

Parashah #9
(Updated for 11.27.10)

VaYeshev ~ וישב ~ **And he continued living (And he dwelt/he settled)**

Torah: B'resheet/Genesis 37:1~40:23

Haftarah: 'Amos/Amos 2:6~3:8

B'rit Hadashah: Acts 7:9-16

Writer's note: I have learned most Christian commentators and Rabbis agree the complete plan of HaShem is in Torah and specifically in (say-fer B'reh-sheet) *Sefer B'resheet/Book of Genesis*. Most readers of scripture have not been taught to look for the Heavenly Father's plan and consequently miss what they are not looking for. With what is happening in the world, it is time for us to really pay attention!!!

Here we go again!!!! WAY too much material for us to cover in our allotted time span!!! This week's Parashah actually includes four stories:

1. It starts with *Yosef/Joseph* and his dreams which infuriate his brothers. They sell him into slavery, which eventually puts him second in command in Egypt.
2. His brother, *Y'hudah/Judah*'s indiscretion is uncovered and we learn some interesting information concerning the lineage of Yeshua HaMashiach.
3. Potiphar's wife tries to seduce *Yosef/Joseph* and eventually has him imprisoned.
4. *Yosef/Joseph* interprets dreams from prison and their outcomes.

**A subtitle for this Parashah could be . . . "Joseph's Journeys:
From Papa's Pet, to the Pit, To Potiphar, To Prison, To the Palace"**

An interjection here. . . A friend of mine wondered why I used two names for people in my notes. I explained it was for teaching purposes; so with that in mind, I will use those names interchangeably in the future. If it's confusing for you, please let me know and I will try to correct it.

So let's get started! First of all, just for clarification, when *Yosef/Joseph* was seventeen years old, his father, *Ya'akov/Jacob* was 108 and his grandfather, *Yitz'chak/Isaac* was 168. Yitz'chak lived another 12 years. According to the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, we

are told the incident described below, occurred approximately 9 years after Ya'akov returned home which is about the same time Leah died.

CHAPTER 37

Over and over we are told nothing is recorded in HaShem's Holy Book if it is not important. Consequently, each year HaShem reveals something I failed to catch the last time. (Okay, okay, maybe I'm just a slow learner!!!!) Anyway, in **verse 1** we are told "Ya'akov continued living in the land where his father had lived as a foreigner, the land of **Kena'an/Canaan.**" Now folks, this isn't any new information to us, is it? In fact, Torah went into great detail in **B'reshet / Genesis 36**, repeating itself over and over concerning **Esav/Esau** is Edom and he will not receive the blessing of **Avraham/Abraham**. We already knew **Yitz'chak/Isaac** and **Avraham / Abraham** lived in **Kena'an/Canaan** so why are we given this, simply worded verse, right here? According to Rabbi Ya'akov Youlus, (and I quote) ***"it is placed here for the sake of contrast to all that was said before. Esau did not live in the land of Canaan, but clearly Jacob did! We can even recall in Genesis 36:6 where it says in black and white that Esau took his sons, his daughters and every animal and possession that he owned and that he left the land of Canaan, voluntarily. So the simple and concise language used in this first verse marks the contrast for us and for all of history right up to our present day, that Esau is not connected to the land of Canaan, but that Jacob is. And remember, when we use the name, Jacob, in this collective way, we are referring to all Jewish people."***

In **verse 2**, we learn Yosef was in the pasture with Dan and Naftali (Bilhah's sons), as well as Gad and Asher (Zilpah's sons) and takes a bad report back to his dad, Ya'akov. At first glance, it looks like Yosef took a bad report back about Dan, Naftali, Gad and Asher. In my opinion, Yosef is a little "tattle tale" and starts digging his own pit! However, given the fact over 25% of the book of Genesis is used to reveal Yosef's life; it appears Torah sees Yosef as a (tzah-deek) **tzaddik/righteous person**. Further study reveals when Yosef was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, although they were sons of concubines, he treated them nicely and with respect although the other brothers did not!

As mentioned before, understanding the cultural background requires knowledge of the middle-east. In those days, it was common for men to have wives and also concubines. The (pay-lay-gehsh) **peleygesh** was a **woman without the status of wife**, in Biblical Hebrew. She was on the level of a maid or servant but was also used to bear children for him. She had an inferior status compared to the original wife or wives. Therefore, the children of the concubines were considered of lower status. So when Yosef associated with Bilhah's and Zilpah's sons, he was showing compassion and treating them justly. He considered his father's concubines as having the same status of real wives. The evil report Yosef brought back to his father, Ya'akov, was not about those four but the inappropriate treatment toward them by the other six!

At this point in his life, he probably is not much of a threat to his older brothers. Never the less, the fact he is obviously Ya'akov's favorite does cause frustrations on their part. I don't understand why someone as wise as Ya'akov would provoke his older sons by showing this favoritism. This is certainly a clear lesson to us to not show favoritism when rearing our own children.

According to the JPS Commentary, the Hebrew word in **verse 4**, (dahb-beh-row) *dabbero* is quite unique. Usually the suffix to this verb connotes a possessive sense, meaning *his speech*. This passage would then be translated: "They could not abide his friendly speech." In other words, they rebuffed every attempt by Joseph to be friendly.

Oh, by the way, according to **verse 3**, so much for Joseph and the amazing technicolored dreamcoat!!! How does your translation read? According to the commentary in the Artscroll Chumash, Stone Edition, the Hebrew renders the translation as "a fine woolen tunic". Well known Rabbi, Rashi translates it as "a garment of fine wool" and further states it was a long-sleeved tunic which was embroidered, made of variously colored strips of fine wool. According to S'forno, the tunic was a mark of leadership. Since Reuben discredited himself by "tampering with Jacob's bed" (**B'resheet/Genesis 35:22**), Jacob elevated Joseph to the status of the "first-born" and made him the tunic to symbolize his new position in the family.

An additional note concerning the long sleeves lets us know it was for someone in leadership or aristocracy. One would find it challenging to get any work done with "long sleeves" in the way. Most working garments had sleeves which were elbow length or no longer than mid-forearm or three-quarter length sleeve in today's vernacular.

According to Targum Jonathan the term "a coat of many colors" was used only one other time in the Tanakh in **2nd Samuel 13:18** where it describes a royal garment worn by a virgin daughter of a king. Based on this usage in 2nd Samuel and from an archaeological discovery of the painted tombs of Bene Hasein in Egypt, we can surmise, in the patriarchal age, Semitic chiefs wore coats of many colors as a sign of rulership.

DREAMS

I believe sometimes things are revealed for our knowledge only. Lacking maturity, Yosef tells his dreams, digging his pit even deeper!!! As if it were not enough to tell his brothers, Yosef then retells his dream to his father in front of his brothers and now they are fuming mad!!!! Ya'akov rebukes Yosef for doing so but "remembers these things in his heart". Another translation says, "kept the matter in mind" and yet another says "guarded the matter".

According to Rashi, Ya'akov spoke strongly against Yosef to remove the jealousy and resentment of his brothers. By ridiculing the dream, he attempted to reassure them it had no

validity with regard to them. He hoped to stop them from taking Yosef's aspirations seriously and being increasingly jealous of him.

We will see later how actual events parallel this first dream. The consensus among the Sages concerning the meaning of these dreams is Jacob actually expected the dream(s) to come true but it isn't possible because Rachel was no longer living (verses 2-11). However, bear in mind dreams mentioned in scripture are usually understood to be vehicles of prophecy.

Closer examination shows, in verse 4, "his brothers . . . hated him". Then in verse 8 "And they hated him even more . . ." It was not until verse 11 "his brothers were jealous of him". Commentary indicates this jealousy was a new thing in the brothers' attitude. At first they hated him because of Jacob's favoritism, but they were not jealous because he was a child in their eyes as he was much younger and they saw no reason to take him as a threat. But, when they heard his dreams, their attitude changed from hatred to jealousy because they perceived the source of the dreams to be providential.

So why did they take Yosef's second dream so seriously? One of the reasons has to do with the numbers reported. When you take the sun, the moon and the eleven stars, the total is thirteen. Now, Yosef was seventeen at the time. So when you add $17 + 13$ you get the number 30. Fast forward to B'reshet/Genesis 41:46 where it says Pharaoh saw Yosef was a very smart man, after he had interpreted Pharaoh's dream. Verse 46 says "And Yosef was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt . . ." Needless to say, we do know the dream did become a reality.

(Verse 12) "Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem . . ." W-H-A-T?! Are they out of their minds? Isn't this where Sh'mon and Levi wreaked havoc on the townsmen? Initially, those were my thoughts. However, going back to B'reshet/Genesis 34:25-29, it is very clear, all the inhabitants were removed from Shechem, either by death or captivity. So I guess there was no problem after all going back to Shechem!

The next event is a little hard for me to understand. Why would Jacob, knowing there is animosity between "the brothers" and Joseph, send his favored son to where they are tending sheep? Perhaps Jacob wanted Joseph to make peace with his brothers, who knows?! Putting the possible danger aside, Joseph, as a very obedient son, agrees to go and goes alone to find his brothers.

All too often, we read these verses, paying no real attention to what is being said. In verse 13 Israel asked Yosef, "Aren't your brothers pasturing the sheep in Sh'kehm? Come, I will send you to them." ". . . So he sent him away from the *Hebron/Hebron* Valley." (verse 14) I have been to both of those locations and they were not/are not just across the street from each other. Getting out my Israeli maps, I found the distance from Hebron to Sh'kehm traveling north over rough terrain is 62.5 miles!!! It must have taken Yosef three to four days to walk that distance.

Can you imagine the reaction of a 17 year old, today, if he had to walk that distance and return? For that matter, can you imagine the reaction of anyone required to walk that distance. People today would probably think they were on a death march if they had to walk that far!!!

Verse 15 says “a man discovered him . . .” It is believed this “man” was actually the angel *Gavri’el/Gabriel* (the announcing angel), whom HaShem sent to lead Yosef to his brothers. When Yosef could not find his brothers, he had a perfect excuse to return to Ya’akov and avoid what he knew would be an unpleasant meeting. Instead, he displayed great loyalty to Ya’akov by persistently searching for them.

Anyway, the brothers have gone on to Dotan (or Dothan depending on your translation) where Yosef catches up with them (**verse 17**). Search as I might, I could find no Dotan or Dothan on any of my maps. However, one of the ladies at Sabbath service had a map in her Bible showing Dothan’s location to be another 10-15 miles further north!! Before we go further, here is some interesting information. In (Eve-reet) *Ivrit/Hebrew*, there are several ways to spell Dotan. In each, the numerical values equal “sin”, “lawlessness”, “rebellion” and the like. Given what takes place there, I thought it interesting.

Okay, so the brothers see Joseph coming in the distance and plan his demise. Reuben encourages them not to shed Joseph’s blood so his death wouldn’t be on their hands. He suggests throwing him in the pit. Reuben’s secret plan was to return later and free Joseph. Although Reuben was the first-born, he had the most to lose since Joseph was the favored son and therefore had the most to gain from his death (**B’resheet/Genesis 25:22** and **1st Chronicles 5:1**). Yet, he had concern for Joseph and felt responsible for him. He was also aware, being the oldest of the family; he would carry the blame as well. (**Verses 18-24**)

Personally, I believe Reuben to be a man of compassion. Remember his compassionate gesture of finding the (due-dah-eem) dudaim for his mother, Leah? And again, he came to his mother’s defense with regard to Bilhah.

Before we move on, in **verse 24**, in parenthesis my translation says “the cistern was empty; without any water in it”. These pits were dug primarily for water storage so this observation is necessary for us to understand Yosef’s brothers were not trying to drown him.

Verse 25 tells about the caravan of (Yish-mah-eh-leem) Yishma’elim coming from the distance. In the meantime, (Mid-yah-neem) Midyanim merchants heard Joseph’s cries and removed him from the pit. In the Complete Jewish Bible, **verse 36** speaks of the Midyanim. However, other translations mention yet another group, the Medanites, who sell Joseph to Potiphar, in Egypt. Actually, I think I FINALLY have a better clarification on this for the first time in all the years I’ve been following Torah. These would have been descendants of *Yishma’el/Ishmael* who were from the Midian area as opposed to some other area of the middle-east.

Verses 31-35 Jacob identifies Joseph's coat, declares his death and "mourns his son many days", unable to be consoled by anyone. In fact, **verse 35** states "all his sons and all his daughters . . ." It is believed this verse refers to his daughters-in-law, who were like daughters to him and his daughter (Dee-nah) Dinah. Some believe Jacob actually mourned Joseph's demise for the entire 22 years of their separation. I wonder if these 22 years of separation is a parallel to the 22 years Jacob was separated from his family when he was living with/working for Laban? Just a thought.

CHAPTER 38

Y'hudah/Judah "gits n splits" (**verses 1-8**) when he sees the grief his father, Ya'akov, is going through because of his decision to sell Yosef. Although these people have been told time and time again not to take Canaanite brides, Y'hudah does so anyway and three sons are born in rather quick succession. **Er**, meaning **awaken**, was the firstborn. The second child was named **Onan**, which means **complaining** or **sorrow** and the third child was named **Shelah** from a root word meaning **to inquire, to request** or **to demand**. (The female name Sheilah is derived from this word!)

Before we proceed further, let's look into the **Levirate Marriage** (**D'varim/Deuteronomy 25:5**): According to the Rabbis, the Torah considers having children to be a primary purpose of marriage. If a man dies childless, his widow is required to marry his brother, if feasible, and the child/children are considered the children of the deceased. There is no legal act involved, because it is considered a continuation of the dead husband's marriage. This is called (ye-boom **NOT** ye-bum!!!) **Yibbum**.

If it is not feasible for the widow to marry her brother-in-law, then a legal act called (kah-leet-zah) **Chalitzah** is performed, to dissolve the dead brother's marriage and enable the widow to marry outside of the family.

Okay, back to our story: Y'hudah's eldest son, Er, married Tamar, the daughter of Shem. According to **verse 7**, Er was evil in the sight of Adonai so He killed Er. Then Yehudah told his second son, Onan, to sleep with Tamar per the commandment above. **Verses 9 & 10** Oh yuck!!! This is definitely not material for young eyes to read. I do not know why anyone needs to read pornographic material! There is some pretty explicit stuff right here!!! After Onan's death, Judah glitches!!! Not sure he wants to lose his third and youngest son, Shelah, to death, Y'hudah requests Shelah be allowed to mature before fulfilling his obligation to marry Tamar.

According to the Chumash commentary, Er and Onan died because of their wickedness, and the nature of their sin is in **verse 9**. Tamar was a beautiful woman and Er and Onan did not want her beauty marred by pregnancy, so they wasted their seed and they died for the gravity of this sin. Because Er and Onan were the grandsons of Jacob and the sons of Judah, HaShem

considered this sin most serious. Remember, the primary reason for marriage was to have children.

Shortly thereafter, Judah's wife dies (**verse 12**). After he had mourned, he went to oversee his sheepshearers. The commentary states sheep shearing of a prominent man was a festive occasion with a public feast for the poor.

After quite some time, it becomes apparent Judah doesn't have any intention of allowing the marriage between Shelah and Tamar to take place. So, when Tamar heard Judah was coming to her area, she dressed herself as a harlot, veiled her face and offered herself to Judah. Thinking she was a prostitute, since his wife was deceased, he chose to consort with this "harlot".

The agreed upon payment was to be a goat but until it was delivered, Tamar required a security deposit, if you will. In **verse 18**, we learn she asked for "Your signet/seal, your cord and your staff that is in your hand". Why three items? And for that matter, why **THESE** three? In my opinion, Tamar was one smart woman! She had already experienced Judah's reticence in taking care of business properly, so her requirement was personal identification, which was used to her benefit later on. Additionally, we will learn by two or three witnesses a matter is established (**D'varim/Deuteronomy 19:15; Mattityahu/Matthew 18:16; 2nd Corinthians 13:1**) and these were her "witnesses".

Long story short, Tamar becomes pregnant. Upon hearing this news, Judah is told, and believes, she has committed harlotry so he calls for her execution. She has a messenger take Judah's personal belongings to him **to identify them**, saying they belong to father of her pregnancy.

The Chumash states HaShem repaid Judah measure for measure. For it was with the words of "identify, if you please" when Ya'akov was given Yosef's tunic dipped in blood. This was Judah's idea. It was with these same words, "identify, if you please", Judah was confronted with. His personal items proved he was the father of Tamar's pregnancy. Judah has no choice but to acknowledge the items as his and declare Tamar is more righteous than he.

Tamar has twins (imagine that!). According to **verses 28-30**, there was a struggle in Tamar's womb regarding the firstborn. The hand of one of the twins appeared first and the midwife put a scarlet thread around the wrist. However, the firstborn was (Peh-rehtz) **Peretz** (פֶּרֶץ), which means **breach, breaking forth** or **strength** and alludes to the midwife's exclamation of "what strength you exerted". The other son was named (Zeh-rahk) **Zerach** (זֶרַח), which means **scarlet** or **dawning**. As it turns out, Peretz is the great-great grandfather of (Dah-veed) David, considered to be one of the greatest kings of Israel. As we know, out of David will come **HaMashiach / The Messiah**, Yeshua.

The birth of *Peretz/Perez* and *Zerach/Zerah* can be understood metaphorically to represent the first and second coming of Messiah. Peretz represents Messiah in His first coming. He breaks open the way into the kingdom of heaven. According to the *Midrash Rabbah*, Tamar names him Peretz to indicate King Messiah, “the Breaker”, would one day come forth from him. Tamar meant, “This one is greater than all those who make breaches, for from you will arise [the King Messiah written about in **Mikhah/Micah 2:13**], ‘The breaker (poretz, פּוֹרֵץ) goes up before them’ [They break out, pass through the gate and go out by it. So their king goes on before them and the L~RD at their head.]” (Genesis Rabbah 85:14)

Zerach represents Messiah in His second coming. The great redemption of the messianic age is spoken of in the prophets as the dawning: “Arise, shine’ for your light has come and the glory of the L~RD has risen (zarach) upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the L~RD will rise upon you and His glory will appear upon you. Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising (zarach) (**Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 60:1-3**). But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. (**Mal’ahki/Malachi 4:2**)

Just as Tamar and the midwife expected Zerach to be born first, the people of the Master’s generation anticipated the messianic redemption. Like a thread of scarlet, they did not receive a token of the coming redemption, but before the final redemption could dawn, the Messiah needed to accomplish His purposes on the cross and in the grave. When Peretz defied Tamar’s expectation by bursting forth ahead of Zerach, she exclaimed, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” (**B’resheet/Genesis 38:29**) In the same way, Messiah’s first coming defied popular expectation. As He burst forth from the tomb, Israel might be imagined to exclaim, “What a breach you have made for yourself!”

Before we move on . . . according to one Orthodox Rabbi, the sages teach the Messiah was created or prepared before the creation of the world. Also, He exercises His activity in a two-fold way. Messiah brings the Hebrews down to exile (or tribulation) and then Messiah brings them out of exile. Therefore the Messiah is the whole process of going down and coming back up. They have a saying which is “G~d always prepares the cure before the sickness.” This phenomena has occurred over and over.

- Just before the terrible Inquisition in Europe, America was discovered and provided a haven for those persecuted.
- Before the Holocaust, Israel was already being prepared by Theodore Herzl’s work to make Israel ready to be a place of return for the Hebrew people.

This whole episode concerning Tamar and her twins points out again, deception within the family is sometimes necessary to obtain what belongs to you. It was true with Esav and Ya’akov and it appears to be true here as well.

I found the following information quite interesting. In **verse 21**, the Hebrew word used for *prostitute* is (keh-die-shaw) *kedaisha*. Surprisingly, the root for this word is the same as (kah-doesh) *kadosh* which means *holy*. As I understand it, Torah reveals the degree of degradation to which a prostitute lowers herself because Torah teaches sex should be an act of spiritual elevation not an act of base animalistic action.

The above account actually takes place sometime during the 22 years when Joseph is estranged from his family. So why is it placed right square dab in the middle of Joseph's story? Some say it is to place emphasis on the sale of Joseph which caused the loss of two brothers, not just one. Judah was demoted from his #2 position, by his brothers, when they saw the anguish it caused their father. Remember, it was Judah's idea to sell Joseph. Judah then leaves the family compound, becomes associated with Hirah, the Adullamite, meets Shua's daughter, marries her and has three sons.

See what a mess our lives become when we stray from our roots and don't stay connected to our families, especially our spiritual families?

CHAPTER 39

“The LORD was with Yosef, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian (**B' resheet/Genesis 39:2**). As a slave in the house of Potiphar, Yosef could have lived in a state of dejection and bitterness. He had been betrayed by his brothers, kidnapped, exiled and sold. He had gone from the position of a favored son to one of a lowly slave. But Yosef did not let his circumstances dictate his life. He refused to succumb to depression. Instead, he diligently set his hands to his work and quickly won the confidence of his new owner.

Where did Yosef find the inner strength to rise above bitterness? We see some people who seem unable to let go of past wrongs, real or imagined. They wallow in self-pity and anger, holding on to old resentments. This seems to be a normal reaction to misfortune and conflict. Someone like Yosef, who could shrug off even the worst of circumstances and make the best of whatever situation, is exceptional. The difference was Yosef had an unshakable confidence in the goodness and faithfulness of HaShem. He knew the stories of his fathers, Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov. He knew the promises he stood to inherit. He did not suppose HaShem had forgotten or abandoned him. Instead, he humbly submitted himself to Adonai's higher, mysterious purpose. This is the lifestyle of the bondservant of Adonai. Yeshua's apostles understood this and although the translators left it out of most versions, they considered themselves His bondservants. Therefore, they knew all events in their lives were orchestrated for their good and His glory. Yosef seems to exhibit this same understanding.

Many of us struggle with an artificial sense of entitlement. We assume we have the right to be happy. We assume we deserve the good and comfortable circumstances of life. Why? What makes us think we have the right to happiness or we deserve anything? When things go wrong, we react with shock, bitterness and anger, as if our rights have been violated. Because of Yosef's steadfast confidence in HaShem, he possessed an undying optimism which transformed even his lowly estate of slavery into success. As Torah says, he became "a successful man."

The rise of Yosef in the royal government of Egypt was very impressive when we consider the hostile attitude Egyptians had toward the Semites. However, according to one article, there is a possibility Yosef went to Egypt during the reign of the Bedouin Semitic conquerors, the Hyksos. The Hyksos took over the government of Egypt rather peacefully by taking advantage of a weakened Middle Kingdom leadership. They were not Egyptian, but from the East. They ruled in Egypt sometime between 1700 and 1550 BCE. If, in fact, the Hyksos were ruling Egypt when Yosef was there it would help explain two things. First, aside from the grace of HaShem, it may explain when Yosef rose to such great heights. Perhaps he, being a Semite, was favored by the Hyksos, who were also Semites. Second, it might also explain why Potiphar is referred to several times as "the Egyptian" (verse 5). He would have been an exception in government service if the Hyksos were ruling.

Okay, here we are, back to the on-going saga of Yosef. In verses 1-6, we learn, even as a slave, Yosef prospers. So much so, Potiphar, an Egyptian idolater, could recognize Yosef's spirituality and appointed him head of his household. Ultimately, Yosef is appointed chief administrator over all of Egypt (Acts 7:9 & 10)

Think about it! Wherever he went, he ruled . . .

- As a slave of Potiphar, he was put in charge of the household
- As a disgraced prisoner, he was placed in charge of the prison
- As a despised Hebrew, he was rushed to interpret Pharaoh's dreams AND was made viceroy of all Egypt as well as all the surrounding countries
- And finally, his entire family bowed down to him

Verses 7-20 entail the story of Potiphar's wife continually imploring Yosef to "lie with me" or more specifically, "sleep with me" which had nothing to do with sleep at all!!! Yosef's refusal over and over didn't seem to faze her. In fact, in verse 8 before he ran away, he said, "How could I do such a thing to my master and, if I do it, I will sin towards G~d." Finally, one day as Yosef was about his business, in verses 11 & 12, she caught hold of his robe and of course we know how she proceeded to frame him. Carelessness can cause serious problems. Obviously, Potiphar didn't believe his wife's story or he would have executed Yosef. However, he had no

choice but to punish his servant, (verse 20) but get this . . . Potiphar sends Yosef to the “royal” dungeon where the important prisoners were kept. Important prisoners??? Oh well . . . verse 21 Adonai was with him; even here Yosef was successful.

One commentary had some interesting information concerning Joseph’s conduct and how Hebrew culture views what happened. “Judaism has learned well from Joseph’s example. Jewish law forbids a married or an unmarried (and unrelated) man and woman to be alone together. Even if there is no impropriety between them, the mere fact that they are secluded together in a place where the potential for impropriety exists is non-kosher and regarded as adulterous. Similarly, among Orthodox Jews, any physical contact between an unmarried (and unrelated) man and woman is expressly forbidden.”

Let’s go back to verse 20 “then Joseph’s master took him . . .” indicates to me Potiphar personally escorted Joseph to the prison, which displays his high esteem for the young Hebrew and an indication he did not believe his wife’s charge. It is said he explained to Joseph unless he punished Joseph, people would say his wife was routinely unfaithful and Potiphar ignored her behavior.

CHAPTER 40

In verses 1-23, The Minister of Wine (cup bearer) and The Minister of Bread (baker) are imprisoned. The Sages tell us because there was a fly in the cup of wine and a stone in Pharaoh’s bread, these two are relegated to the royal 5-star dungeon where the warden treats them very well and Yosef is appointed to serve them.

Both men have dreams on the same night and we are told they were very depressed about them. Yosef offers to interpret the dreams, however, he makes it very clear the “interpretations are from G~d.” (Verse 8) As you can see, Yosef is introducing HaShem to two high Egyptian officials whom he has met in prison.

The story is told, on Pharaoh’s birthday, he was thinking of his former stewards and was trying to reason why and how the situations had occurred which caused their imprisonment. After all, it wasn’t the Cup Bearer’s fault a fly had flown into his cup. However, on the other hand, the Baker was careless in not sifting the flour to be sure all foreign matter was removed. Consequently, Yosef’s interpretations for both men were correct and in three days, the Minister of Wine was released from prison and returned to his position and the Minister of Bread was executed. Yosef begged the Wine Minister to remember him to Pharaoh but he forgot about Yosef (verses 5-19).

The Chumash records Yosef’s prison term was extended an additional two years because he placed his trust in the Wine Minister instead of G~d.

- **Tehillim/Psalm 118:8** it says, “It is better to trust in the L~RD, than to put confidence in man.”
- **Tehillim/Psalm 146:3**, “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a human being in whom there is no help.”

Unfortunately Yosef did and consequently the story ends, declaring the Cup Bearer (or butler) did not remember Yosef but forgot him. It is imperative for us to remember this important lesson from Torah . . . **Trust only in HaShem!**

Pharaoh also has some dreams – which we will read about next week . . . so stay tuned!!!!

VaYeshev ~ וישב ~ He continued living (He dwelt/He settled)

Haftarah: ‘Amos/Amos 2:6~3:8

Right away we see an allusion to Yosef being sold for silver in **verse 6** and then in **verses 7 & 8**, (Ah-mose) ‘Amos/Amos describes the immorality of father and son sleeping with the same girl which we have just read, concerning Y’hudah sleeping with his daughter-in-law, Tamar.

Essentially, ‘Amos is delivering HaShem’s message of love but expectations to Israel. ‘Amos lets Israel know HaShem loves them most intimately; more than any other peoples on the earth. Because of their rebellion and sinfulness, HaShem is going to punish them, should they choose to continue following their own ways instead of repentance and restitution.

It is imperative for us to acknowledge Israel is HaShem’s Chosen People and always will be. Any parent who loves their child, expects him/her to follow rules and expectations of their parents. If they don’t, there are consequences. The same is true of Israel and the same is true of us as well, as grafted-in Israel.

VaYeshev ~ וישב ~ He continued living (He dwelt/He settled)

B’rit Hadashah: Acts 7:9-16

Immediately in **verses 9 and 10** we see the direct parallel to our Torah Portion. As far as the remainder of the reading, we will see it all played out in the weeks to come.

As we walk with Yosef, we can see many parallels with Yeshua.

- Both came to do the will of their fathers.
- Both came to see their brothers.
- Both were plotted against by their brothers.
- Each were sold for pieces of silver
- Both were stripped of their robes.
- Both were put in a pit
- A meal was consumed after their disposal
- The pit was empty when Reuven went back and . . .
- The tomb was empty when John and Peter went there.
- As Yosef was passed to the hands of a gentile, so did salvation through Yeshua pass on to the gentiles.

I'm sure there are probably more but this is what I have for now.

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 112

(An interesting note concerning this particular Psalm is: many Hebrew women read this over their husbands each Shabbat.)

Next week's lesson: Parashah #10

Miketz ~ מִקֵּץ ~At The End

Torah: B'resheet/Genesis 41:1~44:17

Haftarah: M'lakhim Alef/1st Kings 3:15~4:1

B'rit Hadashah: Acts 7:9-11 & 12-16; Yochanan/John 10:22-39

Shavuah Tov (Have a good week)!!!

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim