

Messiah Ben Joseph and Messiah Ben David

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The video version is available at: <https://youtu.be/prP35KVFUEE>

The scripture reading is Genesis 37-38

This Torah portion begins the story of Joseph as the central character. It includes the rising hatred that Joseph's brothers had for him culminating in their selling him into slavery. It ends with Joseph in Pharaoh's prison wondering if he has been forgotten. In the middle of this account of Joseph's life, the Torah inserts an account of Joseph's brother Judah's life. Why are these stories intermixed? Joseph is clearly the figure of Yeshua's suffering, but what does the story of Judah tell us? How do both accounts individually and mixed together reveal the coming messiah?

Let's start with the foreshadowing of Messiah in Joseph's life. There are so many events that we will only hit the highlights of them in this teaching.

The account of Joseph begins with Joseph bringing a bad report of his brother's behavior to their father.

Genesis 37:1-2 NKJV 1 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 2 This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

How are we to take Joseph's actions? Are we to think of Joseph as ratting out his brothers to their father and deliberately getting them in trouble? Or were the acts such that it was necessary for Jacob to know of their actions? When we put Joseph's actions in context, it seems that Joseph's actions were justified and necessary.

Simeon and Levi, the second and third sons of Leah, had devised and brought about the slaughter of the entire town of Shechem behind Jacob's back.

After that we read in Genesis 35, that while Jacob is on his way from Bethel to Hebron after Rachel's death, Reuben, the oldest son of Leah, slept with his father's wife Bilhah.

Jacob could not have been happy with the behavior of his oldest sons. Reuben's actions resulted in Jacob disregarding him as the future leader of the family and making him ineligible in Jacob's eyes as deserving the inheritance of the firstborn. Now, comes word that his sons by Bilhah and Zilpah behaved no better than those of Leah's and their behavior would reflect negatively upon him just like Simeon, Levi, and Reuben's actions did.

The actions of his brothers place Joseph as the son Israel favored to receive the right of the firstborn. He was the firstborn of his mother Rachel.

Genesis 37:3-4 NKJV 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

This tunic was the symbol of Jacob's choice of Joseph to receive the mantle of leadership of the family. This verse uses the name of Israel instead of Jacob indicating that Israel was acting in accordance with the spirit and not in accordance with the flesh. Joseph's ten older brothers hated Joseph because of Israel's choice of

Joseph. Perhaps, they hated him because the guilt of their own actions contrasted with Joseph's righteousness. As we continue in Joseph's story, we learn that he has a highly developed sense of right and wrong constantly weighing his actions against God's standard.

Yeshua was also the choice of His Father to receive the right of the firstborn and the mantle of leadership. Like with Joseph, Yeshua's righteousness convicted those around him of their own sins.

John 7:7 NKJV 7 "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil.

After this, Joseph received a dream from God confirming his position of leader of the family.

Genesis 37:5-8 NKJV 5 Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. 6 So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: 7 "There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." 8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

The obvious understanding of Joseph's dream is that he would rule over his brothers. A deeper meaning is understood from the context of the dream. This is the time of the harvest. Yeshua rose from the dead on the day of the firstfruits of the barley harvest which the children of Israel were to observe as a Feast day.

Leviticus 23:9-11, 14 NKJV 9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 'He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.... 14 'You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The resurrection theme of Joseph's dream was recognized among the Jewish sages. First Fruits of Zion in Shadows of the Messiah quote the writings of the Zerah Kodesh:

This [dream about Messiah son of Joseph] alludes to the prophecy [in Isaiah 52:2], "Shake yourself from the dust, rise up," –that he is raised up and made to rule and lifted from the dust. And the words [in Psalm 118:5], "From my distress I called upon the LORD; the LORD answered me," alludes to them that will be saved from the distress of Messiah son of Joseph, namely that he will not only be slain, but he will also live at the time of the redemption, and it will be said of them, "Shake yourself from the dust, rise up."ⁱ

Joseph had a second dream in which not only his brothers bow down before him but also his father and mother. His mother, Rachel, had died nine years earlier giving birth to Benjamin, so this could not be fulfilled literally but must pertain to some future event.

When Joseph related this second dream to his father and his brothers, his brothers not only hated Joseph, they were jealous of him!

Genesis 37:10-11 NAS95 10 He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind

When Yeshua gained favor among the people, the rulers of Israel were jealous and plotted to kill Him.

John 11:47-48 NAS95 47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. 48 "If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

In spite of the jealousy and hatred directed against him, Joseph remained an obedient son. When Jacob's brothers were out with the flocks in Shechem, Israel asked Joseph to go check on his brothers and the flocks.

Genesis 37:13-14 NKJV 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." 14 Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

Joseph finally found his brothers in Dothan. When his brothers saw his approach, they saw only their hatred and their jealousy. They plotted to kill him. Perhaps they saw Joseph as a threat to the family unity. Perhaps they just hated the thought of Joseph ruling over them. Whatever their thoughts were, they took Joseph captive, stripped him of his coat of authority and threw him in an empty pit.

Genesis 37:23-24 NKJV 23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. 24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

The brothers ended up selling Joseph into slavery. To cover their crime, they took Joseph's coat, dipped it in goat's blood, and presented it to Jacob asking if he recognized it.

Genesis 37:31-33 NKJV 31 So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. 32 Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" 33 And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."

When God saw the shepherds of Israel tending the flock, He sent Yeshua to check on the welfare of the shepherds and the flock. When the shepherds of Israel, saw Yeshua, out of jealousy and hatred, they plotted to kill him.

Matthew 26:3-4 NKJV 3 Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him.

It seems like the Torah is telling us that Messiah will come from the line of Joseph. The similarities between their stories, including so many more details than what this teaching has covered, is the broadest and most complete prophecy of Yeshua's time on this earth. The Jewish sages recognized the messianic implication and called Messiah the son of Joseph.

After Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers, the Torah turns to the story of Judah. Let's look at the messianic implications as the line of Judah has its beginnings.

With the disgrace of Judah's older brothers Reuben, Simeon and Levi, Judah as the next son of Leah is the one in direct line to receive the inheritance of the firstborn. Instead of coming to him, Israel gave it to Joseph. This competition between Joseph and Judah continues in every interaction between the two brothers. It was

Judah's idea to sell Joseph into slavery instead of having him killed. It will be Judah who unknowingly confronts Joseph over the accusations of thievery against Benjamin.

The account of Judah begins with his separation from his brothers.

Genesis 38:1 MKJV 1 And it happened at that time Judah went down from his brothers and turned in to a certain Adullamite, named Hirah.

The Torah tells us that Judah went down from his brothers probably in response to the results of selling Joseph into slavery. Jacob's heartbreak over the supposed death of Joseph will haunt Judah. When Judah later pleads for the life of Benjamin, he cites the heartbreak of his father.

Genesis 44:33-34 MKJV 33 And now please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a slave to my lord. And let the boy go up with his brothers. 34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the boy is not with me lest perhaps I see the evil that will find my father?

The division between the brothers is such that Judah virtually leaves the family. He enters into a business arrangement with a merchant and marries his daughter Tamar. Judah's sons do not please God and judgment falls on them.

Genesis 38:6-7 MKJV 6 And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, whose name was Tamar. 7 And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD. And the LORD killed him.

Judah gave Tamar to his second son Onan to have sons for Er to carry on Er's name after his death, but Onan refused and God killed him too. This left Judah with only his youngest son. Fearful that God would kill him too, Judah refused to give him to Tamar to have sons for Er. It seems like God was determined that Judah's firstborn son would not continue his line.

In the culture of the day, Judah's actions shamed his daughter-in-law Tamar. She decided to take things into her own hands. She disguised herself as a temple prostitute and seduced Judah. Judah was not prepared to pay for the services of a prostitute so he was forced to leave a pledge of payment with Tamar.

Genesis 38:18 NKJV 18 Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.

In today's society these pledges would be equivalent to leaving his power of attorney, his personal identification and his major credit cards. In addition, each of these items holds a messianic significance. His signet is the seal used as a signature. All official correspondence would be sealed with the signet. God says that his kings bear his signet ring.

Haggai 2:23 NKJV 23 'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the LORD of hosts."

The cord is the distinctive cord woven through the hem of a garment identifying the wearer of the garment. The tzit-tzit that God commanded the children of Israel to wear contained a cord of blue. This cord of blue identified the Israelites as belonging to God.

Finally the staff is a symbol of authority. The twelve leaders of the tribes of Israel each had a staff bearing their names. When they questioned God about His choice of Aaron as the family of the priesthood, each leader was instructed to present his staff before God and God would indicate His choice of priesthood through the staffs.

When Tamar became pregnant, she presented Judah's pledge back to him using the same Hebrew words that Judah used when presenting Joseph's bloody coat to Jacob.

Genesis 38:25-26 NKJV 25 When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are -the signet and cord, and staff." 26 So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

Tamar bore Judah twin sons named Perez and Zerah. At their birth, it seemed like Zerah would be born first.

Genesis 38:28-30 NKJV 28 And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29 Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez. 30 Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

It is a physical impossibility for a child, once in the birth canal to retreat and have the other child be born first. But with God this is possible. The first born, Perez, broke out of the womb. He is the one who breaks out spoken of by Micah.

Micah 2:12-13 NKJV 12 "I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so many people. 13 The one who breaks open will come up before them; They will break out, Pass through the gate, And go out by it; Their king will pass before them, With the LORD at their head."

Tamar's second born son is named Zerah which means a rising of light! He is the one who comes as a shining light.

Isaiah 60:1-2 NKJV 1 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. 2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.

With the birth of Perez, the line of David begins. David's genealogy is given at the end of the book of Ruth and begins with the birth of Perez, the one who breaks out! Yeshua is our Breaker. He is the one who has broken out of the grave leading the way into His kingdom. He is Messiah ben David, the one who will reign victorious on His throne.

Both Joseph and Judah are now the firstborn sons of their respective mothers and both in line to receive the blessing and the promise. Of the ten spies Moses sent into look over the Promised Land, the two who gave the good report were Joshua of the tribe of Joseph's son Ephraim and Caleb from the tribe of Judah. In this instance they acted together to urge the children of Israel to receive the Land. There were the only two men from their generation to live to go into the Promised Land forty years later.

When King Solomon went after other gods forsaking the God of Israel in his later years, God tore the kingdom from his son Rehoboam giving ten of the tribes to Jereboam from the tribe of Ephraim. At that time, God gave Jereboam a promise similar to that of David.

1 Kings 11:37-38 NKJV 37 'So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. 38 'Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you.

The split between Joseph and Judah continues to this day. Yeshua came as Messiah ben Joseph and was rejected by His brothers just like Joseph. Before Yeshua's return as Messiah ben David, the staffs of Judah and Joseph will be reunited.

Ezekiel 37:19 NKJV 19 "say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.'"

Joseph and Judah each receive the blessing of the firstborn. Joseph, through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh receives a double portion in the Land. Judah receives the promise of kingship. Through each line comes the promise of Messiah—Messiah ben Joseph the suffering servant who dies for His people and Messiah ben David who is victorious over the grave and comes to reign over His people.

Study Questions:

1. What are some of the other ways in this Torah portion that Joseph's life is a shadow of Messiah, specifically the suffering Messiah?
2. Joseph's brothers sold him for 20 pieces of silver. Although our English translations insert the word shekel instead of pieces, the Jewish Chumash uses pieces or "silverlings," which, according the Chumash, is worth a total of 5 shekels. How does this compare to the ransom for the firstborn in Numbers 3:47 and what is its importance?
3. What are the parallels between Joseph and Judah in this Torah portion?
4. In the last Torah portion, we talked about hidden identities. How is this theme continued in this Torah portion? What is its significance?
5. Genesis 38:1 says that Judah descended or went down from his brothers. What is the symbolic meaning of going down? How does the account of Judah's life at this time reflect going down from his brothers?
6. What new insight did you gain from this teaching? How do you respond to this new insight? How will you realign your life based on this new understanding?

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ⁱ FFOZ Torah Club. Shadows of the Messiah. D. Thomas Lancaster. Vol 1, Page 223