

# פרשת

## ויחי

### Parashat Vayechi

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Genesis 47:28-50:26, 1 Kings 2:1-12,  
Luke 4:31-5:11

#### **Ephraim will become a multitude of nations, What does that mean?**

In this week's Torah portion, the last Portion of the Book of *Bereshit / Genesis*, we learn that Joseph heard Jacob was sick and is at the end of his life. Joseph brought his two sons to visit him (*Bereshit / Genesis 48:1*) and Jacob having difficulty seeing brings them near and then proceeds to bless them (*Bereshit / Genesis 48:9*). The narrative tells us that Jacob places his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh, crossing his arms (שָׁכַל אֶת-יָדָיו). (*Bereshit / Genesis 48:14*) Joseph attempts to correct his father (*Bereshit / Genesis 48:18*) but Jacob insists that he is acting deliberately stating that the younger (Ephraim) will be greater than the older (Manasseh). Jacob set Ephraim ahead of his brother. (*Bereshit / Genesis 48:19*) The Torah then states the following:

#### ***Bereshit / Genesis 48:20***

*48:20 He blessed them that day, saying, 'By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'' Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. (NASB, בראשית מה:כ וַיְבָרְכֵם בַּיּוֹם,*

ההוא לאמור בן יבן ישראל לאמר ישמך אלהים כאפי-  
(רים וכמנשה

Jacob said, וישם את־אפרים לפני מנשה, and the text states explicitly, *Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.* (NASB) There is a repetition here the Torah is emphasizing putting the second born ahead of the first born. Rashi states the following concerning these things.

***Rashi on Bereshit / Genesis 48:20 Part 2***

וישם את אפרים *AND HE PUT EPHRAIM etc. — i.e. in the blessing he bestowed upon them he put Ephraim's name before that of Manasseh, so giving him precedence over his brother when the Israelites encamped and marched beneath their banners in the wilderness (cf. Numbers 2:18 and Numbers 10:22), and when at the dedication of the altar by the princes of the tribes each brought his gifts (cf. Numbers 7:48 Numbers 7:54). (see Genesis Rabbah 97:5).*

Rashi states that Jacob placing Ephraim ahead of Manasseh was giving him precedence over his brother and this was done to direct the Israelites in the wilderness encamping around the Tabernacle. The final statement in *Bereshit / Genesis 48:20* “*and he placed Ephraim before Manasseh,*” appears to be the narrator’s way of recapitulating and summarizing what has just occurred. This is the interpretation offered by some of the classical commentators, according to Rashbam and Ibn Ezra. Chizkuni states that Jacob comparison with Reuben and Simeon makes the order (Ephraim and then Manasseh) unmistakable. The ordering of Joseph’s sons in this way have led to the Jewish blessing over the children in the future to mention that they should be blessed as Ephraim and Manasseh were blessed by Jacob. The basic conclusion of the Jewish commentators changing the order from the first born to the second born indicates how Ephraim received a measure of precedence over Manasseh as a picture for all Jewish children from this point on throughout time. Based upon this analysis, what exactly can we learn about Ephraim that is so significant that would warrant this kind of emphasis in the biblical text?

***Bereshit / Genesis 48:1-21***

*48:1 Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, 'Behold, your father is sick.' So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. 48:2 When it was told to Jacob, 'Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,' Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed. 48:3 Then Jacob said to Joseph, 'God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 48:4 and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.' 48:5 'Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. 48:6 'But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance. 48:7 'Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).' 48:8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, 'Who are these?' 48:9 Joseph said to his father, 'They are my sons, whom God has given me here.' So he said, 'Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them.' 48:10 Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. 48:11 Israel said to Joseph, 'I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well.' 48:12 Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground. 48:13 Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him.*

48:14 But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger; and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn. 48:15 He blessed Joseph, and said, 'The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, 48:16 The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; And may my name live on in them, And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.' 48:17 When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 48:18 Joseph said to his father, 'Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head.' 48:19 But his father refused and said, 'I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.' 48:20 He blessed them that day, saying, 'By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'' Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. 48:21 Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. 48:22 'I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.' (NASB)

א וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיֹּאמֶר לְיוֹסֵף הִנֵּה אָבִיךָ  
חָלָה וַיִּקַּח אֶת-שְׁנֵי בָנָיו עִמּוֹ אֶת-מְנַשֶּׁשֶׁה וְאֶת-אֶפְרָיִם:  
ב וַיִּגַּד לְיַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה בְנֵךְ יוֹסֵף בָּא אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּתְחַזַּק  
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל-הַמֶּטֶה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל-יוֹסֵף אֵל  
שְׂדֵי נְרָאָה-אֵלַי בְּלוֹז בְּאַרְצְךָ כְּנַעַן וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתוֹ: ד וַיֹּאמֶר  
אֵלַי הִנְנִי מִפְּרֶךְ וְהִרְבִּיתִּי וְנִתְמַיֵּד לְקַהֵל עַמִּים וְנִתְמַיֵּד אֶת-

הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְיִרְעָה אַחֲרֶיהָ אַחֲזַת עוֹלָם: ה' וְעַתָּה שְׁנִי-  
בְּנִי הַנּוֹלָדִים לָךְ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד-בְּאֵי אֵלֶיךָ מִצְרַיִמָּה  
לִי-הֵם אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה כִּרְאוּבוּן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יְהוּ-לִי: וּמוֹלַד-  
דָּתָךְ אֲשֶׁר-הוֹלַדְתָּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם לָךְ יְהוּ עַל שֵׁם אַחֲיֵיהֶם יִקְרָאוּ  
בְּנִחְלָתָם: ז' וְאֲנִי | בְּבֹאֵי מִפְּדוֹן מִתָּה עָלַי רַחֵל בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן  
בְּדַרְדָּרָה בְּעוֹד כְּבֵרֶת-אֶרֶץ לְבֹא אֶפְרַתָּה וְאֶקְבְּרָהָ שָׁם בְּדַרְדָּרָה  
אֶפְרַת הוּא בֵּית לְחֵם: ח' וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף  
וַיֹּאמֶר מִי-אֵלֶּה: ט' וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֲבִיו בְּנֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר-  
נָתַן-לִי אֱלֹהִים בְּזֶה וַיֹּאמֶר קָח־סָם נָא אֵלַי וְאֶבְרַכְכֶם: [שְׁנִי] י'  
וְעֵינַי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּבָדוּ מִזֶּקֶן לֹא יוּכַל לִרְאוֹת וַיִּגַּשׁ אֹתָם אֱלֹו  
וַיִּשָּׂק לָהֶם וַיִּחַבֵּק לָהֶם: י"א וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל-יוֹסֵף רְאֵה  
כְּנִי לֹא פָלַלְתִּי וְהִנֵּה הִרְאָה אֹתִי אֱלֹהִים גַּם אֶת-יִרְעָה:  
י"ב וַיּוֹצֵא יוֹסֵף אֹתָם מֵעַם בְּרַכְּיוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְאִפְּיוֹ אֶרְצָה: י"ג  
וַיִּקַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת-שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת-אֶפְרַיִם בֵּימֵינוּ מִשְׁמָאל יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְאֶת-מְנַשֶּׁה בְּשִׁמְאֵלוֹ מִימִין יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו: י"ד וַיִּשָּׂא-  
לֶחַ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-יְמִינוֹ וַיִּשָּׂת עַל-רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וְהוּא הִצְעִיר  
וְאֶת-שִׁמְאֵלוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה שְׁכַל אֶת-יְדָיו כִּי מְנַשֶּׁה  
הֵבְכוֹר: טו' וַיִּבְרָךְ אֶת-יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלַּךְ-  
כּוֹ אֲבֹתַי לְפָנָיו אֶבְרַכְהֶם וַיִּצְחַק הָאֱלֹהִים הִרְעָה אֹתִי מֵעוֹדִי  
עַד-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: טז' הַמְּלֶאכֶה הִגָּאֵל אֹתִי מִכָּל-רָע וַיְבָרֵךְ  
אֶת-הַנְּעָרִים וַיִּקְרָא בְּהֵם שְׁמִי וְשֵׁם אֲבֹתַי אֶבְרַכְהֶם וַיִּצְחַק  
וַיִּדְגּוּ לְרֹב בְּקִרְבַּי הָאֶרֶץ: [שְׁלִישִׁי] יז' וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף כִּי-  
יָשִׁית אֲבִיו יָד-יְמִינוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּרַע בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּתְמָךְ  
יָד-אֲבִיו לְהִסִּיר אֹתָהּ מֵעַל רֹאשׁ-אֶפְרַיִם עַל-רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה:  
יח' וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף אֶל-אֲבִיו לֹא-כֵן אָבִי כִּי-זֶה הֵבְכֹר שֵׁם  
יְמִינָךְ עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ: יט' וַיִּמָּאֵן אֲבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר יַדְעִתִּי כְּנִי יַדְעִתִּי  
גַּם-הוּא יְהִיָּה-לְעַם וְגַם-הוּא יִגְדֹל וְאוֹלָם אֲחִיו הַקָּטָן יִגְדֹל  
מִמֶּנּוּ וַיִּרְעוּ יְהִיָּה מְלֵא-הַגּוֹיִם: כ' וַיִּבְרַכְכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא  
לְאִמּוֹר בְּךָ יְבָרַךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר יִשְׁמָךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִי-  
מְנַשֶּׁה וַיִּשָּׂם אֶת-אֶפְרַיִם לְפָנָי מְנַשֶּׁה: כא' וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אֶל-יוֹסֵף הִנֵּה אֲנִכִּי מֵת וְהִיָּה אֱלֹהִים עִמָּכֶם וְהִשִּׁיב אֹתְכֶם  
אֶל-אֶרֶץ אֲבֹתֵיכֶם: כב' וְאֲנִי נָתַתִּי לָךְ שְׂכָם אֶחָד עַל-אֲחֵיךָ

אֲשֶׁר לְקַחְתִּי מִיַּד הָאֹמְרֵי בְּחַרְבִּי וּבְקֹשְׁתִּי:

The significance of reordering the name is emphasized in Jacob's statement, *48:5 'Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. 48:6 'But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance. (NASB, ה*  
*ועתה שְׁנֵי-בָנָיךָ הַנּוֹלָדִים לְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד-בֹּאִי אֵלַיךָ מִצְרַיִמָּה לִי-הֵם*  
*אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה פְּרָאוּבֵן וְשִׁמְעוֹן יִהְיוּ-לִי: ו* ומולדתה אֲשֶׁר-הוּלְדָתָה אִתָּךְ:  
 (רִיחָם לָךְ יִהְיוּ עַל שֵׁם אֲחֵיהֶם יִקְרָאוּ בְּנַחֲלָתָם: Jacob considers Joseph's  
 two sons as his own and declares they will be known by their names, Israel's twelve tribes were named for Jacob's children or, where in  
 the case of Ephraim (and Manasseh), his grandchildren. Ephraim was  
 born in Egypt to Joseph's wife, Asenath. Joseph named his second-  
 born son "*Ephraim*" because "*God has made me fruitful in the land*  
*of my suffering*" (*Bereshit / Genesis 41:52, וְאֵת שֵׁם הַשְּׂנִי קָרָא, נב*  
*נב וְאֵת שֵׁם הַשְּׂנִי קָרָא, נב*). When Jacob gave his blessing to  
 his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, he chose to bless the younger  
 Ephraim first, despite Joseph's protests. In the blessing Jacob gave he  
 stated that Ephraim would be greater than Manasseh (*Bereshit / Gen-*  
*esis 48:5–21*). Throughout the Tanach the name Ephraim is merged  
 with the Northern kingdom and so became the name of the ten tribes  
 which comprised Israel's northern kingdom. (*Ezekiel 37:16, Hosea*  
*5:3*) The Northern Kingdom, also referred to as "*Israel,*" was taken  
 into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 BC (*Jeremiah 7*). The Southern  
 Kingdom, also known as Judah, was conquered by the Babylonians  
 nearly 140 years later (586 BC). The figurative speech where the  
 name Ephraim come to be used for the Ten Tribes is well attested (*Isa-*  
*iah 7:2-8, Hosea 5:3-9, etc*). In *2 Chronicles 15:8-11*, the secession  
 of Ephraim is denounced as a forsaking of the God of their fathers and  
 His Torah. *2 Chronicles 30* describes Ephraim as mocking the emis-  
 saries of Hezekiah who come to invite them to the Passover in Jerusa-  
 lem. Josiah is also mentioned with doing the same, inviting Ephraim  
 to the Passover (*2 Chronicles 34:6-9*). Due to the way Jacob blessed  
 Ephraim setting him first, and the historical behavior of Ephraim, the

rabbis in Midrash Rabbah describe Ephraim and Jacob in the following way.

***Midrash Rabbah Bereshit Parashat 6***

*Though for seventeen years Jacob instructed Ephraim, yet when the latter came with his father Joseph and his brother Manasseh to be blessed Jacob did not recognize him, because on seeing Jeroboam and Ahab, Ephraim's descendants, the prophetic spirit left him. Joseph then addressed a fervent prayer to God, and the spirit of prophecy returned. Jacob then saw another of the descendants of Ephraim, Joshua ben Nun, and thereupon gave the precedence to Ephraim over his elder brother Manasseh by placing his right hand upon his head and by mentioning his name first (Tan. to Wayehi). Ephraim was thus favored with the birth-right because he was modest and not selfish (Gen. R. vi.; Pesik. R. 3).*

The rabbis describe Jacob as foreseeing the future of Ephraim and that he was given a prophetic spirit which left due to the sin of his future children. Ultimately the reason Ephraim received the blessing was because of a few righteous men who come from this tribe. We learn from the tribe of Ephraim about our human nature, who we are as people. The history of the early Israelites reflects our flawed and sinful nature. As the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans saying, *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)*. There are several very important points we can learn from Ephraim. While the God of Israel gifted them as powerful warriors (*1 Chronicles 12:30*), Ephraim failed to follow God's command to remove the Canaanites from the Land (*Shemot / Exodus 23:23-25, Joshua 16:10, Judges 1:29*). We know historically the tribe of Ephraim was filled with pride and jealousy. For example, when Jephthah chose to fight and defeat the Ammonites without the aid of Ephraim, a war erupted and we are told that 42,000 warriors were killed from Ephraim. (*Judges 12*) A more broad range of behavior from Ephraim we learn how they turned from God and did wicked things (*Isaiah 28:1-3*). The men

of Ephraim also recognized the need for repentance and obeying the word of God according to Obed's instruction (*2 Chronicles 28:12*). In Jacob's blessing, he mentions the following:

***Bereshit / Genesis 48:18-19***

*48:18 Joseph said to his father, 'Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head.' 48:19 But his father refused and said, 'I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.'*

Note how Jacob says out of Ephraim will come a multitude of nations. This is an interesting statement. Taken in light of what we know historically, Ephraim walking away from God and His Torah, the wicked acts of his people, the grouping of the ten tribes, this follows a parallel to the nations who do not know God, and how the Lord God desires for all peoples to repent and come to Him in faith and faithfulness. The struggle Ephraim had with being distant from God and to drawing near, we can learn a lot about ourselves and how the Lord God Almighty greatly loves us! For the non-Jewish believer, we have a great testimony of the great love that God has for us that is pictured in Ephraim.

We are told in the Apostolic Writings, in *John 11* after Yeshua had raised Lazarus from the dead that this brought much attention to him. In *John 11* we read about the Chief priests and Pharisees convening a council and discussing what the Romans might do if Yeshua continued drawing people to himself. Caiaphas then prophetically stated that it would be better for one man to die in the place of the entire nation. We are told after raising Lazarus from the dead, he withdrew to a place northwest of Jerusalem on the edge of the wilderness of Ephraim. This demonstrated how he never again walked openly among the people but went to a region near the wilderness drawing back from the people so that he could complete the task he was sent to do. Yeshua drew back because the people did not have the spiritual insight that he was to come and die for their sins. They wanted to make



him king, but his appointed time had not yet come until following his resurrection and having received power and glory from the Father in Heaven.

***John 11:54***

*11:54 Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples. (ESV)*

This more distant place that Yeshua drew away to is again paralleled to the spiritual distance of Ephraim as historically we can see referring to the northern tribes who walked away from God. The greatest lesson from the history of Ephraim that we may learn is that the Lord God of Israel loves us despite our failings. He is patient, merciful, and calls out to us to draw near and repent. This again is a picture of God's calling upon Ephraim throughout history. Rashbam has the following to say concerning these things.

***Rashbam on Bereshit / Genesis 48:20 Part 2***

*וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת אֶפְרַיִם לְפָנָיו מִנְשֵׁה, he did this not physically, but by mentioning Ephrayim's name in the blessing ahead of the name of Menashe. The expression (verb) שִׂימָה, or לְשׂוּם respectively can be used with words (intangibles) as well as with people and tangible objects. A prominent example of it being applied to intangible concepts is Exodus 21:1 וְאֵלֹהֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשִּׂים לְפָנֶיךָ, "and these are the laws, judicial concepts, you are to place before them." Or. In Deuteronomy 4:41 וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂם מֹשֶׁה, "and this is the Torah which Moses placed, etc." The reference was not to the Torah scroll, but to what was written in it. Also in Deuteronomy 31:19 שִׂימָה בְּפִיָּהֶם, does not refer to something being placed in the mouth of the people, such as food, but it refers to the words in the written Torah being fed to the people as if food fed through*

*their mouths.*

The rabbis teach us about the significance of the Word of God being placed in our hearts in their emphasizing not the Torah scroll itself but its content (what is written) that is important. Joshua stated, *“This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.”* (Joshua 1:8) David said, *“Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”* (Tehillim / Psalms 119:11) The duty of God’s children to lay up God’s Word in the heart, to hide God’s Word in the heart is designed to receive the knowledge of God into the heart, to delight in it, and to put it into practice. This is a duty and a necessary practice for God’s children. The Word of God is not to just function as a memory, but to allow the Word to move within and to motivate our actions as Paul wrote to the Colossians saying, *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.”* (Colossians 3:16) The Lord God said through the prophet Hosea, *“I have written to him [Ephraim] the great things of My Law, but they were counted as a strange thing.”* (Hosea 8:12) To be strangers to the Word of God, and little conversant in it, is a great evil.

To make peace with God is to carefully listen to the message of His Word. The starting point is crucial. As going through the Torah, we learn in the book of Bereshit / Genesis how God created man and all that we know, and man fell into sin and disobedience. The Lord God drew for Himself a people out of Abraham, and He promised to make a great nation from the children of Abraham, which come to be known as those who are faithful to God and His Word. Over and over again throughout the Torah and then in the Tanach, the Lord God sent his deliverer to save a nation. Such is the case with Yeshua and Paul, neither one canceled out the Torah. Paul for example made distinctions between the Jew and the Gentile, where the non-Jewish person was grafted into the olive tree of Israel by faith in God’s Messiah (see *Romans 10*) and he never intended a replacement theology as we see so prevalently today in the teaching and the practice of the church. The mysterious plan of God in His Messiah is revealed to us in the Hebraic tension we find in the Scriptures. For example, in *Romans 3:28* we are told that a man is justified by faith and no man is justified by the deeds of the law. On the other hand, a couple verses later, in *Romans*

**3:31** we are told we establish the law in our faith. Paul's interpretation was that the Holy Spirit of God in dwells and him empowered him to live a life that is pleasing to God according to the Torah. By dying to himself and experiencing the resurrection of the Messiah through faith, he was able to obey God's mitzvot. The contours of Hebraic thought must be sought in its cultural setting. The Torah, the Tanach, and Jerusalem (Israel) is the starting point, to believe in the God of Israel that He exists. These are interactive theological concepts, this is the purpose and the point of the Torah in its practical application. It is within this setting we are taught to have faith in the One true God of Israel, and to trust believing in the Messiah Yeshua for our salvation.

The scriptures teach us that a person will either experience the grace of God or the divine wrath of God in the day of retribution. The issues we see today, the lawlessness that is going on in our culture around the world and in the church, is centered upon the validity of the Torah and the teaching of practical theology (practical biblical living). This may be illustrated in the idea of coming as you are. We are told in the modern theological teachings of today that God wants you just as you are, come as you are, you don't have to do anything. This concept of God wanting you just as you are is not a biblical concept. The Scriptures tell us to come with a humble heart and in repentance (Teshuvah) meaning turning from sin and not embracing it. IF this is the case that God accepts you just as you are, what need is there then for the Messiah Yeshua? Why do we need Yeshua? The biblical concept here is to hearing the Word of God which produces faith, and then causes us to have the expectation of something changing in our lives. We change, we do not stay the same, and we do not come to the Lord God on a "trial" basis. The Word of God is effective in reforming the will, the heart, the mind, and remaining in the Word of God is of utmost importance. This is what Paul meant when he said, the Word of God is able *"to make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished"* (2 Timothy 3:17) or as David wrote in his Psalm saying, *"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word"* (Tehillim / Psalms 119:9). What this week's Torah portion teaches us is how young men are heedless and headstrong, and are lit up by lusts. The Word of god is given to cleanse, cool down (tame) and subdue the will bringing the heart into

submission and humility to God. This is the power of God's Word and the great love that He has for His people!