

Be Actively Seeking the Lord

This weeks reading is from Parashat Vayigash (*Bereshit / Genesis 44:18-47:27*) and begins with Benjamin having the cup of Joseph and the sons of Israel trying to explain to that they must return their brother to their father. Joseph then reveals himself to his brothers (*45:1-8*) and declares מִצְרַיִם בְּכַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְעַתָּה לֹא-אַתֶּם שָׁלַחְתֶּם אֵתִי הִנֵּה כִּי הֵאֲלֵהֶם וְיֹשִׁימֵנִי לְאָב לְפָרְעָה וְלִאֲדוֹן לְכָל-בֵּיתוֹ וּמִשָּׁל בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְעַתָּה לֹא-אַתֶּם שָׁלַחְתֶּם אֵתִי הִנֵּה כִּי הֵאֲלֵהֶם וְיֹשִׁימֵנִי לְאָב לְפָרְעָה וְלִאֲדוֹן לְכָל-בֵּיתוֹ וּמִשָּׁל בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (45:8) *'Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt. (NASB)* Joseph calls for Israel and his brothers to move to the land of Goshen because the famine was going to continue for another five years (*45:9-15*) and Pharaoh ordered that his family would come and he would give them the best of the land (*45:9-24*). Israel then makes an offering to the Lord God Almighty and travels to Egypt (*45:28-46:26*). We learn that Jacob (Israel) is 130 years old (*47:9*) and the people were settled in the land of Goshen and Joseph fed them because of the famine (*47:11-13*). The famine grew very severe and the people gave all their money in order to obtain food to live (*47:14-15*). After the money was gone, the people brought their livestock and cattle to pay for the food (*47:16-17*). After this the people sold their land and themselves into slavery in order to buy grain (*47:18-21*) and the people grew numerous in the land of Goshen (*47:27*).

כתבי הקודש / The Holy Scriptures	
<p style="text-align: center;">ספר בראשית פרק לז</p> <p>א וְלֹא-יָכַל יוֹסֵף לְהִתְאַפֵּק לְכָל הַנֹּצְצִים עָלָיו וַיִּקְרָא הוֹצִיאוּ כָל-אִישׁ מֵעָלַי וְלֹא-עָמַד אִישׁ אִתּוֹ בְּהִתְדַוֵּעַ יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו: ב וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-קִלּוֹ בְּכִי וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁמַע בֵּית פְּרָעֹה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו אֲנִי יוֹסֵף הָעוֹד אָבִי חַי וְלֹא-יָכְלוּ אָחָיו לְעֲנוֹת אֹתוֹ כִּי נִבְהָלוּ מִפְּנֵיו: ד וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אָחָיו גִּשׁוּ-נָא אֵלַי וַיִּגִּשׁוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יוֹסֵף אֲחֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-מָכַרְתֶּם אֵתִי מִצְרַיִמָּה:</p>	<p>Bereshit / Genesis 45:1-4</p> <p><i>45:1 Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, 'Have everyone go out from me.' So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 45:2 He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. 45:3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. 45:4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come closer to me.' And they came closer. And he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. (NASB)</i></p>

According to the Scriptures, how long was Joseph away from his family? Joseph was 17 years old when his brothers sold him into slavery and he was 30 years old when he entered into the service of Pharaoh. What is fascinating about the Scriptures in this weeks reading is that Joseph needed to reveal himself to his brothers, they did not immediately recognize him. Based on the time-line of Joseph's life, he was hardly 15 years away from his family, how did his brothers not recognize him? Did his physical appearance change that significantly or did they just assume that he was dead? Could it be that slavery was so harsh that one would be considered dead if they went to Egypt? Was there a certain amount of spiritual discernment that was necessary to recognize who he was? Joseph declares to his brothers saying וַיִּשְׁלַחֲנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֶיכֶם לְמַחְיָה שְׁלַחֲנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֶיכֶם לְמַחְיָה that it was for life (לְמַחְיָה, *for the preservation of life*) that God had sent him before them. Joseph explains that the Lord sent him before them to sustain life (לְמַחְיָה) according to *Bereshit / Genesis 45:5*. He repeats this in *46:7* saying וַיִּשְׁלַחֲנִי אֱלֹהִים לְפָנֶיכֶם לְמַחְיָה *"the Lord sent me before you"* and the reason being was to provide a great deliverance for his people (וְלַמַּחְיָה לְכֶם לְפָלִיטָה גְדוֹלָה) *"to make/keep you alive by a great deliverance."* The word לְפָלִיטָה has the meaning *"remnant or survivors,"* the Aramaic Targum (Onkelos) says וְלִקְיָמָא לְכוֹן לְשִׁינְבָא רַבְתָּא where the first word וְלִקְיָמָא means *"to raise up / establish"* to translate וְלַמַּחְיָה (preserve life). It is in this way the Lord God Almighty brought the revelation of His Name, character and presence by the means of His actions and deeds through the Hebrew Patriarchs. In Joseph, the Lord provided a great deliverance for His people, also in Moshe, and through the prophets, the Lord has revealed His plan for salvation. The Lord God used Joseph in a mighty and powerful way raising him up from nothing to essentially being the ruler over all of Egypt. Can we see a parallel that the Lord lifted Yeshua up from nothing to be Lord over all? The Aramaic Targum reveals to us that Joseph lifted up the people and the lifting of the people was achieved by establishing them in life so they could live because there was no life sustaining food left in the land. Yeshua said in *John 10:10 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (NASB)* The Lord God also states emphatically that He lifts us up and establishes those who love and trust in Him saying *"I will establish my covenant with you"* (וְנִקְיַמְתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם). The One who is in the seat of authority has the power to bring deliverance, and the Scriptures this week reveal to us that the Lord God almighty provided a deliverer, He has a plan. It is in this way that God raised up His Savior for us like He rose up Joseph and every man of faith to deliver His people. Joseph's brothers were not seeking him, in fact they were not looking either; they assumed that he was dead. What is the Lord trying to tell us this week by this story? Joseph's brothers were only repentant when faced with the consequences of their sins. Had they sought the Lord for forgiveness? The Lord however had been working for years to bring them to this point. Joseph needed to reveal himself to his brothers, and similarly, we need the help of our Father in Heaven by His Spirit to reveal His purpose for our lives and to know His Messiah! In the Torah and in the Apostolic Writings, we are promised an abundant life; not a life of wealth but a life that is rich in the knowledge of the Lord, His deliverance, and His working in our lives daily. Do you have this kind of abundance? The Lord wants to be in your life, but do you want Him in your life?