



#11 VaYigash Genesis 44:18-47:27

**Torah Teaching and Teaching, Have Eternal Purpose in our Lives
by Moshe Schwab**

Names

Kefa – Peter

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed

Moshe – Moses

Shaul – Paul

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)

Y'hudah – Judah

Yochanan – John

Yosef – Joseph

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible

Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah

Vayigash – the 11th Torah portion

We all need to have a mental picture of what we are to look forward to in the future kingdom. This Messianic age we live in is an important time of blessing, but it doesn't end in the here and now.

In the new heavenly kingdom, connections will be interconnected and strong. We sometimes think of the internet as being something that connects us, can inform us, and helps us to do many different things. Think of the new heavenly kingdom as something far beyond that. We will be connected, informed, and have all the help we need. God accomplished that in part in the present.

Of course, this present age is far short of our future age in the future kingdom of God. Yet, Shaul uses the word knit in describing our relationships with other believers. It suggests a far deeper kind of relationship than the superficial world can give us. Colossians 2:2-3 NKJV, "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

We see some of the future by the way our present lives are empowered by God through the Holy Spirit. Because we live in a Messianic age, our lives can be so much more than the ordinary. Ephesians 3:20 NKJV says, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

In this Messianic age, God will do "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." We understand that Shaul is referring to the Holy Spirit which we receive as a gift from God when we believe in the Messiah Yeshua. Isn't that wonderful!

God's word will be evident and at hand in the future kingdom. It will sustain us so that we will not fall. Our aim in this present Messianic life is to, "walk worthy of the calling with which you were called;" Ephesians 4:1 NKJV. We are to, "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God;" Philippians 3:14 NKJV. After all, we are people of our God and king.

Is it so difficult to imagine that we are to be a dedicated people? God has always asked His people to be dedicated to His commands.

Proverbs 3:1-12 NKJV

But let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine. My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

This section of scripture is from the Old Testament portion. It is especially no different now in an age where God gives us the Holy Spirit as our helper.

In the new future kingdom of God, there will be no more curse and we will not fall into sin anymore. The curse comes from sin. Deuteronomy 27:26 NKJV says, "Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them." When we break the commandments of our loving and good God, we do things our own way instead of what an all-knowing God says is best for us. We curse ourselves through our sin. Revelation 22:3-4 NKJV tells us there will be no more curse for sin in the future kingdom: "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads."

Bible teachers sometimes say the Old Testament portion is cursed and they quote Galatians 3:10. Shaul is quoting Deuteronomy 27:26 in Galatians 3:10. Deuteronomy 27:26 says we are cursed for our sin. That has not been removed yet because we are not in the future kingdom yet. They are subtracting truths from God's word just like the devil did in the garden of Eden with Eve.

Just people are people of faith who are not too proud to listen to God the Bible says. "Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith;" Habakkuk 2:4 NKJV. Those who keep God's commandments will have life through them. "You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD. Leviticus 18:4-5 NKJV. Loving God means you care about what He says and you listen to Him and keep His commandments. "You shall love the LORD your God, and keep

His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always;" Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV.

In the future eternal kingdom, those who love God will see magnificent and beautiful things beyond our imagination. Revelation 21:10-11 NKJV says, "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." There are many amazing sights in this present world, but I doubt anything can be of comparison to that!

This is truly amazing. This must have struck so strong into Rabbi Yochanan's mind that he was able to describe all that he saw. The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. Revelation 21:18-21 says, "The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." And this is only some of what he saw.

This world will pass away for something better.

Revelation 21:1-4 NKJV

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

There will no longer any need for pain. There will no longer be a curse for sin.

Isaiah 65:17 says, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." The new heavens and earth will be eternal.

Isaiah 66:22-24 NKJV

For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Those who do evil and live in sin will go to the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Those who do what is right and good (Deuteronomy 6:18) will be in the new heaven and earth.

There is a lot of people who teach others not to respect God. We need to work out our lives with deep respect for the creator Yehovah. Proverbs 1:7 NKJV says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Respecting God is the beginning of our spiritual life. Only then will we begin to listen to God. Proverbs 8:13 NKJV says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way." This is not talking about hating other people. This is talking about being committed to doing what is righteous (right). It says in Job 28:28 NKJV, "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'"

The new future kingdom is going to be more complex than anything in the present. God's word will be at hand and there will be no more curse from sin. The new kingdom is going to be absolutely amazing! There is nothing that we can compare to it; we look forward to it with conviction and patience. 1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard and no one's heart has imagined all the things that God has prepared **for those who love him.**" Those who love God keep His commandments (Deuteronomy 11:1). Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 sums it up well, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil."

Torah Teaching

VaYigash means, "and he drew near." This portion begins with Y'hudah petitioning Yosef to free Benjamin. Y'hudah tells Yosef the story about why Benjamin was not with them originally and that their father would die if Benjamin did not return. Y'hudah then offers himself as a replacement for Benjamin. Then, filled with emotion, Yosef asks those around him to leave and reveals that he is Yosef to his brothers. They are dumbfounded as he talks and Yosef tells them that the famine will last five more years and that through him, God has provided for them. Yosef invites them to come to Egypt so they won't die in the famine. They embrace each other and Pharaoh's court hears that Yosef's family is there. Pharaoh is pleased; and he provides wagons, new clothes, grain, and presents for Yosef's brothers so that they can go and return.

When they arrive back home they tell their father that Yosef is alive and the leader of all Egypt. When Ya'akov saw all they brought back he believed them and he wants to go see Yosef. They returned to Egypt and brought everything with them. Ya'akov stopped at Be'er-Sheva on the way where God spoke to Ya'akov and told him not to be afraid to go to Egypt and that God would eventually return them to the land of Canaan. Then, 66 of Ya'akov's descendants are listed that went into Egypt so that all the men in Egypt then were 70 (including Ya'akov, Yosef, and his 2 sons). This did not include the women. Yosef and his father meet and it is a very emotional experience. Yosef tells Pharaoh that his family is keepers of livestock and instructed his family to also say the same because shepherds were considered abhorrent. He tells them to do this so they should be given the land of Goshen.

Yosef presents 5 of his brothers and his father to Pharaoh and Pharaoh gives them his blessing to live in the land of Goshen. Ya'akov speaks to Pharaoh. Yosef takes care of his family and makes sure that they have food. The famine was severe and the people had to trade their livestock and all their land for food. The people farmed the land and willingly gave

Pharaoh 20% of their produce because Yosef had saved their lives. The people of Israel prospered and increased in numbers. Ya'akov lived 17 years in Egypt before he died.

Just as Judah said he will stand in for Benjamin, Yeshua stood in for us and died for our sins. We see also that Joseph is a messianic figure because he saves his family from the famine and from almost certain death. Yeshua saves us from sin and we have a better life through Him and someday, eternal life through Yeshua. We see a theme of God saving His people in the readings today and of hope for a future kingdom.

The Haftarah for Vayigash is Ezekiel 37:15-28. Before this portion, Ezekiel had just prophesied life coming to the bones of Israel. This prophecy was about Israel regaining its hope. God promises Israel that they will rise from the dead someday. "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.'" Ezekiel 37:12 NKJV. We clearly see that God has given His people the hope of the resurrection.

Our portion then begins with Ezekiel taking two sticks and putting them together, one for Israel and the other for Judah. This represents a future time when Israel will be one nation again and Ezekiel says that they will be one forever with one King and shepherd and they will not sin again. The nations will know that God has set them apart as holy.

Israel has become a nation in one day as prophesied in Isaiah 66:7-8, but the future prophecy of the resurrection and the kingdom with God as their king is yet to come some day. God has a future for Israel. Just as the story of Yosef shows us that God will accomplish His will for the children of Israel; this portion affirms that God will someday make Israel a holy nation forever before all the nations.

Recently, I heard a Jewish rabbi teach that after we die we go on as an unembodied spirit. It seems some of the rabbis have lost an understanding of the truths of the scriptures. Instead they study the Talmud. In this portion, Israel rises from the dead. Rabbi Shaul taught that as well. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." 1 Corinthians 15:42-43 NKJV.

It is clear that those who believe in God and follow His commandments will rise from the dead. Those who don't keep God's commandments will go to the lake of fire. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." In the present we are also commanded to believe on the Messiah Yeshua and receive the Holy Spirit. Rabbi Kefa said in Acts 2:38-39 NKJV, "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.'"

In the messianic times we are now in, God has lavished His favor on us through the Messiah. Just as the descendants of Jacob were almost dead from lack of food, we were dead in sins.

And, just as through Joseph and Pharaoh king of Egypt, Israel was allowed to stay in the land and survive and prosper, we also are delivered through an act of favor of our God through Yeshua the Messiah so that we could keep God's commandments with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy spirit is our helper. "He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit;" John 14:16-17. What is the first helper? It is God's commandments; they are intended to help us in all of life; they are "your wisdom and your understanding" it says in Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV.

Yosef's brothers find out that Yosef is now a leader in Egypt. The prophetic gifting of Yosef has saved the whole region and Yosef's family. Ezekiel prophesies that God will raise the dead some day. In the New Testament portion, Rabbi Shaul also says God will raise the dead. God cares about His people in the present and helps us. Those who keep His commandments will have eternal life with a caring and good God.

Have Eternal Purpose in our lives

What constitutes how we are living? Are we doing our part in life? Is our life centered around entertainment?

What is our view of life? Do we value sports, art, or some other thing more than God? I get the impression from a lot of people that having things and being successful is the most important thing in their life. Sometimes other things take second place like family, sports, partying, entertainment, etcetera.

One of my friends years ago spent all his free time rebuilding cars. He made extra money doing it which was definitely an incentive. He said he believed in God, but spent very little time praying and caring about what God cares about. I should hope we are all doing better than he did. He was also married and had two children. His idea of getting along was working at his job and rebuilding cars. I'm not kidding. One time I just happened to be around and he asked me to help him carry an engine to his garage from the back of a pickup and he just kept on working. That was his view of life.

We definitely need to be making an effort to get something spiritual out of our life. I'm not against hobbies or having fun, but we need to put God first, not last. In the case of my friend, God was practically non-existent in his life. It might not be a bad idea to write down what your life looks like.

Yeshua (Jesus) said in Matthew 13:44-46 NKJV, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Are you surprised to hear this? A person should value God as if God was a treasure. In the other story (parable), the merchant gave everything he had. I feel that seldom do we value our spiritual lives the way Yeshua explained in that story. How much do we value our spiritual lives and God?

Our life is to be centered around God; some though center their lives on themselves or on some thing or activity.

How is God part of everything that we do? People often have a mistaken view of what constitutes our spiritual life. Some who say they believe in God are like my friend who make God a very small part of life. They protect their lives by distancing and protecting their piece of ground so to speak.

Where do we stand? If I just asked someone where they stand, perhaps they'd pick an issue like the environment or the economy, or a political party. Will we stand our ground spiritually? Will we be self-seeking or do we make God and the things of God important in our lives?

Isaiah 26:3 NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Making God important in our lives brings perfect peace. That is truly amazing. Having peace in our lives is important. Don't we all want that? Through God we can have great peace. There are hundreds of promises in the Bible. God gives us strength, God can help us, God can protect us, and God can heal us. God has even saved my life on at least a couple of occasions. You cannot put a price on that.

Let's look at Ephesians 3:16-20 NKJV:

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height —to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."

How rich is God? Shaul prays for the riches of God's glory for those he is writing to. He prays for them to be strengthened spiritually; he prays for their faith and that they can be both rooted and be grounded in love and to know the love of the Messiah. The fullness of God has to do with the presence of God at the Mishkan (the Tent of Meeting in the desert). That is the Jewish concept. The Bible talks about the presence of God filling the Mishkan and so Shaul wants us to also be filled with the presence of God through the Holy Spirit so that God would always be with us and help us to live right. Because of the Holy Spirit, God is able to do, "Exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." The Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of believers. Wow, that is really wonderful and amazing.

Shaul says that we should be rooted; we should not be moved from having faith in God and being faithful. I have removed trees from my property, and it is a very difficult job. We need to be rooted, immovable. We should be grounded so we are completely settled to follow God. Perhaps Shaul is thinking about the Jewish word for settle which can also mean reside (יָשַׁב, yashav). We are to live in God and through God.

We all can wear different hats in life and accomplish various things. We can be focused on life

in different ways. God needs to be at the core of all we do. Do we want what God offers us? God offers us blessings that are unimaginable in the present and then eternal life. This life is short and eternity is a long time. We need to take our lives more seriously and take God more seriously.

Life the way it used to be lived was much different than it is today.

Perhaps to get a perspective on our lives, let's try and think about how life was much different than what it is in our time. What was life like in ancient times?

They worked a lot more.

- Every day was filled with taking care of life and providing for themselves.
- Shabbat was a big deal because what seemed like a perpetual cycle of work was to be set down in order to honor God as the creator.

There were a lot more unknowns.

- Some mistakenly thought they could exert control.
- Some looked at their situation with hopelessness.
- Some created discord; others tried to create peaceful conditions.
- Some people today think that what they do doesn't matter very much so they live isolated and detached or selfishly.

People relied more on each other.

They each had a part to play in society; everyone was important.

In our present day, some say we don't need to rely on others; that is not true.

There is a Jewish concept that relates to who we are and what we do. For example, they understand that the work they do represents who they are; therefore their work is important. A person then that does nothing then represents themselves as someone who does nothing.

Life in modern times is more individualistic and guarded. It can be more self seeking or personal benefits oriented; For some, life is driven to derive satisfaction from something in life that pleases them.

How we provide for ourselves is frequently combined with other goals. God is sometimes an afterthought or compartmentalized into one of our activities. How is God supposed to be part of life? Is it just part of life or is God supposed to be in every part of life?

How do we make God the core of all we do in life?

- By being committed to doing what is right every day. I pray that every morning.
- I think about how I am doing and if I have done something wrong, I ask God for forgiveness and commit myself to not doing that again.
- By knowing God's commands and doing them. There are more than 10 commandments. Shaul expands on loving your neighbor from Leviticus 19:18 in his writings to give us ideas on how to do that. Loving your neighbor is not one of the ten commandments.
- Shaul also tells us things related to the Torah that we are absolutely not to do.
- He also uses the Torah to give us positive commands.
- We do what is right with our job, with our family, with our friends, with acquaintances etcetera – we do what is right in all of life.

Sin is not following God's commandments. Our sin separates us from God. Isaiah 59:2 NKJV says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." We should have deep respect and awe for our great Yehovah and creator. Yehovah is the creator and we need to treat Him as such. Isaiah 66:2 NKJV says, "'For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,' says the Lord. 'But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.'"

God forgives those who fear Him and want to do what is right. "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us;" Psalms 103:11-12 NKJV." Don't keep bringing back your sin to mind; God has forgiven you; He doesn't remember them if you were sorry and have repented.

If we decide to put Yehovah in his proper place in our lives, we will be part of the new heavens and earth with God for eternity and it will be wonderful and amazing all the time. You better believe it! Who wouldn't want that! Isaiah 66:22-23 NKJV says, "'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,' says the Lord, 'So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,' says the Lord." I should point out at this time that many Jews have lost the traditional beliefs of the Bible about our future with God in a new and eternal heaven and earth. In the new heaven and earth, believe me, God will make it the best time for us you can imagine. After all, He is the Creator.

Will we only be self-centered and distant from God? Will we follow God and keep His commandments. Will we allow God to be in our life the way He should be? We should have eternal purpose to our life. He can give us true purpose and eternal purpose and we are to live that out. He can satisfy us like nothing else can. Through Him we have something worthwhile to stand our ground for; we can give up ourselves for the greater and better good by putting God in His proper place in our lives; why not seek the things of God and His blessings? Where will we stand?