

מִקֵּץ

MIKETZ/AT THE END Bereshith/Genesis 41:1-44:17

The story of Yosef's life jumps from one event to another, and because it is **filled** with so much **Messianic significance**, it is fun to look for the **parallelisms**. One can only imagine that Yeshua spent some time **talking about Yosef** while walking with **friends** on the **road to Emmaus**:

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moshe and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

The **details** of the account leave us with many **questions**, and I must admit, the more I study the more questions I have. I have come to the conclusion that as time goes on, **current events** will begin to **line up** with the **events in Yosef's life** and one by one my **questions** will be **answered**. From the very **beginning**, the **Almighty** has been **progressively revealing His plan** to mankind. We know that **His plan** "at the end" (*miketz* - מִקֵּץ) can best be **discerned** by **studying the "beginning"**:

Isaiah 46:9 Remember the former things of old, For I am Elohim, and there is no other; I am Elohim, and there is none like Me,¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning. And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.'

Ecclesiastes 3:15 That which is has already been, And what is to be has already been; And Elohim requires an account of what is past.

As we stand back and take an **overall look** at **Yosef's story**, we notice that **Ya'acov (the father)** plays an **indispensable role**. It is precisely because of **his initial favoritism** that **Yosef** was so **despised** in **his brothers' sight**. It was **Ya'acov** that **sent Yosef to check on his brothers** near Shechem, **precipitating the episode of Yosef's sale** and his **descent into Egyptian exile**. Now in this week's parasha, it is again **Ya'acov** who **sends ten of his children down to Egypt** to secure grain. This decision inadvertently **begins the long process of reconciliation between the brothers**. Thus it can be seen that it was **Ya'acov (the Father)** who was **directly responsible** for the **most painful episode of losing His son**; and it is also **Ya'acov**, without realizing it, who **triggers the events** which **reunite the family**. I would venture to say that this is a picture of the **Father always being in control of events**, while sometimes making **painful concessions** to **bring about the ultimate plan of reconciliation**. **Yosef, the son**, seems to be **acting in sync** with the **Father's plan**. And the **brothers gradually and painfully come to learn** that they are **not in control** of their **own personal stories**. In the **end** they come to **plead the Father's case** and in so doing are **unveiled to the beloved Son**.

If the **Father** is **responsible** for starting the **gears in motion**, the **beloved Son** (sometimes **Yosef**, sometimes **Benyamin**) seems to have **one central role** in the story...that of **ensuring "life" to the family**. Even **before Yosef's revelation** to his brothers, this fact does **not go unnoticed** by **Yehuda** as he **begs his father to send Benyamin** with them **to Egypt**:

Bereshith 43:8 Then Yehuda said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones.

What is the point of **Yosef's lengthy story**? I believe it can be expressed by **three concepts** – **repentance, reconciliation, and family unity**.

What did the brothers need to repent of? The sin of “selling” a “brother” is one of the **more serious sins** and **according to the Torah, worthy of death**:

*Devarim 24:7 " If a man is found kidnapping a soul of his **brother** of the **children of Israel**, and mistreats him or **sells** him, then that kidnapper shall die; and you shall put away the evil from among you.*

“Selling” Yosef is connected with the 1st sin listed as a cause for the wrath of יהוה upon Israel:

*Amos 2:6 Thus says יהוה: "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because **they sell the righteous for silver**...*

Yeshua also was sold by His brethren for “silver”, resulting in “bloodguilt” which eventually יהוה promises will be “pardoned”:

*Joel 3:21 "Their **bloodguilt**, which I have not pardoned, I will **pardon**....*

Thus Yosef understands the need to send his brothers on a journey of repentance. Their awful act – the sale of a brother – was a sin that had the potential to haunt the family for generations. Yosef desired to bring repentance and unity to the family; and although he was not spoken to directly by the Father, through his dreams he understood the authority he was given. A wise Yosef knew that one shows full repentance by facing the same situation in which one sinned initially and this time, showing restraint. So Yosef places his brothers in situations whereby they must choose between themselves and their younger brother, now known as their father’s favorite.

Yosef’s objective then, is to lure his brother Benjamin to Egypt and thereby expose the hearts of his brothers. Let’s take a look at Benjamin for there is more to the story than the desire for Yosef to reunite with his younger brother.

This is what we know about Benjamin:

- Beloved by the father and full brother to Yosef (*Bereshith 44:20*)
- Born near Bethlehem
- Rachel named him Benoni (Son of Sorrows)
- Father named him Benjamin (Son of my right hand)
- Was not involved in the conspiracy to sell Yosef

Obviously, Benjamin can also be seen as a Messianic shadow. Let’s look at some other ways that the Torah emphasizes the “brotherly” connections:

*Bereshith 42:1 When Ya’acov saw that there was grain in Egypt, **Ya’acov** said to his **sons**, "Why do you look at one another?"² And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."³ So **Yosef’s ten brothers** went down to buy grain in Egypt.⁴ But Ya’acov did not send **Yosef’s brother Benjamin** with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him."⁵ And the **sons of Israel** went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.*

Note the different ways the **brothers** are **defined**:

- **Yosef's brothers**
- **Sons of Israel**
- **Ya'acov's sons**
- **Yosef's brother Benjamin**

We are informed that these **ten brothers** are **not just Ya'acov's sons, but Yosef's brothers**. The **journey** is pointing to a **reunion between these brothers, with a focus on Benjamin and Yosef**. **Benjamin** is singled out as a **special brother** because he is **Yosef's only full brother**.

Later **Ya'acov** also refers to **Yosef and Benjamin** as "**brothers**":

Bereshith 42:38 But he said, "My son (Benjamin) shall not go down with you, for his brother (Yosef) is dead, and he is left alone..."

A **literary parallel** connects **Benjamin's descent to Egypt** with the **earlier descent of Yosef**:

Bereshith 37:25 And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

In our current parasha, **when Ya'acov** reluctantly gives **permission** for **Benjamin to journey to Egypt**, he advises his sons to **take a "present for the man"**:

Bereshith 43:11 And their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man -- a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.

Benjamin travels to Egypt in a caravan **transporting the same spices** as when his **brother** was **taken there**. They will **take the same route** and **arrive at the same destination**. The **only difference** is that **when Yosef was taken**, it was the **result of family discord and hatred**. **Now, the repentant family is united** in its **mission**. **Benjamin** will be **carefully protected**. How things have changed! Let's look at the **context** in which the **brothers** were **able to convince their father to allow Benjamin** to make the return **trip to Egypt**.

Time passes after the first trip to Egypt and the **grain runs out**. **Ya'acov** makes a **simple request** for his **sons to return to buy more food**:

Bereshith 43:1 Now the famine was severe in the land.² And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food."

Ya'acov makes no mention of **sending Benjamin**, although everyone knows that the **unpredictable governor of Egypt** has **demand**ed that they **must not return without him**. **Yehuda** is the **one who faces up** to the **dire situation**:

Bereshith 43:3 But Yehuda spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'"⁴ "If you send our brother with us, we will go

Thus the **brothers** have used this law to **entirely acquit themselves** of any **guilt associated** with the **disappearance of Yosef**. **HOWEVER**, this was **not Ya'acov's personal ethic!** Earlier, Ya'acov spoke of a **similar shepherding situation** in regards to **shepherding sheep for Lavan**:

Bereshith 31:39 "That which was torn (terephah - טֵרֵפָה) by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it...

Ya'acov always paid the price for animals “**torn**” by beasts as if he was **personally responsible**. He went over and above Torah requirements. So...now let's compare the **similar phrasing** in how Ya'acov spoke of his **commitment to Lavan** with Yehuda's **promise to his father**:

- *Bereshith 31:39 ... I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand (anokhi achattenna mi-yadi tevakshena - אֲנֹכִי אֶחַטְנָה מִיָּדִי תִבְקַשְׁנָה)...*
- *Bereshith 43:9 "I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him (anokhi e'ervennu mi-yadi tevakshena - אֲנֹכִי אֶעֱרְבֶנּוּ מִיָּדִי תִבְקַשְׁנֵנּוּ)...*

Through his words, Yehuda shows his father that he has **adopted Ya'acov's own personal standard of responsibility**. Ya'acov knows that Yehuda will use every effort to **safeguard Benjamin**. There will be **no excuses like there was with Yosef!** Yehuda is **expressing tremendous faithfulness** for the **Father's Son!!** For Yehuda, the thought of **abandoning Benjamin in Egypt** would be a **continuation of the grievous sin of selling Yosef**. **Protecting Benjamin** at all costs is the **atonement demanded** for the **selling of Yosef**, a **heaven sent opportunity to make amends**. Yehuda shows that he has **adopted the Father's standards!**

The **brothers** make the **second trip** to **Egypt** and once there **Yosef purposely directs them** into **circumstances** which will **reveal where their hearts are** and especially **how they feel about the favored “Son of the Father”**. Let's look at **one of these planned events** – the story of the **silver goblet**.

For some reason, **when the brothers were making their way out of Egypt**, Yosef had his **silver goblet** slipped **into Benjamin's bag** of grain. After they left, **Yosef sent his steward** after them and the **goblet was found in Benjamin's sack**. They were **baffled** by the **accusations** and **responded**:

Bereshith 44:6 So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words.⁷ And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing.⁸ "Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house?⁹ "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."

This is a test...how will they relate to the beloved “Son of the Father”? We are reminded of **another story** when Ya'acov, upon **leaving Lavan's house**, was **chased down by Lavan** and **accused of stealing his god of divination**. In the story, Ya'acov is **certain no one has committed this evil** and **boldly pronounces**:

Bereshith 31:32 "With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you." For Ya'acov did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

Since the **idol** was in **Rachel's possession**, it is taught that **her early death** was a **result of this curse** by Ya'acov. The **story of the silver goblet** is **similar**. Both objects were **described** as a **means of telling the future through "divination"**:

Bereshith 30:27 And Lavan said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by divination ...

Bereshith 44:5 'Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? ...

Rachel died as a result of Ya'acov's proclamation, thus by the brothers' proclamation would **Benjamin also now be under the curse of death**? I would suggest that there is a **prophetic thematic connection** whereby **Benjamin**, shadows the **beloved Son of the Father (Yeshua)**, who would **unjustly be accused** and **die an unfair death**.

So...back to the **literal story**...what was **Yosef** trying to **accomplish** with this little fiasco? Would the **brothers**, who the **first time** sold out the **"beloved Son of the Father"** (Yosef), the **second time** be totally **supportive of this "beloved Son of the Father"** (Benjamin)? **They pass this test when the brothers all take the blame** for the silver goblet:

Bereshith 44:16 Then Yehuda said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? Elohim has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found."

What does **Yehuda** mean when he says **"Elohim has found out the iniquity of your servants"**? Is he referring to the **sale of Yosef**? Has **Yehuda** come to terms with **who Yosef** was? Next week we will **continue with Yehuda's** **incredibly, moving speech**. Remember we are **speaking of Yehuda**...the **progenitor of the main tribe from which today's Jews descended from**. **Yehuda** expresses **acceptance of the beloved Yosef and his intimate relationship with the Father**. **Yehuda** never again wants to **make the mistake of separating the Son from the Father**.

Could I make the **suggestion** that perhaps **this story of the past**, is **pointing to an incredible moment to come when repentant Jews will intercede for a Benjamin of the future**? If so, **who do you think that Benjamin might represent**? Take into account that **all brothers are being united at this moment**. This story to **be continued**...

Shabbat Shalom!

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