



**#11 VaYigash Genesis 44:18-47:27
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Names

Kefa – Peter
 Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed
 Moshe – Moses
 Shaul – Paul
 Yeshua – Jesus' real name
 Yĕhōvāh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)
 Y'hudah – Judah
 Yochanan – John

Yosef – Joseph

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
 Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah
 Vayigash – the 11th Torah portion

VaYigash means, "and he drew near." This portion begins with Y'hudah petitioning Yosef to free Benjamin. I would like to begin today by talking about not being a worldly person.

Where is our focus in life? Do we revere God and want to please God or are we satisfied with ritual or made-up doctrine? Do we understand that God is the creator?

For many people, most of their focus in life is grounded only in getting by in life and what they can get out of life. I once was told by someone that a person is known by the toys they have. What he meant is his case was by the things he acquired and fun he had.

I am not against having fun and having things to enjoy and God wants us to enjoy life. But our spiritual life is of utmost importance and how we live determines whether we will be in God's future kingdom or in the lake of fire. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." Shaul says in 1 Corinthians 6:9 NKJV, "Do not be deceived." The people who live in sin will not be in God's future kingdom. Statistics show that those who are not taught that there is a hell are more likely to live in sin, so it is important that we understand this.

Do we revere God? After all, God is the creator and provider of all we have. Ecclesiastes 2:24 NKJV says, "Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God." What God has provided for us is good, but is this all there is to life? Typically, when people have all they need, they seem to want more and are not satisfied with what they have. There is more to life than the things we have and the fun we have.

Some people want to be noticed, so they will do various things to achieve that. Ecclesiastes 1:9-11 NKJV says, "That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said,

'See, this is new?' It has already been in ancient times before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who will come after."

For most of us, we are remembered for just a short time in this world. Even the great leaders or thinkers of the past are perhaps only remembered by name and by a few of their accomplishments. All the attention we get and all the gratification we obtained is gone almost as soon as we do something.

Some of us have a more lasting view of life through God. We are led by God, by His commandments, and by the Holy Spirit and therefore do not engage so much in an endless cycle of want and desire. Sure, it is okay to have good things, but we are not consumed with the trinkets of life. We are satisfied with what we have and our relationship with God; therefore, we have more substance in life and have more peace. We do what is right and are satisfied with a life that seeks the realities of life and a relationship with God. God is real, He is the creator who provides for all the earth, and He knows what is best for us. Psalms 23:1-3 NKJV says, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." That sounds pretty good.

We need to understand that God has no ulterior motives and cares about us. He knows those who trust in Him and those who do not. Nahum 1:7 NKJV says, "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him." How do we please our creator and trust in Him?

God is there and is waiting for us to come to Him, rely on Him, choose His good ways, and be empowered by Him.

God has reached out to mankind since the beginning of time. God gave Noah grace and through Noah, God saves mankind from destruction. He was a righteous person; he does what is right and follows God's commandments. 2 Peter 2:5 NKJV says that God, "Saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly." One good person, Noah, receives God's grace and saves the world.

God has given mankind grace throughout human history.

Grace means favor. Anytime God helps someone, we can conclude that God has given them His favor. He can choose to do that because He is God. God has given mankind His favor, His kindness, and help throughout history. In this Messianic era, we should understand that God has given mankind His favor through His commandments in the Old and New Testament portions of the Bible. They help us to live right. The Holy Spirit can also help us in many ways in life. We are to believe in the Messiah Yeshua in this era and receive the Holy Spirit as our helper (see John 14:16-17, and Acts 2:38-39).

God has also provided forgiveness of sin through the Messiah Yeshua. 1 John 2:1-2 NKJV says, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

We have to qualify the meaning of God's grace, His favor, when we talk about grace. It is best to identify God's grace as something He has given since the beginning of time and includes the giving of His commandments and the Holy Spirit.

In this era some think God's grace means to do what they want, even do evil. Isn't that ridiculous. They think that a good God is okay with them doing what is wrong and bringing evil into the world, namely living in sin. Isaiah 59:2 NKJV says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God." Perhaps they will say that God knows their heart, that God knows they believe in Him. The devil spirits believe in God, and they are going to the lake of fire for bringing evil into the world. James 2:19 NKJV says, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe." Revelation 20:10 NKJV says, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." God wants us to bring good into the world through His commandments. Also, do not confuse God's commandments with the harsh extra laws of the Jewish Talmud which is a commentary and not commandments of God. Some of their commentaries are good, some are not.

God is not in a hurry, but we should be in a hurry to accept the Messiah and God's commandments for our own good. Deuteronomy 10:13 NKJV says, "Keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good." Also, 2 Peter 3:8-9 NKJV says, "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

What are we to repent of? We are to stop sinning and are to keep God's commandments. There are some 613 commandments in the Old Testament and about 1,050 New Testament commandments. They are mostly common sense like do not murder. People are willing to learn the some 450 laws regarding driving a vehicle that are intended to provide safe driving conditions. What about the laws in the Bible that pertain to living right. They are not a burden, but are from a good God who wants to help us with life. 1 John 5:3 NKJV says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." God's commandments were not given to us to burden us, but show us His love, God cares about us. God's commandments give us wisdom and understanding (see Deuteronomy 4:6) and are "right and good" (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18).

The Messiah has given us grace through the Holy Spirit and also forgiveness of sin through His sacrifice. Yeshua said in Acts 1:8 NKJV, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." The Holy Spirit empowers us and helps us in many ways. Ephesians 3:20 NKJV says, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." God gives believers in the Messiah the Holy Spirit. Seek the associated gifts of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13 NKJV says, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts." When we sin, we are to confess our sins to God, decide we

will not do that again, and ask to be forgiven. 1 John 1:9 NKJV says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The Bible says we are to confess our sins to God.

Isaiah 1:18-19 NKJV says,

Let us reason together, "Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient."

God wants us to succeed, so get back on your feet spiritually and keep moving forward spiritually.

Seek true life through God and not through religious ritual. Be satisfied with real peace and not the trappings of worldly peace.

Life is full of ritual but making ritual into a commandment of God is wrong. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV says, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." Do not complicate life by adding misapplied laws to God's commandments. Added commandments can be ridiculous at times. One of the extra laws states that we cannot open an umbrella on Shabbat because that is putting up a structure. Watch out for nonsense commandments. Keep God's commandments and good applications of God's commandments.

For example, here an example of applying God's commandments properly. One scripture talks about putting a safety wall, a parapet, around the tops of our buildings. Years ago, people would sit on the top of their buildings. Deuteronomy 22:8 NKJV says, "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it." So other sensible safety issues are a good application of this law.

My uncle once told me that another person died at work today because someone turned the electrical power on while someone was working on a machine. In the United States we now have a lock out and tag policy that locks out a machine from being turned on accidentally. It is not just the 10 Commandments that are important, but the other commandments are important as well. Why would a good God change His mind about His good commandments and say we do not have to keep them? Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change." God does not change, and His commandments have always been good and are still good.

Read God's word as though it really applies to us. Be connected to God through the scriptures.

When we read the scriptures, read the scriptures as though they apply to you. This may sound a little strange to some of you, but people will just read their own ideas into what the Bible says or read the Bible as though what is in the Bible does not apply to them. For example, when it says we are not to covet what others have, we are to stop wanting what others have and are to be satisfied with what we have. We do not go and take what they have. Instead, we work and pay for the things we need or want.

The Bible says we are not to move our landmarks, not to steal, and to pay people for their

work. In communism, they believe everything belongs to the society. Communism is not biblical and no believer in God should support this evil system. This one time in Russia, the people in this one city needed food so they went to the countryside and took the food of this one small town and left them to starve. That is what they mean by equity in communism. Communism is not an equitable and just system. God's ways are just, and all people will be judged by a good God who must be just. Those who do evil will receive the penalty for their sin. Communists murdered over 100 million people in the 1900s in order to maintain their evil system of governments. Those who do what is good will be in a future and just kingdom with God. Communists must lie in order to maintain their evil societies.

God must be just and those who do not do what is right and do not follow God's commandments suppress truth and do not live right, they are unrighteous. Romans 1:18 NKJV says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Just in case there is any doubt, let's look at what it says in Hebrews.

Hebrews 10:28-31 NKJV says,

Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

These scriptures are talking about believers who are living in sin. Also, Hebrews 12:14-15 NKJV says, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God."

Being holy is to keep God's commandments.

Do not live in sin. Be holy. Deuteronomy 28:9 NKJV says, "**The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.**" Keep God's commandments and receive the Holy Spirit which are a blessing of God's favor from God for mankind. Do not fall short of what God wants for you.

Revere God and please our good God. Stay true to God and His commandments. God can give us a better life through His commandments and the Holy Spirit. Be satisfied with the truths that the Creator gave us. God wants us to accept the favor that He has given us both from the Old Testament and the New Testament. God does not change, His commandments are still good, and the Holy Spirit through the Messiah is powerful and good. Get past the false concepts of man-made religion and be connected to God the way you are supposed to be. Be determined to stay faithful to God and keep moving forward spiritually in life.

Torah Teaching

VaYigash means, "and he drew near." This portion begins with Y'hudah petitioning Yosef to free Benjamin. Y'hudah tells Yosef the story about why Benjamin was not with them originally

and that their father would die if Benjamin did not return. Y'hudah could have resorted to violence or prayer to an almighty God, but instead Y'hudah offers himself as a replacement for Benjamin. Perhaps this is a sign to Yosef that his brothers had repented.

Caring and respecting others.

We are created in God's image and God tells us to love one another and also to love the stranger. God wants us to care about others and have empathy towards others. It is possible that through Y'hudah's experience and the selling off of Yosef to be a slave that Y'hudah had learned to care about his family and others.

We become members of our family and may not have much in common with them, or care about our family, or even like our family. Esau despised his birthright which perhaps tells us he despised his family.

In order to keep friends, we have to be patient and kind towards them, or they will choose not to be our friends. We should have the same attitude about our family and even strangers, but that is often not the case. We should learn to treat our family and others well, respect others, and be empathetic towards them.

Then, filled with emotion, Yosef asks those around him to leave and he reveals that he is Yosef to his brothers. They are dumbfounded as he talks. He asks how his father is doing and Yosef assures his brothers that he is Yosef. Yosef forgives them and tells them it was God's plan.

We know that Yosef's brothers could not even speak a peaceable word to Yosef. It is then that Yosef has his dreams about his family bowing down to him. Yosef must have gotten these dreams to prepare him for what he was to go through. Perhaps when he became the head of Potipher's household, he thought that somehow the revelation he received from God would come through from his position there, but he was put in prison. Then when he became the head of Pharaoh's household and put in control of supplies for the famine, he must have expected his brothers to show up at some point and fulfill what God told him in his dreams.

Yosef tells them that the famine will last five more years and that through him, God has provided for them. Yosef invites them to come to Egypt, so they won't die in the famine. They embrace each other and Pharaoh's court hears that Yosef's family is there. Pharaoh is pleased; and he provides wagons, new clothes, grain, and presents for Yosef's brothers so that they can go and return. Perhaps Pharaoh was grateful to Yosef for his help during the famine, or maybe he thought that Yosef could have more people like Yosef to serve his country. Pharaoh tells Yosef that perhaps someone in his family can take care of his livestock.

When they arrive back home, they tell their father that Yosef is alive and is the leader of all Egypt. Ya'akov evidently had trouble believing them, but when Ya'akov saw all they brought back from Egypt, he believed them, and he wants to go and see Yosef.

There are consequences to lying.

Children often lie to their parents, so parents do not always believe their children's words.

When a person lies, it devalues their words and can hurt the feelings of others.

They returned to Egypt and brought everything with them. Ya'akov stopped at Be'er-Sheva on the way, and God spoke to Ya'akov and told him not to be afraid to go to Egypt and that God would eventually return them to the land of Canaan. God told Abraham and Isaac that He would give them the land of Canaan, so Ya'akov probably wanted to make sure it was okay to go to Egypt. If you remember, God told Isaac not to go to Egypt.

The natural fear of the unknown.

God tells Ya'akov not to fear to go to Egypt. People often experience the fear of the unknown and it is good to be prepared well for what we embark on. Even doctors will tell us how well we can expect a surgery to go, but that often does not stop us from feeling ill at ease. A lot of the time, surgery is accompanied by the fear of the unknown for the person having the surgery. Ya'akov probably wanted to make sure it was okay to go down to Egypt.

We speak honestly about what the Bible says about an afterlife because we need to know what to expect. People who have little fear about their afterlife and the consequences for their sin are more likely to disobey God's commandments. Those who want to do what is right, keep God's commandments, and fear God are more apt to keep God's commandments. I read once that violent people often have a high opinion of themselves. It therefore makes sense that they do not fear God and they more easily disobey God's commandments. We should also understand that inappropriate fear can paralyze our ability to do things in life and cause us to fail.

Then, 66 of Ya'akov's descendants are listed that went into Egypt so that all the men in Egypt then were 70 (including Ya'akov, Yosef, and his 2 sons). We should understand this as an accounting of families and not as anything against females. Remember, God created all people in His image; He created us all equal. Yosef and his father Ya'akov meet, and it is a very emotional experience. Yosef tells Pharaoh that his family is keepers of livestock and instructed his family to also say the same because shepherds were considered abhorrent. He tells them to do this so they should be given the land of Goshen.

Also, we do not know for sure that Ya'akov knows what Yosef's brothers did. The Bible seems to say that they told Ya'akov what they did. Perhaps they never told him because there was no profit in doing so. We should always be honest, but our words should help or profit others.

The art of saving face.

The brothers had changed so Yosef probably did not tell his father about what they did to save them from having to relive what they went through for what they did to Yosef. Perhaps Yosef also did not tell Pharaoh what they did, or Pharaoh might have not been so pleased to have them in his kingdom. When people repent of their bad behaviors, it is a good idea to forgive and forget as best we can.

Also, putting people down can create negative feelings. Instead, try to consider the good they do so they will be encouraged to continue doing good. Rabbi Shaul says in Philippians 4:8 NKJV, "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just,

whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."

Also, the land of Goshen would separate Yosef's family from the Egyptians. The Egyptians did not live in Goshen. Yosef knew the Egyptians worshipped idols and his family did not. Abraham and Isaac taught their children God's commandments. God says in Genesis 26:5 NKJV, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." Prior to Mount Sinai, they observed an oral law that was passed down from Noah. God had Moshe write down God's commandments at Mount Sinai so that mankind could have them always. The book of Jasher says that both Abraham and Isaac studied under Shem, Noah's son. Shem lived nearby in Salem which later became Jerusalem. Shem was also known at Melchizedek, and he had a school of prophets in Salem according to the Jewish writings.

Yosef out of respect for the Pharaoh presents 5 of his brothers and his father to Pharaoh and Pharaoh gives them his blessing to live in the land of Goshen. It is a good practice to give respect to whom respect is due. Ya'akov speaks to Pharaoh and blesses him. It is the duty of those who are spiritual to pronounce blessings on others when so inspired. Yosef takes care of his family and makes sure that they have food. The famine was severe, and the people had to trade their livestock and all their land for food. The people farmed the land and willingly gave Pharaoh 20% of their produce because Yosef had saved their lives. The people of Israel prospered and increased in numbers. There is a lesson to be learned from this. Following God and doing things His ways create success. Ya'akov lived 17 years in Egypt before he died.

Just as Judah said he will stand in for Benjamin, Yeshua stood in for us and died for our sins. We see also that Joseph is a messianic figure because he saves his family from the famine and from almost certain death. Yeshua saves us from sin, and we have a better life through Him, through God's commandments, and the Holy Spirit. And someday, those who keep God's commandments and receive the Holy Spirit will obtain eternal life through Yeshua. We see a theme of God saving His people in the readings today and of hope for a future kingdom.

The Haftarah for Vayigash is Ezekiel 37:15-28. Before this portion, Ezekiel had just prophesied life coming to the bones of Israel. This prophecy was about Israel regaining its hope. God promises Israel that they will rise from the dead someday. "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.'" Ezekiel 37:12 NKJV. We clearly see that God has given His people the hope of the resurrection.

Our portion then begins with Ezekiel taking two sticks and putting them together, one for Israel and the other for Judah. This represents a future time when Israel will be one nation again and Ezekiel says that they will be one forever with one King and Shepherd and they will not sin again. The nations will know that God has set them apart as holy.

Israel has become a nation in one day as prophesied in Isaiah 66:7-8, but the future prophecy of the resurrection and the kingdom with God as their king is yet to come someday. God has a future for Israel. Just as the story of Yosef shows us that God will accomplish His

will for the children of Israel; this portion affirms that God will someday make Israel a holy nation forever before all the nations.

One time, I heard a Jewish rabbi teach that after we die, we go on as an unembodied spirit. It seems some of the rabbis have lost an understanding of the truths of the scriptures. Instead, they study the Talmud which is commentary and not God's word. In this portion, Israel rises from the dead. Rabbi Shaul taught that as well. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." 1 Corinthians 15:42-43 NKJV.

It is clear that in this present Messianic age, those who believe in God and Yeshua and receive the Holy Spirit, and follow God's commandments will rise from the dead to be in God's future kingdom. Those who don't keep God's commandments will go to the lake of fire. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." In the present we are also commanded to believe in the Messiah Yeshua and receive the Holy Spirit. Rabbi Kefa said in Acts 2:38-39 NKJV, "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.'"

In the Messianic times we are now in, God has lavished His favor on us through the Messiah. Just as the descendants of Jacob were almost dead from lack of food, we were dead in sins. And just as Israel was allowed to stay in the land and survive and prosper, we also are delivered through an act of favor of our God through Yeshua the Messiah so that we could keep God's commandments with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy spirit is our helper. John 14:16-17 NKJV says, "He will give you **another** Helper, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit." What is the first helper? It is God's commandments; they are intended to help us in all of life; they are "your wisdom and your understanding" it says in Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV. The Holy Spirit is **another** helper.

Yosef's brothers find out that Yosef is now a leader in Egypt. The prophetic gifting of Yosef has saved the whole region and Yosef's family. Ezekiel prophesies that God will raise the dead someday. In the New Testament portion, Rabbi Shaul also says God will raise the dead. God cares about His people and helps us. Those who keep His commandments and accept His Messiah Yeshua and the Holy Spirit will have eternal life with a caring and good God.

Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts. (We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)

Judah, in a sacrificial act, wants to save the life of his brother Benjamin and his father Ya'akov. Also, Yosef obtains riches for Pharaoh, but most importantly, he acts to save lives. We are to protect life. We are made in the image of God. Genesis 1:26, 45:5-6, 47:13-26, 33-34.

We are to talk to God about big decisions. Genesis 46:1-4.

In a previous portion, Abraham was a prophet and prayed for Abimelech. From this account, we understand that the prophets also pray for people's healing. Ya'akov was told by God that Yosef, also a prophet of God, would pray for Ya'akov's eyes. Genesis 46:4.

It is good to give proper respect. Yosef introduces his family to the Pharaoh. Genesis 47:1-2.

We see Ya'akov acting as a prophet or spiritual leader by blessing Pharaoh. It is the duty of a prophet or spiritual leader to pronounce blessings. Also, father's should be spiritual leaders in their house and pronounce blessings on their family. Genesis 47:7, 12:1-3.

We do not know for sure that Ya'akov knows what Yosef's brothers did to Yosef. For example, Yosef tells his brothers to be careful with how they identify what they do for a living. He advised them for their protection. Perhaps they never told Ya'akov because there was no profit in doing so or maybe they did tell him. We should always be honest, but our words should help or profit others. Genesis 46:31-34, 1 Corinthians 14:12, James 3:1-12.

In closing, let us say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.

Thank you for being with us today.