



Parasha Vayetze

November 13, 2021

Torah: Genesis 28:10-32:2

Haftarah: Hosea 12:12-14:10

Ketuvim Shlichim: John 1:43-51

Shabbat shalom mishapacha! Our *parasha* this week is *Vayetze* meaning “and he left.” Jacob left his home in *Beersheva* to travel to the home of his fathers’ family in Haran to find a wife. On his way he came to a “certain place” and slept there. He dreamed of a ladder connecting heaven and earth, with angels climbing up and down on it. Then the Hebrew says *vehinneh*, “And behold:” ADONAI appeared to Jacob and promised him that the land on which he was lying would be given to his descendants. Jacob was afraid and said that this place was *Beit El*, the House of G-d. In the morning, he took the stone by his head and set it up as a monument, promising that ADONAI would be his G-d, that this place would become the House of G-d and that he would give a tenth of everything to Him.

When Jacob got to Haran, he met his mother’s niece Rachel, his first cousin, and watered her sheep. Meeting his uncle Laban and family, Jacob stayed and worked for him, tending his sheep. Laban agreed to give him his younger daughter, Rachel whom Jacob loved, in marriage in return for seven years’ labor. But on the wedding night, Laban gave him his elder daughter, Leah, instead. In the morning, Jacob discovered the deception. A week later, he married Rachel in return for another seven years work for Laban.

Leah gave birth to six sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun—and a daughter, Dinah, but Rachel was barren. Rachel gave Jacob her handmaid, Bilhah, as a wife to bear children for her and two more sons, Dan and Naphtali, were born. Leah did the same with her handmaid, Zilpah, who gave birth to Gad and Asher. Finally, Rachel’s prayers were answered and she gave birth to Joseph.

Jacob had been in Haran for fourteen years and wished to return home, but Laban persuaded him to stay, offering him sheep in return for his labor. Jacob prospered in spite of Laban’s repeated attempts to cheat him. After six more years, Jacob left Haran covertly, fearing that Laban would prevent him from leaving with his family and property. Laban pursued Jacob, but was warned by G-d in a dream not to harm him. Laban and Jacob made a covenant and Jacob named the place *Gal-Ed*, meaning mound of stones, saying, may this be a *mizpah*, a watchtower, between you and me. Jacob left that place and on his way was met by ADONAI’s angels.

Jacob was the favored son, not initially by Isaac, his father, but favored by his mother Rebekah and most importantly, by ADONAI. His father did come to understand that Jacob was chosen by G-d and then whole-heartedly accepted it. He realized that the blessing which he had given Jacob, even received in deceit, could not be taken back. And, that was ADONAI’s plan, that the elder brother should serve the younger. (Genesis 25:23).

Jacob received both the birthright and also his father’s blessing. Each had a special meaning. The birthright, usually intended for the firstborn, meant that he would become

the head of the family including control of the family property. According to Deuteronomy 21, the first-born son also was allotted a double portion of the inheritance. (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). He would have considerable authority over the other members of the family and he also became the priest of the family, their representative before ADONAI. In the next generation, Reuben was Jacob's first born and should have received the priesthood of the family, but his sin of sleeping with his father's concubine Bilhah disqualified him. His should have been the priestly family, but ADONAI transferred it to Levi. (Numbers 3:12-13, 8:18). Esau as Isaac's firstborn should have been the priest of the family, but because he despised his birthright (Genesis 25:34), ADONAI gave it to Jacob who cherished it. Jacob remained the priest of the family until his death.

The blessing was an additional show of favor in addition to the birthright. Isaac blessed Jacob saying: 28 *"May God give you—from the dew of the sky and from the fatness of the land—an abundance of grain and new wine. 29 May peoples serve you and may nations bow down to you. Be master over your brothers. May your mother's sons bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and may those who bless you be blessed."* (Genesis 27:28-29). This was the blessing which Esau cried for even though he despised his birthright. But, Isaac could not give it to him because he had already declared Jacob's dominance over him.

When Jacob was about to leave for Haran, Isaac blessed him again: 3 *"Now may El Shaddai bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you so that you will become an assembly of peoples. 4 And may he give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you that you may take possession of the land of your sojourn, which God gave to Abraham."* (Genesis 28:3-4 TLV). The covenant ADONAI made with Abraham, the promise of the land as the homeland of his descendants, was a great blessing, but what is described as the blessing of Abraham is something more. While Abraham was still in Haran, ADONAI said to him: 2 *"My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing. 3 My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."* (Genesis 12:2-3 TLV). Isaac prayed that ADONAI would give Jacob the blessing of Abraham and he and his descendants have received it. They have become a great nation, a people who have been a blessing to the world. But, even though ADONAI curses those who curse Israel, G-dless people continue to curse her.

In our *parasha* next week, Jacob will be personally blessed by G-d, a blessing which further expands the blessing of Abraham. In his coming encounter with G-d, Jacob will be renamed *Yisra'el*, יִשְׂרָאֵל, meaning "struggled with G-d." Israel, through his twelve sons will become the nation of Israel. ADONAI had said to Abraham: 2 *"My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing."* (Genesis 12:2a TLV). The changing of Jacob's name was the first step in making him into a great nation. Through the eleven sons who were born during this *parasha* plus Benjamin, the twelfth one who is to be born soon, the people of Israel rapidly multiply into a nation. Almost four hundred years later when Moses confronted Pharaoh, this is what ADONAI had him say: 22: *"Israel is My son, My firstborn."* (Exodus 4:22b TLV). Jacob, who stole Esau's, his brother's birthright, and ADONAI renamed Israel was the one whom ADONAI chose.

The firstborn has always been important to ADONAI, even the ordinary firstborn of the people. Just prior to leaving Egypt, ADONAI said to Moses: 2 *"Consecrate to Me all the*

firstborn, from every womb of Bnei-Yisrael, both men and animals—this is Mine.” (Exodus 13:2 TLV). The firstborn of all Israel, including animals, were called into ADONAI’s priestly service. But, because the Tribe of Levi had replaced the Tribe of Reuben as priests, they were the ones who served Him as firstborn. But, that didn't take away the responsibility of the firstborn of all the other tribes. They had to be redeemed by the payment of five shekels into the treasury of ADONAI. And, the blood of the firstborn of clean animals had to be splashed on the altar as peace offerings.

So, we see that the position of firstborn was of sacred importance, not only to men, but most importantly to ADONAI who established the order. The blessing of Abraham which Jacob also received included these words: 3 *“and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”* (Genesis 12:3b TLV). This blessing includes many ways that Israel has blessed the people of the earth, but most importantly, it is through the blessing of Messiah, who Himself was in Abraham’s, Isaac’s and Jacob’s loins when this blessing was given to each of them. This particular blessing was given to our forefathers so that their descendant Yeshua, the firstborn of creation, might also become the Savior of the world.

ADONAI made a covenant with David, the second king of Israel, saying: 16 *“So your house and your kingship will be secure forever before you; your throne will be established forever.”* (2Samuel 7:16 TLV). Ethan the Ezrahite said this regarding David’s seed, his descendants: 28 *“I also will set him as firstborn— the highest of the kings of earth.”* (Psalm 89:28 TLV). The Messiah who was in our forefather’s loins was the firstborn and the greatest king the earth has ever known. 5 *For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are My Son. Today I have become Your Father”?* And again, *“I will be to Him a Father, and He will be to Me a Son”?* 6 *And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.”* (Hebrews 1:4-6 T LV). Yeshua is not only the Father’s firstborn, but also the firstborn of the virgin *Miryam* and the angels came and worshipped Him at His birth. (Luke 2:13-14). *Sha’ul* also spoke about the Father’s Son, saying this: 15 *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”* (Colossians 1:15 TLV).

The position of firstborn is a significant component of ADONAI’s spiritual and physical plans. He established it as a pattern which He wished to be followed. He established the pattern of the firstborn son in His chosen family Israel as a foreshadowing of His own firstborn Son, Yeshua. Nothing was an accident. Isaac and Jacob were both types of Messiah. Even though neither was born first, each was ADONAI’s choice to be firstborn. Everything had to happen in His order.

The Covenant given at Sinai was by ADONAI’s design and provided both physical and spiritual comfort throughout its period of effectiveness. But, its time ended when ADONAI’s firstborn Son, Yeshua, died on the stake as the eternal sacrifice for our sins. Forty years later when the Temple was destroyed and the priestly Tribe, Levi, could no longer perform their duties, some 450 or more *mitzvot*, *Torah* commands, became inactive. It was because they could not be performed without a Temple and a priesthood. The family priesthood of Levi ended. But, ADONAI had a replacement. He had a replacement planned even before the founding of the universe. His own firstborn Son replaced Aaron’s sons from the Tribe of Levi and became the priest of the family Israel, a family which now includes those from the nations who have trusted in Israel’s High Priest. Now, our priesthood is a more excellent priesthood, the priesthood of the firstborn son, an eternal priesthood after the order of *Malkitzedek*. Yeshua’s priesthood was instituted when the

New Covenant was cut by the shedding of His blood in about the year 30 CE. He took Aaron's place as the Mediator between G-d and men and became the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest of Israel forever. He is now ministering on our behalf at the right hand of His Father in heaven, a High Priest without fault.

Sha'ul taught us about life in the Spirit; about how we who have truly trusted in Yeshua obtained redemption. He said: 29 *"For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."* (Romans 8:29 TLV). This is not about some people being predestined and some not being predestined. *Shimon Kefa* told us that is not true: 9 *"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you—not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance."* (2Peter 3:9 TLV). Those predestined, those whom He foreknew, means that ADONAI knew in advance who would receive Yeshua and who would reject Him. Our predestination, ADONAI's foreknowledge of our acceptance of Yeshua as Messiah, is not only about being a part of ADONAI's family, but most importantly, to be conformed to the image of Yeshua Himself. We are the brothers and sisters of our firstborn Brother Yeshua and we are commanded to be like Him. When He spoke to His disciples on the mountain, Yeshua said: 46 *"Why do you call Me 'Master, Master' and do not do what I say?"* (Luke 6:46 TLV).

He is both our Master and our Brother and as Master we must obey Him. As Brother, we, His brothers and sisters, must develop a relationship, the intimacy of family with Him. Intimacy with Yeshua is really knowing Him and being known by Him. Our intimate friends are someone we feel very *close* to and they know us at a deep level. That is the type of intimacy we must have with Yeshua. He knows us intimately, but we do not necessarily know Him intimately. If we only know Him at a superficial level, it's very difficult to follow Him as Master. To really know Him as Master, we must also know Him as our Brother. It is up to us. We can have the assurance that we will be with Him in eternity, but yet not have intimacy with Him today. May we understand the importance of our relationship with Yeshua and not take it for granted.

There are also many blessings from ADONAI for us, Yeshua's brothers and sisters. Here is a spoken blessing. As a part of the family of Israel, we receive the blessing given by ADONAI's through Moses: <15> 24 *"Adonai bless you and keep you! 25 Adonai make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you! 26 Adonai turn His face toward you and grant you shalom!"* (Numbers 6:24-26 TLV). Speaking of the *kohanim*, ADONAI said: 27 *In this way they are to place My Name over Bnei-Yisrael, and so I will bless them."* (Numbers 6:27 TLV). But, we are not just blessed by Him at the time that we hear these words pronounced. Once pronounced over us, it is our blessing to walk in continuously. It is our personal blessing delivered to us by the G-d of Israel.

Although Thomas walked with Yeshua for three and a half years, his faith was weak. He had to see Yeshua's resurrection body and put his hand in the wound in His side in order to believe that He had really risen from the dead. 29 *Yeshua said to Him, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed? Blessed are the ones who have not seen and yet have believed!"* (John 20:29 TLV). We have not seen Yeshua physically, but we have seen Him spiritually. We have believed His Word and felt the witness of His Holy Spirit in our hearts. We also know Him as the ladder, the stairway, seen in our *parasha* today, which gives us access to heaven. (John 1:51). ADONAI has blessed us for believing. But, just belief is not enough. *Ya'acov* said: 19 *"You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also*

believe—and shudder!” (James 2:19 TLV). Belief is not enough. We must also have intimacy.

How can we have intimacy with Yeshua? It begins by knowing who Yeshua really is. *Sha’ul* said: 3 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Messiah.”* (Ephesians 1:3 TLV). We who are in Messiah, have been blessed with every spiritual blessing from above. We already have them, but it is up to us to take hold of them and use them. *Sha’ul* continued: 4 *“He chose us in the Messiah before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love.”* (Ephesians 1:4 TLV). Our being chosen is our predestination. ADONAI saw us through time as we placed our trust in Yeshua. But, He saw us not only trusting in Him, but also being holy and blameless before Him in love. Submitting to Him in love, obeying Him, leads us into intimacy. Yeshua said: 21 *“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him.”* (John 14:21 TLV). Are we being truthful saying we love Him if we are not obeying Him? Blameless before Yeshua in love means that we are doing what He has told us to do and He will reveal Himself to us.

Everything which we do in this life has a bearing on what happens in the life to come. There is a physical Mount Zion in Israel today, but our eyes are on the heavenly Mount Zion: 22 *“But you have come to Mount Zion—to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, a joyous gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are written in a scroll in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous ones made perfect, 24 and to Yeshua, the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks of something better than the blood of Abel.”* (Hebrews 12:22-24 TLV). We are a part of Yeshua’s body, the ecclesia, the assembly, of Yeshua, the firstborn from the dead. (Colossians 1:18). The grave couldn’t hold Him and His resurrection is evidence that His sacrificial death, the sprinkled blood, was the perfect means of redemption for the sins of all men. By being faithful to Him on this side of the veil, while we are alive, our expectation is that we will be in the Heavenly Jerusalem when we have departed this life or when Yeshua comes in the clouds for us, whichever comes first.

Jacob, as a type of firstborn foreshadowed the perfect firstborn, Yeshua. Determined before the foundation of the earth, ADONAI’s firstborn Son, Yeshua, became our spiritual leader, the High Priest of our family Israel. He is also the firstborn from the dead, his death the full payment for our sins. Just as Jacob also received a blessing from His father Isaac, so too, Yeshua was blessed by His Father regarding what He did: 16 *After being immersed, Yeshua rose up out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Ruach Elohim descending like a dove and coming upon Him. 17 And behold, a voice from the heavens said, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased!”* (Matthew 3:16-17 TLV).

We also receive a blessing from our heavenly Father. Yeshua is the blessing. Our blessing is not happiness, success or anything else. Yeshua is the blessing bestowed upon us by our Father. There could not be a greater blessing. We have a choice. We can choose every part of His blessing or just some of it. 4 *“He chose us in the Messiah before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love.”* (Ephesians 1:4 TLV).

May we choose to receive and pursue the full and complete blessing so that we might be holy and blameless before Yeshua! *Shabbat shalom!*