

Redemption Comes to Israel

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

The scripture reading is Genesis 44:1-46:3

We have looked at Joseph as a shadow of the suffering and subsequent death of Yeshua in His role of Messiah ben Joseph, the Suffering Servant. Joseph, foreshadowing Yeshua's life, was hated by his brothers. Joseph's brothers plotted to kill him, but were satisfied with selling him into slavery, and deceiving Jacob into thinking Joseph was dead. Their selfish actions had unintended or perhaps ill-considered consequences. Jacob's mourning for Joseph was greater than they had considered, if they had even considered it at all. It had now been twenty-two years since they had sold Joseph into slavery, and Jacob still mourned his loss. However, Joseph's suffering had ended. As this Torah portion begins, Joseph had been ruling over Egypt for nine years. He was living a life of wealth and power. He no longer appears to be the suffering servant. Is his role of suffering servant complete or is there more to accomplish? We looked at the parallel paths of Judah and Joseph's life before, what can we learn as Judah and Joseph see each other for the first time in twenty-two years?

To set up the mysteries of Messiah in this Torah portion, we need to back up a bit and set the stage. During the nine years that Joseph had been ruler over Egypt, he had prepared carefully for the coming famine and then, over the last two years, provided grain for the people of Egypt.

Genesis 41:55 NKJV 55 So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do."

The famine extended to all the lands around Egypt driving the people from these nations to come to Egypt to buy grain.

When Joseph's brothers came to buy grain, Joseph immediately recognized his brothers and set up a test. Were they still the vindictive, hateful brothers who plotted to kill him or had they changed? Most important to Joseph, was how they treated his brother Benjamin. Were they as hateful to Benjamin as they were to him? Joseph devised a scheme to test his brothers. He would keep Simeon in prison until they brought Benjamin to Egypt so he could see Benjamin and observe how they treated him.

As this account of Joseph reaches a climax in this Torah portion, the events parallel events at the beginning of Joseph's story. When Jacob sent Joseph to his brothers back in the Promises Land, Joseph was greeted with being thrown into a pit that had no water. While Joseph suffered in the pit, his brothers sat down to a meal. In contrast, when Jacob sent his other sons to Egypt, and unknowingly to Joseph, they were greeted with hospitality and water to wash their feet and a meal was prepared for them. At this meal, the brothers gave Joseph presents instead of imprisonment.

Genesis 43:24-25 NKJV 24 So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. 25 Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

Joseph greeted his brothers with words reminiscent of his original mission to check on their welfare. He asks about not only their welfare but the welfare of their father.

Genesis 43:27 NKJV 27 Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"

This indicates that Joseph is still on his original mission. As a shadow of Messiah, we see that Messiah continues with his mission sent by His Father to see to the welfare of his brothers!

Joseph had them all sit down to a meal in order of their birth demonstrating that he knew them well.

Genesis 43:33-34 NKJV 33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. 34 Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Benjamin's serving was five times that given to the older brothers. There are levels of meaning as to why Joseph favored Benjamin above the other brothers. The most obvious is to see how the brothers look on Benjamin after Benjamin is given preferential treatment. This favoritism to Benjamin is meant to bring out any jealousies the brothers have when Benjamin is subsequently accused of theft. If they are jealous of Benjamin, they would more likely leave Benjamin to his fate.

A second level of meaning is found in the number five. Benjamin received five times the amount of food as his brothers. This is the amount that is to be given as restitution for a guilt offering. Joseph's brothers had stolen and sold Joseph into slavery, so they owed five times the value in restitution. The Torah explains this principle in the case of a stolen ox.

Exodus 22:1 NKJV 1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep.

Joseph may be subtly reminding his brothers of the redemption price they owe to Benjamin because of their sale of Joseph into slavery. We will see that Joseph eventually pays the redemption price even though it is his brothers who owe it. Joseph will pay Benjamin fifteen times the price Joseph's brothers received for selling him into slavery.

Genesis 45:22 NKJV 22 He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments.

After the banquet, the brothers are sent on their way but a silver cup belonging to Joseph is placed in Benjamin's sack.

Genesis 44:2 NKJV 2 "Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

Silver represents redemption. When God took the children of Israel as His own at Mt. Sinai, he had them numbered but only through the offering of a half-shekel of silver for each person. This offering is described as a ransom or atonement. Every man no matter how rich or poor paid the same redemption price.

Exodus 30:11-12 NKJV 11 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 12 "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them.

Both the silver cup and the three hundred pieces of silver emphasize the theme of redemption. Yeshua refers to a cup when James and John's mother wanted her sons to be at Yeshua's side. Yeshua asked them if they could drink from the same cup that He drank from.

Matthew 20:22-23 NKJV 22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." 23 So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

When Yeshua was in the garden of Gethsemane, He asked if there was any way that He did not have to drink of the cup that waited for Him at His crucifixion.

Luke 22:41-42 NKJV 41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

The cup of redemption cannot be stolen, given away, or used by any other than the Messiah.

The test of the stolen cup was laid out for Joseph's brothers. Benjamin was destined for slavery unless someone stepped up. When Joseph's silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack, the brothers tore their clothes in grief.

Genesis 44:13 NKJV 13 Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

Once again, this takes us back to the beginning of the story when Joseph's brothers tore Joseph's coat in order to cover up what they had done. Now they tear their own garments in response to what was done to Benjamin.

Our Torah portion opens as all of the brothers are brought before Joseph for judgment. Would they allow Benjamin to go into slavery or would they stand up for him? Judah, who had lost two sons of his own, could not let Jacob lose both Joseph and Benjamin. He approached Joseph to plea for Benjamin's freedom.

Genesis 44:18 NKJV 18 Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh.

Judah goes on to plea for Benjamin's freedom because of the harm his imprisonment would do to Jacob. Judah explains that He took responsibility for Benjamin's safety and could not return without him.

Genesis 44:32 NKJV 32 "For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.'

Once again, this contrasts with the beginning of this story when Judah takes the lead to sell Joseph into slavery. Now Judah takes the blame for Benjamin's predicament, takes the lead in pleading for Benjamin's safety and even offers to take his place in slavery.

Genesis 44:33-34 NKJV 33 "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34 "For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

With this act, Joseph and Judah come together both desiring the best outcome for Benjamin. Joseph desires to know that Benjamin has been well treated in his family and Judah desires to know that Benjamin will be returned to his father. Joseph as a shadow of Messiah ben Joseph becomes one with Judah as a shadow of Messiah ben David.

Seeing that Judah wanted only Benjamin's good, Joseph could not restrain himself any longer. He cleared the room of all the Egyptians so it was only himself and his brothers present when he gave way to his emotions.

Genesis 45:1-3 NKJV 1 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. 3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

In all of Joseph's trials, the Bible records Joseph weeping only when he first sees Benjamin and now when he reveals himself to his brothers. Yeshua also wept. He wept when his good friend Lazarus died and then, he wept over Jerusalem and the fact that His identity was hidden from His brothers.

Luke 19:41-42 NKJV 41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

When the eyes of the Jewish people are opened and Yeshua's identity is revealed, there will once again be weeping.

Zechariah 12:10 NKJV 10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Joseph's brothers were understandably confused and fearful. The Egyptian that held control over all of Egypt was actually the brother that they had sold into slavery. Had he brought them there to put them into slavery? Joseph discerned their thoughts and reassured them. He recognized God's hand on all that had led to him being sold into slavery and then raised to the right hand of Pharaoh.

Genesis 45:4-5 NKJV 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

Joseph's death to his family and new life in Egypt was necessary to preserve the lives of the Egyptians, the nations around Egypt, and Joseph's own family. Joseph's exile was necessary to set up the exile that God told Abraham would happen to his descendants. If Joseph had not been the one in control in Egypt when the famine hit, Jacob's family would have had to go to Pharaoh as supplicants and perhaps slaves. Instead, they enter as honored guests and receive the best grazing land in Egypt for their flocks and cattle.

The Chumash explains the connection between Joseph announcing himself to his brothers and God eventually revealing His plan to Israel.

"When Joseph said "I am Joseph," God's master plan became clear to the brothers. They had no more questions. Everything that had happened for the last twenty-two years fell into perspective. So, too,

will it be in the time to come when God will reveal Himself and announce, "I am HASHEM!" The veil will be lifted from our eyes and we will comprehend everything that transpired throughout history."ⁱ

Paul tells us that the spiritual blindness of Israel was necessary to bring salvation to the Gentiles. When that is accomplished, God will open the eyes of Israel to salvation.

Romans 11:25-27 NKJV 25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

After Joseph explained that the famine would continue for five more years, Joseph's brothers were finally able to speak.

Genesis 45:14-15 NKJV 14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

Joseph's brothers who were unable to speak peaceably to him at the beginning of this account of Joseph were now able to speak to him.

Joseph immediately sent his brothers to bring the word to his father that he was alive. When Jacob received word that Joseph was alive, he is at first referred to as Jacob, but when he receives the word and believes, he is referred to as Israel, the one who struggles and prevails.

Genesis 45:26-28 NKJV 26 And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28 Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

As Jacob made his journey from Hebron south towards Egypt, he came to Beer Sheva where he began to have second thoughts. When famine was in the land when he was a boy, his father Isaac remained in the land. Also, Jacob had already lived in exile from the Promised Land for twenty years. Should he once again leave the land or stay like Isaac did? Jacob sought the LORD by bringing offerings at Beer Sheva and God appeared to him in a vision.

Genesis 46:2-4 NKJV 2 Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." 3 So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. 4 "I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."

When Jacob and his family were facing starvation, suddenly salvation appeared in the form of carts and camels sent by Joseph ready to carry them into the safety of Egypt. So too, when the time of Yeshua's second coming approaches, God will send salvation.

Isaiah 11:11-13 NKJV 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah

From the four corners of the earth. 13 Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

The family of Jacob, separated for twenty-two years and marked by jealousy and envy were reunited in the fertile land of Goshen. Joseph and Judah made peace with each other. During the five remaining years of famine, Joseph made sure that all his family was fed. Notice that we end with the number five which we saw was the number of redemption or grace. Joseph's role of suffering servant is complete with the redemption he is able to offer to his brothers because of his own suffering. So, too, Yeshua is able to offer us redemption because He suffered for us.

Study Questions:

1. Joseph tested the hearts of his brothers by observing how they treated Benjamin. How does God test our hearts?
2. Compare Joseph's mission which began in Genesis 37 with the mission God sent Yeshua to accomplish. What did Yeshua say that his mission was?
3. God sent Joseph ahead into Egypt to "preserve a posterity for you in the Earth and to save your lives." (Genesis 45:7). The Hebrew word translated as "posterity" is "sheh-ay-reeth'," #7611 in Strong's Concordance meaning a remainder or residual portion. What does this mean to preserve a remainder or remnant?
4. What were the mysteries of Messiah that were revealed in this teaching and this Torah portion?
5. How does the interaction between Joseph and Judah demonstrate the dual roles of Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben David?
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 The Stone Edition Chumash. Artscroll Series. Rabbi Nosson Scherman/Rabbi Meir Zitz. Mesorah Publications, Ltd. ©2007. Page 253.