

Opening Reading:

Luke 2:14

The Birth of Jesus Christ

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸ And in the same region there were **shepherds** out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ **“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”**

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, **“Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”** ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. ²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Jesus Presented at the Temple (22-38)

Luke 2:14

“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth **peace among those with whom he is pleased!**”

Matthew 10:34

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. **I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.**

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, **that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation.** But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Timeline of The Christmas Story

- **5 BC, June** - The Conception of **John the Baptist** (Luke 1:5-25 - Zechariah, John the Baptist’s father was a priest in the line of Abijah, which stood eighth in the order of service . . . Therefore, Zechariah would have served two consecutive terms, both the Feast of Weeks and then his own order before returning home about mid-June.)
- **5 BC, December** - The Conception of **Jesus**, the Christ (“Now in the **sixth month** (this refers to the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, which would be December) the angel Gabriel was sent to a virgin . . . named Mary . . . And the angel said to her, “. . . you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son . . .” Luke 1:26-38)
- **4 BC, Late March** - The Birth of **John the Baptist** (Luke 1:57-80)
- **4 BC, September** - The Birth of **Jesus**, the Christ (Luke 2:1-20)
- **4 BC, Late September** - The Circumcision of **Jesus**, the Christ (Luke 2:21)
- **4 BC, Late October** - The Dedication of **Jesus**, the Christ (Luke 2:22-38 - 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; the Jewish people call the day “The Great Day of Salvation” - It is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.)

Last Week (in review): Genesis 32:3-36:43

“And Jacob **sent** [vayishlach נָשְׂאָה] messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.” **Genesis 32:4[3]**

“TRUST in God is Greater than all of our Praises to God”

Timeline of Jacob's Sojourn in Haran (referenced to Jacob's age)

- **Jacob** and Esau were born when **Isaac was 60 years old (Ge 25:26)**, approximately 15 years before the death of Abraham (Ge 21:5, Ge 25:7).
- Now, in view of **Ge 26:1**, we can infer that **Isaac went to Gerar after Abraham died**, that is, when **Jacob** was more than **15 years old**.
- **Jacob** was **40 years old** at the time of **Ge 26:34**.
- **Age 57 - Jacob leaves Canaan and comes to Haran**
- **Age 64 - Jacob marries Leah and Rachel**, begins having children
- **Age 65 - Jacob begins having children by Leah**
- **Age 76 - Jacob probably has last of children by Leah (Dinah)**
- **Isaac** and Rebecca's son **Jacob** was sent to **Padan-aram** (home of Rebecca's brother Laban) to avoid the wrath of his brother **Esau**. **Jacob came to Padan-aram** when he was 91-14 = **77 years old**.
- **Jacob** was about **91 years old** when Joseph was born. As we read in Ge 37:3, Joseph was a "son of his old age". While Benjamin was younger than Joseph, he was just a little child at the time of Ge 37:3, when Jacob regarded Joseph as a son of his old age.
- **97 – Esau again tries to kill Jacob & Jacob named Israel (Gen 32 – Jacob wrestles with G-d and name and destiny changes)**

Teaser: To this very day, the descendants of Jacob (Israel) still struggle with this Divine Man who is **Yeshua HaMashiach (the Messiah)**.

- The passage in which Isaac sends **Jacob** to Padan-aram (**Ge 28**) takes place later. The age of **Jacob** at that time could be calculated as follows:
 - Isaac lived 180 years (**Ge 35:28**). Thus, **Jacob** was about **120 years old when Isaac died**. Joseph was about 29 years old at that time.
 - Now, Joseph was 30 years old "when he stood before Pharaoh" (Ge 41:46).
 - Joseph was about $30+7+(7-5) = 39$ years old when **Jacob** was **130 years old when he came to Egypt (Ge 47:9)**.
 - As stated in **Ge 47:28**, **Jacob died 147 years old** and he lived **17 years in Egypt**.

<http://hiswordsarepure.com/TheLifeOfJacob.htm>
<https://sites.google.com/site/calendarstudies/genesis-28-9>

Genesis 35:16-36:43

The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac

¹⁶ Then they journeyed from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel went into labor, and she had hard labor. ¹⁷ And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for you have another son."¹⁸ And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name **Ben-oni** ("son of my grief"); but his father called him Benjamin ("son of the right"). ¹⁹ **So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).**

Genesis 31:25-32

Jacob Flees from Laban

²⁵ And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁶ And Laban said to Jacob, . . . ³⁰ And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but **why did you steal my gods?** ³¹ Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. ³² **Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live.** In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it." **Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.**

"ANYONE WITH WHOM YOU FIND YOUR GODS, LET HIM NOT LIVE" FOR JACOB KNEW NOT THAT RACHEL HAD STOLEN THEM (31:32)

It was because of these words spoken by Jacob that Rachel died in childbirth shortly thereafter.

(Midrash Rabbah)

Genesis 35:20-21

²⁰ and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb. It is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day. ²¹ **Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the TOWER of Eder.**

Biblical Prophecy of the Future Birth of Our Messiah

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*).

An Amazing Story and Biblical Prophecy that falls every year during the season of Hanukkah. The continuation of one of the Greatest Stories and Prophecies ever written in Scripture, playing out right in front of our eyes during this very special Appointed Time in God’s Heart to Reveal His Redemption of Mankind from the Beginning of Time:

Genesis 3:15

¹⁵I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”

The True Meaning of Hanukkah – Part 2

The Feast of Dedication and The Feast of Light

Week 9 - VAYEISHEV (And He Lived/And He Settled)

Genesis 37:1–40:23; Amos 2:6–3:8; Romans 8:18–39

“God is positioning you to fulfill your destiny”

“Jacob lived (“and he settled”) in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.” **Genesis 37:1**

In last week’s Torah study, Jacob returned from Haran with his entire household to settle in the Land of Canaan. **After all the twists and turns of Jacob’s life, he longed to settle down in the land God had promised.**

The original Hebrew uses the word **yeshev**, which means **to settle**. In Israel, a settlement is called a **yishuv**, and those who settle in Israel, especially within the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria, do so at great risk from Palestinian terrorists who often live nearby:

“Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan (known also as “the Promised Land”).” **Genesis 37:1**

In last week’s Torah study, Jacob returned from Haran with his entire household to settle in the Land of Canaan. **After all the twists and turns of Jacob’s life, he longed to settle down in the land God had promised.**

US says Israeli settlements no longer considered illegal in dramatic shift

Declaration marks rejection of 2016 UN resolution that settlements on the West Bank are a ‘flagrant violation’ of international law

Julian Borger in Washington and **Oliver Holmes** in Jerusalem

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The US has declared that Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land are not necessarily illegal, in a dramatic break with decades of international law, US policy and the established position of most US allies . . .

The US declaration marks the rejection of a 2016 UN security council resolution that settlements on the West Bank are a “flagrant violation” of international law and the US legal position on the issue since 1978. It is also a renunciation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which outlaws transfers of population by an occupying power, and a new rift with US allies in Europe and in the Islamic world . . .

In this reading, we learn about the trials of Jacob’s favorite son, Joseph, whom God had given the gift of dreams and their interpretation. **Many of those dreams revealed Joseph’s future exalted position.**

By relating these dreams to his brothers, however, Joseph **fueled their jealousy**, which had already been aroused by their father’s favoritism toward Joseph, son of his favored wife, Rachel.

Genesis 37:1

Joseph’s Dreams

¹Jacob **lived** in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

AND JACOB SETTLED... (GENESIS 37:1)

Jacob desired to settle in tranquility, but it pounced upon him the agony of Joseph. For when the righteous wish to settle in tranquility, G-d says: “Is it not enough for the righteous what is prepared for them in the World to Come, that they also ask for a tranquil life in this world?”

(Rashi)

The 100-year-old Patriarch now hoped that he had experienced enough hardship and heartbreak for a lifetime, and looked forward to some tranquil years in “the land of his father’s dwelling” (Hebron) as his sons shepherded his flocks in the hills and valleys of Canaan.

Philippians 2:12

Lights in the World

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling . . .**

Matthew 24:13

¹³ **But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**

Genesis 37:2

² These are the generations of Jacob. **Joseph, being seventeen years old,** was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives . . .

THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF JACOB: JOSEPH BEING SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD... (37:2)

Should not have the verse said, “These are the generations of Jacob: Reuben, etc.”? Why Joseph?

Because everything that happened to Jacob, happened to Joseph. As Jacob’s mother was infertile, so was Joseph’s mother infertile; as Jacob’s mother had difficulty in childbirth, so did Joseph’s mother have difficulty in child- birth; as Jacob’s mother bore two sons, so did Joseph’s mother bear two sons; as Jacob was hated by his brother, so was Joseph hated by his brothers; as Jacob’s brother sought to kill him, so did Joseph’s brothers seek to kill him.

Jacob was a shepherd and Joseph was a shepherd, Jacob was persecuted, and Joseph was persecuted; Jacob was blessed with ten blessings and Joseph was blessed with ten blessings; Jacob was exiled from the Holy Land, and Joseph was exiled from the Land; Jacob took a wife outside the Land, and Joseph took a wife outside the Land; Jacob begot children outside the Land, and Joseph begot children outside the Land; Jacob was escorted by angels, and Joseph was escorted by angels; Jacob was made great through a dream, and Joseph was made great through a dream; the house of Jacob’s father-in-law was blessed on his account, and the house of Joseph’s father-in-law was blessed on his account; Jacob went down to Egypt and Joseph went down to Egypt; Jacob ended the famine and Joseph ended the famine; Jacob adjured [his children] and Joseph adjured [his brothers]; Jacob charged [his children] and Joseph charged [his brothers]; Jacob died in Egypt and Joseph died in Egypt; Jacob was embalmed and Joseph was embalmed; the bones of Jacob were brought up [from Egypt to the Holy Land], and the bones of Joseph were brought up [from Egypt to the Holy Land]....

Jacob fathered Tribes, and Joseph fathered Tribes; Jacob was lost to his father for 22 years, and Joseph was lost to his father for 22 years; Jacob was indentured on account of a woman, and Joseph was imprisoned on account of a woman; Jacob supported Joseph for 17 years, and Joseph supported Jacob for 17 years...

(Midrash Rabbah; Zohar; et al)

Genesis 37:2

² . . . And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

AND JOSEPH BROUGHT TO HIS FATHER THEIR EVIL REPORT (37:2)

This teaches us that one who speaks negatively of another is punished . . . someone who listens to negative talk of another is *also* punished (as we will see later on with the 10 Spies of the Promised Land).

Genesis 37:3

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors.

The Folly of Favoritism

Jacob made no secret of the fact that he loved Joseph more than any of his other children, and he gave him a special coat of many colors.

By giving him this coat, Jacob was proclaiming Joseph’s sovereignty and leadership over all his other sons, since in the patriarchal age, Semitic chiefs wore coats of many colors as an insignia of rulership.

Perhaps Jacob should have foreseen the negative effects of sibling rivalry that usually results from such favoritism, since **he was also a victim of such dysfunction.**

Everlasting spiritual new beginnings are found in the freedom that Jesus offers when we repent of our sins and receive His forgiveness.

Favor Follows Joseph into the Pit

Indeed, Joseph had a great destiny upon his life, the twists and turns of which would provide a foundation for the survival of his family; and in the fullness of time, **a freedom that provides a foundation for Jewish* life and salvation.**

***Meaning of Jew:** Anyone who rejects idolatry is called a *Jew*. One who acknowledges G-d's existence and submits to His authority--to the extent that he is willing to sacrifice his life for the sanctification of His name--he is called a *Jew*.

But **he was not immediately ready to fulfill his divine purpose.** Either Joseph needed to learn humility, which he gained through painful and difficult trials, or through his trials, **God positioned him to fulfill that destiny.** Perhaps both.

“God positioned him to fulfill that destiny.”

The drama began when Jacob dispatched Joseph on a mission to check on his brothers. Unbeknownst to both of them, the brothers had already plotted to kill Joseph.

Their plan might have succeeded except for the protests of Reuven, who urged them to throw Joseph into a pit instead. **He secretly intended to rescue him later.** Reuven never had the opportunity to save his brother, since the other brothers sold Joseph, at Judah’s suggestion, to an Ishmaelite caravan.

Genesis 37:4-17

⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. ⁶ He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: ⁷ Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” ⁸ His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

⁹ Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” ¹⁰ But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?” ¹¹ And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

¹² Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. ¹³ And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “Here I am.” ¹⁴ So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word.” So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵ And a **man found him** wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” ¹⁶ “I am seeking my brothers,” he said. “Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” ¹⁷ And **the man** said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

“The man” was the angel Gabriel.

Genesis 37:18-24

¹⁸ They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹ They said to one another, **“Here comes this dreamer.”** ²⁰ Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.” ²¹ **But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.”** ²² And Reuben said to them, **“Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him”—that he might RESCUE him out of their hand to restore him to his father.** ²³ So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. ²⁴ And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Genesis 37:25-28

²⁵ Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. ²⁶ Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. ²⁸ Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and **sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver.** They took Joseph to Egypt.

“They sold Joseph for **twenty pieces of silver** to the Ishmaelites.” Genesis 37:28

What is the connection or significance between Joseph being sold for 20 pieces and Yeshua [ben Joseph - the suffering redeemer that the Hebrew prophets often spoke of] being sold for 30 pieces of silver?

The first connection is the silver itself. **Silver spiritually signifies atonement or redemption.** There are but two precious metals mentioned in God's Word, silver and gold. In the temple silver is found in the holy and gold in the most holy. Following are a couple of verses to make that point:

Silver - Atonement

Exodus 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than **half a shekel [of silver]**, when they give an offering unto the LORD, **to make an atonement for your souls.**

Joseph explains the silver cost of atonement to his brothers

Genesis 45:5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, **that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. ...**⁷ And **God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth,** and **to save your lives by a great deliverance.**⁸ **So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God:** and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

The second. Zechariah the Prophet wrote about thirty pieces of silver and God's judgment.

Zechariah 11:12 Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages **thirty pieces of silver.** Then the Lord said to me, *“Throw it to the potter”* - **the lordly price at which I was priced by them.** So I took the **thirty pieces of silver** and threw them into the house of the Lord, to the potter. Then I broke my second staff Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

Therefore, the connection or significance between Joseph being sold for 20 pieces and Yeshua [ben Joseph - the suffering redeemer that the Hebrew prophets often spoke of] being sold for 30 pieces of silver? The cost of betrayal and redemption.

Judas was like Pilate, trying to wash his hand of his part said

Matthew 27:4 “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” They said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself”

Zechariah writes, *“Throw it to the potter”* which looked prophetically forward to when **Yeshua [ben Joseph - the suffering redeemer]** that the Hebrew prophets often spoke of] betrayed by Judas, who upon returning the thirty pieces of silver, the Jewish religious leaders took the coins and purchased the "potter's field".

Matthew 27:7 “So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers.”

Matthew 27:9 “Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me’”

Once in Egypt, Joseph was sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian captain of Pharaoh’s guard, who soon discovered the greatness within Joseph. Potiphar came to trust Joseph so implicitly that he placed him in charge of all of his affairs.

Meanwhile, Joseph’s brothers returned to their father with his coat of many colors. **They dipped it in blood in order to deceive their father into thinking that a wild animal had killed his beloved son.**

There is a **curious interruption in the narrative of Joseph’s story here**, as the Scriptures turn to the episode of Judah. **Judah, fourth son of Jacob and future ruler of the twelve tribes of Israel, led the decision to sell Joseph rather than kill him.**

“Then Judah said to his brothers, ‘What do we gain by killing our brother and covering up his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let us not do away with him ourselves. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh.” **Genesis 37:26-27**

Genesis 37:29-31

²⁹ When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes ³⁰ and returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?” ³¹ Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood.

AND THEY TOOK JOSEPH’S COAT, AND KILLED A KID OF THE GOATS, AND DIPPED THE COAT IN THE BLOOD (37:31)

G-d pays back man **measure for measure...** even the righteous does He pay back measure for measure. Jacob deceived his father with goatskins (cf. **Genesis 27:16**), and his sons deceived him with the blood of a goat...

* **Genesis 27:16**

¹⁶ And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.

Genesis 37:32-36

³² And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, “This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not.” ³³ And he identified it and said, “It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him. ³⁶ Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

Genesis 38:1

Judah and Tamar

¹ It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.

AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THAT TIME... (38:1)

The sons of Jacob were engaged in selling Joseph. Jacob was taken up with his sackcloth and fasting, and Judah was busy taking a wife, while the Holy One, blessed be He, was creating the LIGHT of Messiah. (Peretz, born of Judah and Tamar, is the ancestor of King David and the Messiah.)

(Midrash Rabbah)

Genesis 38:2

² There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her and went in to her,

Keeping Hope Alive through Inheritance

At this time, Judah had married the daughter of a Canaanite, Shua.

Shua conceived and had a son named Er, who married Tamar, but **Er died without giving Tamar a child because the Lord was displeased with this son of Judah and prematurely took his life.**

Genesis 38:3-10

³ and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. ⁴ She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. ⁵ Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him.

⁶ And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. ⁷ **But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death.** ⁸ Then Judah said to Onan, “Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.” ⁹ But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. ¹⁰ **And what he did was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death also.**

Judah and Tamar

The saga of Joseph is interrupted to relate an incident in the life of Judah. Judah separates from his brothers, marries, and has three children: Er, Onan and Sheilah. When Er comes of age, Judah marries him to a woman by the name of Tamar.

Er “was wicked in the sight of G-d” and dies young. Judah tells Onan to perform “the duty of a brother-in-law” to marry the widow of a childless brother and “raise up progeny for your brother” (a practice called yibbum—cf. **Deuteronomy 25:5**). Onan, who does not desire to father children that will be regarded as his brother's, “spilled his seed to the ground.” He, too, dies an early death in punishment for his sin.

*** Deuteronomy 25:5**

Laws Concerning Levirate Marriage

⁵ “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

Since Onan, too, had died childless, Sheilah was now supposed to marry Tamar. But time passes and Tamar realizes that Judah has no intention of marrying her to his third son. **She resolves to find a way to have a child from Judah's family, if not from Sheilah, then from Judah himself.**

Genesis 38:11-13

¹¹ Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up”—for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house.

¹² In the course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died. When Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. ¹³ And when Tamar was told, “Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep,”

Genesis 38:14-18

¹⁴ she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶ He turned to him at the roadside and said, “Come, let me come in to you,” for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?” ¹⁷ He answered, “I will send you a young goat from the flock.” And she said, “If you give me a pledge, until you send it—” ¹⁸ He said, “What pledge shall I give you?” She replied, “Your signet and your cord and your staff that is in your hand.” So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him.

AND HE SAID, “WHAT PLEDGE SHALL I GIVE YOU?” AND SHE SAID: “YOUR SIGNET, AND YOUR CORD, AND YOUR STAFF THAT IS IN YOUR HAND” (38:18)

A prophetic spirit was kindled within her: “your signet” alludes to **the royal house of David**; “your cord” alludes to **the Sanhedrin**; “and your staff” alludes to **the Messiah**, as in the verse, “The staff of thy strength the L-rd will send out of Zion” (Psalms 110:2)—all of whom are the progeny of Judah and Tamar.

(Midrash Rabbah)

Genesis 38:19-28

¹⁹ Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood.

²⁰ When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. ²¹ And he asked the men of the place, “Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim at the roadside?” And they said, “No cult prostitute has been here.” ²² So he returned to Judah and said, “I have not found her. Also, the men of the place said, ‘No cult prostitute has been here.’” ²³ And Judah replied, “Let her keep the things as her own, or we shall be laughed at. You see, I sent this young goat, and you did not find her.”

²⁴ About three months later Judah was told, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality.” And Judah said, “Bring her out, and let her be burned.” ²⁵ As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, “By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant.” And she said, “Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff.” ²⁶ Then Judah identified them and said, “**She is more righteous than I**, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not know her again.

²⁷ When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb. ²⁸ And when she was in labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.”

Obedience Is Rewarded

Judah then realized that though Tamar’s actions were less than perfect, she had acted to fulfill the familial responsibility to raise up a child for her husband under the family name. **He realized that she was more righteous than he was, so he set her free.**

Tamar gave birth to twins, one of whom, Perez, became a forefather of Boaz, who became the great-grandfather of King David, who became a forefather of the Messiah. (see *Matthew 1; Ruth 4:18-22*)

Judah is considered, in traditional Judaism and in the Tanakh, the father of the Mashiah (Messiah), who we know to be **Yeshua** (salvation), the Lion from the tribe of Judah.

“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*

Genesis 38:29-39:7

²⁹ But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” Therefore his name was called Perez. ³⁰ Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

¹ Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ² The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³ His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. ⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵ From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶ So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. ⁷ And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, “Lie with me.”

AND IT CAME TO PASS AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT HIS MASTER'S WIFE CAST HER EYES UPON JOSEPH (39:7)

Why does the Torah adjoin the incident of Potiphar’s wife to the incident of Tamar? To tell us that just as Tamar acted for the sake of Heaven, so did Potiphar’s wife act for the sake of Heaven. For she . . . was destined to produce children from him. But she did not know whether through herself or through her daughter (Joseph married Potiphar’s daughter, as per Genesis 41:45)

(Rashi)

Genesis 41:45

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

Genesis 39:8-40:23

⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, “Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge.⁹ He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. **How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?**”¹⁰ And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

¹¹ But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house,¹² she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.¹³ And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house,¹⁴ she called to the men of her household and said to them, “See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.¹⁵ And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house.”¹⁶ Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home,¹⁷ and she told him the same story, saying, “The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me.¹⁸ But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house.”

¹⁹ As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, “This is the way your servant treated me,” his anger was kindled.²⁰ And **Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison.**

²¹ But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.²² And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it.²³ The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

Genesis 40:1-23

Joseph Interprets Two Prisoners' Dreams

¹ Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt.² And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker,³ and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined.⁴ The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody.

⁵ And one night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation.⁶ When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled.⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, “Why are your faces downcast today?”⁸ They said to him, “We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them.” And Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me.”

⁹ So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, “In my dream there was a vine before me,¹⁰ and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes.¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.”¹² Then Joseph said to him, “This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days.¹³ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer.¹⁴ Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house.¹⁵ For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit.”

¹⁶ When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, “I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head,¹⁷ and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head.”¹⁸ And Joseph answered and said, “This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days.¹⁹ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you.”

²⁰ On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants.²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.²² But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.²³ **Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.**

AND THE CHIEF BUTLER DID NOT REMEMBER JOSEPH, BUT FORGOT HIM (40:23)

Because Joseph placed his trust in him, he had to remain imprisoned for another two years... Thus it says (Psalms 40:5):
“Fortunate is the man who places his trust in G-d, and does not turn to the arrogant.”

(Rashi)

From Pit to Palace

What does this story show us? It shows us that God, **by His mercies, can redeem us and take us from the depths of despair to the heights of fulfilled dreams.**

Although Judah made some very bad decisions that tremendously hurt people, and although he fell into immorality, God still chose to bring forth the Messiah of all mankind through his lineage.

Similarly, Joseph’s dark descent into a pit, his betrayal by his brothers, his period of slavery in Egypt, and abandonment in a dungeon for a crime he did not commit **served to position him to be exalted over all of Egypt, next to Pharaoh.**

In this exalted position Joseph was able to arrange for all of Egypt to have enough food to eat during the seven-year famine throughout the region. The people living around Egypt, including his own brothers who came to Joseph seeking food, survived the famine because of Joseph’s wise leadership.

Each of us may have to endure challenging situations in life as we journey toward fulfilling our calling in God.

When times are the darkest — when we have fallen into a pit, either by those who sin against us, or by our own sin — we can take heart because this is not the end of the story. **God promises to make all things work together for our good.**

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to **His purpose.**” **Romans 8:28**

MUST READ:

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to **WORK FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE. **Do everything without complaining** or arguing so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, **AMONG WHOM YOU APPEAR AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD.**” **Philippians 2:12–15****

Hanukkah (day 4 of 8)

The Feast of Dedication and The Feast of Light

On the fourth night:

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what it brings forth, who gave breath to the people upon it and life to those who walk thereon:

I the Lord, in My grace, have summoned you, and I have taken you by the hand. I create you, and appointed you a covenant-people, a light to the nations . . .

Opening eyes deprived of light, rescuing prisoners from confinement, from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

I form light and create darkness, I make peace and create woe . . .

I the Lord do all these things.

*I will lead the blind by a road they did not know, and I will make them walk by paths they never knew. I will turn darkness before them into light, rough places into level ground. These are promises – I will keep them without fail. **Isaiah 42:5-7, 45:7, 42:16***

The Seven Lamps

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and say to him, **WHEN YOU SET UP THE LAMPS, the seven lamps shall give light** in front of the lampstand.” **Numbers 8:1-2**

Proverbs 20:27: “A LAMP OF GOD, the soul of man.”

The spiritual significance of the commandment of **lighting the menorah** is that one should be a “lamplighter” who ignites that latent potential within “the **soul (soul: spirit – the breath of God, divine inspiration) of man, a lamp of God” Proverbs 20:27.**

In **teaching and influencing a fellow Believer**, the objective should be to establish him or her as a self-sufficient luminary: to assist in developing their talents and abilities so that their lamp independently glows and, in turn, kindles the potential in others.

The soul of man is a lamp of God whose purpose in life is to illuminate the world with divine light. God provided us with the “fuel” that generates His light — the Torah and its commandments, which embody His wisdom and will and convey His luminous truth.

“love the Lord your God... for He is your life”
Deuteronomy 30:20

Therein lies the specialty of the commandment of kindling the lamps of the menorah in the Holy Temple. Every commandment generates light.

Every morning, a priest filled the menorah’s seven lamps with the purest olive oil; **in the afternoon**, he would climb a three-step foot-ladder to kindle the menorah’s lamps. **The seven flames** burned through the night, symbolizing the Divine light which radiated from the Holy Temple to the world.

When the Kohen (priests who serve in the Temple) came to kindle the menorah’s lamps each afternoon in the Holy Temple, he found them fully prepared for lighting: earlier in the day, the lamps had been cleaned and filled with oil, and fresh wicks had been inserted. **All he had to do was bring near the flame he carried, so that its proximity to the waiting lamp would unleash the potential for illumination which the lamp already holds.**

Therein lies an important lesson to the spiritual lamplighter: do not think that you are achieving anything that your fellow could not, in truth, achieve on his own; do not think that you are giving him something he does not already possess. The soul of your fellow is a ready lamp, filled with the purest oil and equipped with all that is required to convert its fuel into a blazing flame. It only lacks the proximity of another lamp to ignite it. If your own soul is alight, its contact with another’s soul will awaken its potential for light, so that it may illuminate its surroundings and kindle other souls, in turn.

It is written, “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,’
‘Nor does DARKNESS obscure for You; the night shines as the DAY, DARKNESS IS AS LIGHT.’” Psalms 139:12

DARKNESS (darkness: figuratively – misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness)

DAY (day: luminous, glorious)

Revelation 2:1-7

To the Church in Ephesus

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.

² **“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name’s sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. IF NOT, I WILL COME TO YOU AND REMOVE YOUR LAMPSTAND FROM ITS PLACE, UNLESS YOU REPENT. Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To THE ONE WHO CONQUERS I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’** Revelation 2:1-7

WHO ARE THE ONES WHO CONQUER AND HOW DO THEY CONQUER?

Revelation 22:14

King James Version

¹⁴ Blessed are they that **do his commandments**, that **they may have right to the tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the city. **(IN SUMMARY, the ones who conquers and how they conquer is by “DOING HIS COMMANDS”.**

1 John 2:4

King James Version

⁴ He that saith, I know him, and **keepeth not his commandments**, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

the Nicolaitans: Jesus is very clear in expressing his feelings concerning the deeds and doctrine of the Nicolaitans, “he hates ‘them’ (the deeds and doctrines)”. **What was this doctrine, and does it still exist today?** Jude 14, “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the GRACE of GOD into lasciviousness (luh-siv-ee-uhs: *a license for immorality – unbridled lust, excess, wontedness, outrageousness, shamelessness.*); and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 3:31**, “Do we make void (nullify) the law through faith? God forbid (Not at all!): we establish the law (Rather, we uphold the law).” **By their refusal to obey God’s Commands, they deny our Lord Jesus Christ and what he taught** (Titus 1:16, Deut 28:15, Ro 1:32). **2 Peter 2:1**, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who **privily** (priv-i-ly: *secretly – to introduce or bring privately or craftily*) **shall bring in destructive heresies**, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction,” **2 Peter 2:2-3**, “. . . And through covetousness shall they with false words make merchandise of you . . .” (We are to stay alert to false teaching, as Jesus teaches in Matthew 24:4, 11) **2 Peter 2:15-16**, “Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved gain from wrongdoing,” **2 Peter 2:17-19**, “. . . they allure through the lusts of the flesh . . . while they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.” **The Nicolaitans abused the doctrine of GRACE. Their doctrine made the law of God of no effect, “By ‘believing’ we are released from being doers of the word.”** Jesus never taught this, HE HATED IT! This is His Plan for US: 1) We Repent, 2) He Forgives, 3) We then Obey His Commands. He blesses and rewards our obedience we grow closer to Him through sanctification: WE FOCUS ON BUILDING HIS KINGDOM AND NOT OURS.

God warned that He might remove the lampstand of a congregation if they continue in sin and refuse to repent. As Jesus told the church at Ephesus: “I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent.” **Revelation 2:5**

Those who are His followers continually grow in obedience, love, joy, and peace, becoming more and more like Jesus.

It is therefore, that love, joy, and peace that shines forth through a dark and dreary world like a beacon of hope. It makes others desire the Source of that goodness.

1 John 2:6

“whoever says he abides in him ought to **walk in the same way in which he (Jesus) walked.**”

Hebrews 12:14

“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the **holiness** without which no one will see the Lord.”

When a person builds a house, he makes the windows narrow on the outside and wider on the inside (a picture of a life without God), so that the light from the outside should optimally illuminate the interior. But when King Solomon built the Holy Temple in Jerusalem he made the windows narrow within and wide without, so that its light should emanate to the outside and illuminate the world (a picture of a life with God).

It is during life’s dark times that the light of Yeshua seems brightest.

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.” His light of truth and eternal love can sustain us through the darkest of nights as we continue to place our faith and trust in Him.

“Then *Jesus* spoke to them again: ‘I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.’” **John 8:12**

Next Week’s Reading & Location:

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

Upcoming Event:

Hanukkah (Jesus’ Conception) 2020
6pm Thursday, December 10th to 6pm Friday, December 18th