

**Vayeshev**  
**Genesis 37:1-40:23**

Every week in our fellowship our goal is to find the Messiah in what we are studying. We take Yeshua seriously when He said in John:

**John 5:46** "For if you believed **Moses**, you would believe Me; for **he wrote about Me**.

And we consider the Bible study Yeshua did with the two men as they walked towards Emmaus:

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

Some parts of the Torah are easier to find Yeshua than others. The parallels between Yeshua and Joseph are many and easy to see this week. Here are just a few:

- Both were shepherds
- Both were willing, obedient servants
- Both were especially loved by their Father
- Both were hated by their own brethren and without a cause
- Both were sent to check on the welfare of their brethren
- Both suffered as a result of a conspiracy
- Both were stripped of their robe
- Both were sold for pieces of silver
- It was their own brethren who delivered them up to their enemies
- Both went down into Egypt and returned later
- Both preached to two prisoners
- Both were exalted to a throne
- Both were not recognized by their own
- Both had/will have their robe dipped in blood

There are many, many other comparisons, and they are kind of fun to find. The point is, that it is very easy to find Messiah in the life of Joseph. Now, let's try to take that to the next level. If Joseph is a type of the Messiah, and we are the "body of the Messiah" (He is the head), then doesn't it stand to reason that we should find parallels about **us** also in the life of Joseph? Let's dig in and see what we can find.

**Genesis 37:2** These are the **generations 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.

The verse says that "these are the generations of Jacob". Yet the rest of the Torah portion seems to focus mainly on the stories of two individuals, Joseph and Judah. This begins an amazing story. The Torah will use the lives of these two sons to portray **all** of Israel. Throughout the Tenach we see the Southern Kingdom/Judah and the Northern Kingdom/Joseph (also referred to as Ephraim). Our Torah reading is just the beginning of the amazing story of the two houses of

Israel, and as we continue through Genesis... the **restoration** of all Israel! Again we are seeing the end from the beginning and the fact that Genesis has more to do with our future, than our past!

Let's move ahead to chapter 38. Something about this parenthetical story is meant to shed light on the story of Joseph's captivity. The first thing we notice is that Judah "went down, away from his brothers." It seems that Judah has made a decision to leave the family. The Hebrew word for "went down", yarad (יָרַד), is an idiom for **leaving** the land of Israel (or the people). The opposite of yarad is aliyah and it symbolizes **going back** to the land, or **going up** to Jerusalem. Today's Jews that are returning to Israel are said to make "aliyah".

In Genesis 38:2, we see Judah make another huge error. He marries the daughter of a **Canaanite**, named Shuah (wealth). In Genesis 9:25, the **Canaanites** became a cursed line. We talked about that in depth in the commentary on Lech Lecha. Because this woman was from the cursed line, none of her sons would have been suitable to carry on the line of promise. So in the story of Judah's sons, we see the hand and the sovereignty of יְהוָה. Despite Judah's rebellion and conscious decision to marry a Canaanite woman, there would still be a proper descendant.

Now as Judah lived his life totally contrary to the will of the Almighty, he also was clueless to why his sons were dying. According to the book of Yasher and other oral writings, his first son Er found Tamar so beautiful that he did not want her to have children and lose her youthful beauty. So Er spilled his seed on the ground to prevent Tamar from getting pregnant.

**Genesis 38:7** But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of יְהוָה, and יְהוָה killed him.

Since Onan was the 2<sup>nd</sup> born, he was elevated to 1<sup>st</sup> born status. That meant if he produced a child in the name of his deceased brother, that child would have been entitled to Judah's estate. In other words, Onan and his children would receive less.

**Genesis 38:9** But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother.

To intentionally deny this widow a son did two things. It meant that the deceased husband's family line would end (a disaster to the ancient mind), and that she would have no son to care for her in her old age. This would almost surely mean poverty for her. Again יְהוָה sees this as evil and kills Onan.

But Judah is living his life oblivious to God's commands and laws. As a result, he does not see the wickedness of his own sons and decides that Tamar is really bad luck. He sends Tamar back to her father's house with apparently no intention of giving her to his third son as a wife.

A less than righteous Jacob seemed to think nothing of a harlot along a roadside, but this becomes the decision that will give him a legitimate heir. Let's take a closer look at Tamar. Her name means "date palm". That might seem insignificant until you do a bit of research:

**Psalms 92:12** The **righteous** shall flourish like a **palm** tree; He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

The **palm** tree is a tree which from the earliest times has been associated with the Semitic people. The **palm** leaf appears on pottery as far back as 1,800 B.C. It was extensively used as decoration in the temple. It is a symbol of **beauty**:

**Song of Solomon 7:7** This stature of yours is like a **palm** tree....

On the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles the Hebrews were commanded to take branches of **palms**, with other trees, and rejoice before God. (Lev 23:40). The **palm** branch still forms the chief feature of the lulav carried daily during the feast. The idea of rejoicing comes out in the use of **palm** branches by the multitudes who escorted Yeshua to Jerusalem (John 12:13) and also in the vision of the "great multitude, which no man could number....standing before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and **palms** in their hands" (Rev 7:9).

So...I guess we can see that Tamar's identification with the **date palm** is very positive and very messianic and very end times oriented. There is rabbinical literature that teaches that Tamar was the granddaughter of Shem, the son of Noah. The Hebrew Bible is silent as to her lineage, but this only makes her more like Melchizedek, the priest with no recorded ancestry. We can also identify her as the daughter of a priest (like Melchizedek), since Jacob's first reaction to her pregnancy was to burn her...

**Leviticus 21:9** 'The **daughter of any priest**, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire.

So now, the question begs to be asked....Was Tamar really **righteous**?

**Genesis 38:26** So Judah acknowledged *them* and said, "She has been more **righteous** than I....

I think that Tamar understood the Father's plan. Because of her lineage, she would have been well educated in the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. She does not hesitate to put herself in a difficult position, risking her own reputation and life for יהוה's plan to be fulfilled. Judah needed a proper descendent....one not from the line of Cain. I'd also like to give her the credit for Judah returning back to the family which obviously happened, although the details are not recorded in the Torah.

The guarantee she asks for speaks to us of her intentions:

- The **seal** - a symbol for **kingship**

- The **cord** - same word for the **thread** of blue later required in the fringe on Israelite garments as a reminder to keep the commandments
- The **staff** - a symbol of **Messiah**

Incidentally...the word generally translated as “harlot” in Genesis 38:21, is actually the female form of Kadosh, or “holy”. Now think about this.....throughout the Prophets, a harlot is identified as one who has committed **spiritual adultery**. Adultery is what Judah accused Tamar of and this is the same accusation that Judah/Jews make against those who follow Yeshua today (spiritual adultery). Tamar understood the importance of the Messianic line, yet Judah would not allow her to be connected to his son. Today modern day Tamars (we are priests from the order of Melchizedek) make Judah/Jews jealous by practicing the Sabbath, by celebrating their festivals, by wearing tzit tzitot, keeping kosher, etc. Meanwhile, we wait for our reunification with Judah.

Now let’s skip over to Joseph who is in prison in Chapter 40. The cupbearer and the baker end up in prison with Joseph and each has a dream. It is interesting that the dreams they have are about **bread** and **wine**.

**1 Corinthians 11:23** For I received from Adonai that which I also delivered to you: that Adonai Yeshua on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took **bread**; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My **body** which is broken for you; do this **in remembrance of Me**." <sup>25</sup> In the same manner *He* also *took* the **cup** after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My **blood**. This do, as often as you drink *it*, **in remembrance of Me**."

Yeshua tells us to ‘**remember**’ Him whenever we partake of these two foods. This does not mean to merely “think” about Him. His table is about walking the way He walked...about thinking His thoughts and keeping His commandments. The Hebrew meaning of the word “remember” implies action.

Let’s consider the Pharaoh, as the leader of Egypt, to be a picture of the church with its infiltration of paganism. The one who tends the bread (baker) and the one who tends the wine (cupbearer) have temporarily been set aside. However, soon the cupbearer will resume his position, even though Joseph remains forgotten in the pit. The baker is killed (done away with).

Bread is representative of Yeshua’s **body**. Remember our beginning premise that Yeshua has a head and a **body**? We are the **body** of Messiah. Don’t forget there are many layers of teaching in Scripture. To consider this meaning does not mean that you scrap other interpretations.

**Luke 22:19** And He took **bread**, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My **body** which is given for you; **do this in remembrance of Me**."

**1 Corinthians 10:16** The cup of the blessing that we bless -- is it not the fellowship of the blood of the Messiah? the **bread** that we break -- is it not the fellowship of the **body** of the Messiah?

Throughout the Scriptures, wine sometimes represents joy and sometimes blood.

Now a closer look at the dreams.....each of them focused on something to do with the dreamer's position, yet one predicted **life** and the other predicted **death**. What was the difference?

Let's consider some details of each of the dreams. The dream of the cupbearer:

**Genesis 40:10** And in the **vine** (01612) *were* three **branches** (08299): and it *was* as though it **budded** (06524) *and* her blossoms **shot forth** (05927); and the **clusters** (0811) thereof brought forth **ripe** (01310) **grapes** (06025). **11** "Then Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

- A **vine** (01612) was before him
  - Yeshua says "I am the **vine**."
- Three **branches** (08299)
  - Yeshua says "You are the **branches**"
- It **budded** (06524)
  - **Hosea 14:7** Those who dwell under his shadow shall return; They shall be revived *like* grain, And **flourish** (06524) like a vine....
  - **Psalms 92:12** The righteous shall **flourish** (06524) like a palm tree,
- Blossoms "**went up**" (5927)
  - Aliyah – going up, as to the land of Israel
- **Clusters** (0811)
  - **Isaiah 65:8** Thus says יְהוָה: "As the new wine is found in the **cluster**, And *one* says, 'Do not destroy it, For a blessing *is* in it,' So will I do for My servants' sake, That I may not destroy them all.
- **Ripe** (01310) – seems to imply harvest
- **Grapes** (06025) – from an unused root meaning **to bear fruit**

The cupbearer's dream had many aspects of **blessing** and a **future**. The vine was full of life. The cupbearer takes a hold of the grapes (he is fruitful) and serves his master. He seems enthusiastic in his position.

Now let's look at the dream of the baker:

**Genesis 40:16** When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also *was* in my dream, and there *were* three white baskets on my head.<sup>17</sup> "In the uppermost basket *were* all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the **birds** ate them out of the basket on my head."

**Birds** are often a picture of unclean spirits (Mat 13:32). Remember the concept of bread being the body of Messiah? Look at what is happening to the body! The baker seems careless and doesn't even try to fend off the birds as Abraham did (Gen 15:11). This may symbolize those in leadership positions doing nothing about the defiling of the community. Also, no where in the

dream does there appear to be any more resources for making new bread. This could likely bring about a famine.

Now, let me try to bring this all together. I am going to look at both the cupbearer and the baker as two sides of established religion. On the one hand, the leaders announce with joy the benefits of the blood of Messiah. He is alive and we can participate in His fruit! Those in charge are eager to serve the leader(s) of this world (Egypt). But then we have the baker...he is supposed to be in charge of keeping the bread/body together. The church has minimized the commandments of יהוה, even claiming that they are done away with! We **know** what keeps us in unity.....it is the **body** keeping the **commandments** of יהוה. But for now, this is pictured as death to the baker.

Look now at what has happened. The cupbearer is **FREE!** He took the gift of freedom and **FORGOT** Joseph. He was asked to **remember** (Genesis 40:14, Luke 22:19). He considered his freedom to be an **unconditional gift without obligation** to the giver (Joseph/Messiah). Therefore Joseph was not elevated to a proper position. In the same way, Yeshua has not been elevated to His position of authority.

Well bread is a necessity of life, and we will continue this prophecy throughout the rest of Genesis. We will see that grain/bread will play a crucial role in the restoration of the family of Israel. Bread (body keeping commandments) will become an absolute necessity as the world is thrust into famine.

**Amos 8:11** " Behold, the days are coming," says יהוה Elohim, "That I will send a famine on the land, **Not a famine of bread**, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the **words of the יהוה**."

Let's commit ourselves to live lives which elevate the commandments of יהוה, that we may keep in mind what Yeshua told His disciples:

**John 14:15** "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Now let's recap. Joseph is a type of Messiah. That's easy to see. We also are considered to be the **body** of Messiah. We could say that the **body** of Messiah is Jacob/Israel. Our Torah portion began with mention of **the generations of Jacob** – then it gives **the stories of Joseph and Judah**. It is these two sons who will be known collectively (including all the tribes) as **Israel**. Their stories are our stories. Their restoration will be our restoration.

**1 Corinthians 10:11** Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Shabbat Shalom!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> To download Ardelle's Torah Commentaries most weeks, visit [www.yourlivingwaters.com](http://www.yourlivingwaters.com).