



Parasha *Vayeshev*

November 27, 2021

*Parasha*: Genesis 37:1-41:23

*Haftarah*: Amos 2:6-3:8

*Ketwim Shlichim*: Acts 7:9-16

*Shabbat shalom mishpocha!* Our *Parasha* today is *Vayeshev*. It begins: *1 Now Jacob dwelled in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan* (Genesis 37:1 TLV). *Vayeshev* means “and he dwelled.” It’s easier for us English speakers to read “Now Jacob dwelled in the land” rather than “And dwelled Jacob in the land.” But, Hebrew is different and usually the subject of a sentence comes after the verb.

Here is the story in *Vayeshev*. Jacob settled and was living peacefully in the land of Canaan. Sometime later, his son Joseph brought him a bad report about some of his brothers, the sons of his father’s two concubines. That was the beginning of trouble for Joseph. Then, Jacob, who loved Joseph, the son of his old age, more than the others, made him a *ketonet passim*, מִיֶּזֶר נִתְּנָה, a multi-colored tunic. *Torah* says: *4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak to him in shalom* (Genesis 37:4 TLV). And then Joseph increased his brother’s hatred for him by telling them about the dreams which he had. *5 Then Joseph dreamed a dream and told his brothers—and they hated him even more* (Genesis 27:5 TLV). The first dream was that he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field and his sheaf stood up and the brothers sheaves all bowed down before him. *8 “Will you truly be a king over us?” his brothers said to him. “Will you really rule over us?” So they hated him even more because of his dreams and because of his words* (Genesis 27:8 TLV). To make matters worse, Joseph told them of a second dream in which the sun, moon and eleven stars were bowing down to him, a dream which they understood as the whole family bowing before Joseph. The brother’s reaction to Jacob’s love for Joseph and Joseph’s seeming sense of superiority led them to jealousy and contempt and caused them to hate Joseph.

Hate is a very powerful emotion. Hatred is described as: a deep and extreme, emotional dislike. It can be directed against individuals, groups, objects, behaviors, or ideas. Hatred is frequently associated with feelings of anger, disgust and a tendency toward hostility. If hate is not dealt with, sometimes it ends in violence. In the case of Joseph’s brothers, it was a desire to kill him. They threw him in a pit planning to kill him, but when another opportunity arose, they sold him to a group of Ishmaelites. Their hatred resulted in Joseph being sold into slavery. One of the brothers, Reuben, later had a change of heart and wanted to save Joseph. He was very distressed when he went back to the pit and found him gone. The other brothers put goat’s blood on Joseph’s tunic which they had torn and took it to their father. The thought of his son that he loved so much being torn apart by animals sent Jacob into continuing grief.

Joseph was bought from the Ishmaelites by Potifar, one of Pharaoh’s officials. While serving in his house, Joseph was falsely accused by Potifar’s wife of trying to rape her and he was put in prison. In prison, he was put in charge of the prisoners by the jailer and there

he met Pharaoh's cupbearer and his baker. Joseph interpreted a dream for each of them. His interpretation was that the cupbearer would be released and the baker would be hanged and it eventually happened that way. But after his release from prison, the cupbearer forgot about Joseph. And, that ends *Parasha Vayashev*. It was ADONAI's will for all these things to happen so that in the end, Joseph could save his whole family from famine and that they could grow into a nation of people in Egypt. His dreams would come true. They would bow before him, the second most powerful person in Egypt. But, even though it was ADONAI's plan, it does not excuse hate and murder in the heart. The brothers were still guilty and had to face and admit their guilt when they faced their brother in Egypt.

Hate is a major sin. John said this about hate: *15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer—and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him* (1John 3:15 TLV). Without forgiveness, a hater has no eternal life. I wonder if hate trumps salvation? That's an interesting question: will someone who has professed Yeshua who hates someone have eternal life when they die? John also says this: *20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen* (1John 4:20 TLV). Within the body of Messiah today, there appear to be many liars.

There is a tremendous amount of hate in our nation, extreme hatred between certain groups. Some of them probably call themselves followers of Yeshua. Hatred that is not dealt with can and will lead to violent action. It has in our nation in just the last few years and is ongoing. In our corporate prayers, we have prayed for ADONAI to touch those who are spreading hate and violence in the United States. Our present culture has created an opportunity for all kinds of hate. Racial hate and anti-Semitism are two of the major sources of hate today. *Sha'ul* tells us that this hatred is originating from a supernatural source. *12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 6:12 TLV). *HaSatan* is the leader of those demonic rulers, powers, worldly forces of darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness. The hatred and violence in the world is much more today than I have ever seen in my lifetime. It's everywhere. No nation is without it.

Today, I am more convinced than ever that *HaSatan* has been released from his imprisonment by Yeshua. On the Island of Patmos, John saw what had happened some 70 years earlier in the year 30 CE: *1 "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the abyss and a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon—the ancient serpent, who is the devil and satan—and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He also threw him into the abyss and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed. After these things, he must be released for a short while.* (Revelation 20:1-3 TLV). When Yeshua died on the stake, *HaSatan* was imprisoned. Referring to His approaching death on the stake, Yeshua said: *31 "Now is the judgment of this world! Now the prince of this world will be driven out!* (John 12:31 TLV). When Yeshua died, the angel chained and locked up *HaSatan* for a symbolic period of a thousand years. The Greek word translated "thousand" in Revelation 20 and elsewhere in that chapter is *chilia* (khil-ee-a) from *chilioi* (khil'-ee-oy). According to Reverend Ellis Skolfield, *chilioi* is an indefinite Greek plural, and may not mean just one thousand. It could mean one thousand, but it could also mean many thousands. John continued: *7 "When the thousand years has ended, satan shall be released from his prison, 8 and he shall come out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for the battle. Their number is*

*like the sand of the sea.*” (Revelation 20:7-8 TLV). *HaSatan* has been released from his *chilioi* captivity of about two thousand years and is now very actively working his hate against Israel in the nations. That’s what it’s all about, *HaSatan*’s maniac desire to defeat ADONAI’s Son Yeshua and he has focused his wrath on ADONAI’s chosen people and nation and those who serve Yeshua. Believers are being mercilessly attacked all over the earth. Gog and Magog will eventually attack Israel, but will be defeated by Yeshua and His forces. That battle is one and the same as Armageddon.

That *HaSatan* will be defeated is the good news and we are awaiting our Messiah’s return for that to happen. As we wait, we are commanded to be faithful, faithful to ADONAI’s truth. *Sha’ul* said to Timothy: 15 *“Make every effort to present yourself before God as tried and true, as an unashamed worker cutting a straight path with the word of truth.”* (2Timothy 2:15 TLV). Other versions say: “study to show yourself approved.” As followers of Yeshua, we are expected to know ADONAI’s Word. The “word of truth” can only have one meaning. It can’t be divided with different truths in different groups. We cannot be passive followers of Yeshua. Our action must begin with knowing and understanding His Word so that we can accurately share it with others. In order to do this, we must study the written Word. Unfortunately, most Bible versions have a significant amount of distortion within them. Many of the modern versions significantly distort the original Hebraic meaning of Scripture. Genesis through Revelation was written by Jews and contains much Hebraic thought. You can’t take an English translation of Hebrew and Greek and then interpret what that should mean in English according to your understanding. It must be translated faithfully to try and preserve the original meaning. I recommend that you read from a Hebrew roots Bible such as the Tree of Life Version and the Complete Jewish Bible. Even then, it’s still not easy to understand everything, but we get much more of the original Hebraic intent of the authors.

*Sha’ul*, confirming the worth of being Jewish, said: 1 *“Then what is the advantage of being Jewish? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way. First of all, they were entrusted with the sayings of God.”* (Romans 3:1-2 TLV). The Greek word which the TLV translates “sayings” is *logia* (log-ee-a). It comes from *logion* (log'-ee-on) meaning sayings or oracles. I believe that *Sha’ul*’s purpose in this verse was to show that ADONAI had entrusted the Jews with the *Tanakh*, His written word. Written by Jews, it must be understood with all of its Hebraic nuances. When *Sha’ul* wrote this letter to the Roman congregation, there was no *Ketuvim Shlichim*, no accepted writings of Yeshua’s followers. Now that these writings are a part of our Bible, his words continue to apply. These additional writings, the *Ketuvim Shlichim*, have also been entrusted to the Jews. They wrote them!

Jews were the authors under the inspiration of ADONAI, but most early translations of the Bible from the Hebrew and the Greek contain a certain amount of antinomian and anti-Semitic content. The English versions, especially, have led millions of well-intended followers of Yeshua to have an overall view of Scripture in opposition to what its writers and ADONAI originally intended. It’s important that we know this if our objective is truth; and it is. My teaching on the subject has been that we follow the written Scriptures alone and reject *Talmud* and any other oral tradition which suggests that we are obligated to do other things which are not in written Scripture. In Messianic Judaism, as a part of our heritage, we do observe certain Jewish practices as beautiful traditions, but with no obligation to follow them as law.

There is one Bible version which seems to have had the most influence on English speaking followers of Yeshua. The one which has had the most influence over the last four

hundred years is the King James Bible. Published in 1611, it is the Bible which many modern followers love. But, it also leads them astray in many ways. My fervent prayer is that all Yeshua's followers would learn about the Hebraic versions and seek to understand by studying from a Hebrew roots Bible.

One of the changes found in the King James Version is the changing of the name Jacob in the writings of Yeshua's disciples. The Hebrew is *Ya'acov*, a name which we find in this *parasha*. It should have been transliterated from the Greek to Jacob, but is presented as James. To be truthful, the King James translator's were not the first to do this. Apparently a large percentage of the *Ketuvim Shlichim* Scriptures, the writings of Yeshua's emissaries in the King James Version, were taken from William Tyndale's Bible. Tyndale's 1526 Bible used the English James instead of Jacob and the King James translators continued it. But, Tyndale wasn't the original culprit. It was John Wycliffe, who completed the first Bible translation into English around 1395. He translated the Greek *Iakóbos* (ee-ak'-o-bos) as James with some help from the Latin Vulgate. *Iakóbos* is Greek for *Ya'acov*, which is transliterated into English as Jacob. Whether this was intentional or just the influence of changing between several different languages is unknown. But, whether intentional or not, *Ya'akov's* ancestry is lost. Changing his name takes away a part of the understanding that the Jews were "*entrusted with the sayings of God.*" The Complete Jewish Bible describes *Ya'akov* as "the chief rabbi of the early Messianic Jewish community centered in *Yerushalayim*. He was a *Torah* teacher par excellence, spokesman for the entire community and the chief *halakhic* judge and authority of community practices. He was respected in the non-Messianic Jewish world, where he was referred to as a *tzaddik*, a wise man." This is so much different than how so many people see him. *Ya'akov* described himself as: 1 "*Jacob, a slave of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah,*"... (Jacob 1:1a TLV). Unfortunately, today the majority of Yeshua's body of believers do not recognize him in that role.

Another change made earlier and continued in the King James Version is the word "testament." Knowing that these changes have been made is important for a seeker of truth and also to understand that changes directly influence a more correct understanding of the Bible. It is a spiritual thing. What did ADONAI intend for us to know? If we don't understand His original intention through His authors, we miss much of His spiritual truth. More than thirty years ago, I heard a sermon based on Hebrews 8:7-9. The preacher quoted this verse: 8 "*For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.*" (Hebrews 8:8 KJV). There is nothing wrong with this verse. It essentially says what its author intended. But, what the preacher did with it completely changed its meaning. Covenant is translated from the Greek *diathéké* (dee-ath-ay'-kay) which according to Strong's Concordance, means "a covenant between two parties, a will, testament." The first definition is correct, but the other two are not and he chose to use them. He presented the New Covenant as a will, the last will and testament of Jesus Christ. He presented Jesus's death as the event which placed into effect His last will and testament and offered Hebrews 9:16 as proof: 9 "*For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*" (Hebrews 9:16 KJV). This is the same Greek word, *diathéké* (dee-ath-ay'-kay), previously translated as covenant, but the KJV has translated it from the Latin, *testamentum*, testament in English. I can't fault the preacher. He was a very good preacher, but was led into falsehood by the King James Version. As we know, a covenant is an agreement between two parties, in the case of the New Covenant, it's between ADONAI and Israel. The TLV translates this verse as: 16 "*For where there is a covenant, the death of the one who made it must be established.*" (Hebrews 9:16 TLV). The death spoken of is the sacrifices presented as a part of the Covenant at Sinai

and also Yeshua's sacrificial death on the stake for the New Covenant. But this does not make a covenant a will. Presenting it as a last will and testament, a document describing that which is bequeathed to the heirs when a person dies, completely changes ADONAI's meaning. Whether the original translators did this intentionally or not, it still takes the meaning away from the truth that ADONAI made His New Covenant with the Jews. Have you ever asked a person this question: With whom did G-d make the New Covenant? I have, a number of times, and I usually get a blank look, and sometimes, the answer, "with everyone." That the New Covenant was made with Israel, the Jews, hasn't been taught to Yeshua's followers and it makes a big difference in their overall theology. More confusion is added when parts of the Bible are referred to as "the Old Testament" and "New Testament" or "the Old Covenant" and "New Covenant." Please don't do it! A covenant is a covenant, an agreement between two parties and there is no testament anywhere in the Scriptures. And, there is no divider in either the TLV or CJB between 2Chronicles and Matthew. It goes smoothly from one book to the next. The order of books is different. In most Christian Bibles, Matthew follows Malachi, but in Jewish Bibles, the *Tanakh*, Second Chronicles is the last book.

Our purpose is to seek ADONAI's truth. Over the centuries it has been distorted and changed in many different versions of the Bible and requires extra effort on our part to find it. As *talmidim*, disciples of Yeshua, we should all be seeking to understand it for ourselves and not just believe what we've been told. Yeshua said: 40 "*A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.*" (Luke 6:40 TLV). That is our Yeshua's goal for us, to become like Him. And, we are held accountable for what we believe and teach. Most people are not teachers, but they do share what they believe with others. We will be judged with regard to what we have taught and professed by Yeshua when He returns. *Sha'ul* said: 10 "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may receive what is due for the things he did while in the body—whether good or bad.*" (2Corinthians 5:10 TLV). He was speaking of believers, people who received salvation through trusting in Yeshua. We will spend eternity with Yeshua but first must face what we did or did not do as His followers. What we believe is of vital importance. If you are not in the habit of studying the Bible when you read it, start now!

Believing differently does not give us the right to be judgmental toward others. We must love our brothers and sisters who teach and believe differently than we do. Yeshua said: 34 "*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" (John 13:34-35 TLV). We are not commanded to love them if we agree with them. We must love them if they disagree with us and even if they hate us. Joseph's brothers hated their own flesh and blood so much that they wanted to kill him. This has also happened throughout Christian history. Wars have been fought and people executed for their beliefs which were different from the mainstream. Our beliefs are much different from mainstream Christianity, but I hope that other believers do not hate us. The truth is that they don't understand us. *Sha'ul* has told us how we are to act: 12 "*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves in tender compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience— 13 bearing with one another and forgiving each other, if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord pardoned you, so also you must pardon others. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfect harmony.*" (Colossians 3:12-14 TLV).

Our *haftarah* reading today included this: 1 *“Hear this word that Adonai has spoken against you, Bnei Yisrael, against the whole family that I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying: 2 ‘Only you have I known from among all the families of the earth. Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.’”* (Amos 3:1-2 TLV). The prophet was saying that Israel were the only ones with which ADONAI had shared His will, His instructions for living. Because they were taught how to live under Him, but violated His trust, they would be punished. Also a part of our *haftarah*, verse 7 says: 7 *“For the Lord Adonai, will do nothing, unless He has revealed His counsel to His servants the prophets.”* (Amos 3:7 TLV). That is the bottom line. While there are modern prophets, the Prophet Amos was primarily speaking about the prophets of Israel. ADONAI’s counsel has been revealed through Isaiah, Jeremiah and all the others. And, that is why it is so important that we understand them properly. These prophetic verses also speak directly to us. We, Jew and Gentile, are a part of the Commonwealth of Israel, ADONAI’s covenant body, and we have also been given the keeping of the “oracles of G-d.” Even though we did not write them, in a sense we have been given responsibility to understand the oracles, the sayings of ADONAI, and to protect them from misinterpretation. As *Sha’ul* exhorted Timothy, he also exhorts us to *“cut a straight path with the word of truth.”* (2Timothy 2:15). *Shabbat shalom!*