



#12 Vayechi Genesis 47:28-50:26
Torah Teaching
by Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Yosef – Joseph

Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed

Moshe – Moses

Shaul – Paul

Shlomo – Solomon

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

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

Y'hudah – Judah

Yochanan – John

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 12th Torah portion

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 where the grain was stored during the famine of that time and also 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)¹ 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 is bad). We should understand that Ya'akov was listening to God; Ya'akov relied on hearing from God, just as his fathers did. Also, he says that Israel should invoke a blessing that God would make His people like Ephraim and Manasseh (as in 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 chooses who He wills to choose. God has chosen Yeshua Hamashiach to be the Messiah. Or, God saw the heart of Ephraim and chose Him because of his godly heart.

¹ The ancient rabbis believed that El Shaddai meant mighty God.

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. Ya'akov prophesies that the messiah would come from Judah and that Judah's rulership will continue until the Messiah comes. "The scepter will not pass from Y'hudah, 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." Genesis 49:10 NKJV. Yeshua Hamashiach was born before the Roman appointed King Herod and the false high priest were installed by Rome. Yeshua is our king and someday will reign as king in the future kingdom of God. 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'hudah, it spells the exclusive name for God, Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey. 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 hearts to the Messiah, we can have a relationship with Him. How wonderful and amazing!

Also, Y'hudah 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'hudah) to God inwardly and therefore a praise 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

Ya'akov blesses each of his sons and the two sons of Yosef. The words he has for them are not all good words. Since he is probably trying to get words from God, we should understand that God knows our thoughts and sees all we do, and is not removed from mankind as some think.

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.

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. 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 the 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 man. 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.

Those who keep
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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 and 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; to desire the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit; and 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 believers in the past who brought us to this time. We just celebrated the Gregorian New Year; Happy New Year. No wonder God's feasts are times of celebration. Mankind may celebrate their own works, their own accomplishments, their lives, and their special times (there is nothing wrong with feeling good about those things), 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 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; 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 the 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. They use this saying at the conclusion of each book of the Torah. Be strong in our God, Yĕhōvâh:

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

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