

Did Jesus Come to Bring Peace to Earth?

When the angel announced the birth of Jesus, the host of heaven appeared with Him and praised God in these familiar words.
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men – Luke 2:14
Jesus is also called the "Prince of Peace." The prophet Isaiah wrote.
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace – Isaiah 9:6
The question then arises: Did Jesus come to earth to bring peace? If so, then He failed in His mission because the world has not known peace since His coming.
There Is A Different Reading Of The Text
First, it should be noted that the text in Luke should read a little differently.
Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom He favors!
The peace promised is not to every person but rather those whom God favors.
He Came To Bring Peace To Believers Only
Jesus has promised peace to believers.
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid – John 14:27
The Apostle Paul wrote of God's peace.
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus – Philippians 4:7
There Will Not Be Peace For Everyone
The idea of Jesus coming to earth for the purpose of bringing a lasting peace is contrary to His words. Although one of the designations of Jesus is the "Prince of Peace," His first coming was not for the purpose of bringing peace on earth. He made this clear.
I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.' And 'a man's foes will be those of his own household' – Matthew 10:34-36
According to His own words Jesus came to testify of the truth.
Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice – John 18:37
People Must Make A Choice Regarding Jesus
The nature of Jesus' message called for people to make a choice. Rather than uniting humanity, it divided friends and families. It still has that effect today. Those who believe in Jesus are separated from those who do not believe. His mission was not that of bringing peace but rather bringing the truth of God.
There Will Be Universal Peace Someday
One day He will return and establish an everlasting kingdom where peace will be the rule rather than the exception. The prophet Isaiah wrote.
Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this – Isaiah 9:7
Until that time the message of Jesus divides those who love God's truth from those who do not.
Summary
When Jesus Christ came to earth the angels announced that there would be peace. Jesus is called the, "Prince of Peace" yet there has been no peace for the world since He came. There are several reasons for this. First, the peace the angels promised were to those who have trusted Him - not to everyone. Believers can enjoy the peace of God. Second, Jesus Himself testified that His coming had the result of dividing people not uniting them. There will be peace on the earth but only when Christ returns.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/fuq/don_stewart/don_stewart_790.cfm

John 16:33

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.”

Week 9 - PARASHA 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 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:

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

Mon 18 Nov 2019 15:53 EST First published on Mon 18 Nov 2019 15:04 EST

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.

“Calling the establishment of civilian settlements inconsistent with international law has not advanced the cause of peace,” said **Mike Pompeo**, the US secretary of state. “The hard truth is that there will never be a judicial resolution to the conflict, and arguments about who is right and who is wrong as a matter of international law will not bring peace.”

He said the legality of individual settlements should be decided by the Israeli courts, and claimed that the US declaration would not prejudice an ultimate comprehensive settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. Pompeo even suggested the move would “provide the very space for Israelis and Palestinians to come together to find a political solution”.

... Israel’s prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, immediately lauded the announcement, saying the US had righted a “historical wrong” and accepted the “reality on the ground”.

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 . . .

Pompeo’s statement is, however, an extension of previous Trump policy, which has been marked by a series of radical pro-Israeli moves and the abandonment of Washington’s historic role as broker. The administration has already recognised Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, and Israeli sovereignty in the occupied Golan Heights.

In making the case for the policy shift, Pompeo repeated some of the language he had used to justify the recognition of Israeli control of the Golan, saying it reflected “the reality on the ground”, and that it arose from the unique facts, history and circumstances” around the establishment of settlements.

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 37:1-4 **Joseph's Dreams**

37 Jacob 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 once, while someone who listens to negative talk of another is twice punished.

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.**

His mother, Rebecca, favored Jacob but his father, Isaac, favored his brother Esau. This caused a great deal of animosity between the two brothers. Rather than learn from his parents' mistakes, however, Jacob simply perpetuated their parental weaknesses.

Instead of following Jacob's example, we can make a choice to learn from our parents' mistakes and decide today not to carry on with unhealthy parent-child relationships that have been modeled for us by previous generations.

Of course, to make such a change requires us to be set free from the past, and that begins with repentance and forgiveness — repentance for judging our parents (and perhaps for being a troublesome child), and forgiving them for their mistakes.

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.

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.

AND THEY TOOK HIM, AND CAST HIM INTO A PIT; AND THE PIT WAS EMPTY; THERE WAS NO WATER IN IT (37:24)

From the implication of what is said, "And the pit was empty," do I not know that there was no water in it? What then is taught by, "there was no water in it"? There was no water, but there were snakes and scorpions in it.

(Talmud, Shabbat 22a)

The mind and heart of man are never empty. If there is no life-nourishing "water," there are "snakes and scorpions in it"

(The Chassidic Masters)

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 11:4 Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter ... because "their own shepherds have no pity on them" and because of this, God says

Zechariah 11:6 I will cause each of them to fall into the hand of his neighbor, and each into the hand of his king, and they shall crush the land, and I will deliver none from their hand

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 "the potter's field" later called the "Field of Blood". Interestingly, this place was used for the burial of strangers from what I can dig up.

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 37:29-36

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.

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 38:1-2

Judah and Tamar

38 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 Shelah. 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,”

IT WAS TOLD TO TAMAR: BEHOLD, YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW IS GOING UP TO TIMNA TO SHEAR HIS SHEEP (38:13)

For Timna sat on the slope of a hill: one ascended to it from one side and descended to it from the other.

(Rashi)

The town of Timna is thus the prototype for all of life’s destinations. One never simply goes to Timna—one either ascends or descends to it; the same is true of the journey of life. There are no two parallel points on the slope of human development, where every step is either a step up or a step down from its predecessor..

This is also the lesson implicit in the **lights of Chanukah** (which always falls in proximity with this Torah (Vayeishev)). One who kindles a single flame on the first night of the festival observes the mitzvah of kindling the **Chanukah lights** in the most optimal manner possible. But to kindle that same flame on the following night is not only a failure to increase light but a decline in relation to yesterday’s achievement: on the second night of **Chanukah**, a single flame represents a less than optimal observance of the mitzvah. For in the diagonal trajectory of life, our every deed and endeavor either elevates or lowers us in relation to our prior station.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

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 her 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 enkindled 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

Still, we can well imagine that sin might get in the way of this hope, and it did in the case of Judah's second son, Onan. In fact, the Lord was displeased with him, too, because he refused to raise up a son for his brother. In judgment, the Lord took his life also.

Instead of admitting that his sons died early because of their sin, Judah blamed the widow, Tamar. And though he promised her that his third and last son, Shelah, would give her a son, he did not want to risk losing him as well.

He told Tamar to wait as a widow until Shelah grew to maturity. But when Shelah became a man, Judah still did not give him to Tamar as her husband, so she took matters into her own hands.

Tamar disguised herself as a cult prostitute and lured Judah into an encounter that resulted in her becoming pregnant. Approximately three months later, when her pregnancy became evident, Judah ordered her executed for harlotry; but it was then that Tamar displayed Judah's seal, cord, and staff, which Judah had given Tamar as pledge of payment for her services.

"As she was being brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law, 'I am with child by the man to whom these belong.' And she added, 'Examine these: whose seal and cord and staff are these?'" **Genesis 38:25**

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 Mashiach (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

39 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

40 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**

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 flame surges upwards, as if to tear free from the wick and lose itself in the great expanses of energy that gird the heavens. But even as it strains heavenward, it is already pulling back, tightening its grip on the wick and drinking thirstily of the oil in the lamp, oil that sustains its continued existence as an individual flame.

The wick, if ignited, would flare briefly and die, utterly consumed. As for the oil, one would find it extremely difficult to ignite at all. But when wick and oil are brought together in the lamp, they produce a controlled and steady light.

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.

The divine oil requires a “wick”, a **physical body**(physical minds that study it and comprehend it, physical mouths that debate it and teach it, and physical media that publish it and disseminate it) to channel its substance and convert it into an illuminating flame; **but for the divine will to be manifest in our world, there must be physical hands that actualize it and physical materials with which it is actualized.**

To realize its role as a “**lamp of God,**” a human life must be a lamp that combines a physical existence (the “wick”) with the divine ideas and deeds of Torah (the “oil”). When the wick is saturated with oil and feeds its spiritual yearnings with a steady supply of the same, the resultant flame is both luminous and sustainable, preserving the existence and productivity of the wick and illuminating the corner of the world in which it has been placed.

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

Our lives are rendered into burning lamps, alight with flames that waver from heaven to earth and back again and illuminate the world in the process.

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)

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. ³ I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ 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.** ⁶ Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷ 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**

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.

Yeshua 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 Yeshua 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) 2019
Sunday, December 22nd to Monday, December 30th