

וַיְחִי

# Vayechi

“And he lived”



“Obey”

And Jacob lived  
in the land of Egypt seventeen years.  
So the length of Jacob's life was  
one hundred and forty-seven years.  
Genesis 47:28

In this week's Torah Portion, Ya'kov (Jacob) was aware that his life on earth was coming to an end. He made his son Yosef (Joseph) swear that he would not bury him in Egypt when he died. Yosef swore to bury Ya'kov with his fathers in the Cave of Machpelah, located at Hebron in the land of promise.

When Yosef heard that his father was sick, he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim to visit him. Ya'kov blessed his grandsons, making them heirs to the blessings of God just as if they were his sons. He then called all his sons to him before he died and told each one what would happen to their descendants in the last day. This proclamation was based on his sons' behavior during their lives. When he was finished speaking these prophetic words to his sons, he laid down on his bed and died.

Yosef prepared his father's body for burial according to the customs in Egypt, and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days. Pharaoh allowed Yosef to leave Egypt temporarily in order to bury his father in the land of promise just as he had requested. Pharaoh sent all his servants and all the elders of his house along with chariots and horsemen up with the house of Yosef to bury Ya'kov in Hebron. They observed seven days of mourning for Ya'kov at the threshing floor of Atad beyond the Jordan River, and all the people of the land realized this was an intense mourning.

After Ya'kov had been buried in the Cave of Machpelah, Yosef and all those with him returned to Egypt, and Yosef's brothers once again bowed before him, submitting to be his servants. Yosef continued to live in Egypt until he died at the age of 110 years. Before he died, he took this oath from the children of Yisra'el (Israel):

**“God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.”** Genesis 50:25

## Pray First

Father God,

You are Sovereign in all things. It is not Your will for evil to occur, but You alone are able to turn evil into good to fulfill Your purposes. Help us to always agree with You and make You the top priority of our lives. Please teach us to obey You. Please remind us to give thanks to You in all circumstances, as we learn to live obediently to Your commandments. In Yeshua's Name we pray. Amen

## Read Next

Genesis 47:28-50:26

# ~ Focus Passage of Scripture ~

Genesis 48:5-22



In this week's focus passage of Scripture, God revealed to Ya'kov that he was going to die while in exile. When Ya'kov realized this, his top priority was to bless the next generation. The word "blessing" means pulling something down from above. When we receive what God desires to give us, we receive His blessing.

Approximately 107 years before his death, Ya'kov left the land of promise because his brother Esav (Esau) wanted to kill him. As Ya'kov fled, he camped at a place called Luz on the first night of his journey. That night he dreamed a ladder was set up on earth and its top reached into the heavens. The angels of God were going down and back up on the ladder from heaven to earth, and the LORD stood above the ladder and spoke to Ya'kov. The LORD promised Ya'kov that He would give the land he was leaving, the land of promise, to him and his descendants after him. He promised Ya'kov that his descendants would be like the sand of the earth, meaning they would always exist and could not be counted. He told Ya'kov that his descendants would spread out in all four directions on the earth and that all the families of the earth would be blessed through them. The LORD also told Ya'kov that He would always be with him and He would keep him wherever he went. Finally, the LORD promised Ya'kov that He would bring him back to the land of promise because He would not leave him until He had accomplished everything He had spoken to him. Ya'kov's dream revealed that God desires to give His children access into heaven or the Kingdom of God. As we submit to the plans and purposes of God, He will bless us abundantly so that we can be a blessing to others. Ya'kov arose early the next morning and poured oil on the rock he had slept on to anoint it, setting it apart from the other stones. He vowed that since God desired to bless him in this way, the LORD would be his God! He also vowed that he would give a tenth of everything God gave him back to the LORD. In other words he would take what God gave him and bless others with it. Ya'kov named the place where God had promised all these things to him Bethel, meaning "House of God" (Genesis 28).

Throughout Ya'kov's life of 147 years, he had experienced God's abundant blessings. God had sustained him, protected him, prospered him no matter where he was and God also brought him out of exile to dwell safely again in the land of promise just as He promised. However, when Ya'kov failed to respond correctly to the dreams God revealed to Yosef, he was severely disciplined by God. Ya'kov's sin not only affected himself, it affected his family and future generations for many years to come. Although Ya'kov had pursued God his entire life, when he failed to agree with God and demonstrate it through his behavior, he was living under his own authority instead of living under the authority of God. Even though his sin was evil God used it, turning it into good in order to fulfill His plans and purposes. God does not depend on man to accomplish His will, rather He invites man to submit to His will in agreement with Him so that man can be blessed by Him. As Yakov's life was coming to an end, he wanted to share this truth with the next generation.

At the end of his life Ya'kov fully understood the significance of Yosef's life for the end of time. Therefore, Yisra'el (Ya'kov) behaved in a way that would demonstrate his understanding. He gathered all his strength so that he could sit on his bed and testify to this truth before he died.

In Genesis 48:5-6 we learn that Ya'kov took Ephraim and Manasseh, Yosef's first two sons born in Egypt, as sons for himself. Ya'kov explained to Yosef that all children born to him after these would be his, but Ephraim and Manasseh would be Ya'kov's direct heirs just as Reuben and Simeon, the first two sons born to Ya'kov in exile. By doing this Ya'kov elevated Ephraim and Manasseh to receive the same inheritance as Yosef. When reading these verses, did you notice that Ya'kov stated Ephraim's name first even though Manasseh was Yosef's first born son?

In Genesis 48:7 Ya'kov reminded Yosef that his mother had died in the land of Canaan on the road to Ephrath or Bethlehem. Rachel, Ya'kov's beloved wife, gave birth to only two sons and died while giving birth to Yosef's younger brother Benjamin. The names Ephraim and Ephrath both relate to fruitfulness, and the name Manasseh is related to forgetting past hardships as God's promises are remembered. This teaches us that in order to be fruitful we must agree with and focus on the plans and purposes of God no matter what opposition we face.

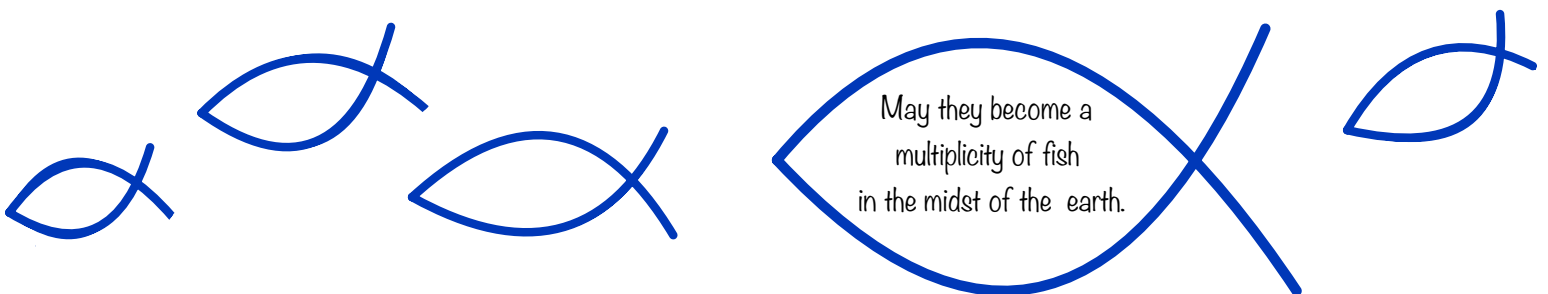
In Genesis 48:8-11 Ya'kov is referred to as Yisra'el. This name change connects this passage of Scripture with the Messiah and the end of time. When Yisra'el saw the two sons of Yosef, he requested they be brought to him so that he could bless them. Yisra'el's eyes were dim, meaning he could no longer see well because of his old age. Yosef brought his two sons to his father just as he requested, and Ya'kov hugged and kissed the boys. He stated that he had believed he would never see Yosef again, but God had blessed him, allowing him to see both Yosef and his children.

In Genesis 48:12-14 Yosef respectfully bowed before his father with his face to the ground, as he brought his sons by his knees in front of Yisra'el. Yosef intentionally positioned Ephraim his youngest son in front of Yisra'el's left hand and Manasseh his first born son in front of Yisra'el's right hand. Even though his eyes were dim Yisra'el, being led by the Spirit of God and fully aware of what he was doing, placed his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left hand he placed on the head of Manasseh. The right hand always signifies a greater blessing.

In Genesis 48:15-16 Yisra'el blessed the sons of Yosef with regard to their father. In other words because Yosef had submissively and obediently walked with God all of his life even through much hardship and persecution, God had richly blessed him. Having received great blessings from God, Yosef was equipped to be a blessing to the next generation. Ya'kov spoke these words of blessing to his sons:

**"The God, before whom my fathers Avraham and Yitzchak walked, The God Who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Messenger Who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads:  
Let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Avraham and Yitzchak;  
and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."**

With this blessing Ya'kov taught that he had received the covenantal promises God made to his fathers, and these same promises would continue through the next generation until the last day! He also taught that Yosef's submission and obedient behavior to the plans and purposes of God positioned him to be a blessing to others.



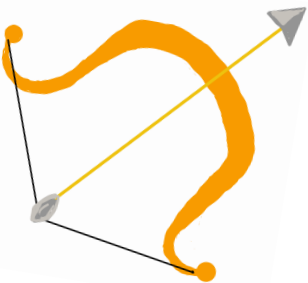
In Genesis 48:17-19 Yosef realized that his father had placed his right hand on the head of his younger son and this displeased him. He took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim and place it on Manasseh's head instead. He told his father to place his right hand on the head of the first born, but Yisra'el refused and assured Yosef that he had not made a mistake. Yisra'el meant to put his right hand on the younger son's head to demonstrate he agreed with the plans and purposes of God. Yisra'el explained to Yosef that Manasseh would also be blessed and become great, but Ephraim his younger brother would be greater and his descendants would become a multitude of nations like a multiplicity of fish in the midst of the earth (Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:14-20).

In Genesis 48:20 Yisra'el blessed Ephraim and Manasseh. He made a proclamation stating that God would bless others through Ephraim also called Yisra'el and that everyone should desire to be blessed by God so that they could be a blessing to others like Ephraim and Manasseh. Ya'kov had learned that his life experiences foretold similar things that will occur in the last day. These things teach us what will happen in the future before the Kingdom of God is established on the earth:

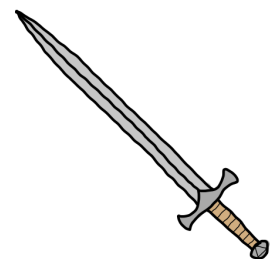
- Just as Ya'kov was alone and fleeing for his life, so will Ephraim (the nation of Yisra'el) be alone, fleeing for survival in the last day.
- Just as Ya'kov relied solely on God for all his needs, vowing to return to Him ten percent of all He gave him, so will Ephraim (the nation of Yisra'el) rely solely on God and influence others to fully depend on Him in the last day.
- Just as Ya'kov was fruitful having four wives and at least thirteen children, so will Ephraim (the nation of Yisra'el) be fruitful becoming a multitude of nations in the last day.
- Just as Ya'kov came back to the land in order to share his blessings with his brother, so will Ephraim (the nation of Yisra'el) return to the land of promise to share God's blessings with the nations in the last day.

The nation of Yisra'el will receive all the blessings God has promised when it depends completely upon God. When the nation of Yisra'el receives all the promises of God, it will be a blessing to the entire world! By placing his right hand on Ephraim's head instead of Manasseh, Yisra'el (Ya'kov) was demonstrating this truth from God. Likewise today, when we fully rely upon God and demonstrate our trust in Him by obeying His Word no matter how difficult the circumstance, we receive His blessings, and we can be a blessing to others!

In Genesis 48:21 Yisra'el informed Yosef that the only thing he had left to do before he died was to speak these words of truth about God's work of redemption. He explained to Yosef that through redemption, God will be with him and his descendants to return them to the land of his fathers, the land of promise, which is the land of Yisra'el.



In Genesis 48:22 Yisra'el informed Yosef that all these things will be accomplished by God through war. Just as God had given him victory over the Amorite with his sword and bow, God will give the nation of Yisra'el victory over their enemies in the last day before the Kingdom of God is established on earth!



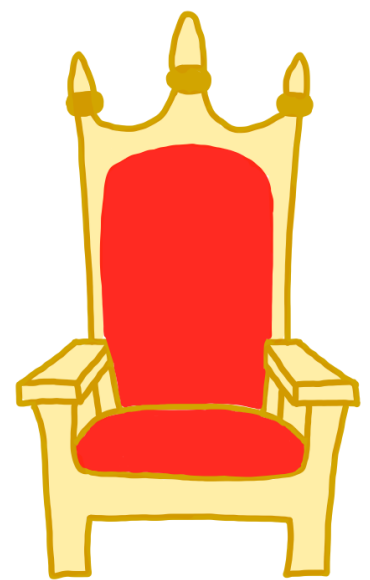
# ~Torah Test~

Directions: Unscramble the letters below each blank to write the correct answer.

1. When we receive what God desires to give us, we receive His \_\_\_\_\_.  
sgleibns
2. Ya'kov's dream revealed that God desires to give His people access into heaven or the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.  
dgimokN
3. The name \_\_\_\_\_ means House of God.  
telBhe
4. God does not need \_\_\_\_\_ to accomplish His will.  
nma
5. God invites man to \_\_\_\_\_ to His will so that he can be blessed by Him.  
btusim
6. The name Ephraim is connected to \_\_\_\_\_.  
nuuftlrifses
7. The name \_\_\_\_\_ is connected to forgetting persecution and focusing on the promises of God.  
nsehMsaa
8. Yosef was a blessing to others because he submitted to God and \_\_\_\_\_ Him.  
yeeodb
9. The nation of Yisra'el will receive all of God's promises when it \_\_\_\_\_ completely on Him.  
esrlei
10. God will give the Nation of Yisra'el \_\_\_\_\_ over their enemies before the Kingdom of God is established on the earth!  
tyvcior

# Haftarah

1 Kings 2:1-12



The period that David reigned over  
Yisra'el was forty years;  
seven years he reigned in Hebron  
and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years.  
1 Kings 2:11

In this week's Haftarah King David, God's anointed King of Yisra'el, was aware that he was at the end of his life. Before he died, King David spoke with his son Solomon, who would inherit the throne of his father. King David had learned through his life experiences that God's discipline for His people is for their good and God's judgment of His enemies cannot be escaped. When God's people take matters into their own hands, they are acting pridefully and demonstrating more trust in themselves than in God. When God's people disobey Him, they must be disciplined so that they can learn to **obey** Him and bring glory to His Name. God is sovereign, meaning He has the right to exercise His ruling power over all of His creation. Through His power God is able to take evil and turn it into good. However, this does not mean that there are no consequences when someone opposes the purposes and plans of the Almighty God, committing evil against Him.

King David was aware of the importance of keeping the charge of the LORD God and to walk in His ways! He knew to pull down blessings from God to the earth one must keep His statutes, commandments, judgments and His testimonies. King David charged Solomon to follow the Law of God given to Moses for His people so that he would prosper in all that he did no matter where he was. King David understood that the LORD would fulfill His promises through his descendants, and if the next generation would be careful to walk with the LORD in truth, with all their heart and with all their soul, the LORD would be with them. He would defend and protect them, He would provide for them and sustain them and He would prosper them and direct them so that they could bless others. If the descendants of King David were careful to agree with the plans and purposes of God, they would never lack a ruler to sit on the throne of Yisra'el. It was very important that Solomon, the next king of Yisra'el, understood clearly that God's greatest desire is to bless His people so they can be a blessing to others, but God does not bless His people when they disobey Him.

King David was a man of war, and God had given Yisra'el victory over their enemies during his reign of forty years. At his death Solomon would sit on his throne to firmly establish the Kingdom of Yisra'el during a time of peace in the land. To maintain peace in the kingdom King Solomon had to administer justice in agreement with God. King Solomon would judge the people through the wisdom of God. Those who opposed the plans and purposes of God would not be free of guilt and would be destroyed. Those who showed support and kindness to the throne of Yisra'el, demonstrating they agreed with the plans and purposes of God, would be rewarded.

# New Testament

## 1 Peter 1:3-9



In this week's New Testament passage the apostle Peter was speaking to Jewish believers in Messiah Yeshua who were living in exile. Although they were not living in the Land of Yisra'el, they were expecting restoration because of their hope in the LORD. Peter explained to the people that by God's foreknowledge He knew their suffering before it happened, and because God is Sovereign, He has the power to put an end to all suffering. When God allows His people to suffer, it is because He has a purpose for it.

If God allows His people to suffer as a result of His discipline, it is because He desires to teach them to **obey** Him in order to receive or pull down His abundant blessings from heaven to earth. If God allows His people to suffer as a result of persecution from the enemy, He is giving them a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate their faith in Him through their behavior. **Obedient** behavior in these circumstances will be documented by God for a future Kingdom reward!

When God allows His people to suffer, no matter what caused the suffering, He always uses it for the good of His people or for their sanctification. Sanctification is a process that the children of God go through to be set apart or to be made holy in their behavior in order to serve Him.

The behavior of a believer does not save them; rather, it demonstrates their trust in the One Who saved them by His Blood! A believer cannot worship or serve God without first being redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb of God, Messiah Yeshua. The sanctification of our behavior is a very important process which teaches us to **obey** God so that we can worship and serve Him in the way that pleases Him and brings glory to His Name or character.

Peter had failed many times in his life. He had denied knowing Messiah Yeshua three times on the night of His arrest just as Yeshua had foretold he would. But through the abundant mercy found in the Blood of Messiah Yeshua, Peter was restored through the living hope he found in the resurrection of Messiah Yeshua from the dead. A believer's hope in the promises of God, which include the coming Kingdom of God, must be remembered and focused on during times of discipline from God and during times of persecution from the enemy. A believer's hope grounded in the resurrection of Messiah Yeshua is connected to the same hope for an inheritance that both Ya'kov and King David understood before they died. Both of these men understood that they would inherit the incorruptible and undefiled Kingdom of God through the promises of God. Because of their hope, they informed the next generation about this truth so that they too could receive redemption and blessing from God.

In this week's New Testament passage the Apostle Peter taught believers in Messiah Yeshua who were living in exile this same truth. All those who trust in Messiah Yeshua for their redemption have access to the Kingdom of God during their life and will have a full inheritance in the Kingdom of God at their death. Our inheritance has been, is being and will be kept for us in heaven by God! Because we have such a great inheritance kept by the power of God through our faith in Him, we can endure all sufferings in our life as we look forward to our future. When we respond to God's discipline with gratitude, we will be spiritually blessed. When we respond to trials and persecution of the enemy with hope and joy because we know the enemy is defeated by the Blood of the Lamb of God, Messiah Yeshua, we testify our faith to others, and it is documented by God for an eternal reward!

Our **obedience** to the Word of God demonstrates our faith to the world. We will receive our full reward for our **obedience** to God when we inherit His Kingdom!

~ Kingdom Test ~

Directions: Unscramble the letters below each blank to write the correct answer.

10. The children of God will receive their full \_\_\_\_\_ for their obedience when they inherit the Kingdom of God.



