



Full childhood through adoption

Parashat vayechi (12) – He lived

Torah: Berēshith 47:28 to 50:26

Haftarah: Melākim Aleph 2:11-25

Apostolic Writings: Kēpha Aleph 2:11-25

The only person in Scripture whose name was changed but is still called by both names, is our youngest patriarch, *Ya`aqob*. This name is always used when he is wearing his worldly jacket, that jacket which did not always show the necessary confidence in *YAH* for the best part of 120 years. It is also for this reason that last week's study concludes with the words:

Berēshith 47 ²⁷And *Yisra'ēl* dwelt in the land of *Mitsrayim*, in the land of *Goshen*. And they had possessions there and were fruitful and increased exceedingly.

First of all, it was the man *Yisra'ēl* who stayed in *Goshen* and subsequently the nation that would bear the name. He survives the famine, but 12 years later he is still in *Mitsrayim*. One question that arises: why did he stay there and not go back to *Kena'an*? After all, this was the land that had been promised to him and his ancestors more than once. One of the easy answers could be: he was happy to be close again to *Yosēph*. We also see a difficult answer in the words he speaks to Pharaoh shortly after his arrival:

Berēshith 47 ⁹And *Ya`aqob* said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojournings [on earth] are one hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not reached the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojournings."

He considers his life to be filled with evil because his beloved wife died at an early age, but also because he missed his beloved son for many years. However, to be close to *Yosēph*, is more important to him than staying in a land where pagans are in the majority. There is a lesson, though, that we can learn from all of this: regardless of where you find yourself, when you live according to *Torah*, you are as close to *YAH* as you will ever be. It is also for this reason, when he realises that he is coming to the end of his life, he gets *Yosēph* to swear to him to take him out of *Mitsrayim* and bury him with his fathers. He uses the standard oath by which *Yosēph* is to put his hand under *Ya`aqob*'s thigh. It is important that *Ya`aqob* returns to the land promised to him with an oath, as it will also represent the future restoration of all twelve tribes. At the end of this ritual he lies in worship with his head over the head of the bed. How long ago did you humble yourself like this before *YAH*, if ever? Have you ever lied prostrated before *YAH*, flat on the ground and in silent reverence and devotion?

The last part of v. 27 sets up the next scene where a government will be brought forth, one that is afraid of this rising nation – a nation that is growing and increasing exceedingly. Shortly after this, *Ya'aqob* tells *Yosēph* of the promise he was given at *Luz (Beit-El)*:

Berēshith 48 ⁴and said to me, 'See, I am making you fruitful and shall increase you and make of you an assembly of peoples, and give this land to your seed after you as an everlasting possession.'

This promise still stands firm to this day for every person, all over the world, to be a part of *Yisra'ēl* – it excludes nothing and no one, except those who do not have ears to hear. This is where we as *Torah*-believers must draw a thick red line through the lie of the church in that they would replace *Yisra'ēl*. This has never happened at any point and will not happen in the future! Replacement theology is a lie from hell, as is the rapture of a select few. The ten tribes have been dispersed all over the world, not just to South Africa or any other country. Please refer to the note at [addendum A](#).

At some point we again see the expression “after these things”, after which *Yosēph* is summoned to his ill father. His two sons, *Menashsheh* and *Ephrayim*, accompany him. *Ya'aqob* adopts these two sons as his own – a standard custom in the ANE. *Yosēph*'s name means “(He [YAH]) will add” and that is what is happening here. It is also a sign for us that they are to come “out of *Babel*”, as we will see shortly again:

Hazon 18 ⁴And I heard another voice from the heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

Regardless of *Yosēph*'s position in *Mitsrayim*, he still shows the necessary respect for his father by bowing down and lying face down on the ground. It is also a tribute to *YAH* when we honour our parents (cf. *Shemoth* 20:12; *Marqos* 7:10; *Eph'siyim* 6:1-3). Not only do these two sons share in the inheritance of *Ya'aqob*, but they are now also fully part of *Yisra'ēl* and will later each get their own territory. We can't help to notice the shadow picture of any person, regardless of nation, tribe, race or language, who will be able to join the nation of *Yisra'ēl* through the blood of *Yeshua*. Up to this point the name of the eldest son is mentioned first, but after being blessed by *Ya'aqob*, the name of *Ephrayim* is mentioned first. They replace, as it were, the first two sons of *Ya'aqob*, namely *Re'ubēn* and *Shim'on*. It doesn't change *Yehudah* being the leader of the entire nation and head of the family. We see the same inverse application between *Menashsheh* and *Ephrayim* as with *Ėsaw* and *Ya'aqob*. However, before blessing them, we experience a very important event:

Berēshith 48 ⁸And *Yisra'ēl* saw *Yosēph*'s sons, and said, “Who are these?”

Ya'aqob is heavily under the influence of *Ruach*, but he is also visually impaired; he is aware how he and *Ribqah* had cheated *Yitshaq* and he wants to prevent this from happening again. The official adoption will also take place now, therefore we see *Yosēph* bringing the boys from between his knees. In order for *Menashsheh* to receive the blessing of the firstborn, *Yosēph* stands him on his left and *Ephrayim* on his right. This will help his visually impaired father to stretch out his hands forward and place his right hand, the greater blessing of prosperity and wealth, on *Menashsheh*. Either hand can be used for blessing, but where more than one blessing is offered, the right hand is preferred. When a complete transfer of empowerment is bestowed, both hands are used (cf. *Melakim Aleph* 19:19 where *Ėliyahu* throws his robe on *Elisha*. The robe goes over both shoulders and therefore represents both arms that produce the blessing in full).

For the past 2 000 years, since the death, resurrection and ascension of *Yeshua*, we are increasingly experiencing how people all over the earth are being awakened to investigate and follow the Hebrew roots, the principles taught us by *Yeshua*. Most of these people have left Christianity, while others became involved in a different way, probably completely raw and without previous religious influence. Unfortunately, it also happens that a large number of newcomers have fallen straight into orthodox Judaism with dirty shoes and all – something that is just as abominable as Christianity. These two children

of *Yosēph* represent those people born into paganism, but also include Christianity, as most of the customs of Christianity were inherited from idolatry. It is therefore important that we do not follow any traditions of man or even try to imitate them, but simply stay on the Way that *Torah* teaches us, just like our ancestors, but in complete obedience. No Christian ever needs to convert to Judaism, and likewise should *Y'hudim* never convert to Christianity. There is a golden middle ground where neither of the traditions and customs will be followed, but only the balance of the pendulum as taught by *Torah*, where everything is in perfect balance.

Ya'aqob's eyesight is poor enough that he wouldn't necessarily see which boy is older, but being led by *Ruach* he crosses his hands so that the younger son, *Ephrayim*, receives the more important blessing, as determined by *YAH*. Initially *Yosēph* is shocked, but in spite of his trying to prevent it, *Ephrayim* is blessed and we are taught another Hebrew idiom:

Berēshith 48¹⁶ the Messenger who has redeemed me from all evil – bless the youths! And let my name be called upon them, and the name of my fathers *Abraham* and *Yitshaq*. And let them increase to a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

Ya'aqob acknowledges the favour he had received from *YAH* through the messenger who had wrestled with him years ago. In this way he arrogates to himself the right that that messenger will bless the boys and we see a singular verb, meaning that the boys will be blessed as a unit and together they will be known as *Yisra'el*. The names *Ephrayim* and *Yisra'el* will, however, be used interchangeably in the future. The first two ancestors are also included here. We encounter the idiom with the word יָגַדְּ? (*yid-Gu*), to grow. The root word is הָגַדְּ (*da-Gah*) and derived from the word דָּג (*dagh*), fish, simply because fish breed in large quantities. However, the point being made here is that the two boys will not only become great nations, but also learn to swim upstream for survival, as this is the life preserver of fish. Therefore, we also learn another life lesson from this: don't go with the flow, because it mostly contains deception, lies and sadness. Learn to move upstream spiritually because through the power of *Ruach* you will be equipped to succeed.

Yosēph is satisfied by his father's words that *Menashsheh* will also become a great nation, although *Ephrayim* will be bigger. This is clearly shown in Scripture during the period of the judges when the tribes of *Ephrayim* and *Menashsheh* show significant growth (cf. *B'midbar* 1:32-25; 26:28-37), especially when compared to the decrease in numbers of the tribes of *Re'ubēn* and *Shim'on*. In this way *Yosēph* is now physically recognised as firstborn, that which is taken away from *Re'ubēn*. The blessing we have just encountered is exactly what every father bestows on his sons every *erev Shabbat* – that they will be like *Ephrayim* and *Menashsheh*, not only growing in numbers, but growing in love for *Torah* in order to lead their descendants and also other people to the Way of Truth.

Ephrayim now has a very important role in the nation of *Yisra'el*; along with *Yehudah*, *YAH*'s plan of salvation is coming closer to being fulfilled. It is easy to follow the natural course of circumstances. This is how we were raised and to some extent includes tradition. However, we must realise that *YAH* sometimes works outside the natural course of events and when *Ruach* is present, things sometimes happen quite differently than we expect or plan. We should therefore always be mentally prepared for something out of the ordinary. *Moses*'s successor, *Yehoshua*, is a descendant of *Ephrayim*. This is also the tribe that was set up as the leader of the northern tribes after they broke away from *Yehudah* and *Binyamin*, after which they became scattered across the world.

When *YAH* rejects *Ephrayim* at some point (cf. *Hoshēa* 1:6, 9), it is part of His plan to save the entire world. The prophecy that *Ya'aqob* pronounces over *Yosef*'s sons teaches us that *Ephrayim* will be the “fullness of the other nations” (cf. *Romiyim* 11:25; *Luqas* 21:24). The words that *Ya'aqob* speaks over *Ephrayim* are מְלֵא הַגּוֹיִם (*me-lo ha-go-Yim*), multitude of nations. However, it must in no way be confused with the expression “mixed crowd” (cf. *Shemoth* 12:38). The word גּוֹיִם (*go-Yim*) is the plural of *goy* which simply

translates as 'nation'. In its plural form it includes every nation under the sun – *Yisra'el et al* – without exception. In its singular form *goy* indicates any person not born in the then country of *Kena'an*.

We must also understand from this that *melo* does not refer to multitudes or numbers, but to abundance, fullness – that which happens after *YAH* rejects the ten northern tribes. They then go out among the rest of the people on earth and their descendants come back in abundance, in a way that cannot be counted (cf. *Hosh'ea* 1:10). These ten tribes, of which *Ephrayim* is the head, has spread over the earth, but is waking up to *Torah* and coming back, just as Scripture teaches us. Soon after receiving these blessings, *Yos'eph* receives the city *Shekem* and prophecies that *YAH* will cause the people as a whole to return to the land of their fathers. Although it was his two sons who acted unlawfully and conquered *Shekem*, *Ya'aqob* speaks as if he had conquered it himself. We must keep in mind that our children's empowerment comes from us as parents, even if it is not expressly given to them. This could also mean that the *Amorites* took over everything after *Ya'aqob* and his family left there during the famine, but that this is a prophetic word and that it will be taken back again. Nowhere in Scripture or the apocrypha is reference made to any other children *Yos'eph* would have had. However, it is possible that it wasn't important enough to record.

Ya'aqob is satisfied that what *Ruach* had laid on his heart, is now accomplished. Typically, as with the previous two patriarchs, it is now the turn of the last to also bless his sons – something that carried unconditional weight and was characteristic of fathers during that period in the ANE. While the Masoretic Text (MT) refers to בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים (*b'a-cha-rit ha-ya-mim*), in the last days, the context here is wrong as it doesn't fit the time slot. This text addresses the thirteen tribes and must therefore relate to the victories during *Yehoshua's* leadership and the people's eventual return to and residing in *Kena'an*. This does also not refer to the days in which we presently find ourselves.

With a similar enthusiasm and empowered by *Ruach*, *Ya'aqob* starts blessing each of his sons after he calls them closer. Each blessing contains one or more of the following principles:

1. a summary of the boy's personality;
2. an indication of possible contingencies;
3. a prophecy of his future.

This entire blessing is written in the form of poetry and is the first long piece of poetry in Scripture. Not only does it form the culmination of *tol'dot Ya'aqob* (offspring of *Ya'aqob*), but also the highlight of the entire book. The blessings rest on the promises that *YAH* had made to *Abraham*, *Yits'haq* and *Ya'aqob*. Each of the twelve sons would learn how his branch of the family would benefit from each blessing, but also how he could be a blessing to the others. We see something similar to the letters sent to the seven congregations mentioned in *Hazon* 2 and 3. Although one letter was addressed to a specific congregation, it would ultimately apply to all. Each blessing is given directly to one of the sons, but may also apply to any or all of the others.

Many a believer in and follower of *Yeshua* has not yet learned how to develop their respect for their inheritance because they cannot determine their bloodline. They have lost the understanding of who they should be in *Ya'aqob* and the covenant effected through *Abraham*. Many believers have lost their identity through false teachings and are today walking around like lost sheep. When these people are unsure of their scriptural identity, it is their own lack of understanding that causes a veil to be drawn over their minds. They do not realise the blessings of full childhood, much less that they are physical heirs of *Abraham*:

Galatijim 3 ²⁹ And if you are of Messiah, then you are seed of *Abraham*, and heirs according to promise.

In *Yeshua's* own words:

Mattithyahu 15 ²⁴ And He answering, said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of *Yisra'el*."

When we flip the coin, we see on the other side that the majority from the house of *Yehuḏah*, also known today as Rabbinic Judaism, focus only on their man-made rules and the *Talmudic* theories – for them *Torah* is less important. By this they miss out on the spiritual benefits such as *Yeshua* has already accomplished them. They only see partially through a veil that has been drawn over their minds. The salvation of all people has always been a part of *YAH*'s plan (cf. *Berēshith* 3:15; 12:3; *Shemoth* 19:5-6). There is only one Creator-Elohim and all of us are created in His image (cf. *Berēshith* 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6). The all-encompassing love that *YAH* has for all has is clearly pointed out by *Yeshayahu* (cf. *Yeshayahu* 2:2-4; 45:21-25; 56:1-8; 60:1-3). The Word preached to *Abraham* and the Word that *Mosheh* penned down is known as the Mosaic Covenant. It's the same *b'sorah*, good news, that we, as *talmidim* of *Yeshua* experience today:

☞ *Yohanan 5* ⁴⁶ "For if you believed *Mosheh*, you would have believed Me, since he wrote about Me.

☞ *Luqas 24* ²⁷ And beginning at *Mosheh* and all the Prophets, He was explaining to them in all the Scriptures the *matters* concerning Himself.

☞ *Luqas 24* ⁴⁴ And He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all have to be filled that were written in the *Torah* of *Mosheh* and the Prophets and the *Tehillim* concerning Me."

Thirty years after *Yeshua* was raised from the dead, *Sha'ul* still preached the *b'sorah* like *Mosheh* gave it to the people at *Sinai*. If we were to walk into a synagogue today, may we find rabbis sharing the same teaching that *Mosheh* brought? What would happen if we walked into a Christian church? Will there be preachers teaching *Torah* the way *Mosheh* had taught and *Yeshua* had fulfilled it? In both cases we will be sorely disappointed, therefore we learn at the end of *Luqas*'s message:

Ma'asei 28 ²³ And having appointed him a day, many came to him where he was staying, to whom he was explaining, earnestly witnessing about the reign of Elohim, and persuading them concerning *יְהוָה* from both the *Torah* of *Mosheh* and the Prophets, from morning until evening.

If we try to separate *Torah* and *Yeshua* from one another, especially when we deem any of our man-made rules or traditions higher, we practice nothing but legalism. We cannot have one without the other and therefore must not stand with one foot on human traditions and the other foot in *Torah* – it's both, not one or the other. The Way of Truth, as *Yeshua* fulfilled for us and accomplished in *Torah*, is a gift that *YAH* has given to everyone with love. All He asks in return, is our obedience and complete trust.

In actual fact *Re'ubēn* doesn't receive a blessing, but rather a punishment. He is described as rushing water, something that cannot be controlled (cf. *Shemu'el Bet* 5:20; *Iyob* 12:15 *et al*). Uncontrolled water is not usable and therefore *Re'ubēn* can never excel at anything. *Shim'on* and *Lēwi* are not only brothers, but they have the same characteristics of violence. Both are divided because the tribe of *Shim'on* later becomes so small in numbers that they are included in other tribes, mainly *Yehuḏah*, while *Lēwi* is spread throughout the territory as priests and caretakers of cities of safety. *Lēwi* will later receive a wonderful blessing at *Sinai*. However, the only blessing for these three eldest sons is that they still remain part of the nation.

Yehuḏah is the first son to actually receive a blessing. He is compared to a lion, something that is fearless. His staff is the sign of royal rule and therefore he will rule over all the other brothers. He was the one who saved *Yosēph*'s life and also openly admitted his offence of fornication with *Tamar*. Where the brothers had bowed to *Yosēph* earlier, they will now bow to *Yehuḏah*:

Berēshith 49 ¹⁰ "The sceptre shall not turn aside from *Yehuḏah*, nor an Insciber from between his feet, until *Shiloh* comes, and to Him is the obedience of peoples.

Some source texts do not contain the word 'Shiloh', but render it slightly different:

Berēshith 49 ¹⁰The scepter will not pass from *Yehuḏah*, nor the ruler's staff from between his legs, until he comes to whom [obedience] belongs; and it is he whom the peoples will obey. (CJB)

The word *Shiloh* can be taken literally as a city in the country, but nothing of note ever happened there. Both the Septuagint and *Targum Onkelos* translate it as "until what is his comes". However, no one can explain what 'his' should be. There is also a vague possibility that the word originated from *Babel* of which the root word translates as 'prince'. However, most commentators agree that this is a Messianic prophecy, similar to *Berēshith* 3:15, which therefore refers to *Yeshua*, who will emerge from the tribe of *Yehuḏah*. Where *Yehuḏah* will rule over twelve tribes, his seed, the Messiah, will rule over all the kingdoms of the earth (cf. *Hazon* 11:15). The thought of a king who will rule over all mankind is found throughout the book of *Berēshith*.

Although *Z'vulun* is younger than his brother, he is blessed first. He teaches his brother *Torah*, gets involved in shipping and knows *YAH*'s times (cf. *Dibrei haYamim Aleph* 12:31). Since he works along with *Yissasḳar*, the latter is considered a donkey. However, we do know that donkeys are excellent pack animals, but they also become obstinate and lazy very easily. That was the reason for *Yissasḳar*'s downfall: they became comfortable and subjected themselves to forced labour. Isn't this the biggest problem most of us have today? There may be a little of *Yissasḳar* in each of us. We see something that looks good, so much so that we give up our freedom for years of service, just so we can buy things we don't need with money we don't have anyway!

No one likes to be called certain names, especially 'donkey' or 'snake'. However, we must also see the positives in this: when a donkey works, it works hard and a snake is brilliant in defense. The tribe of *Dan* would remain relatively small and could never accomplish much in the military field. However, they would be able to outwit the enemy through shrewdness. We see in the words of one commentator¹:

"This character of Dan as a judge of Israel came out in the expedition of the Danites to Laish in northern *Kena'an* (described in *Judges* 18), and in the romantic chivalry of the brave and gigantic Samson, who with the cunning of the serpent overthrew the mightiest of foes."

When *Ya'aqob* therefore compares his son *Dan* to a snake, he may see far into the future. The name *Dan* translates as judge. *Shimshon*, devoted to *YAH* from birth, was a judge from the tribe of *Dan* (cf. *Shophetim* 13:2, 24). At the time of his death he killed more Philistines than during his entire lifetime. However, we notice a strange exclamation here in *Torah*, as if the blessings are interrupted:

Berēshith 49 ¹⁸"I have waited for your deliverance, O יהוה!

This is the only place in the entire chapter where the Tetragrammaton is used and most commentators believe that it is a call to return to *YAH*, especially after their problems with the Philistines. *Gad* would eventually live on the eastern side of the *Yardēn*, after helping their brothers overcome the enemy. *Ashēr* was in essence very productive, as the name also reflects: contented and prosperous. *Ya'aqob* sees in *Naphtali* many victories over enemies, as we learn in *Shophetim* 4. No wonder he is described as a deer, for Scripture teaches us:

Shophetim 4 ⁹And she said, "I shall certainly go with you. Only, there shall be no esteem for you in the journey you are taking, for יהוה is going to sell *Sisera* into the hand of a woman." So *Deborah* arose and went with *Baraq* to *Qeḏesh*. [emphasis added]

Yosēph's blessing follows and is almost as comprehensive as that of *Yehuḏah*. He is given the birthright, as well as the covenant and the priestly part. This is incredibly important for us, because our Messiah can only return when *Yehuḏah*'s royal and *Yosēph*'s priestly parts are combined in the hand of *YAH*. This is what we

¹ Coffman's Commentaries on the Bible.

know as the priestly order of *Malkitsedeq*, as we are taught in Hebrews 7. The twelve tribes and those who are added, grafted in, will come together with one heart, in one accord and with one covenant (cf. *Yehezqël* 37). *Yeshua* will return and make Himself known to the world, just like *Yosëph* made himself known to his brothers.

Yosëph, like a shepherd, provided people with food during the famine. *Yeshua* provides every person who has an ear with the Bread of Life. When we look at the expressions that *Ya'aqob* uses while blessing *Yosëph*, we see words like Shepherd, Mighty One, Almighty, Stone of *Yisra'ël* and more. One of the key words in *Berëshith* is indeed 'blessing', as it appears about 88 times in total. According to another commentator²:

“Here in two verses [25 and 26], like the finale of a fireworks display, the root occurs six times (verb 1x, noun 5x) making a brilliant climax to the last words of Jacob. The God-given blessings of the future will far outshine those already experienced.”

Binyamin, as the youngest son, receives the last blessing. We later learn from Scripture that many warriors came from this tribe: *Ëhud*, *Sha'ul*, *Yonathan et al*. He therefore demonstrates the quality of warfare, even against his brothers (cf. *Shophetim* 5:14, 8:16; *Dibreï haYamim Aleph* 8:40; ch. 12 complete; *Dibreï haYamim Bet* 14:8; 17:17 et al). The prediction of *Ya'aqob* is that *Binyamin* would always be successful against his enemies – the words ‘morning’ and ‘evening’ indicate a figure of speech that would encompass the entire 24-hour period. Possibly *Ya'aqob* could have had a glimpse of the future regarding events in *Shushan*, where *Estër* became queen. Both *Estër* and *Mordekai* were descendants of *Binyamin*.

We learn in Scripture of many farewell speeches. This is where a spiritual leader or a man of high standing gathers his followers or children with the announcement that death is imminent. Although those gathered may express their grief and dismay, the speaker encourages them to be strong and brave. He declares his love for them and one of the most important commands he gives them is to maintain *Torah* at all times; there must also not be any friction amongst each other and they must in all cases maintain unity. He utters the promise that *YAH* will bless and protect them in every way, provided they remain faithful to Him. In most cases, a successor is designated and the end of the speech is closed with prayer. The first of these farewell speeches in Scripture are the blessings which *Ya'aqob* bestows on his sons. Another important farewell speech are the words we read in almost the entire book of *D'varim*, during which *Mosheh* gives an overview of the nation's journey, but also presents blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Others to note are when *Shemu'ël* and later *Dawid* bid farewell to the people. The most important farewell speech is taught to us in *Yochanan* 13 to 17, when *Yeshua* calls his *talmidim* together for a farewell dinner, shortly before His death.



Ya'aqob concludes his farewell speech and blessings with orders concerning his burial in the cave of *Machpelah*, after which he withdraws his feet and is gathered to his people – not only an expression which means that he has come to rest, but also points to the immortality of the soul. The writer(s) of Hebrews penned it down as follows:

² J Gordon Wenham, Genesis 16-50, p. 486; Word Biblical Commentary series. Waco: Word Books, 1994.

lb`rim 11 ²¹By belief, *Ya`aqob*, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of *Yosēph*, and did reverence on the top of his staff.

Some translations indicate that 'staff' could also be the head of the bed. However, the full meaning of this idiom is that he has fully surrendered everything to posterity. The blessing or punishment for each son would be in force with the necessary empowerment *Ya`aqob* had received from *YAH*. He hands out orders as expected and each son knows what needs to be done. These orders can also be seen as tasks and would not be impossible to carry out. It gives each person a purpose in life, something that each of us should yearn for in order to understand and discover the deeper mysteries of *YAH*. We are currently like the lost boy in the pigsty living on pods, therefore we must yearn to get back what *YAH* has taken away from us: His Word, His festivals, His calendar. We are not going to find it in the pigsty, so each person must view his or her task in such a way as to be able to live in freedom of obedience and then be able to accomplish the given task with love. The opposite of this is that we fall into legalism and view everything as a burden.

Directly after *Ya`aqob*'s demise, *Yosēph* arranges for embalmers to collect the remains and embalm him. The correct practice according to Scripture would be to get the body in the ground as soon as possible and bury it, but because of *Ya`aqob*'s request to be buried in his own country, *Yosēph* allows this method. Some sages criticise the embalming, since *Torah* requires a body to be buried in order to decompose as soon as possible and again become part of what we are made of:

Berēshith 3 ¹⁹“By the sweat of your face you are to eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For **dust you are, and to dust you return.**” [emphasis added]

Please note that we do not read anything about ashes, but we do read about dust. As in many other cases, the body could be buried, only to be exhumed later and taken back to *Kena'an*. A cremated body cannot be exhumed and reburied unless the ashes are placed in a special container that is resistant to the elements. However, it is unclear whether this act of embalming would be a tribute from Pharaoh and *Yosēph* only agreed to it. Embalming a body took a minimum of 40 days and we include a good description at [addendum B](#). The other problem with embalming is that it returns us to our former life: a beautiful body, but without a spirit! Last week we alluded to a possibility why *Yosēph* died earlier than his brothers; however, there are also sages who are of the opinion that he committed a sin by having his father *Ya`aqov* embalmed. Again, this statement cannot irrefutably be proven.

After the embalming and a total of 70 days of mourning, *Yosēph* arranges for *Ya`aqov*'s remains to be taken back to *Kena'an* for proper burial as agreed. According to the book of *Yasher*, *Ya`aqob*'s body was placed in a coffin of pure gold, inlaid with onyx stones and bdellium all around. A large number of people from *Mitsrayim* embarked on the 400 kilometer journey with the brothers. At the threshing floor of *Atad* they mourned for 7 days and this is where we extract a lesson for ourselves once again: the *Kena'anites* did not recognise their fellow countrymen from before and thought they all hailed from *Mitsrayim*! This, my dear brother and sister, is because we do not take *YAH* seriously and say farewell to people who do not walk in the Way of Truth. We look and smell like people of the world, maybe even like pagans, and are easily equated with things that have no eternal value; we exchange *Shabbat* and secluded festivals of *YAH* for worldly pleasure, especially when it has a spiritual undertone. In order to make a difference in our lives and those of others, we must act like *YAH*'s children, look like *YAH*'s children and smell like *YAH*'s children!

After *Ya`aqob* is laid to rest in the cave of *Machpelah* with his ancestors, the brothers become very distressed. They send a messenger to *Yosēph* with the untruth that their father would have asked him to forgive his brothers and not hold them accountable for their actions from years ago. Soon after, they all check in with *Yosēph*, fall down before his face and plead for forgiveness. They still do not realise that they must forgive themselves – as *Yosēph* had already done years ago. In prophetic language *Yosēph* gets his brothers to understand that no one, including him, could stand in the place of *YAH* to act as a judge over

other people. He assures them that he is only there to take care of them and their children. This is also true of the prophet's words to us, as part of *Ephrayim*, where we see these purposeful words:

Yirmeyahu 31⁹ "With weeping they shall come, and with *their* prayers I bring them. I shall make them walk by rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they do not stumble. For I shall be a Father to *Yisra'el*, and *Ephrayim* – he is My first-born.

Yosēph dies at age 110 and is also embalmed, after which the body is placed in a coffin, *aron*. This would be similar to the prospective ark of the covenant, something that could later easily be transported to take back to *Kena'an*, even if it would take 40 years! According to tradition, the coffin of *Yosēph* was always beside the ark of the covenant while the people moved. If someone enquired about it, the answer would be: "It is appropriate because this one [*Yosēph*] fulfilled everything that is written in that one [ark of the covenant]." Although this commentary is only found in Rabbinic manuscripts, we nevertheless see the similarities between *Yosēph* and *Yeshua*. After taking possession of the promised land, *Yosēph* is buried in *Shekem*, the city that father *Ya'aqob* had given him many years before (cf. *Yehoshua* 24:32).

We have learned about many blessings, but must realise that it is not something that any person can randomly wish for or bestow on someone else. A blessing is something to be taken very seriously and comes directly from *YAH*; it is not the common words we utter when wishing someone something good, like winning the Lotto, however well intended. It is therefore important that every blessing bestowed upon someone is spoken with seriousness and fully intended. As we come to the end of this first book of *Torah*, it is our wish that each person will take these words to heart and live purposefully according to them, so that they will receive all the blessings of *YAH* contained in this book. May we each also look out for each other, build and strengthen each other as we do at the end of each book of *Torah*, speaking the following words out aloud:

חֲזַק! חֲזַק! וְנִתְחַזַּק!

This is in the original "*Chazak! Chazak! Venitchazek!*" and translated as: Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!

Shabbat shalom!

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Sources:

Unless otherwise stated, all text is quoted from *The Scriptures* (2009)³. Due to personal belief, the word 'God' is replaced with the Hebrew '*Elohim*' or sometimes inflections thereof.

You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series – Dr. Bob Utley

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Messianic Torah with Commentary – Gary Gardner Ph.D. (Kindle Edition)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable

Book of the Upright

3 <https://isr-messianic.org/>

The Word of יהוה is free, therefore this study may be distributed free of charge, provided no changes are made.

Addendum A

Notes: Being the seed of Abraham is neither a theory nor British Israelism or replacement theology. As a believer in Yeshua, your rightful position and inheritance is part of Israel. Many from the House of Judah try to reject brothers who are not like them and believe there is only one tribe in Israel - Judah. They speak of what they have learned through man's theology, which is not Scriptural. On the other hand, many church followers cannot even relate to being part of Israel and sadly do not see themselves in the *Torah* or the land, as their roots have been severed from the body by replacement theology. Today, the whole House of Israel (all twelve tribes) are beginning to recognize their heritage, individually and as a community, and are learning to come together as Israel. Brothers and sisters are returning home to the *Torah* and the Land of Israel. Scripture is very clear - those who believe in Yeshua are Abraham's physical seed and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:7-9)⁴.

Addendum B

The embalming of a body⁵.

They laid the body out on a wooden table and prepared to remove the brain. To get into the cranium, the embalmers had to hammer a chisel through the bone of the nose. Then they inserted a long, iron hook into the skull and slowly pulled out the brain matter. Once they had removed most of the brain with the hook, they used a long spoon to scoop out any remaining bits. Finally, they rinsed the skull with water. After they had removed the brain, the embalmers took a special blade made from obsidian (a sacred stone) and made a small incision along the left side of the body. They carefully removed the abdominal organs through this slit, except for the heart which they almost always left in the body. Once they removed the organs, the embalmers rinsed the empty chest cavity with palm wine, in order to purify it. Then, to maintain the body's lifelike form, they filled the cavity with incense and other material. This kept the skin from shrinking down inside the cavity when the body was dried out. After the embalmers removed the organs and re-stuffed the body, they laid the body down on a sloped board and covered it completely with baking soda powder. The Egyptians collected this powder, a mixture of sodium compounds, from the shores of Egyptian lakes in the desert west of the Nile Delta. The embalmers left the body in the powder for 35 to 40 days to allow enough time for the body to dry completely. Then the embalmers removed the incense and other stuffing from the body cavity and refilled it with natron, resin-soaked linen and various other materials. When the body was fully stuffed, the embalmers sewed up the incisions and covered the skin with a resin layer in order to keep moisture out. Bandaging was the next process, and it typically took a week or two to complete. The embalmers wrapped the body in a shroud and began methodically winding the bandages around the different parts of the body. Typically, they started with the hands and feet, wrapping all of the fingers and toes individually, and then moved on to the head, arms, legs, and torso. Once all the parts of the body were wrapped, the embalmers began wrapping the body as a whole. As they applied new layers, the embalmers coated the linen with hot resin material to glue the bandages in place. When the mummy was completed, it was housed in a coffin decorated to look like the person.

5 William Sanford: *The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures*