

1-03-26 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene – VaYechi (and he lived)
Torah Portion; Genesis 47:28-50:26
Haftarah: 1 Kings 2:1-12
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Rev 21:1-5

Prophecy inside Blessing – A Deeper Look

Central question of this message: Can you see the hidden prophecy?

This is parasha *Vayechi*, meaning “and he lived”. Its name comes from the first word in the parasha in both the English and in the original Hebrew.

This is the final parasha in the book of Genesis.

Gen 47:28-29

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. 29 When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt,

וַיָּמָּוֹת	וַיְהִי	שָׁנָה	שִׁבְעַת עָשָׂרָה	מִצְרַיִם	בְּאֶרֶץ	יַעֲקֹב	וַיְחִי	28
whole	the	so was	years:	seventeen	Egypt	in the land of	Jacob	And lived
<u>3117</u>	<u>9999</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>8141</u>	<u>6240</u> <u>7651</u>	<u>4714</u>	<u>776</u>	<u>3290</u>	<u>2421</u>
		שָׁנָה:	וּמֵאֶת	וְאַרְבָּעִים	שָׁנִים	שִׁבְעַת	חֲזִירוֹ	יַעֲקֹב
			an hundred	forty and	years.	seven	age of	Jacob
		<u>8141</u>	<u>3967</u>	<u>705</u>	<u>8141</u>	<u>7651</u>	<u>2416</u>	<u>8141</u> <u>3290</u>
וַיֹּאמֶר	לְיוֹסֵף	לְבָנוֹ	וַיִּקְרָא	לְמוֹת	יִשְׂרָאֵל	יָמָיו	וַיִּקְרְבוֹ	29
and said	Joseph,	his son	and he called	that must die:	Israel	the time	And drew nigh	
<u>559</u>	<u>3130</u>	<u>1121</u>	<u>7121</u>	<u>4191</u>	<u>3478</u>	<u>3117</u>	<u>7126</u>	
יָדָךְ	נָא	שִׁים	בְּעֵינֶיךָ	חֵן	מָצָאתִי	נָא	אִם	לוֹ
thy hand	I pray thee,	put,	in thy sight,	grace	I have found	now	If	unto him,
<u>3027</u>	<u>4994</u>	<u>7760</u>	<u>5869</u>	<u>2580</u>	<u>4672</u>	<u>4994</u>	<u>518</u>	<u>3807a</u>
תִּקְבְּרֵנִי	נָא	אֵל	וְאִמֶּת	חֲסֵד	עִמָּדִי	וַעֲשֵׂיתָ	יָרְכִי	תַּחַת
bury me	I pray thee,	not,	and truly	kindly	with me;	and deal	my thigh,	under
<u>6912</u>	<u>4994</u>	<u>408</u>	<u>571</u>	<u>2617</u>	<u>5978</u>	<u>6213</u>	<u>3409</u>	<u>8478</u>
							בְּמִצְרַיִם:	
							in Egypt:	
							<u>4714</u>	

There are some interesting statements found in these opening lines. One of which is that Yacov told Yoseph to place his hand “under his thigh” as part of the oath he asked him to make regarding burial. What always came to my mind as a younger person when I read this was the routine where one of the Three Stooges kept putting his leg into one of the other fellow’s hand.

That might seem a strange thing to ask of someone, as our modern culture does not have any similar things today. The closest thing we have today in America is the handshake between gentlemen.

In the culture of that time, and even in the culture of their ancestors, this was more than a mere gesture, and it was far more intimate. It invoked the covenant of

circumcision and called upon the one swearing the oath to be as bound to that oath as G-d is to his covenant relationship with His people.

Also found after this oath is another odd phrase.

Gen 47:28

And he said, "Swear to me." So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed.

יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ	לּוֹ	וַיִּשְׁבַּע	לִּי	הַשְׁבַּעַה	וַיֹּאמֶר	31
Israel	And bowed himself	unto him.	And he swore	unto me.	Swear	And he said,	
<u>3478</u>	<u>7812</u>	<u>3807a</u>	<u>7650</u>	<u>3807a</u>	<u>7650</u>	<u>559</u>	
					הַמִּטָּה: פ	רֹאשׁ	עַל-
					the bed's	head.	upon
					<u>4296</u>	<u>7218</u>	<u>5921</u>

This statement has caused quite a bit of discussion among our Sages. The interpretation I like best from them is that as a holy person is dying, the Holy One invisibly stands at the head of that person's bed. Another Sage suggested that when Yacov came down into Egypt, the *shechinah* of G-d accompanied him, and stood with him continually in that land.

In any case, these seem to suggest that Yacov was bowing before G-d in worship and thanksgiving that his final resting place would be in holy ground, and not in the land of Egypt which was so polluted with idolatry and worship of the dead. Further, some suggest that Yacov was able to see into the future, and saw as part of the plagues leading up to the exodus, that lice would swarm from the earth to

torment the Egyptians, and Yacov didn't wish for his bones to be crawled over by emerging lice in that day.

Our Sages have recognized that Jacob didn't live only for himself, but his life was dedicated to the care of others. Quite true. His grandfather Abraham was famous for caring. His son Joseph excelled in caring for others, as well.

Joseph cared for:

His father Israel – by attending to his needs in his old age

His brothers – by bringing them supplies, and providing 20 shekels.

Potifar – by managing his household

Dungeon guards – by managing the affairs of the dungeon well

Other prisoners – by interpreting their dreams

Pharaoh – by ensuring that Egypt would be the most powerful nation

All of Egypt – by establishing store cities to distribute grain for 7 years

All of the Hebrews – by bringing them to live in the best land in Egypt

All of the world – by feeding the known world during the long famine

It is because of all this self-sacrifice, even after multiple afflictions, that our people have named him as one of the “types” of Messiah – the suffering servant Messiah – Moshiach ben Yoseph. The one who was dead, but then was raised to glory and power.

Before Yacov blessed the two sons of Yoseph, he gave a bit of an introductory statement that one might simply read past on the way to the blessings of the boys without slowing down to analyze it a bit more. Let's do that now.

Gen 48:15-16

"The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
 The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,
16 The angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;
And may my name live on in them,
And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

I want to focus on the last part of that passage:

וַיְצַחֵק	אֲבֹרָתָם	אֲבֹתַי	וְשֵׁם	שְׁמִי	בָהֶם	וַיִּקְרָא	הַמַּלְאָכִי
and Isaac;	Abraham	my fathers	and the name of	my name	on them,	and let be named	The Angel
<u>3327</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8034</u>	<u>8034</u>	<u>871a</u>	<u>7121</u>	<u>4397</u>
		הָאֲרֶץ:	בְּקֶרֶב	לְרֹב	וַיִּדְגּוּ		
		the	in the midst of	into a multitude	and let them grow		
		<u>776</u>	<u>7130</u>	<u>7230</u>	<u>1711</u>		

It begins with the word translated into English as "The Angel." The translators capitalized the word "Angel" and I think that means they understood Yacov was referring to G-d. The word in Hebrew is *Malach*. Its true significance can be seen

by taking the word apart a bit. The Hebrew word for king is *melech*. In Malach, we see an *aleph* placed in the middle of the word *melech*. In pre-Babylonian Hebrew, the letter *aleph* means first, primary, and strong. So, if you insert these concepts into the center of the Hebrew word for king, what do you have signified? The first, primary, strong king – the “King of Kings.”

I find only a couple of times in all of Torah where the word *malach* doesn’t directly invoke Yeshua. And in those instances, although it is used in a way that does not directly invoke Yeshua, it still describes one who speaks with the very authority of the one who sent him to take an action. And since we know that when the Malach speaks to people, those people bow before Him in worship. And of course, no angel would allow such a thing to happen.

I believe the context is clear that Yacov was invoking that part of G-d specifically when he was giving this blessing. After all, it was the Malach who wrestled with him and gave him a blessing.

There is more to this passage that speaks to you and me today. Let’s look deeper.

הַנְּעָרִים	אֶת-	יְבָרֶךְ	רָע	מִכָּל-	אֲתִי	הַגָּאֵל	הַמַּלְאָכַי 16
the lads;		bless	evil,	from all	me	which redeemed	The Angel
<u>5288</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>1288</u>	<u>7451</u>	<u>3605</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>1350</u>	<u>4397</u>

The next word is *hagoel*, translated as “which redeemed.” That translational choice was made to try to make what the translators believed that the Hebrew sentence said more understandable in English. But I suggest that a literal translation of the word is “the redeemer.”

The next word is *oti*, translated as “me.” That is legitimate, but if we remember that the *aleph* and *tav* can represent Yeshua (connecting the creator with His creation – and the entity through which creation occurred), and that a following *yud* means “of me,” then it can also mean “for me the One who is the beginning and the end.”

The next two Hebrew words *nichol ra* seem to indicate precisely how they are translated – “from all evil.”

הַנְּעָרִים	אֶת־	יְבָרֵךְ	רָע	מִכָּל־	אֹתִי	הַגָּאֹל	הַמַּלְאָכַי	16
the lads;		bless	evil,	from all	me	which redeemed	The Angel	
<u>5288</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>1288</u>	<u>7451</u>	<u>3605</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>1350</u>	<u>4397</u>	

Then the Hebrew words are *y’barek et hanarim*. They are translated as “bless the lads.” This makes good sense in context of the passage, but if we look deeper, we see more. *Y’barek* means “he blesses.” Then there is that *aleph tav* again. Then the Hebrew word is *hanarim*. That word is translated as “the lads.” That is a legitimate translation, but the root word *na’ar* carries with it the concepts of a young child, and also tossing about, a wonderer. In other words, a young person who has lots of energy and movement, but lacks discipline and direction.

The next part of the passage also has deeper meaning:

וַיִּצְחָק	אֲבֹרָהִם	אֲבֹתַי	וְשֵׁם	שְׁמִי	בָהֶם	וַיִּקְרָא
and Isaac;	Abraham	my fathers	and the name of	my name	on them,	and let be named
<u>3327</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8034</u>	<u>8034</u>	<u>871a</u>	<u>7121</u>
		הָאָרֶץ:	בְּקֶרֶב	לְרַב		וַיִּדְגּוּ
		the	in the midst of	into a multitude		and let them grow
		<u>776</u>	<u>7130</u>	<u>7230</u>		<u>1711</u>

The first word is *v'yikra*, translated as “and let be named,” We have already seen in previous lessons on the first word in Leviticus, that this Hebrew word means “and he called [in an intimate fashion and not as a stranger or acquaintance].”

The next word is *bahem*, translated as “on them.” It is just as legitimately translated as “in them.”

The rest of the phrase is *shemi v'shem avotai Avraham v'Yitzhak*, translated as “my name and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac.” I think we can keep this translation as rendered.

הָאָרֶץ:	בְּקֶרֶב	לְרַב	וַיִּדְגּוּ
the	in the midst of	into a multitude	and let them grow
<u>776</u>	<u>7130</u>	<u>7230</u>	<u>1711</u>

Then comes *v'yidgu larev b'kerev haaretz*, translated as “and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the [earth].” This works fine in the context of the blessing for the children, but there is more to see by looking deeper.

The Hebrew word *v'yidgu* has as its root the word *dag* – a fish. It carries with it the concept of moving rapidly, as a fish darts in the water, but in this usage also means to become numerous.

The next word is *larev*, translated as “into a multitude.” That word carries with it the idea of a multitude, but it also carries with it the idea of greatness. The root word is *ray*, which is the same root as the word Rabbi, which in essence means “my great one.” By the time of the Second Temple, the term Rabbi also meant “teacher.”

הָאָרֶץ:	בְּקֶרֶב	לְרַב	וַיִּדְגּוּ
the	in the midst of	into a multitude	and let them grow
<u>776</u>	<u>7130</u>	<u>7230</u>	<u>1711</u>

The next word is *b'kerev*, translated as “in the midst of.” The Hebrew root word is *karav*, which carries with it the concept of approaching or drawing near to the center. Our people have always considered Jerusalem to be the true “center of the earth” because it is there that G-d chose to make His Name to dwell, and where His throne will be established in the coming season.

We have dissected the Hebrew a bit, and that allows us to maybe retranslate the passage in a way that might show a deeper meaning – not so much about the children who are receiving the blessing, but about G-d’s plan of redemption for the world as well. Let’s put all these alternative meanings together and see what we see:

"The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,
The King of Kings, the first and the last, the Redeemer from all evil
He blesses, as the first and the last, those who are still being tossed about because
of their immaturity, speaking intimately into them by invoking the lives of
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and drawing them as one does darting fish into a
multitude, nearer to the center of the Earth – Jerusalem.

Do you see yourself as an immature, darting fish, who is young in faith, but with energy to grow? So did Yeshua.

Matt 4:18-20

18 And walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 And they immediately left the nets, and followed Him.

There is also something quite interesting regarding one phrase in the passage preceding the blessings given by his father Yacov.

Gen 48:22

22 And I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

לָקַחְתִּי	אֲשֶׁר	אֶחָיִךְ	עַל-	אֶחָד	שָׁכֶם	לָךְ	נָתַתִּי	וְאֲנִי	22
I took	which	thy brethren,	above	one	portion	to thee	have given	Moreover I	
<u>3947</u>	<u>834</u>	<u>251</u>	<u>5921</u>	<u>259</u>	<u>7926</u>	<u>3807a</u>	<u>5414</u>	<u>589</u>	
וּבִקְשָׁתִי :			פ	בְּחֶרֶבִי	הָאֱמֹרִי	מִיַּד			
and with my bow.				with my sword	the Amorite	out of the hand of			
<u>7198</u>				<u>2719</u>	<u>567</u>	<u>3027</u>			

Onkelos, in his Aramaic targum on this passage, rendered "my sword and my bow" as "my prayer and my requests." I like that rendering. It seems to be consistent with Jacob.

Gen 49:1-2

49 Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, "Assemble yourselves that
I may tell you what shall befall you in the days to come.
2 "Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob;
And listen to Israel your father.

Our sages have said that the *shekinah*, the holy spirit of G-d, descended on Jacob at this time, giving him the gift of prophecy. The sages have said that “the days to come” refers to the days of the reign of Messiah. They believed that Jacob was able to see the end of the people’s exile, and he wished to tell his children when the Messiah would arrive, but at that time the *shekinah* departed from him, and he could not further prophecy. This is much like what happened to Daniel, when he was prohibited from revealing anything further about the days to come.

But during the time the *shekinah* was upon Jacob, he blesses his sons. I wish to focus on the blessing to Dan for it contains an odd statement.

Gen 49:17-19

17 "Dan shall be a serpent in the way,
A horned snake in the path,
That bites the horse's heels,
So that his rider falls backward.

At first blush this does not seem to be a complimentary blessing. To be likened to a snake is no small thing.

Our sages have struggled with this blessing. Most have said this doesn't apply to Dan, but to others. One said Samson, who is the one prophet who fell into evil ways. Another said the serpent is Satan, and the horse that falls also kills him.

I reject those analyses, because if the passage does not apply to Dan, then where is the blessing for him?

I believe that Dan will be as crafty as the serpent who is able to attack an enemy, even one mounted upon great strength, and find its weak spot. Dan will be able to execute the judgment of G-d upon such an enemy so that he falls and dies on the way to do great evil to our people.

Then, after the blessing for Dan, and just before the blessing of Gad, Yacov says something very strange. It's almost like he suddenly blurts out something unrelated to the blessings. See it in verse 18.

Gen 49:17-19

17 "Dan shall be a serpent in the way,
A horned snake in the path,
That bites the horse's heels,
So that his rider falls backward.

18 "For Your salvation [Yeshua] I wait, O Lord.

19 "As for Gad, raiders shall raid him,
But he shall raid at their heels.

The translation of the Hebrew word in verse 18 as “I wait” is difficult.

יְהוָה: קָנִיתִי לְיִשׁוּעָתְךָ 18
O Lord. I have waited for thy salvation,
3068 6960 3444

Here, the translators believe the word is from the root *cavah* which means bound together, or collecting.

OT:6960 קָנָה **qavah** (kaw-vaw'); a primitive root; to bind together (perhaps by twisting), i.e. collect; (figuratively) to expect:

Given this interpretation, we might be able to translate this passage as: “For your Yeshua, I have been gathered and bound together.” That speaks of the same kind of process we have just discussed in the alternative translation of the previous passage.

But I believe it can just as easily be from the identically-spelled root *covah* which can mean a covering, an arch, a helmet.

OT:6959 קוֹבָע **qowba`** (ko'-bah or ko-bah');
a form collateral to OT:3553; a helmet:

Could a better translation be, “For your Yeshua is a helmet to me.”

Maybe this is the interpretation Paul was using when he spoke of the “helmet of salvation” in Eph 6:17. It seems to match precisely.

The blessing for Gad is also important:

Gen 49:19

19 "As for Gad, raiders shall raid him,
But he shall raid at their heels.

That is another way of saying, "There will be a time of persecution, but you will prevail in the end."

The blessing for Judah has much to offer us.

Gen 49:10-11

10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes,
And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.
11 "He ties his foal to the vine,
And his donkey's colt to the choice vine;
He washes his garments in wine,

Our sages have concluded that Shiloh refers to King Messiah. This is an indication that Messiah shall be from the tribe of Judah. And all people will obey Him.

The vine is interesting. Yeshua referenced Himself as that vine.

John 15:5-6

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

The idea of washing his garments in wine might have another interpretation. We know that the wine of red grapes is required to be used for Passover, because it represents the blood of the Lamb. So, if the juice of the grapes is red as blood, maybe there is another place we can see that a garment is dipped in blood?

Rev 19:11-14

11 And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.

The passage mentions a foal of an ass. That will appear as well, associated with Messiah.

Matt 21:1-8

21 And when they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them, and

bring them to Me. 3 "And if anyone says something to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

4 Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

5 "Say to the daughter of Zion,
'Behold your King is coming to you,
Gentle, and mounted on a donkey,
Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'"

6 And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had directed them, 7
and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid on them their garments,
on which He sat.

We now have seen in Yacov's final words. Yeshua (salvation), coming to Israel riding on the foal of an ass, and then later as Judgment riding on a horse wearing a robe dipped in blood.

We must not forget that after the death of Yacov, Yoseph also died. And not long after that, a Pharaoh arose who did not remember Joseph.

Ex 1:8-11

8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. 10 Come, let us deal wisely with them,

lest they multiply and in the event of war, they also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us, and depart from the land."

If you compare this thought pattern to other similar ones throughout history, you will see that this is not a new thing.

The Jewish people have been persecuted in every nation where we have lived in peace and harmony.

We faced persecution by the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Hasmoneans, the Greeks, the Selucids, the Romans, the Russians, the Arabs, the Germans, the English, the French, and you might have felt it even from fellow Americans during your lifetimes.

So, how are we to deal with this eternal circle of envy, hatred, persecution, betrayal and death?

We are first to recognize that our enemy has not changed from the foundations of the world. Satan has not lost his desire to destroy us, and thus prove that G-d is not all-powerful.

One of our strongest weapons in this war is simply... perseverance.

Rev 14:9-12

9 And another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a

mark on his forehead or upon his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 "And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." 12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

My perseverance has carried me farther than my raw talent ever could. I was not the best at anything I have ever done, but I simply refused to give up. That one trait has served me well in every part of my life.

If we do persevere, then how does it all end for those who believe in Yeshua?

Rev 21:1-5

21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed

away." 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new.

Chazak, Chazak, V'nitchazek!