

# וַיִּגַּשׁ

## VAYIGASH/AND HE DREW NEAR Bereshith/Genesis 44:18-47:27

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The story of Yosef is like a 3D puzzle. If you receive a few pieces of revelation, they may belong to different levels of interpretation and they just won't fit together. If we won't consider what others have learned, we may miss out on the pieces that fit with ours. Plus our heavenly Father still holds on to a few very important pieces which He will not reveal until the timing is appropriate. This commentary will attempt to give you a few pieces, but you may find the picture is still difficult to view.

If we go back and review the events that make up the two descents to Egypt, we see that much of what Yosef does is for the purpose of pulling Benjamin from Ya'acov's protective embrace. The reason for this is so that Yosef might place his younger brother in potentially the same situations that Yosef himself had experienced so long ago. Creating a situation where Benjamin could be imprisoned on false charges, Yosef orchestrated a replica of his very own sale to force his brothers into a parallel dilemma. Yosef needs to know...how will his brothers respond? Will they abandon the accused Benjamin in Egypt, when charged with stealing Yosef's goblet? Will they react with jealousy towards the favoritism shown to Benjamin? Twenty years earlier they turned their backs on Yosef and watched as traders carried him off to Egypt. Now, the brothers had a similar opportunity to hand over their brother into bondage to save themselves. Once again the decision is between them and their brother, the beloved son of their father. Their actions will prove where their heart is.

It was Yehuda who spoke on behalf of his brothers. He shadows the Messiah as he offers himself as a substitute for not only Benjamin, but for all his brothers:

*Bereshith 44:33 "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.*

Yehuda displayed selflessness in his willingness to be a "servant" to the master, totally offering up his own life, an attitude that the Messiah completely fulfilled:

*Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Yeshua, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of Elohim, did not consider it robbery to be equal with Elohim, <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

Yehuda was willing to be a "ransom" for Benjamin and his brothers. Yeshua likewise did this for all:

*1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one Elohim and one Mediator between Elohim and men, the Man Messiah Yeshua, <sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,*

Centuries later, another man...interestingly enough, this man is from the "tribe of Benjamin"... will express the desire to lay down his life in exchange for Yehuda (the Jews):

*Romans 11:1 ... I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Avraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.*

*Romans 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Messiah for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,<sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Torah, the service of Yah, and the promises;*

The picture of **Yehuda coming to Yosef**...we already have **one explanation**, but could we be **unaware of another level**? The **example set** by the **forefathers** is **replicated** on a grander scale **by their descendants**. Could this **event come around once again** as the **Hebraic wheel** makes **another rotation**?

What if, on **another future level** of this 3D puzzle, **Yehuda** pictures the **Jews**? In our parasha, the **father entrusted Yehuda with Benjamin**. Does this mean at some point **still to come**, the **Jews** (Yehuda) will **come before Yosef** (who unbeknownst to them is the **Jewish Messiah**) to **plead for Benjamin**?

Who then, is **Benjamin** in this scenario? **Torah's picture** of **Benjamin** (reference last week's Torah commentary) is that he is of the **same essence as Yosef**. I believe **Benjamin** may shadow **Torah-keeping, non-Jewish believers**. Even today, some **Jews** are beginning to **consider believers in Messiah** who **keep Sabbath, eat kosher, wear tzit-tzit**, etc., to be their **brothers**.

**Benjamin**, could therefore be seen as **not the Messiah/Yosef (who is the head)**, but the **body of the Messiah**. Together, **Yosef and Benjamin** make up the **"oneness"** of the **Messiah**.

**Yeshua** speaks of this **"oneness"** in **His High Priestly prayer**:

*John 17:6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."<sup>7</sup> "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You."<sup>8</sup> "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me...Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are..."<sup>17</sup> "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth..." "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;"<sup>21</sup> "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."<sup>22</sup> "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:"<sup>23</sup> "**I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.***

**Rav Sha'ul** writes of the **"oneness"** possible in the **Messiah**:

*Philippians 2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Messiah, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,<sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but **in humility consider others better than yourselves**.<sup>4</sup> Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

A humbled Yehuda, pleading for the life of Benjamin results in the revelation of Yosef (the Messiah):

*Bereshith 45:3 Then Yosef said to his brothers, "I am Yosef; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were **troubled** in his presence.*

There is Jewish commentary that suggests how Yosef kept his brothers from recognizing him. When Yosef spoke to them, he covered his face with a veil (common Middle Eastern practice), and the brothers were unable to observe his face. Upon revealing himself, he uncovered his face and said to them, "I am Yosef." When he removed the veil, it is said that they became frightened for the face of the man speaking to them resembled exactly that of their father, Ya'acov! (Think on the Messianic implications here) You can imagine that they were "troubled"!!

This is what Yosef told his brothers to tell their father:

*Bereshith 45:9 "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Yosef: "Elohim has made me **lord of all Egypt**;* come down to me, do not tarry.

Yosef is "lord of all Egypt"; therefore, Egypt does not rule over him! He has not permitted the environment to corrupt him. He is still a Torah-keeping member of the covenantal family! In like manner, some day "Jesus" will be revealed to all of the tribes of Israel as a Torah-keeping Jew who has been ruling in Egypt for the purpose of bringing life to the world!

*Bereshith 45:7 "And Elohim sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

The Haftara, the well-known verses from Ezekiel 37:15-28, deals with the reunification of the various parts of the members of Israel which have become separated, with special emphasis placed upon Yehuda and Yosef. As it relates to the parasha, the reunification is not on the level of Ya'acov's family household, but rather on the national level.

*Ezekiel 37:21 and say to them, 'This is what Adonai יהוה says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land.<sup>22</sup> I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.*

There are also differences between the parasha and the prophecy in Ezekiel. Ya'acov's household is reunited in Egypt, the place of exile. In the final stages of redemption, the family is reunited "in the land, on the mountains of Israel."

We also note a difference in leadership. In our parasha, we have Yosef as the authority in Egypt, and Yehuda as the leader of all the tribes. When Yosef reveals himself, he becomes leader of the household, albeit because of circumstances. Years later, circumstances will again arise and most of the tribes will align themselves under the authority of the tribe of Ephraim, son of Yosef. But, as Ezekiel declares, in the days to come the kingdom will be united under the leadership of a king from the tribe of Yehuda:

*Ezekiel 37:24 " David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them.*

Obviously, this is still **future prophecy**, and we can meditate on how this may occur. A **long time** has passed **since the exile of the ten tribes to Assyria** and the **kingdom of Yehuda to Babylon**. These **tribes have not been united as Israel** since the time of the **reign of King Solomon**. How could these **separated tribes return to the shared connections that existed during the days of King David**? How can these tribes **regain their shared identity** which marked them as the **tribes of Israel**?

Rav Mosheh Lichtenstein writes (emphasis mine):

“**History is full of examples of national groups that had been joined together as a single national and cultural entity, but later separated, never to rejoin**. For example, Normandy and other parts of present-day France were **part of England** for more than **three hundred and fifty years**, but would anybody today entertain the idea of **trying to reunite England and western France**? So too, **Italy and Germany** were subject to a **common political leadership** for much of the **Middle Ages**, but **nobody dreams** any more of **reuniting them**. The **assumption** is that this was the **situation in its time**, but **historical reality has changed**, and there is **no reason to embark on a hopeless attempt at reconstructing the past**.”

Yet **Ezekiel’s prophecy** speaks of a **total reunification** of the **tribes of Israel, tribes separated for thousands of years**. The **nation will eventually reunite**, and this is the **plan of יהוה** despite what **any man** may see as **Israel’s future**:

*Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is יהוה's purpose that prevails.*

Just as **Yosef’s brothers feared** what **their family reunification** would **mean**, so there is an **apprehension** for some concerning the **uniting** of the **Jews with the entire house of Israel**. How will this **unity happen**? **Ezekiel** gives us a **clue**:

*Ezekiel 37:16 'And thou, son of man, take to yourself one stick, and write on it, **For Yehuda, and for the sons of Israel, his companions**; and take another stick, and write on it, **For Yosef, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel, his companions**,<sup>17</sup> and **bring them near one to another, for yourself, into one stick, and they shall become for oneness in your hand**.*

Two “**sticks**” of wood joined together “**into one stick**” which become “**oneness in your hand**”. There are **different thoughts** about **how this will happen**. An interesting theory is that these “**sticks**” will be joined together “**in your hand**” by an **external force**. The **suggestion** is that **this force is likened to a “nail”**. Hmmm.....

What we do know, is that this happens in a “**hand**”... *the “son of man’s” hand*. Let’s follow the **thread** of the “**hand**” throughout the **Scripture**. “**Hands**” were involved in the **creation of the world**:

*Psalms 95:5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.*

**Hebrews 1:10** And: "You, **יהוה**, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the **heavens** are the work of Your **hands**.

The “**hand**” often points to **יהוה**’s **power**:

**Psalms 89:13** Your arm is endued with power; **strong is your hand** – high your right **hand**.

In a **demonstration** of His **power**, His “**mighty hand**” brought **deliverance** of Israel from Egypt:

**Shemot 13:3** Then Moshe said to the people, "Commemorate this day, **the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because יהוה brought you out of it with a mighty hand**.

“**Hands**” were used for  **blessing**:

**Bereshith 48:17** When Yosef saw his father placing his right **hand** on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

**Luke 24:50** When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, **He lifted up his hands and blessed them**.

“**Hands**” were used in the concept of **substitution**:

**Vayikra 1:4** He is to lay his **hand** on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

“**Hands**” were used for **setting people apart**:

**Acts 13:3** Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid **hands** on them, they sent them away.

**Yeshua** healed with His “**hands**”:

**Mark 8:25** Then **He put His hands** on his eyes again and made him look up. And **he was restored and saw everyone clearly**.

**Luke 4:40** When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and **He laid His hands** on every one of them and healed them.

**יהוה** did miracles through His servant’s “**hands**”:

**Acts 19:11** Now **Yah** worked unusual miracles by the **hands** of Sha’ul,

**Acts 19:6** And when Sha’ul had laid **hands** on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

We can see that there is **much power associated with “hands”** – both the “hands” of יָדָיו and “hands” that are **used for His glory**. I’d like to give you one more thing to think about. **Chapter 49 of Isaiah** speaks of the **restoration of Israel**, the **main subject in both our Torah parasha and our Haftara**. Let’s begin by reading these **verses from Isaiah**:

*Isaiah 49:8 Thus says יהוה: "In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You As a covenant to the people, To restore the earth..."*

Reading a little farther:

*Isaiah 49:16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms (כַּפַּי) of My hands...*

Literally, the Hebrew reads:

*“Behold, on palms/soles (כַּפַּי) I engraved you.”*

“Of my hands” is an **added phrase** in the **first translation**. The **Hebrew** interpreted as “palms” (כַּפַּי) can refer to **either the hands or the soles of the feet**. This is where it gets interesting. We (all of Israel) are “engraved” on both **Yeshua’s hands and feet**. Look at the “palms” of your hands. The lines “engraved” there are your **identity**. **Yeshua included us in His identity!** **Yeshua’s “engraved palms and soles”** are what were **nailed to the tree**. “I’ve been crucified with Messiah” takes on **new meaning!**

We read that **when Yeshua appeared to His disciples, He asked them to look at “his hands and feet”**:

*Luke 24:37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.<sup>38</sup> And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"<sup>39</sup> "Behold My hands and My feet..."*

Now **back to the Ezekiel prophecy**. Did the **nails that connected Yeshua to the tree also become the nails that would join the “two sticks” as “oneness in your hand” in the Ezekiel prophecy**... accomplishing the **future uniting of all of Israel**, i.e., **Yehuda and Yosef**? Were **Yeshua’s “hands”**, perhaps one “engraved” with “*Yehuda and the sons of Israel, his companions*” and the other “hand” “engraved” with “*For Yosef, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel, his companions*” **both nailed together onto that tree**, a dramatic picture of **unity**? I searched the Scriptures and I can’t find anything that **proves that Yeshua was nailed onto that tree with outstretched arms**.

Okay, this is enough. As I said, these are only **pieces of a complex puzzle**. They may need **adjusting**...perhaps even **throwing out**. But they are where the Father has taken me this week. We are blessed to know that **He will progress with His revelation...in His good timing**. Until then, let’s **continue to seek His face and to love on each other!**

**Shabbat Shalom!**

**Ardelle**