Messianic age (Isaiah 2:4, 9:1–7, 11:6–9; Revelation 20:4–6)

Throughout this Messianic prophecy series, we are looking at the many duties Messiah is to perform and prophecies He is to fulfill, but those listed above are His primary purposes.

Did We Miss It?

Over 100,000 Jews and two billion non-Jews today have accepted that Messiah has come and is coming again.

Some Jews from ancient days believe the time for Messiah has come and gone. Rabbi Hillel who lived at the time of Yeshua said, *"There shall be no Messiah for Israel because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah."*

Hillel thought that King Hezekiah was the Messiah.

"May God forgive him [Hillel for saying so]," said a Rabbi named Joseph.

This Rabbi Joseph, a contemporary of Rav Hillel, who lived during the time of Yeshua (Jesus) stated that the Messiah is still to come and will arrive as Zechariah prophesies, riding on a donkey!

"Now, when did Hezekiah flourish? During the first Temple. Yet Zechariah prophesied that in the days of the second [Temple], proclaimed, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold, thy king cometh unto thee! he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.'" (Sanhedrin 99a)

But millions more Jewish People are still looking, praying three times a day the following prayer:

"Speedily cause the offspring of your servant David to flourish, and let him be exalted by your saving power, for we wait all day long for your salvation. Blessed are you, O Lord, who causes salvation to flourish." (Excerpt of the Amidah, or Standing Prayer)

Why do so many Jews reject Yeshua as this Servant of David?

Part of the answer could be in the confusion that arises with two Messiahs and two task lists compiled through rigorous debate by Rabbis over many centuries.

We . . . believe that when we let Scripture interpret Scripture (from Genesis through Revelation), we see a picture of one task list for one Messiah that is quite different from the two task lists of the Rabbis.

Perhaps when we have finished our current series searching these Messianic prophecies, more Jewish People will be *"explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead"* as Rabbi Paul in the New Testament did, and say, *"This Yeshua I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah."* (Acts 17:3)

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Blessing:

Numbers 6:22-27
The Aaronic Blessing

The True Meaning of Hanukkah – Part 3

Week 10 – MILKETZ (At the End)

Genesis 41:1-44:17; Zechariah 2:10(14)-4:7; John 1:1-18
“Transformed from Darkness to Light”

- ²²The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²³“Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying,
Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,
²⁴**The LORD bless you and keep you;**
²⁵**the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;**
²⁶**the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.**
²⁷“So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”

Next Week’s Reading:

Week 11 - VAYIGASH (Then He Drew Near)
Genesis 44:18–47:27; Ezekiel 37:15–28; John 6:1–59