



**#11 VaYigash Genesis 44:18-47:27
by Moshe Schwab**

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
 Yĕhōvâh – 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, darkness wants to rule this world, instead, be a person of light. There are evil ideologies that believe the world would be better living like they do. Beliefs can take many forms, and it does not mean that it has to include a belief in God. Instead of following these false ideals, follow our good God and be a person of light.

The Bible likens those who do not understand the goodness of God and His commandments like those who walk around in darkness. Those who are in darkness do not have the ability to lead others properly because they are blinded by their false ideals and cannot see properly. Psalms 82:5 NKVJ says, "They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness."

People that have rejected God can come up with all kinds of ideas, and they may think that their intentions are for the better. We need to talk about this because people often live life by good intentions instead of God's commandments in the Bible. These self-idealists with their good intentions think they are good people.

Hitler imposed what he thought were good ideals on the people of Germany and those he conquered by murdering anyone who opposed him or anyone who could not contribute to his ideal society. He did that thinking he could have a superior society. His society turned out to be a murderous society that imposed war and murder through what the German leadership perceived as good intentions. The wars started by countries like Germany in World War 2 caused the death of 70 to 85 million people according to Wikipedia. That doesn't account for the murdering countries of Religious Communism and Religious Atheism that imposed their false ideals by murdering another 101 million of their own people.

Hitler was an Atheist, and his doctrine caused him to pursue war and also the murders of 11 million of the German people to impose his false atheist and supremacist doctrine. Stalin's society is said to have murdered 20 million of the Russian people in order to impose the Communist Religion on its people and they are still murdering their people today. China's Communist Religion is said to have led to the murders of 70 million of their own people and China also continues to murder its own people. The Communist and Atheist Religions are the most murderous religions that have ever existed. The Bible teaches that murder is wrong.

It is an understatement that we need to be a people of light for the world. The world in general does not know God and does not want to do what is right. They think it is enough to have good intentions. What is light according to the Bible? Psalms 119:105-106 NKJV says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments." It is God's judgments, His commandments that are light.

We are to follow God's commandments that are light and truth. Psalms 43:3 NKJV says, "Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me." If only the world would start following God. He knows what is best for us and His commandments are truth. Psalms 119:151 NKJV says, "You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth." God is not a detached or distant God. He has revealed the truths we need for life in the Bible. We need to allow God's light to lead us and not the mixed up and misguided intentions of people who do not believe in God.

God's truths can release us from the darkness of this world that produces false ideas and ideals. Again, Psalms 82:5 NKJV says, "They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness." It is God's commandments and light that can lead us and be our lamp. It is God who desires us to know truth. Psalms 18:28 NKJV says, "For You will light my lamp; the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness."

God's light is available to all; God wants us to accept His blessings. Join God's good kingdom. Deuteronomy 28:2 NKJV says, "All these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God." Do not follow the ways of those who do not believe in God. God wants you to be His special people and bless you. He wants to affirm your allegiance to Him and for you to agree to be His special holy people.

Deuteronomy 26:16-19 NKJV says,

This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken."

It could not be any plainer. Those present when Moshe addressed them had agreed to observe all that God commanded them. We can take part in that by making a decision to

follow God and keep His commandments. Believers for all of time also made the decision to keep God's commandments. For example, Abraham was not Israelite, but at one point made the decision to keep God's commandments. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." It is not automatic. Everyone who wants to follow our good God must also commit themselves to follow His commandments. God gave us 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." It is important to understand that God has given mankind His good commandments for our good. Moshe goes on to say in the next few verses that their Gentile believing fathers were also favored by God. God loves those who choose to follow His truths because they are good truths for life.

Deuteronomy 10:15-18 NKJV says,

The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.

Circumcise your heart and cut away false thinking. Stop being stiff-necked and being determined to do things your own way. Zealously desire to keep God's law. God wants what is right for everyone, even the stranger. So, do not be a stranger to God.

God wants what is best for us both in the here and now and in His future kingdom.

Psalms 34:8 NKJV says, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" God is not vindictive like the pagan gods were, and God does not have evil intentions for us. Mankind can be self-centered and abusive. God is good and will forgive those who call to Him. Psalms 86:5 NKJV says, "For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You." God only wants what is best for us and mankind. Give God a chance.

Isaiah 55:6-9 NKJV says,

Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

It is our destiny that those who keep the commandments of God should experience the goodness of God in the present and for eternity. Isaiah 55:12 NKJV says, "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Even all of creation will rejoice over those who follow our good God.

Be wise and keep God's commandments. Psalms 19:7 NKJV says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."

When I began keeping God's commandments my life got better. I remember introducing my friend David Roth to some of the young believers I knew. One of my grandmothers was a Roth. My friend saw them as weak people who did not apply themselves well. God was changing them though to be good and strong people who knew what was right. They would continue to grow and make their lives better. God helps the simple to be wise.

God's law is perfect and gives us wisdom and understanding for life (see Deuteronomy 4:6). These are important verses in Daniel. Daniel 12:2-3 NKJV says, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever." God will reward those who keep His commandments and teach others to keep His commandments. They will shine forever and ever in His future kingdom. God can do that because He is God.

Listen to God and not worldly messages. We have a choice in life. We can go on doing things our own way. Sometimes it will work out and at other times it will not. Do you want to be satisfied with part truths and intentions that do not help you or others to have the life that God's wants for you both in this life and life in His future kingdom? I have heard people who do things their own way in life say they are satisfied with their life, but what if what they perceive is satisfying is just a big lie. Proverbs 26:12 NKJV says, "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." The Communist and Atheist Religions have been the most destructive, murderous, and hurtful religions that have ever existed.

People may think that their life is productive and satisfying without God, but there is more to life than meets the eye. God is real and wants you to have a productive, satisfying, and good life not on our own terms, but by following the reality and truths of God. Do not be deluded into having worldly or sinful ideals. Not following God's commandments is called sin. Sin is evil because God is an all-knowing God and He gives us truths for life. Therefore, following false ideals is sin and is wrong. God pleads with us. Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV says, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" God wants what is best for us in this life and wants the wellbeing of our children. We could understand this verse as saying that God wants what is good for us and our ancestors, but it could also be alluding to God wanting what is good for us forever in His future kingdom.

Darkness wants to rule this world, instead, be a person of light. There is enough darkness in this world so why not be a person of God's light and understanding. People need the wisdom and understanding from God and his good commandments. God's light is available to all; God wants us to accept His blessings. Join God's good kingdom. It is up to us. God will forgive us if we change our hearts and do things God's way. Following your own heart may sometimes be okay, but at other times it can be evil. Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" God wants what is best for us both in the here and now and wants us to be in His wonderful future kingdom.

Revelation 21:4 NKJV says, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things

have passed away." He can do that because He is God. God gives us truths for life and then eternal life if we accept Him. Listen to God and not worldly messages. God is real, wants what is good for us, and for our children, and promises those who follow His commandments life in His future kingdom.

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 about 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. The Bible tells us that 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 both 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 Potiphar'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 his brothers 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. Seeking God's advice either through godly people or through God's revelation is a good thing to do. Sometimes we only require good common sense that comes from our own knowledge or from a reputable person. For example, if you are going to do some electrical work, getting advice from an electrician can be helpful.

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 live in sin will end up in, "The lake which burns with fire and brimstone," see Revelation 21:8 NKJV.

Those who want to do what is right and keep God's commandments, and those who fear God are more apt to keep God's commandments. I read once that violent criminals often have a high opinion of themselves. That is why they are more apt to commit sin. It therefore makes sense that since they do not fear God, 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. That is a different kind of fear. Deeply respecting who God helps us to do what He says and succeed in life.

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 to the Egyptians. 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 his father from having to relive what his father went through for what his brothers did to Yosef. Perhaps Yosef also did not tell Pharaoh what they did, or Pharaoh might not have 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 good practice to give respect to those whom respect is due. Ya'akov speaks to Pharaoh and blesses him. After all, Pharaoh was good to Yosef's family. 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. 1 Corinthians 15:42-43 NKJV says, "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."

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 both to keep God's commandments and with life.

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. Those who do not keep God's commandments will end up in the lake of fire and brimstone.

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, fathers 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. Yosef understood that it is important to be careful with our words. This can also teach us that we should try to fit into culture, but not in a sinful way. Yosef advised his brothers for their protection. Perhaps the brothers never told Ya'akov what they did to Yosef 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:

We need to explain why we use God's real name in the Aaronic blessing. Some believe we are not supposed to use God's name, but they are mistaken. ADONAI or LORD in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God which is pronounced Yě-hō-váh. Yě-hō-váh is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name.

According to Exodus 3:15, Yě-hō-váh is God's true name forever. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yě-hō-váh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah. Yě-hō-váh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. I want to honor God's name. Won't you also honor God's name and use His true name with respect at times. The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) is God's name. 2,363 different manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yě-hō-váh, once as Yě-hō-věh, never as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh.

Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה).

Numbers 6:27 says we are to put God's name on His people. What an honor it is to be a people of the creator and true God.

Let's say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶכָּ
 יֵאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

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.