



**#12 Vayechi Genesis 47:28-50:26**  
**2023**  
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**Names**

Kefa – Peter  
Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one;  
Christ in the Greek means to be smudged  
Moshe – Moses  
Shaul – Paul  
Shlomo – Solomon  
Yeshua – Jesus' real name  
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 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  
Vayechi – the 12<sup>th</sup> Torah portion

Vayechi means, “and he lived.” This portion begins with Ya'akov dying at the age of 147 after living 17 Years in Egypt. He asks Yosef (Joseph) to swear to him that he will bury him in the cave of Machpelah in Hebron. That is the cave that Abraham bought and was thought to be where Adam and Eve were buried.

I would like to begin by talking about, there is a difference between being at peace and living a comfortable life.

We have talked about getting involved with spiritual things in the past. People will often base their life only on things that they perceive as fun, interesting, exciting, family, or any number of things instead of making God a priority in life.

There are many things that we can get involved with spiritually instead of only basing our life on fun and enjoyment. We can feed the poor, help people with their homes, pray for people, and many more things. One pastor told me years ago that there were about 50 different ways that the people in his congregation served God through the things they did.

For example, one couple cleaned homes for the elderly besides their regular jobs. When I asked him if they had an opportunity to share about God, he told me that 1 or 2 people a year would come to faith in Yeshua. I know they had been doing that for about 10 years, so perhaps they helped some 10 to 15 people believe in the Messiah Yeshua. How many people have you helped to believe? One person I know played golf just for the chance to talk to people about God if they were interested. God told me to go on some nature walks this one time and I met someone who was desperate to find some good Bible teaching.

A person I knew years ago said they were struggling and asking God over and over what they should do. One day, God told him to do something. We all can do something. We do not have to do everything. Try different things and see if that is something you can do.

Some people focus their life on just being comfortable. Being comfortable through different activities is a blessing from God but it should not be our main focus in life. Enjoyment can take the form of relaxation, doing something we like, doing something restful, or something that is easy to do. Here are a few more things you can do to be more content. We can take a walk or exercise. We can enjoy some humor, nature, our pets, a hobby, music, some good food, or play a game. Relaxation and sleep can help us feel refreshed. There are many ways being comfortable in life can be achieved.

Of course, we should never engage in a sinful activity. Some people get comfort from sinful activities. Sin brings evil into this world and is therefore wrong. God does not want us to bring pain and evil into the world and 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."

As you can see, being comfortable and enjoying what God has given us is good, but making being comfortable your goal in life can be counterproductive and sidetrack us from obtaining goals; it can strain our relationships because we do not give those we care about proper attention; it can take time from the important things we need to do; and most of all, it can take precedence over the spiritual matters of life. I once invited someone to learn more about God, but they said they were too busy watching TV. Sometimes people put a lot of effort into a nonproductive activity and think they are accomplishing something.

I once heard a Russian political figure say that everyone in the United States was only concerned with sports. Perhaps that was his way of explaining why Russia did so poorly in the Olympics. What he could not understand is that the freedom we have in the United States creates motivation and therefore people are more motivated in sports and other things in life including innovation. Communism teaches that everything belongs to all the people and therefore it squashes peoples' motivation and innovation. The people in the United States do better because they have a free society.

Let's talk some about the satisfaction we can have in life through God and the Bible. There is a scripture that says we can have perfect peace by trusting in God. That would seem to be the ultimate satisfaction for life. Isaiah 26:3-4 NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever." This scripture in Isaiah says we will find "perfect peace" through God if we trust in Him. The context then reveals how we are to trust God.

It goes on to say that those who are just are upright. The word upright means to have integrity and do what is right. The upright do what is right in their life through God's commandments. God is also upright. God knows what is best for mankind because He is the creator. He judges people according to His good laws.

Isaiah 26:7-9 NKJV says,  
The way of the just is uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just. Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for You; the desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. With my

soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

God desires the people of the earth to keep His law, His commandments, and do what is right. Righteousness in the Bible means to do what is right and doing what is right is to keep God's commandments. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is **right and good** in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you." Things can go well for us if we keep God's commandments.

Isaiah then refers to God's commandments as grace which is God's favor. There are a lot of people who want God's grace, but they fail to see that God has given us grace through His commandments. It goes on to say that the wicked will not learn to do what is right and will not keep God's commandments and they will not see the majesty of God. Isaiah 23:10 NKJV says, "Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD."

Not seeing the majesty of God can be understood as the wicked will not have eternal life. It can also mean that the wicked will not see the benefits of doing what is right. So, they will not see the benefits of keeping God's commandments both now and their disobedience to God will result in a loss of the benefits of eternal life with a good God.

So true peace, satisfaction, and comfort in life comes from keeping God's commandments. Those who are just and righteous keep God's commandments. We may do things at times that give us comfort, but the ultimate goal of life is not to be comfortable or feel comfortable. You can feel comfortable in life but be a completely deluded person. Ecclesiastes sums it up best. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NKJV says, "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."

We derive our proper place in life by how we act out life.

We could focus on any number of things in life. Here are some things that people focus on. People can tend to make their life all about them. The reason I am sharing this today is to help you develop spiritual goals and not just have a comfortable life:

Establishing good Relationships.

Having a purpose.

Making plans.

Giving of their time or resources.

Having good virtues.

Seeking good advice.

Having money or wealth.

Achievements including intellectual achievement.

Having thoughtful dialogue.

Trying out different activities.

The list of things that people set for life's goals can be very extensive. Notice that some of the above can be applied to our spiritual life. First and foremost, seek what is right and good. As you should see, a comfortable life is not the ultimate goal for a peace filled life. That is why the Bible tells us to put God first. Yeshua quotes the Torah in Matthew 22:37-38 NKJV and He says, "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment." And how do we love God? Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always."

Be authentic spiritually. Listen to God's advice and the godly advice of others. Grow spiritually by reading the Bible, praying, by being committed to keep God's commandments, or by finding ways to give of yourself and resources to help others change and follow God. Or even just serve others to be a blessing to them. Perhaps you could come up with something that you can do. We cannot do everything but do something.

Think about how you can apply what the Bible says and do what is "right and good." Also, when you fail, think about how you could respond differently. For example, if you are irritated by someone, think about being patient and understanding. If you fail, be committed to responding differently the next time. Plan on keeping God's commandments and think about how you can apply them to your life.

Some people are in constant anxiety. The solution to their anxiety is to reach out and seek what is spiritual.

In order to receive almost everything in life, we need to make some sort of effort. In our era, even turning on the TV requires that we at least push a button. Some things in life are easy to accomplish and other things are accomplished through considerable effort or time. It took me 7 years to get my engineering degree because I had to work while going to school. After that I got 2 Bible degrees and did some work towards my doctorate in Religious Studies. I am saying this to encourage you to also use your abilities and begin not only using them for yourself, but for God.

Anyone can be lazy in life. Also, anyone can find a way to be accomplished in life if they are willing to put forth the effort. Proverbs 10:4 NKJV says, "He who has a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich." People who are lazy sometimes think they are getting away with not working, but what they do not realize is that they are losing the opportunity to live out life and succeed at different things in life. Some even lose out on providing for themselves and the opportunity to improve their living conditions.

In all we do, do not forget to keep God at the forefront in life. Deuteronomy 6:17 NKJV says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you." We are to be diligent to keep God's commandments. 2 Timothy 2: 15 NKJV it says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God." As we have already talked about, a lot of people seek the other things of life, but it is most important to be approved to the creator of the universe.

Be strong, be resilient, in every part of life.

Be diligent and strong spiritually. Exodus 15:26 NKJV says, "Diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes." The Bible makes quite an emphasis on following what God says. God knows what is best for us.

We are not to let to turn away from God's good commandments, Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV says, "Be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" Then it says in Deuteronomy 4:9 NKJV, "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren."

We are to diligently keep ourselves, so we do not turn away from keeping God's commandments. The word for keep in verse 9 could also be translated as guard. We are to diligently guard our life, so we keep God's good commandments. Look at the language in this verse. We are to "take heed," and 'diligently guard' our life.

Have a proper focus in life and make God a priority in life. We can focus on any number of things in life and forget about our spirituality. Why be consumed with being anxious? Seek most of all what will give you true peace and be content with putting God in His proper place. Stay strong spiritually and keep working at being a godly person in all you do.

### **Torah Teaching**

We now close out the book of Genesis also called Beresheet which means in the beginning. God has mercy on mankind as Adam and Eve repent. God again has mercy on mankind because of Noah who taught what was right and did what was right. That's what righteousness means; to do what is right. God protects Abraham and Ya'akov, men of faith. God saves the whole region of Egypt through Yosef, a believer in the true God. Archaeologists have found the grain bins where the grain was stored during the famine at the time of Yosef. Also, they have found Yosef's tomb that held his bones until Israel was able to go back to Canaan. This portion finishes the history of Yosef and Ya'akov.

Vayechi means, "and he lived." This portion begins with Ya'akov dying at the age of 147 after living 17 Years in Egypt. He asks Yosef (Joseph) to swear to him that he will bury him in the cave of Machpelah in Hebron. That is the cave that Abraham bought and was thought to be where Adam and Eve were buried.

Jacob says that El Shaddai (God Almighty)<sup>1</sup> appeared to him at Luz (Bethel), blessed him, and God said that the land of Canaan will belong to Jacob's descendants forever. Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh, and he blesses the younger Ephraim first and tells Joseph that he is not making a mistake (even though his eyesight was bad). We should understand that Ya'akov was listening to God; Ya'akov relied on hearing from God, just as his fathers did. Also,

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<sup>1</sup>The ancient rabbis believed that El Shaddai meant mighty God.

he says that Israel should invoke a blessing that God would make His people like Ephraim and Manasseh (see Genesis 48:20). It is thought that they were examples of getting along well.

Perhaps Ya'akov chooses to bless Ephraim first to let us know that God chooses who He wills to choose. God has chosen Yeshua Hamashiach to be the Messiah regardless of what mankind thinks. Perhaps God saw the heart of Ephraim and chose Him because of his godly heart instead of just becoming a greater people than Manasseh as it says in the Bible. Later in the portion, Jacob prophesies that Ephraim will be greater than Manasseh.

For example, God knew that Ya'akov would be a spiritual person and that Esau would be a worldly person. That is why we previously talked about Ya'akov being the descendent who would carry on God's line of believers. God chose Ya'akov as the first born. We learned that the promises of God are greater than what the world has to offer.

Ephraim and Manasseh were adopted by Ya'akov in Genesis 48:5. Yosef is appointed as the first-born son that receives the double portion and the double portion is passed on to Ephraim and Manasseh. There will still be 12 territories given to Israel. The tribe of Levi will act as priests and not get a territory. Also, Yosef will not get a territory, but his 2 sons will get a territory and therefore replace the tribes of Yosef and Levi.

Jacob prophetically says that God will bring them back to Canaan and then speaks to each of his sons and includes some words of prophecy to them. Some of these prophecies were words of correction. Perhaps they were meant to tell them to get with it spiritually. We should also understand that God knows our thoughts and sees all we do and is not removed from mankind as some think.

We saw that Judah becomes the spokesman for the brothers as the 4<sup>th</sup> in line. For example, He is the one who pleads for Benjamin. Reuben (the firstborn) had slept with Bilhah and Simeon and Levi (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> children) in anger had killed the men of a town. So, the leadership of the clan passed on to Judah.

### Anger

Anger can be good or bad. Anger can protect us when we see something that is wrong. Anger can also cause us to sin as was the case with Simeon and Levi. Here are some thoughts about anger:

Define what you are angry about. Identify and control your reaction.

Did your anger come from expectations, lies, feelings of entitlement, or being selfish?

Think about your motives for being angry. Perhaps ask yourself why you are angry.

Act appropriately. Psalms 4:4 NKJV says, "Be angry, and do not sin."

Get control of your anger. You may need time to cool down.

We must learn to control our reactions in life. Channel your anger to produce good.

God controls His temper and is patient and merciful.

When Ya'akov gets to Judah, he prophesies that Judah's rulership will continue until the Messiah comes. Genesis 49:10 NKJV says, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the

people." Yeshua Hamashiach is that Messiah that was born at the time of the Roman appointed King Herod and the false high priest that was installed by Rome. Yeshua is our king and someday will reign as king in the future kingdom of God (see Jeremiah 23:5-6). Ya'akov's prophecy of the Messiah coming before the Israeli kingship being ended was fulfilled.

It is interesting to note that if we take the dalet out of the name of Y'udah, it spells the exclusive name for God, Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey, namely, Yĕhōvâh. Dalet means door in Hebrew. Yeshua said in Revelation 3:20 NKJV, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." If we open our heart to the Messiah, we can have a relationship with Him. Yeshua said in John 4:22 NKJV, "Salvation is of the Jews." How wonderful and interesting!

Also, Y'udah means praise and that is from where we get the word Jew. Shaul says in Romans 2:29, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God." Jew "inwardly and praise from God" is a Hebrew word pun. We are to be a praise (Y'udah) to God inwardly and therefore a praise (Y'udah) to God. Having a circumcised heart refers to Deuteronomy 10:16 NKJV, "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer." In other words, stop resisting God.

*We are to be a  
praise to God inwardly.*

Then Ya'akov dies, he is embalmed, and they mourn for him for forty days. The Egyptians mourn for him 70 days. Yosef asks Pharaoh if he can go bury his father at the cave of Machpelah and a great number of people go up with him and mourn for him for 7 days there in Canaan and then return to Egypt. Yosef's brothers are concerned that Yosef will retaliate for their mistreatment of Yosef, but Yosef tells them not to be afraid and that God used the situation and turned it around for good.

#### Forgiveness can bring peace.

Yosef seemed to forgive his brothers. Forgiveness is a good way to bring peace. It is not always possible to reconcile but we should try. Romans 12:18 NKJV says, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

Forgiveness requires making a decision to forgive and not hold on to what they did. We let go of what they did. Our emotional peace is restored by being willing to forget. Also, we do not keep track of their offenses or offense. Typically, we can forgive someone, but we may have difficulty forgetting and so treat the other person differently. For example, if someone takes advantage of us, we may go back on friendly terms, but we may be less apt to let them take advantage of us again.

If you remember, Yosef's brothers were tired of Yosef meddling in their affairs and in the favoritism shown by Jacob. Then on top of that, Yosef had dreams of his brothers bowing down to him. Yosef's brothers not only schemed to kill Yosef and then sold him as a slave, but earlier, we learned that they could not speak peaceably to him. His brothers were

mistreating him over and over even before they sold him as a slave. Yosef had to forgive his brothers for their continuous mistreatment, for scheming to kill him, and for selling him as a slave. It is possible that Yosef was giving them a difficult time for what they did but, in the end, Yosef seemed to forgive them.

Perhaps he saw that they had changed, and they seemed to be remorseful. Also, God worked out the circumstances to the favor of both Yosef and his brothers. Perhaps he saw them as being vulnerable just as he was vulnerable. We seem to need to come up with a good reason to forgive someone. I would suggest that instead of thinking of reasons not to forgive someone, think of some reasons to forgive them even if it only for their sake.

Forgiving someone can restore peace with them and it also can bring some emotional peace. The Bible says we are not to hold onto grudges but treat others the way we want to be treated and we are to even love them. Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV says, "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes." It appears that Yosef also decided to love his brothers in spite of how they mistreated him.

The portion ends as Joseph dies at 110 and he gets to see the third generation of Ephraim's children. He asks to be buried in Canaan when God takes them back to the land of Canaan sometime in the future. Joseph was a true believer, a holy one, a saint. We see him keeping God's commandments.

In this we perhaps can see a picture of our future hope; it prefigures the picture of God returning all His people to Him some day in the future and raising His people from the dead. Ezekiel 37:4-6 NKJV says, "Again He said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.'" This refers to Israel, but God will raise up all believers to live together in a future kingdom.

In this closing portion of Genesis, we see the death of two of our great spiritual leaders, Ya'akov and Yosef. What do the stories in the Bible tell us so far? Mankind fell from their relationship and fellowship with God. The sin of man without God becomes so severe that God relents creating mankind. For the sake of the faith of Noah, God saves the world through a believer. Noah listens to God, and he builds an ark that saves mankind from annihilation. May we all be like Noah who saved the world.

*Those who keep God's commandments  
give this world hope.*

Abraham becomes the father of believers in the true God and God tells Abraham that the world will be blessed through him. Isaac and Jacob carry on the line of believers and each encounter God. They are led by God just like the believers before them. Even though the



believing prophet Joseph suffered as a result of his brothers' jealousy, he ends up saving them from a deadly famine. God prospers and protects His people of faith. The prophetic is important and Shaul tells us to love each other and to desire the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit; we are also to be led by God through the prophetic. 1 Corinthians 14:1 says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy."

We see God saving mankind because of those who live in faith towards God, who follow God's commands, and who are led by Him. Let us also be people of faith who bring God's blessings to the world. Let us be a people who listen to God's voice and follow Him just as our patriarchs did. True believers make the world a better place. The world needs us. The people who say they don't need God are mistaken. Without God, there would be no life left on earth.

As believers in the true God, we have lots to celebrate. We can be thankful for the past saints of the Old Testament portion who brought us to this time. No wonder God's feasts are times of celebration. Mankind may celebrate their own works, their own accomplishments, their lives, and their special times, but without God, mankind would not exist. Celebrating God's feasts keeps us in touch with reality. We would have nothing without God so don't be deluded (tricked or brainwashed) into thinking otherwise; all things exist because of the creator God.

Let us be people of faith who bring God's blessings to the world. Let us be a people who listen to God's voice and follow Him just as our patriarchs did. We can make the world a better place.

The Haftarah for Vayechi is 1 Kings 2:1-12. We read about the deaths of some of the great leaders of Israel in the portions of scripture for Vayechi. King David is about to die and so he commissions Shlomo and tells him to do things God's way; namely, according to the Torah. David asks for specific favors against Joab and Shimei, and for Shlomo to be kind to the sons of Barzillai. David then dies after reigning over Israel for forty years.

We see Ya'akov giving farewell words to his children. Both Ya'akov and Yosef die in this portion and Yosef asks for his bones to be taken back to Canaan when they return. Yosef firmly believes in what God is able to do and so should we. Remember to be faithful to God.

*Remember to believe in what  
God is able to do and will do.*

We will close our Torah study with an ancient encouraging Jewish saying. We don't have to reinvent things in pagan terms. Tradition is not a commandment of God, but some tradition can be useful and encouraging. The Jews use this saying at the conclusion of each book of the Torah. Be strong in our God, Yĕhōvāh.

Hazak, hazak, v'nit'chazek! 3X

Be Strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened! 3X

**Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts.  
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures  
in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)**

It is good to make preparations for your death. Genesis 47:29-30

We may adopt children into our family. Genesis 48:5

We may give prophecies over our children at significant times. Genesis 48:20-49:28

It is good to observe a time of mourning for our close family. They spent 7 days mourning for Ya'akov. Genesis 50:10

God may intervene to thwart evil and turn it around. Genesis 50:20-21

We are to keep our convictions about God's promises to the very end just as Yosef did.  
Genesis 50:24-25

**In closing, let us say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:**

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.

Thank you for being with us today.