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News

400TH ISSUE OF OUR PARASHA/ NEWSLETTER

We are sure that some of you have noticed that last week we have reached the 400th issue of our parasha/newsletter. Looking at the past we can just praise the L-rd for his blessings upon us and our ministry. When we started this newsletter it was because we found the necessity to share with our fellow workers news from all over the world, then came the idea of adding to this news a short comment on the parasha. The first publication was just by e-mail, without any layout, but progressively we wanted to improve it and a few years ago we used a layout software to build its current format. We have published our newsletter for about nine years, the first issued were not numbered.

20 PEOPLE IMMERSSED IN THE JORDAN RIVER

Shabbat 20th was a new day of Joy for the Israel Field, 20 people have been baptized in the Jordan River, 19 for the community of Arad and 1 for the community of Bat Yam. It is not very often that we have so many baptisms at once, that's why we can thank Kun, Eyub and Oleg for their good work. Since the beginning of the year 61 people have been immersed into the Jordan River.



BRITH MILA IN JERUSALEM

On Tuesday November 16 a boy was born in the family of Rav-Pastor Shalom David. This boy was called David. That means his full name is David David (twice the name of King

Shabbat Vayeshev
November 27, 2010
20 Kislev 5771

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david). On November 23, the when this boy was 8-day old he was circumcised according to the tradition of Israel and following the example of Yeshua (Luke 2:21).



We welcome David in our spiritual family and hope that he will grow in "wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men"

CHANUKAH

Chanukah begins next week, Wednesday night, December 1st. We have received this information from Jeff in Florida.

Chanukah Celebration Come and enjoy this wonderful time of the year with us by attending our Chanukah celebration at Beth-El Shalom. We will be lighting our gigantic 10 ft menorah as well as serving potato latkes, singing Chanukah songs, learning, dancing, playing games, and having fun. Bring your own menorah and candles and join us for our united lighting ceremony. We will be celebrating together

- On Friday Dec. 3rd at 7:00 PM (3rd night of Chanukah). Beth-El Shalom Messianic Congregation. Corner of 17 St. and 29th Ave N. — St. Petersburg.
- On Saturday Dec. 4th at 5:00 PM (4th night of Chanukah). A special youth and kids program will begin at 3:30 (just south of Main St)

Beth-El Shalom Messianic Congregation, 6209 Congress St. — New Port Richey

All are welcome, Free admission For more info call 345-7777 or 375-7502.

Parasha

1

Newsletter n° 401



OVERVIEW

VAYESHEV - וַיֵּשֶׁב GENESIS 37:1-40:23

Parasha

2

Newsletter

Jacob settles in the land of Canaan. His favorite son, Joseph, brings him critical reports about his brothers. Jacob makes Joseph a fine tunic of multi-colored woolen strips. Joseph exacerbates his brothers' hatred by recounting prophetic dreams of sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheaf, and of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him, signifying that all his family will appoint him king. The brothers indict Joseph and resolve to execute him. When Joseph comes to Shechem, the brothers relent and decide, at Reuven's instigation, to throw him into a pit instead. Reuven's intent was to save Joseph. Yehuda persuades the brothers to take Joseph out of the pit and sell him to a caravan of passing Ishmaelites. Reuven returns to find the pit empty and rends his clothes. The brothers soak Joseph's tunic in goat's blood and show it to Jacob, who assumes that Joseph has been devoured by a wild beast.

Jacob is inconsolable. Meanwhile, in Egypt, Joseph has been sold to Potiphar, Pharaoh's Chamberlain of the Butchers. In the Parasha's sub-plot, Yehuda's son Er dies as punishment for preventing his wife Tamar from becoming pregnant. Onan, Yehuda's second son, then weds Tamar by levirate marriage. He too is punished in similar circumstances. When Yehuda's wife dies, Tamar resolves to have children through Yehuda, as this union will found the Davidic line culminating in the Mashiach. Meanwhile, Joseph rises to power in the house of his Egyptian master. His extreme beauty attracts the unwanted advances of his master's wife. Enraged by his rejection, she accuses Joseph of attempting to seduce her, and he is imprisoned. In prison, Joseph successfully predicts the outcome of the dream of Pharaoh's wine steward, who is reinstated, and the dream of Pharaoh's baker, who is hanged. In spite of his promise, the wine steward forgets to help Joseph, and Joseph languishes in prison.

A SIGN FOR JACOB'S DESCENDANTS

The narratives of Genesis are more than stories. The vicissitudes of the forefathers are far more than ancient tales; they are spiritual realities pregnant with meaning, which form the woof and warp of G-d's people history. In order to understand the significance of the teachings in Genesis generally, and in this Torah portion specifically, we must introduce the concept of *ma'aseh avot siman l'banim*, "the actions of the forefathers serve as a sign for their descendants." Put another way, history repeats itself, or, in theological terms, G-d's people history is G-d's people destiny. Rabbi Shaul reminds us that "All Scripture is G-d-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness," (2 Tim 3:16).

JACOB SETTLED

The Torah States, "And Jacob settled in the land in which his father dwelled." (Genesis 37:1) Rabbi Ari Kahn says that Jacob has come to the point in his life when he could finally settle down. The Torah uses the Hebrew verb *yeshbev*, "settled," to describe his action of setting up a homestead, contrasting it with the verb *m'gurei*, "dwelled." Interestingly, *m'gurei* is a derivative of *guer*, "stranger," and implies a stopover in wanderings. So the point is that Jacob succeeds in actually settling down and sinking roots.

Interestingly, at a later time, when Jacob is brought before the pharaoh of Egypt and is asked his age, he himself uses a *m'gurai* to answer: "The days of my dwelling are one hundred and thirty years. Few and bad have been the days of my life." (Genesis 47:9) So did Jacob in fact, settle, or merely dwell?

Rashi cites a Midrash which explains: Jacob wished to settle in tranquillity, but the anger over the disappearance of Joseph overwhelmed him. The holy ones wish to live in tranquillity. G-d says, is it not sufficient that they have a share awaiting them in the next world, they wish to live in tranquility in this world as well! (Rashi 37:2).

JACOB'S LEGACY

Jacob identified Joseph as his heir in the fulfillment of his mission. The Torah gives us a hint of this from the start of this week's portion: "These are the generations of Jacob; Joseph was seventeen years old"

(Genesis 37:2). The link between Jacob and Joseph is spelled out from the start.

Of all his sons specifically Joseph holds the key to Jacob's legacy. The generations of Jacob will be fulfilled in Joseph. It is no wonder that Joseph, who had special gifts as visionary and interpreter of dreams, was his father's favorite. "Israel loved Joseph more than any of his sons" (Genesis 37:3). It is interesting that here the text uses the name Israel as opposed to Jacob, implying that the love was not just sentimental but on G-d's people level.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

Joseph was Jacob's firstborn in thought, for Jacob had intended to marry Rachel first, and Joseph was Rachel's firstborn. As Jacob's likeness, Joseph also possessed all the various traits that would define the entire people of Israel.

Joseph played the role of the first born; he preceded his brothers to Egypt and laid the foundation for his brothers' eventual sojourn there. Joseph's descendant, Yehoshua, conquered the land that the tribes then developed into the Jewish commonwealth.

The Torah then informs us that Jacob, in his role as Israel, the progenitor of the future nation loved Joseph *mikol banav* "from all his sons." His love for Joseph emanated from the love of all his sons, for he viewed Joseph as the one who represented them all and who would prepare them for their future tasks.

According to Rabbi Zev Leff: The brothers viewed Joseph as a threat to the nation, which in their view had already come into being. They perceived him as attempting to curry favor in Jacob's eyes at their expense. They viewed their father's love for Joseph as coming at their expense, and thus estranged themselves from him and could not find the ability to speak to him in harmonious perfection that had to be reached through the unity of each tribe contributing its unique portion, and not usurping the role of another tribe.

TWO TYPES OF DREAMS

The Sages tell us that there are two distinct types of dreams: those generated by one's own thoughts and ideas; the other linked to prophecy. When Joseph related his dreams concerning

his brothers' sheaves of grain bowing to him—and later the dream of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him—he did so because he viewed them as prophetic mandates. The brothers, however, saw them as further proof that thoughts of domination preoccupied his mind.

WHERE WAS G-D DURING THE SALE OF JOSEPH?

Rabbi Shmuel, the son of Nachman said: "The brothers were busy in the selling of Joseph; Joseph was busy with his sackcloth and fasting; Reuben was busy with his sackcloth and fasting; Jacob was busy with his sackcloth and fasting; Judah was busy taking a wife for himself; and G-d was busy creating the light of the King Messiah. 'And it came to pass at that time and Judah went down' before the first slave is born, before the final redeemer is born." (Midrash Rabba 85:1)

The Midrash is answering the unspoken question: Where was G-d during the sale of Joseph? The answer is amazing. G-d was busy creating the light of the Messiah. Surely this is a bizarre response. As the result of the sale Israel would all make their way to Egypt, slavery will ensue, and along with it, incredible suffering for countless people. And this was all of part of G-d's Messianic plan?

Later, Joseph comes to recognize that this was indeed true. He understands that the Divine hand was involved in the events of his life. As he would inform his brothers upon their reconciliation: "And now do not be saddened that you have sold me into this slavery in a foreign land, for G-d has sent me ahead to be a source of sustenance for you ... it is not you who has sent me here but G-d." (Genesis 47:5-8). G-d was putting His own plan into action. The slavery foretold to Abraham had not taken place yet, the redemption had not taken place, nonetheless G-d was busy planning for the final stage—the coming of the Messiah—of which Judah's descent was a vital element.

EXCESSIVE MOURNING

The Torah forbids excessive mourning on this very ground; that death constitutes only a temporary separation. (Nachmanides, Deut.14,1)



WHY AND HOW JEWS CELEBRATE HANUKAH?

There are two ways which Jews' enemies have historically sought to destroy them. The first is by physical annihilation; the most recent attempt being the Shoa. The second is through cultural assimilation. Purim is the annual celebration of Jewish physical survival. Hanukah is the annual celebration of Jewish spiritual survival over the many who would have liked to destroy them through cultural assimilation.

In 167 BCE the Syrian-Greek emperor, Antiochus, set out to destroy Judaism by imposing a ban on three mitzvot: the Shabbat, Establishing of the New Month (establishing the first day of the month by testimony of witnesses who saw the new moon) and Brit Mila (circumcision). Brit Mila is a sign of Israel' covenant with the Almighty. All three maintain Jewish cultural integrity and were thus threats to the Greek culture.

Matityahu and his five sons, known as the Maccabees, started a revolt and three years later succeeded in evicting the oppressors. The victory was a miracle—on the scale of Israel defeating the combined super-powers of today. Having regained control of the Temple in Jerusalem, they wanted to immediately rededicate it. They needed ritually pure olive oil to re-light the Menorah in the Temple. Only a single cruse of oil was found; enough to burn for just one day. However, they needed oil for eight days until new ritually pure olive oil could be produced. A miracle occurred and the oil burned for eight days.

Therefore, Jews light Hanukah candles for eight days. One the first day, two the second and so forth. The first candle is placed to the far right of the menorah with each additional night's candle being placed to the immediate left. One says three blessings the first night (two blessings each subsequent night) and then lights the candles, starting with the furthest candle to the left. The menorah should have all candles in a straight line and at the same height. Ashkenazi tradition has each person of the household lighting his own menorah. Sefardi tradition has just one menorah lit per family. The candles may be lit inside the home. It is preferable to light where passers by in the street can see them—to publicize the miracle of

Hanukah. In Israel, people light outside in special glass boxes built for a menorah or little glasses with olive oil and wicks.

The tradition to eat special cakes fried on oil in the memory of the miracle of the oil, and potato pancakes. In Israel, the tradition is to eat *sufganiot*, deep-fried jelly donuts. The traditional game of Hanukah uses a dreidel, a four-sided top with the Hebrew letters Nun (נ), Gimmel (ג), Hey (ה), Shin (ש) (The first letters of *Nes Gadol Haya Sham*—A Great Miracle Happened There. In Israel, the last letter is a Pay (פ) for *Po* “here.”) Rabbi Pakouz say “in times of persecution when learning Torah was forbidden, Jews would learn anyway. When the soldiers would investigate, they would pull out the dreidel and pretend that they were gambling” we have confirmation of this custom in John 19:23-24.

BLESSINGS OVER CANDLES (EVERY NIGHT)

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam asher kidishanu b'mitz'votav v'tzivanu l'had'lik neir shel Chanukah.

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light the lights of Chanukah.

BLESSINGS OVER HANUKAH (EVERY NIGHT)

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam she'asab nisim la'avoteinu bayamim habeim baziman hazeh. (Amen)

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time

SHEHECHEYANU (FIRST NIGHT ONLY)

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam shebecheyanu v'kiymanu v'hig'anu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season (Amen)

EDITOR

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Richard-Amram Elofer
4, Abraham Lincoln
94186 Jerusalem
Israel

Tel. +972 504 535 121
Fax +972 2625 1319
email: richard@elofers.com
web: jewishadventist.org

HAFTARAH

Amos 2:6-3:8

PARASHAH: We continue to read in this parasha the story of Yaakov and specially the painful experience of Yosef who was sold by his brothers for some coins of silver. “Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers agreed. . . . they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.” (Genesis 37:27-28).

HAFTARAH: This text of Amos could be linked to the selling of Yosef for some coins of silver “Thus says the LORD: For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals” (Amos 2:6).

PARASHAH: The first installation of Israelites in Egypt “Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.” (Gen. 39:1)

HAFTARAH: The mention of Egypt in our haftarah text is also a link with the Parasha where Yosef is sold and then will see Israel to be installed in Egypt, then after slavery they will have to leave. “Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. And I raised up some of your children to be prophets and some of your youths to be nazirites. Is it not indeed so, O people of Israel? says the LORD.” (Amos 2:10-11).

HAFTARAH: It is not easy to be god’s people, it gives us more responsibilities and from time to time Israel did not use their privilege properly, that’s why the Lord has said to them: “Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt: You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” (Amos 3:1-2).

G-d says that he will punish Israel for all their sins, the temple has been destroyed two thousand years ago and the people have been taken in deportation. It is interesting to notice that the Sages of Israel have made connection between the story of Yosef and the destruction of the Second Temple which is attributed by the Midrash to the unwarranted hatred between brothers.

BRIT HACHADASHA

Acts 7:2-19

This text of the book of the Acts of Yeshua’s Talmidim is in a special context and it is a speech from Stephen, a believer who has not been one of the talmidim of Yeshua.

We are three years and a half after the death and resurrection of Yeshua, the message of Yeshua has been preached only in Yerushalaim, and the Judean leaders are upset. They thought that the death of Yeshua would stop the rumor saying that he is the Mashiah. But, in fact, it is the opposite, Jerusalem is filled with the message of Yeshua. These leaders have arrested Stephen, they were jealous of his success as Joseph’s brothers were jealous of his position in the brotherhood. The high priest asked him if the charges against him were true, for his defence Stephen thought it would be good to remind how G-d’s people their own history, maybe they forgot how G-d guided them in the past and in he started to say, “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.” (7:2) telling the story of the Patriarchs we see that the story of Joseph is very important in the text. On the 18 verses, 7 are about Abraham and 11 are about Joseph.

What we learn from this text is

- 1) the motive of Joseph’s brother to sell him to the Ishmaelites was jealousy.
- 2) Joseph was not abandoned there, God was with Him.
- 3) God gave him a special wisdom in order to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh.
- 4) When Jacob died his body was buried in Hebron, in the tomb that Abraham bought.
- 5) However the body of Joseph was not buried in Hebron, but on a plot of ground that Jacob bought in Shechem (Gen 33:19).
- 6) a new Pharaoh arrived in Israel who started to oppress the children of Israel.

This narrative shows us that Stephen had a very good knowledge of the Bible, he had no Bible with him, very few people could have a fragment of the Bible at that time. The lesson for us is that we have to be ready to defend our beliefs by quoting the Bible and its stories by heart.

