

**Exodus 31:12-17**

*The Sabbath*

<sup>12</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, <sup>13</sup>“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. . . .’ <sup>16</sup> Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. <sup>17</sup> 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.”

**Isaiah 58:13-14**

<sup>13</sup>“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;  
<sup>14</sup> 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.”

**Opening Message:**

**What does the Hebrew term “shema” mean?  
a pre-cursor to “True Faith Revealed”**

*“I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”*

**Genesis 26:4-5**

The English word “**obey**” is nasty and polluted by our preconceived cultural connections to fundamentalism. Beneath this construction is our shameless scoffing towards authority. We hate to be told what to do, but even more, we hate to be told we *have to do* anything. “**Obey**” is not the best word to Americans.

We will often say we hate authoritarianism and totalitarian leaders who lord over us telling us to “**obey**”. But the truth is, we don’t hate authority at all, we love it all too much — we worship it. You see, we hate being told what to do, unless we’re the ones telling ourselves to do it. We don’t hate authority, we just love it so much we want it all for ourselves. This is why the word “**obey**” isn’t the cleanest English word. We don’t like it alone.

*“<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.”*

**Romans 6:16-18**

But the Hebrew word for “**obey**” isn’t as nasty as the English — it’s way cleaner in your Old Testament. In fact, the Hebrew is easier than English because, well, *there is no Hebrew word for “obey”*.

That’s right. They actually do not have a word for it.

The American in me loves this, until I realize that (depending on your translation) the word “**obey**” shows up around 130 times in your Old Testament. How can we put in a word in our Old Testament over 130 times that’s never even there in the original manuscript’s language?

Because the word in Hebrew we translate as “**obey**” is usually the term ‘*shema*’. This Hebrew word here is actually kind of famous and you may have heard it before. The term ‘*shema*’ is actually more accurately translated as “**listen**” or “**hear**”. The famous “**Shema**” from **Deuteronomy 6** gets its name from this beautiful Hebrew word. The **Shema** begins, “Hear, O Israel, the LORD your God, the LORD, is one!” That, “**hear**”, is the Hebrew term *shema*. **Hear. Listen. Heed. Pay attention.**

*But hearing isn’t obeying — so how did we get from “listen” to “obey”?*

This is the beauty of an ancient culture and the gift of the Scriptures. The Jewish tradition and particularly the Old Testament culture, did not differentiate between “**hearing**” and “**doing**” or between “**listening**” and “**obeying**”. *We* came up with that.

We started to realize that you could hear and not do, that you could listen to words and not put them into action. We probably did this as human beings because we love finding shortcuts, taking the easy way out.

**But God asks us to *shema***. God wants a heart where the listening *is inextricably linked* to the obeying.

And this goes deeper than just a Hebrew word study. When he walked the earth, the Lord Jesus closed his most famous sermon with these words:

*“Everyone then who **hears** these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who **hears** these*

words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it”

Matthew 7:24–27

To Jesus, listening without obedience is foolish. His brother, James, would tell us later,

*“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing”*

James 1:22–25

The New Testament writers seem to be trying to explain to us the deep connection between **listening** and **obeying**. Maybe, then, **we are only truly listening to God when we are obeying Him**. This seems to be what it means to *Shema*. And anyways, isn't that a better word?

***Let's Connect the Dots of Modern Day Judaism and Modern Day Christianity, in the teaching or concept of the “Two Messiahs”:***

**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*

“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. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land shall mourn, each family by itself . . .”

**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**).

*For to Us a Child Is Born*

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.

<sup>3</sup> You 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.

<sup>4</sup> For 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.

<sup>5</sup> For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult

and every garment rolled in blood

will be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For 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.

<sup>7</sup> Of 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.

**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 (Armilus). 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?

**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)

**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.

**Jesus** 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.

**Jesus** 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**

**Jesus** was given all authority to rule God’s Kingdom in heaven and on earth.

As a result, today 2.1 billion people claim to be Christians. Many have attached themselves to 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**

**Opening Scripture Reading:**

**“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13**

**Week 11 - VAYIGASH (Then He Drew Near)**

Genesis 44:18–47:27; Ezekiel 37:15–28; John 6:1–59

**“True Faith Revealed”**

*“Then Judah came near [Vayigash וַיִּגַּשׁ] unto him and said, ‘Pardon your servant, my lord, let me speak a word to my lord. Do not be angry with your servant, though you are equal to Pharaoh himself.’” Genesis 44:18*

In last week’s Torah reading, Pharaoh appointed Joseph administrator over all of Egypt in order to save Egypt from the coming famine, which he did. That famine affected much of the region, and the nations looked to Egypt as a source of food.

**Last Week, Week 10 - Miketz (At the End) (Genesis 41:1-44:17) we learned the principle of:**

***Being “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 the 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 Scripture 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.**

When Jacob sent his sons to Egypt for grain, Joseph recognized them, but did not reveal himself right away. **He wisely tested their integrity through a series of character challenges.**

### **Genesis 44:18-47:27**

#### **Genesis 44:18-34**

<sup>18</sup> Then Judah went up to him and said, “Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. <sup>19</sup> My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father, or a brother?’ <sup>20</sup> And we said to my lord, ‘We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.’ <sup>21</sup> Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.’ <sup>22</sup> We said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.’ <sup>23</sup> Then you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.’

<sup>24</sup> “When we went back to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. <sup>25</sup> And when our father said, ‘Go again, buy us a little food,’ <sup>26</sup> we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down. For we cannot see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is with us.’ <sup>27</sup> Then your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons. <sup>28</sup> One left me, and I said, “Surely he has been torn to pieces,” and I have never seen him since. <sup>29</sup> If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol.’

<sup>30</sup> “Now therefore, as soon as I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the boy’s life, <sup>31</sup> as soon as he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. <sup>32</sup> For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.’ <sup>33</sup> Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. <sup>34</sup> For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would find my father.”

#### **Judah Reveals His True Character**

This week, Reading “**Then He Drew Near**” (Vayigash) begins with a plea from Judah, brother of Joseph, on behalf of his younger half-brother, Benjamin. **A silver cup had been deliberately planted in Benjamin’s bag by Joseph, causing Benjamin to be in danger of having to remain a slave in Egypt.**

Judah can’t bear to return to his father without his youngest brother, Benjamin. He knows that the grief his father will endure for doing so will probably kill him.

He therefore pleads with Joseph, saying, “Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?” **Genesis 44:33–34**

The brothers realize that their situation is related to their evil behavior in selling Joseph, and they are filled with remorse over the way they had sinned against Joseph in the past.

**This confession of sin accompanied by sincere remorse and turning from sin** fulfills the Torah’s requirements for true repentance (**teshuvah**).

Judah approaches Joseph privately and explains how it was difficult to bring Benjamin with him to Egypt since he is the only surviving son of Rebecca, and his father is very attached to him. **He explains that he guaranteed the boy’s safety and is desperate to take his place as a slave.**

#### **Genesis 45:1-5**

*Joseph Provides for His Brothers and Family*

<sup>1</sup> Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, “Make everyone go out from me.” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup> And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. <sup>3</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

<sup>4</sup> So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

Joseph, no longer able to control his emotions after seeing his brothers’ repentance, cries out for everyone to leave except his brothers. He wants to be alone with them when he reveals his true identity.

“Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, ‘Make everyone go out from me!’ So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.” **Genesis 45:1–2**

**As Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, he comforts them:** “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; **for God sent me before you to preserve life.**” **Genesis 45:5**

#### **Zechariah 12:10**

*Him Whom They Have Pierced*

<sup>10</sup> “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.

#### **Romans 11:25-33**

##### **The Mystery of Israel's Salvation**

<sup>25</sup> Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,  
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;

<sup>27</sup> “and this will be my covenant with them  
when I take away their sins.”

<sup>28</sup> As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. <sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup> For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup> so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup> For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

#### **God’s Sovereign Plan of Salvation Cannot Be Broken**

In placing Joseph in charge of Egypt’s food supply, God wanted to do more than preserve the lives of the Egyptians and the nearby world from **starvation due to a present famine.**

#### **The “True” Famine of God’s Word:**

##### **Matthew 28:17-20**

<sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

##### **Matthew 4:4**

<sup>4</sup> But he answered, “It is written,  
“‘Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

##### **Deuteronomy 8:3**

<sup>3</sup> And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

By installing Joseph in a position of power to save his family, **God was preserving the promise He made to Abraham, which included Israel being a blessing to the nations:**

“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**” **Genesis 12:2–3**

Specifically, this promise would be passed down through Isaac, not his brother Ishmael (*Genesis 26:2–5*); through Jacob, not his brother Esau (*Genesis 28:14–15*); and the promise of the Messiah would exclusively come through the line of Judah, not his other 11 brothers:

“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from his descendants, until the coming of the one to whom it belongs, the one whom all nations will honor.” **Genesis 49:10**

**The one to whom the sovereign staff belongs is the Messiah.**

God sovereignly chose Joseph to ensure that His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (not only of land but also of being a blessing to all nations through the Savior of the world) would be fulfilled through the line of Jacob’s son, Judah.

**In the end, neither envy, nor jealousy, nor murderous plots against Joseph by his brothers could derail God’s plan of salvation — and they still can’t.**

#### **Genesis 45:6-46:4**

<sup>6</sup>For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup>And **God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth**, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup>**So it was not you who sent me here, but God.** He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup>**Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry.** <sup>10</sup>**You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have.** <sup>11</sup>There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.’ <sup>12</sup>And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. <sup>13</sup>You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.” <sup>14</sup>**Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck.** <sup>15</sup>And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

<sup>16</sup>When the report was heard in Pharaoh’s house, “Joseph’s brothers have come,” it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. <sup>17</sup>And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan, <sup>18</sup>and take your father and your households, and **come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you shall eat the fat of the land.**’ <sup>19</sup>And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. <sup>20</sup>**Have no concern for your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.**”

<sup>21</sup>The sons of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. <sup>22</sup>To each and all of them he gave a change of clothes, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five changes of clothes. <sup>23</sup>To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. <sup>24</sup>**Then he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, “Do not quarrel on the way.”**

<sup>25</sup>So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. <sup>26</sup>And they told him, “**Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.**” And his heart became numb, for he did not believe them. <sup>27</sup>**But when they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.** <sup>28</sup>**And Israel said, “It is enough; Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”**

#### *Joseph Brings His Family to Egypt*

**46** So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. <sup>2</sup>**And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob, Jacob.”** And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>3</sup>Then he said, “**I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. <sup>4</sup>I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph’s hand shall close your eyes.**”

#### **Jacob Reunites with Joseph**

“And they told him, saying, ‘Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.’ And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them.” **Genesis 45:26**

**In this Reading Jacob is reunited with his beloved son Joseph.**

**Imagine hearing that your favorite child, whom you thought had been killed many years ago, is actually a governor of the nation next door!**

This perhaps reminds many of us of the shock that Yeshua’s disciples experienced when they were told that Yeshua was not dead, but alive.

They had seen Him die and witnessed His burial, yet, here He was — alive and well and walking about because death was unable to hold Him.

“When they heard that Yeshua was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.” **Mark 16:11**

#### **Genesis 46:5-27**

<sup>5</sup>Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. <sup>6</sup>They also took their livestock and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and **came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, <sup>7</sup>his sons, and his sons’ sons with him, his daughters, and his sons’ daughters. All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt. . . . (go to Verse 26)**

<sup>8</sup> Now these are the names of the descendants of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob<sup>(1)</sup> and his sons. Reuben<sup>(2)</sup>, Jacob's firstborn, <sup>9</sup> and the sons of Reuben: Hanoch<sup>(3)</sup>, Pallu<sup>(4)</sup>, Hezron<sup>(5)</sup>, and Carmi<sup>(6)</sup>. <sup>10</sup> The sons of Simeon<sup>(7)</sup>: Jemuel<sup>(8)</sup>, Jamin<sup>(9)</sup>, Ohad<sup>(10)</sup>, Jachin<sup>(11)</sup>, Zohar<sup>(12)</sup>, and Shaul<sup>(14)</sup>, the son of a Canaanite woman. <sup>11</sup> The sons of Levi<sup>(15)</sup>: Gershon<sup>(16)</sup>, Kohath<sup>(17)</sup>, and Merari<sup>(18)</sup>. <sup>12</sup> The sons of Judah<sup>(19)</sup>: Er, Onan, Shelah<sup>(20)</sup>, Perez<sup>(21)</sup>, and Zerah<sup>(22)</sup> (*but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan*); and the sons of Perez<sup>(23)</sup> were Hezron<sup>(24)</sup> and Hamul<sup>(25)</sup>. <sup>13</sup> The sons of Issachar<sup>(26)</sup>: Tola<sup>(27)</sup>, Puvah<sup>(28)</sup>, Yob<sup>(29)</sup>, and Shimron<sup>(30)</sup>. <sup>14</sup> The sons of Zebulun<sup>(31)</sup>: Sered<sup>(32)</sup>, Elon<sup>(33)</sup>, and Jahleel<sup>(34)</sup>. <sup>15</sup> These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, together with his daughter Dinah<sup>(35)</sup>; altogether his sons and his daughters numbered **thirty-three<sup>(35)</sup>**.

<sup>16</sup> The sons of Gad<sup>(36)</sup>: Ziphion<sup>(37)</sup>, Haggi<sup>(38)</sup>, Shuni<sup>(39)</sup>, Ezbon<sup>(40)</sup>, Eri<sup>(41)</sup>, Arodi<sup>(42)</sup>, and Areli<sup>(43)</sup>. <sup>17</sup> The sons of Asher<sup>(44)</sup>: Imnah<sup>(45)</sup>, Ishvah<sup>(46)</sup>, Ishvi<sup>(47)</sup>, Beriah<sup>(48)</sup>, with Serah<sup>(49)</sup> their sister. And the sons of Beriah<sup>(50)</sup>: Heber<sup>(51)</sup> and Malchiel<sup>(52)</sup>. <sup>18</sup> These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob—**sixteen persons<sup>(17)</sup>**.

<sup>19</sup> The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. <sup>20</sup> And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh<sup>(12)</sup> and Ephraim<sup>(13)</sup>, whom Asenath<sup>(14)</sup>, the daughter of Potiphera the priest of On, bore to him. <sup>21</sup> And the sons of Benjamin<sup>(53)</sup>: Bela<sup>(54)</sup>, Becher<sup>(55)</sup>, Ashbel<sup>(56)</sup>, Gera<sup>(57)</sup>, Naaman<sup>(58)</sup>, Ehi<sup>(59)</sup>, Rosh<sup>(60)</sup>, Muppim<sup>(61)</sup>, Huppim<sup>(62)</sup>, and Ard<sup>(63)</sup>. <sup>22</sup> These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob—**fourteen persons in all<sup>(11)</sup>**.

<sup>23</sup> The son of Dan<sup>(64)</sup>: Hushim<sup>(65)</sup>. <sup>24</sup> The sons of Naphtali<sup>(66)</sup>: Jahzeel<sup>(67)</sup>, Guni<sup>(68)</sup>, Jezer<sup>(69)</sup>, and Shillem<sup>(70)</sup>. <sup>25</sup> These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and these she bore to Jacob—**seven persons in all<sup>(7)</sup>**.

<sup>26</sup> All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own descendants, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were **sixty-six persons in all<sup>(27)</sup>**. <sup>27</sup> And the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, **were two**. **All the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were SEVENTY.**

Gen 46:27 indicates that **66 biological descendants of Jacob had traveled to Egypt**. That is, when Joseph and his two sons are not counted from the genealogy (along with Er and Onan, who had died previously in Canaan), the number is 66 people according to the Masoretic Text. Thus **66 biological descendants of Jacob traveled to Egypt**. This number did not include the wives of the sons of Jacob (Gen 46:26).

However, Gen 46:27 indicates that 70 people traveled to Egypt. In this regard, the additional four people appear to have been -

1. Jacob
2. Leah
3. Zilpah
4. Bilhah

Thus Ex 1:5 and Deut 10:22 indicate that there were **70 persons** "...who went down to Egypt."

<https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/4700/did-70-or-75-people-go-down-to-egypt-with-jacob>

#### ALL THE SOULS OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB WHO CAME INTO EGYPT WERE SEVENTY (46:27)

When they reached the border of Egypt, they added up to sixty-six; together with Joseph and his two sons, they were one less than seventy. What did G-d do? He entered into the count with them, in fulfillment of what is written, "*I will go down with you into Egypt.*"

(*Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 39*)

<sup>43</sup> Then he said, 'I am God, the God of your father. **Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt**, for there **I will make you into a great nation**. **I myself will go down with you to Egypt**, and **I will also bring you up again**, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes.'" Genesis 46:3-4

The fact of the matter is that God always provides a way out of our time(s) of adversity before we even enter into our time(s) of adversity ("No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation **he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.**" 1 Corinthians 10:13). The mother of the deliver, Moses, was born before Jacob's family even set foot into Egypt. **How "Awesome" is that?** And yet the reality to Jacob's families new position, and our ultimate inheritance, is that Joseph, a type of "Messiah", provided the entire family a safe haven ("So Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come near to me, please.' And they came near. And he said, 'I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you **to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.** So it was not you who sent me here, but God.'" Genesis 45:4-8) for his family to prosper, multiply ("But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong . . ." <sup>8</sup> Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. <sup>10</sup> Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." Exodus 1:6-10), and ultimately be "raptured" (covered from God's ultimate Wrath on his enemies), in a city that He designate in Egypt, "the World", for their provision, protection, and ultimately their deliverance into their future inheritance, "Goshen", meaning, a land or place of plenty and comfort. It was in "Goshen" that God's people were protected from the Wrath of God, through the plagues, beginning with the fourth plague, "Flies", as read in Exodus 8:22 ("But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth." Exodus 8:22; <sup>26</sup> Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail." Exodus 9:26), which symbolically is the number of "divine appointments" and "divine/appointed rest":

The number 4 derives its meaning from creation. On the fourth day of what is called 'creation week' God completed the material universe. On this day he brought into existence our sun, the moon, and all the stars (Genesis 1:14 - 19). Their purpose was not only to give off light, but also to divide the day from the night on earth, thus becoming a basic demarcation of time. They were also made to be a type of signal that would mark off the days, years and **seasons**.

Interestingly, the Hebrew word for '**seasons**' in Genesis 1:14 is *moed* (Strong's Concordance #H4150), which literally translated is "**appointed times**" (divine appointments) in reference to God's festivals. This is the earliest known allusion to what would later be called the Holy (or Feast) days (periods) of worship, which are seven in number.

The 4th of the Ten Commandments is to remember and keep God's holy Sabbath day (Exodus 20:9-11). The Sabbath day is tied directly to the creation week. God himself made the period between Friday sunset and Saturday sunset extra special when he rested on it after bringing everything into existence the previous six days (Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 20:11).

<http://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/meaning-of-numbers-in-bible/4.html>

## Genesis 46:28-47:12

*Jacob and Joseph Reunited*

<sup>28</sup> He had sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to show the way before him in Goshen, and they came into the land of Goshen. <sup>29</sup> **Then Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen. He presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.**

<sup>30</sup> Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive.” <sup>31</sup> Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, “I will go up and tell Pharaoh and will say to him, ‘**My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me.**’ <sup>32</sup> And the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock, and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.’ <sup>33</sup> **When Pharaoh calls you and says, ‘What is your occupation?’** <sup>34</sup> you shall say, ‘**Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,**’ in order that you may dwell in the land of Goshen, **for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.’**

*Jacob's Family Settles in Goshen*

<sup>47</sup> So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, “My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan. They are now in the land of Goshen.” <sup>2</sup> And from among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. <sup>3</sup> Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?” And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were.” <sup>4</sup> They said to Pharaoh, “**We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. And now, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.**” <sup>5</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. <sup>6</sup> The land of Egypt is before you. **Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.**” <sup>7</sup> **Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and stood him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.** <sup>8</sup> *And Pharaoh said to Jacob, ‘How many are the days of the years of your life?’* <sup>9</sup> And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “**The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning.**” <sup>10</sup> **And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.** <sup>11</sup> Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. <sup>12</sup> **And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents.**

**Joseph was not only a powerful man; he was also an excellent provider. He brought his father and all of his brothers to Egypt where he made sure they were well looked after.**

“Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father’s household with bread, according to the number in their families.” **Genesis 47:12**

Again, we can draw a parallel to Yeshua — the living bread (**lechem chayim**) who was born in **Beit-Lechem** (Bethlehem), the house of bread. **The bread that Joseph provided for his brothers sustained them during their lifetime, but the bread that Yeshua gives us sustains life eternally.**

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” (*John 6:51*)

## Genesis 47:13-27

*Joseph and the Famine*

<sup>13</sup> Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine. <sup>14</sup> And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain that they bought. And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. <sup>15</sup> And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, “Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone.” <sup>16</sup> And Joseph answered, “Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone.” <sup>17</sup> So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. He supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. <sup>18</sup> And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, “We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent. The herds of livestock are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land. <sup>19</sup> Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and



our land for food, and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate.”

<sup>20</sup> So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe on them. The land became Pharaoh's.<sup>21</sup> As for the people, he made servants of them from one end of Egypt to the other. <sup>22</sup> Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived on the allowance that Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land.

<sup>23</sup> Then Joseph said to the people, “Behold, I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. <sup>24</sup> And at the harvests you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households, and as food for your little ones.” <sup>25</sup> And they said, “You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh.” <sup>26</sup> So Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh's.

<sup>27</sup> Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly.

### Israel Reunites with Judah

The theme of this wonderful story of Joseph's reconciliation with his brothers, after so many years of being separated, continues in the **Haftarah (prophetic reading)**, with the **reunion of the northern and southern tribes of Israel upon their return from exile**.

How did this split between the tribes of Israel happen?

**After the reign of King Solomon, the nation of Israel split into the Southern Kingdom** (represented by the tribe of Judah & Benjamin) **and the Northern Kingdom** (represented by the ten other tribes called Joseph, Ephraim, or simply Israel).

While both kingdoms sinned, Judah (Yehudah) returned from exile and still exists today as the **Yehudim** (Hebrew word for Jews). The ten northern tribes went into the nations and became “lost,” although some members of those tribes did return.

Because of their idolatry, God broke the bonds of brotherhood between Judah and Joseph (Ephraim/Israel):

“Then I cut in two my other staff, bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.” **Zechariah 11:14**

According to Jewish thought, the animosity between Joseph and his brothers (all children of Jacob) foreshadows this later split between Judah and Benjamin with the other tribes of Israel (all children of God).

**In an amazing prophecy, however, God promises that one day there will again be unity between them.**

“Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.” **Ezekiel 37:19**

To make sure there is no misunderstanding, God plainly explains this prophetic symbolism:

“Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And **I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel.**” **Ezekiel 37:21–22**

Of course, there is another reconciliation that God has brought about. Through Yeshua's sacrificial death on the Roman execution stake — the **dividing wall between Jew and Gentile has also been destroyed**, resulting in “one new man” out of the two.

**Though divisions have and still do exist, God's purposes are to reconcile us to Himself and to one another.**

“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to **create in Himself one new man from the two**, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” **Ephesians 2:14–16**

There is an even greater reconciliation to come. If we look prophetically at this story of Joseph, we may see that just as Joseph said, “Ani Yoseph: I am Joseph, your brother,” **likewise, Yeshua one day will say, “Ani Yeshua: I am your salvation, your brother and your Messiah.”** Halleluyah!

When the Jewish people recognize Yeshua as their Messiah there will also be a great reconciliation that will bring about life-giving change all over the world. How we long for that great day!

“For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” **Romans 11:15**

### The “True” Christmas Story:

**“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13**

## Eight Days of Hanukkah

*The Feast of Dedication and The Feast of Light*

*by Michael Gibson, Key2Changes.com*

### The True Meaning of Hanukkah The “Conception” of the Light of the World

*“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name  
Jesus (Yashua – I am Salvation, I am the Light of the World).” Luke 1:31*

#### Hanukkah (day 8 of 8)

The Feast of Dedication and The Feast of Light

#### On the eighth night:

I want to close this Celebration with a Scripture passage that many Jewish people read of the eighth and last night of Hanukkah. Just as the number eight marks a new beginning in something God will do and serves as the sign for eternity this Scripture looks forward to a new heaven and a new earth in which the glory of the Lord will be its light:

*Behold, there will come a time!*

*And the light of the moon shall become like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall become sevenfold, like the light of the seven days, when the Lord binds up His people’s wounds and heals the injuries it has suffered.*

*In that day, there shall be neither sunlight nor cold moonlight but there shall be a continuous day, of neither day nor night, and there shall be light at evening time.*

***No longer shall you need the sun for light by day nor the shining of the moon for radiance by night; for the Lord shall be your light everlasting, your God shall be your glory.***

*Your sun shall set no more, your moon no more withdraw; for the Lord shall be a light to you forever.*

*Cause a new light to shine upon Zion and soon may all of us be worthy to enjoy its light. Isaiah 30:26; Zechariah 14:6-7; Isaiah 60:19-20*

#### Study/Review on the eighth night:

##### The Christmas Story:

Based on my knowledge of Scripture, historical facts, the Biblical calendar and Jewish tradition I would like to present the following Christmas story as a plausible way in which the events surrounding Jesus’ birth occurred.

It is Saturday night, Kislev 25, in the Jewish year 3755. It is the first night of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication and the Feast of Light, December 4, 6 BCE. The angel Gabriel comes to the Virgin Mary with a message from God. She will conceive in her womb, bear a son and name him Jesus (Yashua – Joshua – “I AM SALVATION”). The Holy Spirit will come upon her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

Mary appropriately Hanukkahs (dedicates – first use for a holy purpose) her body to be the temple of God by saying, *“Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.”*

*The Holy Spirit impregnates Mary. She now has the Word of God, eternal life and the light of men dwelling in the darkness of her womb. As it is written: In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was **life**, and the **life** was the **light** of men. And the **light** shines in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)*

Interestingly, on the first night of Hanukkah many Jews quote this passage of Scripture, *“In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth. And the earth was **formless** and **void**, and **darkness** was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, **“Let there be light”; and there was light.**” (Genesis 1:1-3)*

Coincidentally we are reminded by the Scripture in John 9-10:22-39, that Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God on Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication and Light in the Temple at Jerusalem.

Forty weeks (40 weeks is the period of human gestation) after His conception Jesus is born. It is Friday night, Elul 9, in the Jewish year 3756. This corresponds to our Gregorian calendar date of September 9, 5 BCE. It is the beginning of the weekly Sabbath. The Jewish people have a particular name for every Sabbath and they read specific passages of Scripture on those Sabbaths. The one on which Jesus is born is called KiTeitzei, "When you go out". On that Sabbath night Jesus goes forth from the womb. And the next morning in the Temple and in every synagogue **Isaiah 54:1-10** is read. It begins this way:

***"Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not traveled; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman," says the LORD.***

On the following Sabbath, being the eighth day Jesus is circumcised. The Jewish people call this particular Sabbath, KiTavo, "When you enter". On that day Jesus entered into the Mosaic Covenant through His circumcision. And in the Temple and every synagogue the prophet **Isaiah 60:1-22** is read. It begins this way:

***Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but the LORD will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you.***

And in verse six of that passage of Scripture it prophesies the coming of the Magi to see Jesus. It reads this way:

***A multitude of camels will cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba will come; they will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news (myrrh - a sweet smelling aroma) of the praises of the LORD.***

Mary waited the prescribed 40 days for her purification (Read Leviticus 12:1-4) from the blood of childbirth before presenting her son, Jesus at the Temple. It was Thursday, Ethanim 21 (Ethanim is the seventh month of God's calendar. It falls within our September/October time frame. The Jewish people currently call this month Tishri.), of the Jewish year 3756 or our October 20, 5 BCE. The Jewish people call the day Hossana Rabba or "The Great Day of Salvation". It is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (In Hebrew the feast is called Sukkoth, which is translated as tent, hut, tabernacle or booth and indicates a temporary dwelling.) (Sukkoth).

The Feast of Tabernacles is the most joyous feast of the year for Israel and it has four major themes associated with it. Let's see how these four themes are linked to Jesus' first appearance at the Temple.

The first theme is the **ingathering of various tree branches**. Jesus, "the **Branch**" spoken of by Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 11:1-10) concerning the messiah is brought into Jerusalem during the feast. It was written of Him: "*Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.*"

Jesse was King David's father. Therefore, the messiah had to be a descendent of King David, which Jesus was according to the genealogies. The **shoot** or **branch** in the prophecy can also be rendered from the root Hebrew word **Nazir** meaning "**unpruned vine**" from whence we get the word **Nazarene**. This is why the Bible references Jesus as the **Nazarene** or Jesus from **Nazareth**.

*by Michael Gibson, Key2Changes.com*

**Nazarene/Nazareth:** the word is used to translate two related terms that appear in the Greek New Testament: *Nazarēnos* (Nazarene) and *Nazōraios* (Nazorean). The phrases traditionally rendered as "*Jesus of Nazareth*" can also be translated as "*Jesus the Nazarene*" or "*Jesus the Nazorean*", and the title "*Nazarene*" may have a religious significance instead of denoting a place of origin.

In Acts, Paul of Tarsus is called, "*a ringleader of the sect of the Nazoreans*," [thus identifying Nazorean with Christian](#). Although both "Christianios" (by Gentiles) and "Nazarenes" (by Jews) appear to have been current in the 1st century, and both are recorded in the New Testament, the Gentile name "Christian" appears to have won out against "Nazarene" in usage among Christians themselves after the 1st century.

The apostles who were before us had these names for him: "*Jesus, the Nazorean, Messiah*", that is, "*Jesus, the Nazorean, the Christ*". The last name is "Messiah" or "Christ", the first is "Jesus", that in the middle is "the Nazarene". "**Messiah**" has two meanings, both "*the Christ*" and "**the measured**". "Jesus" in Hebrew is "*the redemption*" or "*I am Salvation*". "**Nazara**" is "*the Truth*". "**The Nazarene**" then, is "*the Truth*". "**Christ**" has been **measured**. "**The Nazarene**" and "**Jesus**" are they who have been **measured**.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene\\_\(title\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_(title))

The second theme of the feast is **God comes to tabernacle or dwell with His people**. For the past week, all the Jewish people had been living in temporary dwellings or booths made out of tree branches. It was meant to remind them of the Exodus, when God's presence was manifest among His people, leading and protecting them day and night. Jesus arrives among the people as

**Immanuel ... “God With Us”** to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

The third theme of the feast is **the salvation of God’s people**. The angel commanded Joseph to name the child, Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. In Hebrew, Jesus’ name is Yashua or Joshua, which means, **“I AM salvation”**. God told Moses to tell the Israelites that **“I AM”** (Exodus 3:14) had sent him to deliver them from the Egyptians. In today’s world we just hear a person’s formal name and it has no particular meaning to us. But in Jesus’ day peoples name were actual statements. So every time Jesus introduced Himself, the people heard the statement, **“I AM salvation”**.

The fourth theme of the feast is **great joy**. While the people were rejoicing in God outside the Temple, Jesus was presented before God, in the Temple, as was the custom. At that time old Simeon and Anna were filled with the **joy of the Holy Spirit** and began prophesying because they had seen the consolation of Israel.

by Michael Gibson, Key2Changes.com

### **Where was the Birth Place of the Lord Jesus?**

Although the New Testament does not tell us where in Bethlehem Jesus was born, the Old Testament does. **Micah 4:8** states:

*“And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”* Thus, the Old Testament clearly states that the Messiah would be born at the **“tower of the flock”** (Hebrew: Migdal Edar).

The phrase **“tower of the flock”** is the Hebrew phrase **“Migdal Edar”** [mig-dawl ay-der] and means a **“watch tower of the flock”**. In ancient times this was a military tower erected to view into the valley on the edge of Bethlehem to protect the city. Several of these military towers are recorded in the Old Testament (See Judges 8:71, 9:46, 9:51; 2 Kings 9:17, 18:8; Nehemiah 3:1). The tower at Bethlehem is first mentioned in **Genesis 35:21**, *“And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar”* (**“tower of Edar”** - Migdal Edar). After Jacob left Bethel, he came to **Edar (the tower)** and there Rachel began hard labor and as she delivered Benjamin she died and was buried there in Ephratah which is Bethlehem” (**Genesis 35:19**). After burying Rachel, Jacob moved his flocks beyond the **tower of Edar**. This would pinpoint the location as being near to what is present day Bethlehem. Clearly, this establishes that **Migdal Edar, “the tower of the flock”** was in Bethlehem in Bible times.

The oldest tradition, based upon **Genesis 35:16-20; 48:7**:

*“And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to **Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.**”* Genesis 35:19

*“And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the **way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.**”* Genesis 48:7

*This watch tower from ancient times was used by the shepherds for **protection from their enemies and wild beasts. It was also the place ewes were safely brought to give birth to the lambs.*** In this sheltered building/cave the priests would bring in the ewes which were about to lamb for protection. **These special lambs came from a unique flock that was designated for sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem.**

**Prophetically, “Migdal Edar”** is the exact place in Bethlehem for Christ to be born. **Micah was God’s prophet** who was warning Israel of the coming captivity. *He used the authenticating prophecy of the Assyrian captivity of the Northern Kingdom (soon to occur when he foretold it) to serve as a reminder to Israel of God’s promised Kingdom.* God wanted them to know that even though they would be taken from their land because of their disobedience that He would restore them in time. **Micah 4:7** establishes the context of the passage and clearly is a Messianic prophecy of the coming of the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus Christ will reign over Jerusalem forever. *“ . . . LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even forever.”* In other words, God was assuring Israel that He would fulfill His promises to them of the Kingdom. In **Micah 4:8** the word is rendered **“tower of the flock”** (marg., “Edar”), and is used as a designation of Bethlehem, which figuratively represents the royal line of David as sprung from Bethlehem.

In this setting, **Micah (Micah 4:8)** uses the prophecy of the Babylonian captivity of the Southern Kingdom as a pledge to **guarantee (authenticating prophecy) of the birth of Christ at “Migdal Edar” at Bethlehem which is exactly where it took place!** **Micah prophesied that as surely as Assyrians would soon carry away Israel in the North, so the Messiah would come and establish His kingdom,** the *“first dominion, the kingdom shall come to Jerusalem.”* *The verse states that as surely as Babylon would carry away the tribe of Judah, in the South, into captivity, so the Messiah would arrive at the Tower of the Flock. This prophecy was one other evidence that later proved that Jesus was the Messiah, but one that Israel ignored in rejecting Him as their Messiah.*

God’s word tells us that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, of Judah in the city of David at a place called the **“tower of the flock”**.

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Galatians 4:4-5

by Cooper P Abrams III  
<http://www.bible-truth.org/BirthPlaceofJesus.html#2>

**“True Faith Revealed”**

**“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13**