

# וישב

## VAYESHEV/AND HE SETTLED Bereshith/Genesis 37:1-40:23

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After more than **20 years away from the Land**, as the parasha is entitled, **Jacob** is ready to “settle”:

*Bereshith 37:1* Now **Jacob settled in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.**

The **next 14 chapters**, however, will lead us into a story that takes **Jacob’s offspring AWAY** from “settling” in the Land. This is **consistent with the promises in the covenant יהוה (Yahweh)** made with **Abraham**:

*Bereshith 15:13* Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that **your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.**

It is the **events in Joseph’s life that lead to the entire family’s descent into Egypt**. Our parasha quickly makes us **aware of the favoritism Jacob (Israel) displays towards Joseph**:

*Bereshith 37:3* Now **Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors.**<sup>4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

It is interesting that the **Torah** mentions that it is “**Israel**” that **loved Joseph more than all his other children**. With “**Jacob**” describing the more **fleshly part of the man**, you’d expect “**Jacob**” to be the **name** in the text. It should make us **hesitant in criticizing Israel for singling out Joseph**. That doesn’t mean that **Joseph was perfect**. On the **contrary, Joseph had some growing up to do**. We begin with **Joseph’s way of handling the bad behavior of his brothers**:

*Bereshith 37:2* These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and **Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.**

**Yeshua** sets forth a **better way of correcting problems** of which you have **first-hand knowledge**:

*Matthew 18:15* "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.<sup>16</sup> "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'<sup>17</sup> "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the assembly. But if he refuses even to hear the assembly, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Why did **Jacob favor Joseph**? Remember that **Jacob had worked 14 years for Laban** only for the sake of **marrying Rachel**, who after **years of barrenness, finally gave birth to Joseph**. **Joseph** could therefore be considered **Jacob’s “intended firstborn”**. As the **beloved, son of the father**, whose **brothers hate him, Joseph** is about to give us one of the most **phenomenal pictures of the Messiah Yeshua**. The following comparisons are a slightly edited version from [www.hebrew4christians.com](http://www.hebrew4christians.com):

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<b>Joseph</b>	<b>Yeshua</b>
<b>Was a shepherd (Bereshith 37:2)</b>	<b>Yeshua is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)</b>
<b>Beloved of his father (Bereshith 37:3)</b>	<b>“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17; 17:5)</b>
<b>Anointed by his father (coat of many colors) Bereshith 37:3</b>	<b>Yeshua anointed as Messiah ben David (Heb. 1:9)</b>
<b>Brothers hated him (Bereshith 37:4)</b>	<b>Yeshua was hated without a cause (John 15:25)</b>
<b>Brothers refused his rule (Bereshith 37:8)</b>	<b>We do not want this man to rule over us (Luke 19:14)</b>
<b>Brothers jealous of him (Bereshith 37:11)</b>	<b>It was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over (Mark 15:10)</b>
<b>Sent out by his father (Bereshith 37:12-14)</b>	<b>Yeshua sent by His Father (John 5:30-36)</b>
<b>Brothers conspired to kill him (Bereshith 37:18)</b>	<b>The chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Yeshua in order to bring about His death (Matthew 27:1)</b>
<b>Brothers disbelieved him (Bereshith 37:19-20)</b>	<b>Yeshua’s brothers did not believe in Him (John 1:11; 3:18)</b>
<b>Stripped of his robe (Bereshith 37:23) wear a scarlet robe (Matthew 27:28)</b>	<b>Yeshua was stripped of his garments and made to wear a scarlet robe (Matthew 27:28)</b>
<b>Cast into a pit (Bereshith 37:24)</b>	<b>Spent 3 days in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40)</b>
<b>Brothers ate a meal while he was in the pit (Bereshith 37:25)</b>	<b>Brethren ate the Passover while He was in the grave (John 13:1)</b>
<b>Sold for pieces of silver (Bereshith 37:28)</b>	<b>Judas was paid 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15)</b>
<b>Raised from the pit (Bereshith 37:28)</b>	<b>Raised from the grave (John 20)</b>
<b>Made a slave (Bereshith 37:28)</b>	<b>Matthew 26:15; Philippians 2:7</b>
<b>Taken to Egypt to avoid being killed (Bereshith 37:28)</b>	<b>Taken to Egypt to avoid evil Herod (Matthew 2:13)</b>
<b>Covered his robe with blood (Bereshith 37:31)</b>	<b>His robe was covered with blood (Mark 15:17)</b>
<b>Made overseer (Bereshith 39:4)</b>	<b>The Father loves the Son and has placed all things into His hands (John 3:35; Matthew 28:18)</b>
<b>Made no defense (Bereshith 39:19)</b>	<b>Yeshua gave no answers (Isaiah 53:7; Luke 23:9)</b>
<b>Imprisoned with two (Bereshith 40:2-3)</b>	<b>Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be</b>

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put to death with Yeshua (Luke 23:32)

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Falsely accused (Bereshith 40:15)

Yeshua falsely accused (Matthew 27:23; Mark 15:11-15; Luke 23:21-23)

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I will point out even more of these **comparisons** as we finish out **Bereshith**. **Judaism teaches** that there will be **two Messiahs** involved in **delivering Israel from its exile** and **ushering in the Messianic era**. These **two Messiahs** are called **Messiah ben David** (Messiah son of David, i.e. **reigning King**) and **Messiah ben Yosef** (Messiah son of Joseph, i.e. **suffering servant**).

When **unbelieving Jews** speak of the **Messiah**, they are usually referring to **Messiah ben David** of the tribe of **Judah** who will **usher in the Kingdom of יהודה** and **rule in the Messianic age**. Obviously, **King David's life foreshadows Messiah ben David**. However, **Messiah ben Yosef** is said to come **first**. **Judaism teaches** that **this Messiah will not be recognized**. **Messiah ben Yosef** will **war against evil** and be **killed (like Yeshua)**. His **death** will be **followed by a period of tribulation for Israel**, and then **Messiah ben David** will **appear to avenge his (Messiah ben Yosef) death** and **inaugurate the Messianic kingdom**. **Messiah ben David** will **restore the Temple**, **regather the exiles of Israel**, and **bring peace to the earth**.

What we know to be the **truth** as **believers in Yeshua** is that **Yeshua already came as Messiah ben Yosef (suffering servant)**. He **suffered and died for the sake of Israel in a spiritual war against evil**. It is the **same Messiah** who will **return as Messiah ben David (reigning king)** to bring **judgment** on the **unjust**, to **gather the exiles**, and to **restore the kingdom to Israel**. Instead of **two Messiahs** coming at **two different times**, we **believe in one Messiah Yeshua** who came the **1<sup>st</sup> time** as the **suffering servant, Messiah ben Yosef**, and will **return as the reigning King, Messiah ben David**.

While it is true that **Joseph foreshadows Yeshua**, he also presents to us a **picture of the body of Messiah**. It is simple. **Yeshua is the head...we are His body**. So **BOTH Yeshua and His body (bride)** are **represented by Joseph in exile**.

Let's find **one example** of how **Joseph represents both the head and the body**. First let's take note of the **jealousy and rejection** that the **brothers had for Joseph** because of the **love their father had for him**:

*Bereshith 37:4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.*

*Bereshith 37:11 And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*

Now we can **apply this to Yeshua** who was also **loved by his Father**, but **despised and rejected by his brethren**:

*John 1:11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.*

*John 15:24 "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also **hated both Me and My Father**.<sup>25</sup> "But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their Torah, '**They hated Me without a cause.**'*

As the **"body"** of **Messiah**, we also have the **love and favor of the Father**. It is a part of the **Father's plan** that **this love will provoke our unbelieving brothers to jealousy**:

**Romans 5:8** *But Yah demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Messiah died for us.*

**Devarim/Deuteronomy 32:21** *They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not Elohim; They have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.*

**Romans 10:19** *But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."*

Now take note of the awesome **consequences** of the **Father's plan** of "**provoking to jealousy**":

**Romans 11:11** *I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.*

**Joseph** had **two dreams** which **appear to imply the same message** in **two different ways**. But are they really the **same**? Is it **possible** that **Joseph, his brothers, and his father** all were **mistaken** in their **interpretation of the dreams**? We'll study some **insights** from **Rav Elchanan Samet**. Let's begin with a look at the **first dream** and how his **brothers interpreted it**:

**Bereshith 37:7** *"There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."<sup>8</sup> And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.*

There are **two methods** of **interpreting dreams** – **literally** or **symbolically**. We can **deduce** from the verses above that the **brothers interpreted Joseph's dream literally**. They understood the **sheaves bowing down** to be **symbolic of rulership**. But what could the "**symbolism**" be behind the **bowing down**? In the following verses, we see that **prostration** expresses **dependence**, not **rulership**:

**Bereshith 23:7** *Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.<sup>8</sup> And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me,*

**Ruth 2:10** *So she (Ruth) fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"*

So if the **sheaves bowing in Joseph's first dream** were to be **understood symbolically**, they could be **expressing the brothers' dependence on Joseph** during the years of **famine** and **during their stay in the land of Goshen in Egypt**. The **sheaves** are a **symbol of produce** and of **bread** (lechem - לֶחֶם). Notice in **Joseph's dream**, the **sheaf suddenly stands out**. This is **referring to Joseph's remarkable rise in status in Egypt**. Notice then that the **other sheaves gather around Joseph's sheaf and bow down to it**. They are **totally dependent** on **Joseph** who is the **distributor of bread**.

We can go to a **higher level** and **continue the pattern** until we see the **end-times famine** in another light:

*Amos 8:11* "Behold, the days are coming," says Adonai יהוה, "That I will send a **famine** on the land, **Not a famine of bread** (lechem - לֶחֶם), **Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing** (shema - שְׁמָע) the words of יהוה.

In the **future**, could the **world** be **dependent** on a **body of believers** (represented by **Joseph**) who have stored up the "words of יהוה" for those **hungry** for "hearing" (shema - שְׁמָע)?

The **brothers** ask the **question**, "Shall you indeed **rule** over us?" If **Joseph**, himself, **understood the dream**, he should have **answered**, "No, but the day will come when **I will provide sustenance for you and your children.**" I hope you see the difference.

Now let's look at **Joseph's second dream**:

*Bereshith 37:9* Then he **dreamed still another dream** and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, **the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.**"<sup>10</sup> So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? **Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?**"<sup>11</sup> And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

We know that **Jacob's household** has been **chosen** as the **nation** to bring **light to the world**:

*Isaiah 42:5* Thus says El יהוה, Who **created the heavens** and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it:<sup>6</sup> "I, יהוה, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; **I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles,**

From the **2<sup>nd</sup> dream**, we can again see that the **survival of Jacob's household** is **dependent on Joseph**. For in **Egypt**, **Joseph** does **not only care for his family's physical needs**, but he also **provides a place for them to survive spiritually**. **Joseph** keeps the dream of returning to the **Land alive** by preserving a **longing in Jacob's household** for the **Land of their forefathers** by **organizing Jacob's funeral procession** back to **Canaan**, and even by **commanding his brothers** prior to his own death:

*Bereshith 50:25* Then **Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel**, saying, "Elohim will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

*Shemot/Exodus 13:19* And **Moses took the bones of Joseph with him**, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "Elohim will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

So **Joseph's second dream** is about **light** and **keeping the promises of the covenant alive**. **Yeshua** came as **Messiah ben Yosef**, being our **light** through which we **obtain light to fulfill the promise of being a "light to the Gentiles."**

*John 8:12* Then **Yeshua spoke to them again**, saying, "**I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.**"

*Matthew 5:14* "**You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.**

We can conclude that **Joseph and his family all misinterpreted his dreams**. They were **not the same dream**. The **first dream** pictured survival through the sustenance of Joseph. The **second dream** pictured the **suffering servant, Messiah ben Yosef** who is the **source of light for Israel**. Joseph would come to an **understanding** of his **dreams the hard way**. He would be **sold as a slave**. What he would **learn** is that **any greatness he ascended to would be granted to Him by the Almighty**. This **high position** was granted to him for the **benefit of others, not for his own enjoyment**. And despite his **power, Joseph** was still a **slave**.

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

Now that we are well into the story of **Joseph**, we are about to be **interrupted**. **Chapter 38** appears to be an **independent island** within the **greater story of Joseph**. **Chapter 39** will pick up exactly where **chapter 37 ends**. **Chapters 39-41** recount more than **20 years of Joseph's life in Egypt**. Meanwhile, we are left **without information** about what has been **occurring in Jacob's family in Canaan**. To avoid this **imbalance in focus**, **chapter 38 (Judah and Tamar)** provides us with **events** that run **concurrent** with those of **Joseph's life in Egypt**. **Joseph and Judah** – together their lives provide a **prophetic summary of all of Jacob**. This explains why the **stories of Joseph and Judah** are what follow the second verse of our parasha as opposed to the **normal listing of descendants**:

*Bereshith 37:2 These are the generations of Jacob...*

**Chapter 38** probably covers about **20 years**. At the **beginning** of the story, **Judah** marries a **woman** and has **children**. Then at the **end**, we have the **birth of twins** which **technically** could have been **Judah's grandchildren**. So these are the **20 years of Judah's life** while **Joseph** is in **exile**.

Our parasha is **focused** on these **two leaders**. **Joseph** had **aspirations** to **lead the family of Jacob**, and **later** does **rule** as a **servant**. In **parallel**, **Judah** leads during the **sale of Joseph**, in the **family** during the **time of the famine**, and during the **confrontation with the Egyptian viceroy**. These **two brothers** represent those people who would eventually become the **two dominant tribes of Israel...Judah and Ephraim**. Why **Ephraim**? We shall see later that **Ephraim**, an **Egyptian-born son of Joseph**, will be **adopted by Jacob** and become the **dominant tribe**. From **Judah** descends **King David** and **Messiah**. From **Joseph/Ephraim** descends the line of **Jeroboam**, the **king who rebelled** and broke away with **ten tribes**. Most of the people from these **tribes** were **assimilated** into **surrounding nations** during the time of the **exile**. The **Almighty** speaks of the **return of all tribes** through the prophet **Jeremiah**:

*Jeremiah 31:1 ... says יהוה, "I will be the Elohim of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people..."<sup>7</sup> For thus says יהוה: "Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O יהוה, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!'"<sup>8</sup> Behold, I will bring them from the north country, And gather them from the ends of the earth... A great throng (kahal - קהל) shall return there.<sup>9</sup> They shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.*

**Yeshua** began the **search** for these **lost tribes**:

*Matthew 15:24* But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the **lost sheep of the house of Israel.**"

**Disciples of Messiah** continued to **reach out to the tribes dispersed** in the **exile**, who became part of the **congregation of Israel**, **erroneously translated** as the "**church**":

*James 1:1* James, a bondservant of Yah and of Adonai Messiah Yeshua, **To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:** Greetings.

*1 Peter 1:1* Peter, an apostle of Yeshua the Messiah, **To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,**

Let's get back to the story of **Judah**:

*Bereshith 38:1* It came to pass at that time that **Judah went down** (yarad - יָרַד) from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah.

Notice that **Judah "went down"** (yarad - יָרַד) from his brothers. Immediately we see a **connection** with the **story of Joseph**:

*Bereshith 39:1* Now **Joseph had been taken down** (yarad - יָרַד) to Egypt.

The **Torah** does not explain **why Judah "went down"** away from his brothers. We are left to wonder if it was the **result of deceiving his father, Jacob**, concerning the "**death**" of **Joseph**. **Judah** is about to make a **poor choice for a wife**:

*Bereshith 38:2* And **Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite** whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her.

We know how **Judah's forefathers** had felt about **marrying Canaanite women**:

*Bereshith 24:3* "and I (Abraham) will make you swear by **יהוה**, the Elohim of heaven and the Elohim of the earth, that you will **not take a wife for my son (Isaac) from the daughters of the Canaanites**, among whom I dwell;

*Bereshith 28:1* Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.

So is it now OK for the **sons of Jacob** to begin to **marry outside of the line of Shem**? We will soon see that **Joseph** will marry an **Egyptian (line of Ham) wife**. What is happening in the **Judah** story is a picture of how **יהוה** intervenes in the lives of His people to accomplish His will. **יהוה's hand** in the midst of **Judah's choices** will maintain the **purity of the line** that would eventually **produce the Messiah**. **Abraham and Sarah** were both from the **blessed line of Shem** and produced **Isaac**. **Ishmael was rejected** (Egyptian mother). **Isaac** married another **Shemite, Rebekah**, and produced **Jacob and Esau**. **Esau was rejected not for physical reasons, but for heart issues**. Concerning **Jacob's descendents**, instead of having **ONE** chosen to continue the **covenantal family**, the **entire family of Jacob is chosen**. But only **ONE** son will carry the **special physical seed** through which will **descend the Messiah**. The rest of the family of **Jacob/Israel** has the **option** (for now) of **marrying**

**outside the family of Shem, assuming that their spouse accepts the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

Now, with all that being said, the **wife that Judah** chose was a **problem**. She was a **physical descendent** from the **cursed line of Canaan**. That meant **none of their three sons were worthy** of being the **ancestor** of the **One** from which would come **kingship and redemption**.

The **first two sons** were **evil** (ra - רָע) and יהוה took their lives:

*Bereshith 38:7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil (ra - רָע) in the sight of יהוה, and יהוה killed him.<sup>8</sup> And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother."<sup>9</sup> But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother.<sup>10</sup> And the thing which he was evil (ra - רָע) in the eyes of יהוה; therefore He killed him also.*

Our verses tell us that the **deaths of both of the sons** were **because they were evil in the sight of יהוה**, yet **Judah unfairly accuses Tamar** of being **responsible** and is **unwilling** to let her marry his **third son**:

*Bereshith 38:11 Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.*

**Tamar waited and expected** to be **given to Shelah in marriage**, but **Judah had no intention of allowing the marriage**. **Judah deceives Tamar**, but he is **about to be tricked by her!** **Tamar desired to bear a son** who would **continue the line of Judah**, and having **realized Judah's deception**, she took the initiative in a **daring and dangerous way**:

*Bereshith 38:12 Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.<sup>13</sup> And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."<sup>14</sup> So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.<sup>15</sup> When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face.<sup>16</sup> Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"*

**Poor Tamar**. She is a woman who **lost two husbands** and **waited** much of her life for a **third son of Jacob to grow up**. In her desire for a **close, personal relationship with Judah**, she **demands his PERSONAL belongings as collateral**:

*Bereshith 38:17 And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock." So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?"<sup>18</sup> Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet (choltam - חֹלְתָם) and cord (patil - פִּתְיֵל), and your staff (matteh - מַטֵּה) that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.*

**Tamar** does **not** want money (or a goat) in return for the sexual favor. **Judah** is **not** yet able to understand or appreciate this. He only thinks of the incident as a **business deal**. He thinks by sending a messenger with a **more valuable (monetarily speaking) object** such as a **goat**, she will be **eager to exchange for his personal possessions** that she has acquired.

Let's look closer at the items **Tamar** requested:

- **Signet** (choltam - חֹלְתָם) – this was a **ring** used to press into a wax seal to **stamp** his **ownership on his possessions**. It was a **highly personal object** that performed the function of the **signature in modern society**. A **signet** was used to make the **crown** of pure gold worn by the **high priest**:
  - *Shemot/Exodus 28:36* " You shall also make a **plate of pure gold** and engrave on it, like the **engraving of a signet** (choltam - חֹלְתָם): **HOLINESS TO יהוה!**
- **Cord** (patil - פַּתִּיל) – same word for the **thread of blue** later required in the **fringes on Israelite garments** as a **reminder to keep the commandments**:
  - *Bemidbar/Numbers 15:38* "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make **tassels on the corners of their garments** throughout their generations, and to put a **blue thread** (patil - פַּתִּיל) in the **tassels of the corners**.
- **Staff** (matteh - מַטֵּה) – most often this word is translated as **tribe**. Apparently each **tribal ruler** led his group with a **staff**. This suggests that the **ruler's staff** may have originally been a **symbol of the tribe** and spoke of **leadership** and **authority**. It can be very **Messianic** in its symbolism:
  - *Psalms 110:2* יהוה shall send the **rod** (matteh - מַטֵּה) of **Your strength out of Zion**. **Rule in the midst of Your enemies!**

Well **Tamar** conceived, and this **information** is passed on to **Judah**. Without even the slightest hesitation, **he pronounces the death penalty**:

*Bereshith 38:24* And it came to pass, about three months after, that **Judah** was told, saying, "**Tamar** your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore **she is with child** by harlotry." So **Judah** said, "**Bring her out and let her be burned!**"

**Tamar** is sentenced to **death** along with the **twins** (**Perez** is part of the **Messianic line**) in her womb. Normally, an **Israelite woman** would be **stoned to death for adultery**. Only **priest's daughters** were **sentenced to be burned**:

*Vayikra/Leviticus 21:9* The **daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire.**

That **Tamar** would be the **daughter of a priest** supports the **rabbinical teaching** that **Tamar** was indeed from the **lineage of Shem**. This **qualifies her** to be a part of the **Messianic line** which would **produce King David and Messiah Yeshua**. Now can you see the **Father's hand** in all of these events? **Judah** needed a **proper descendent...one not from the line of Canaan**. Perhaps as the **daughter of a priest**, during the years **Tamar** was **forced to wait, she began to understand this**. Like the **matriarchs before her**, she takes matters into her own hands to **preserve the seed**.

**Tamar's reply** is for **Judah** to **look at the personal items** of the **man** by whom she became **pregnant**:

*Bereshith 38:25 When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are -- the signet and cord, and staff."*

At this point **Judah**, who had **previously seen Tamar as responsible for the death of his sons, recants and admits his error.** Where before, **Judah had assumed his own righteousness and the righteousness of his sons, he now realizes that his actions were not justified, nor were his sons righteous.** He exhibits **humility in the place of ego.** He **admits to his deceit** (following the **pattern of his father**) and **recognizes Tamar's good intentions:**

*Bereshith 38:26 So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.*

**Tamar is righteous because she desires to bear a son for the family of Judah.** For this she will be **recognized** in the book of **Ruth** in the **people's blessing to Boaz:**

*Ruth 4:12 "May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which ייִי will give you from this young woman."*

Now **"one more thing"** about **Judah** and his **sons...**his **first two sons** are **never again mentioned.** But his **third son, Shelah, is mentioned in the families belonging to the tribe of Judah.** **Shelah was not qualified** to be in the **lineage of the Messiah,** but that did not **exempt him** from being part of the **family:**

*Bemidbar/Numbers 26:20 And the sons of Judah according to their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; of Perez, the family of the Parzites; of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites.*

Let's finish with a last look at **Joseph.** At the **beginning** of our parasha, **Joseph was the favored son of his father.** **Joseph is then sold by his brothers** and he **descends to Egypt** where he ends up as a **slave of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.** He works himself into a **privileged position,** but after an **unfair accusation,** he ends up in **prison:**

*Bereshith 39:20 Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.*

This is **Joseph's new life.** He is now **living with the wretched and the condemned.** Like **Yeshua's descent,** it's a far cry from the **life he led with his Father in an elevated position.** But as we have seen, this is **all part of the Almighty's sovereign plan.** Like **Judah, Joseph must learn and possess the virtue of humility necessary for leadership.** It was **Joseph's own dreams** that led to his **misfortunes.** It will be the **dreams of others,** and his **attributing his interpretation skills to Elohim** that will **lead him to prosperity.**

The **narratives of Bereshith are more than stories.** There are many **layers of meaning** associated with each of them. There is a **concept in Judaism** called **"ma'aseh avot siman labanim"** which means **"the actions of the forefathers serve as a sign for their descendants."** These are the **cycles** that we see as **history repeats itself.** It's all the more reason to **study and meditate** on these **incredible stories.**

Shabbat Shalom!

**Ardelle**