

פרשת

ויחי

Parashat Vayechi

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

Dan and Ephraim not mentioned in Revelation

This week's Torah portion, Parashat Vayechi, concludes the book of Bereshit / Genesis. In this last Torah portion, we read how before Jacob died he spoke prophetically over each of his sons, (Bereshit / Genesis 49) then his children buried him in Canaan in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite that Abraham had purchased. (Bereshit / Genesis 49:29) We read on how his brothers were afraid and Joseph said that He was in the place of God, that he forgave them of their sins against him. We read then of Joseph's death at 110 years old and his command to bury his body in the same location as his father, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

While reading through this week's Torah portion, there are a few things that jump out of the text from the blessing that Jacob had spoken over his brothers. The two brothers we are interested in are Dan and Joseph specifically:

Dan (49:16-18)

*Dan shall govern his
people, As one of the tribes of Israel.*¹⁷
עֲלֵי־דָן אֶשְׁפִּיץ עַל־אֶרֶץ הַנְּשֹׂף עַקְבֵי־סוּס וַיִּפֹּל רֶכְבוֹ

אָהוּר: *Dan shall be a serpent by the road, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that his rider is thrown backward* 18 יְהוָה: *I wait for Your deliverance, O LORD!*

Joseph (49:22-26)

בֶּן פֶּרֶת יוֹסֵף בֶּן פֶּרֶת עָלֶי-עֵינָיו בְּנֹת צָעֲדָה עָלֶי-שׁוּר: *Joseph is a wild ass, A wild ass by a spring—Wild colts on a hillside.* 23 וַיִּמְרָרוּהוּ וַיִּשְׁטְמֵהוּ בַעֲלֵי חֲצָיִם: *Archers bitterly assailed him; They shot at him and harried him.* 24 וַתִּשָּׁב בְּאֵיתָן קִשְׁתּוֹ וַיִּפְזֹז וַיִּזְעִי יָדָיו מִיָּדָי: *Yet his bow stayed taut, And his arms were made firm By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob— There, the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel—* 25 מֵאֵל אֲבִיךָ וַיַּעֲזֹרְךָ וְאֵת שְׂדֵי וַיַּבְרִיכְךָ בְּרִכְתּוֹ: *The God of your father who helps you, And Shaddai who blesses you With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that couches below, Blessings of the breast and womb.* 26 בְּרִכְתּוֹ אֲבִיךָ גָּבְרוּ עָלֶי-בְּרִכְתּוֹ הוֹרֵי עַד-תְּמֹנֶת גְּבֻעַת עוֹלָם תְּהִיִּין לְרֹאשׁ יוֹסֵף וּלְקַדְקֹד גְּזִיר אֲחֵיו: (פ) *The blessings of your father Surpass the blessings of my ancestors, To the utmost bounds of the eternal hills. May they rest on the head of Joseph, On the brow of the elect of his brothers.*

In the case of Dan, the rabbis discuss his being a judge over Israel and and connect this to Samson. The things mentioned in Dan's blessing parallel the events in Samson's life. (see *Rabbeinu Bahya, Bereshit 49:17 Parts 1-3*) In his blessing, Jacob speaks of him being a viper striking the heels of the horse. This parallels what we read in *Bereshit / Genesis 3:15 "the man will crush the serpent's head"* (הוֹאֵ יִשׁוּפֶךָ רֹאשׁ *Chizkuni, Genesis 49:17 Part 2*) Which we know is a messianic prophecy. Note how Dan is described as the serpent, not the man. The serpent is a description of the evil one (Satan).

In the case of Joseph, Jacob is much more expansive and speaks to the blessings of God in heaven over Joseph. According to *Rabbeinu Bahya, Bereshit 49:22 Parts 1-4* the interpretation of the Hebrew text from a kabbalistic interpretation is “the words בְּן פֶּרֶת are an allusion to the glory of Israel, the word פֶּרֶת, being a derivative of תַּפְאֲרֶת. The words עֲלֵי-עֵינַי, refer to the origin of the river Euphrates, i.e. פֶּרֶת, which is one of the four rivers originating in גֶּן עֵדֶן, in Paradise. Joseph gets his vital input directly from גֶּן עֵדֶן. Seeing that the emanations נִצְחָה and הוֹד respectively appear left and right of the emanation תַּפְאֲרֶת in our usual diagrams, it is logical that he, Joseph, would produce two tribes instead of merely one. This is why Yaakov continued with בְּנוֹת צְעֵדָה which Onkelos translates as “two tribes will emerge from him.” This is what caused Moses to speak of both שְׁוֹר and רְאֵם, in his blessing of the tribe of Joseph (Deut, 33,17) the former representing the emanation נִצְחָה, the latter the emanation הוֹד.” It is interesting how this interpretation connects Joseph back to the garden of Eden (גֶּן עֵדֶן) through the use of the words Jacob spoke. This is certainly connected to Joseph saving many peoples lives through his position of power in Egypt. Jacob speaks of Joseph being assailed by his brothers, and how Joseph was firm due to the God of Israel, the Rock of Israel. The end of Jacob’s words speak of his brothers resting in Joseph. This is an interesting thought as Joseph functions as a Savior Messiah in the way that he saved many from death.

The verses we are looking at for today are from *Bereshit / Genesis 49:1-33*.

ספר בראשית פרק מט

[רביעין] א וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶל-בָּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאִסְפוּ וְאִגִּידָה לָכֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָא אֲתֶכֶם בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים: ב הִקְבְּצוּ וְשִׁמְעוּ בְנֵי יַעֲקֹב וְשִׁמְעוּ אֶל-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִיכֶם: ג רְאוּבֵן בְּכֹרִי אַתָּה פָּחִי וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנֵי יָמֶיךָ שָׂאת וְיָמֶיךָ עָזוּ: ד פָּחַז כַּמִּים אֶל-תּוֹמֵר כִּי עֲלִיתָ מִשְׁכְּבֵי אֲבִיךָ אֲזַ חֲלַלְתָּ יְצוּעֵי עֲלָה: פ הַ שִׁמְעוּן וְלוֹי אַחִים כְּלֵי חֲמָס מְכַרְ-מִיָּהֶם: ו בְּסֹדֶם אֶל-תְּבֹא נִפְשֵׁי בְקֹהֶלֶם אֶל-תַּחַד כְּבִדֵי כִי בְּאַפֶּם הִרְגוּ אִישׁ וּבְרִצְנָם עָקְרוּ-שׁוֹר: ז אַרְוֵר אַפֶּם כִּי עָז וְעִבְרַתֶּם כִּי קִשְׁתֶּה אֲחֻלְקֶם בְּיַעֲקֹב וְאַפִּיצֶם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: פ ח יְהוּדָה אַתָּה יוֹדוּךָ אֲחִידָה יָדְךָ בְּעֶרְףִי אֲבִיךָ יִשְׁמְחוּ לְךָ בְּנֵי אֲבִיךָ: ט גִּוֵר אֲרִיָּה יְהוּדָה

מִטָּרֶף בְּנֵי עֲלִית פָּרַע רַבִּץ פֶּאֲרִיָּה וּכְלָבִיא מִי יְקִימָנוּ: י לֹא-יִסּוּר
 שְׁבֹט מִיַּהוּדָה וּמַחֲקֵק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו עַד כִּי-יָבֹא שִׁילָה לָלוֹ יִקְהַת עַמִּים:
 יא אֶסְרִי לְגֹפֶן עִירָה [עִירוֹ] וְלִשְׂרָקָה בְּנֵי אֲתָנּוּ כַּבֵּס בֵּינָן לְבָשׁוּ
 וּבָדָם-עֲנָבִים סוּתָה [סוּתוֹ]: יב חֲכַלְיִלִי עֵינַיִם מִיָּיִן וּלְבָן-שֵׁנַיִם
 מִחֹלֵב: פ יג זְבוּלָן לַחֹרֶף יָמַיִם יִשְׁכֵּן וְהוּא לַחֹרֶף אֲנִיתָ וְיָרֶ-
 כְּתוֹ עַל-צִידוֹ: פ יד יִשְׁשׁוּכָר חֲמֹר גָּרָם רַבִּץ בֵּין הַמְּשֻׁפְתָּיִם:
 טו וַיֵּרָא מִגְּנֶחֶה כִּי טוֹב וְאֵת-הָאָרֶץ כִּי נִעְמָה וַיֵּט שְׁכֵמוֹ לְסֹבֵל וַיְהִי
 לְמִס-עֶבֶד: ס טז דָּן יָדִין עַמּוֹ כְּאַחַד שְׁבֹטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: יז יְהִי-דָן
 נֶחֱשׁ עַל־דָּרָף שְׁפִיפֹן עַל־אֶרֶץ הַנְּשֻׁף עֶקְבֵי-סוּס וַיִּפֹּל רֶכְבוֹ אַחֲרָיו:
 יח לִישׁוּעָתָךְ קוּיָתִי יְהוָה: ס [חֲמִישִׁי] יט גַּד גְּדוּד וַיִּגְדַּבוּ וְהוּא
 יִגַּד עֶקֶב: ס כ מאֲשֶׁר שְׁמָנָה לְחֹמוֹ וְהוּא יִתֵּן מַעֲדָנָי-מְלֹךְ: ס
 כא נִפְתְּלִי אֵילָה שְׁלֹחָה הַגִּתָּן אֲמָרִי-שֹׁפָר: ס כב בֶּן פֶּרֶת יוֹסֵף
 בֶּן פֶּרֶת עַל־עֵינָן בְּנוֹת צַעֲדָה עַל־שׁוּר: כג וַיִּמְרָרְהוּ וְרָבוּ וַיִּשְׁטַמְּהוּ
 בְּעַלְי חֲצִים: כד וַתֵּשֶׁב בְּאֵיתָן קוֹשֶׁתָּ וַיִּפְזוּ זְרָעִי דָּוִד מִיַּד אָבִיר
 יַעֲקֹב מִשָּׁם רָעָה אָבוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל: כה מֵאֵל אָבִיךָ וַיַּעֲזֹרְךָ וְאֵת שְׂדֵי
 וַיִּבְרַכְךָ בְּרַכַּת שְׁמַיִם מֵעַל בְּרַכַּת תְּהוֹם רַבְּצַת תַּחַת בְּרַכַּת שְׂדֵיִם
 וְרַחֵם: כו בְּרַכַּת אָבִיךָ גָּבְרוּ עַל-בְּרַכַּת הוֹרֵי עַד-תַּאֲנוֹת גִּבְעוֹת עוֹלָם
 תִּהְיֶינָּה לְרֹאשׁ יוֹסֵף וְלִקְדָּקֵד גִּזִּיר אֲחִיו: פ [שְׁשִׁי] כז בְּנִגְמִין
 זָאב יִטְרֹף בְּבִקְרָא יֹאכֵל עַד וְלַעֲרֹב יִחַלֵּק וְשָׁלַל: כח כָּל-אֵלָה שְׁבֹטֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁנִים עֶשֶׂר וְזֹאת אֲשֶׁר-דָּבַר לָהֶם אָבִיהֶם וַיִּבְרָךְ אוֹתָם אִישׁ
 אֲשֶׁר כְּבִרְכָתוֹ בְּרָךְ אוֹתָם: כט וַיִּצּוּ אוֹתָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֲנִי גְּאֹסֶף
 אֶל-עַמִּי קְבְּרוּ אֹתִי אֶל-אֲבֹתַי אֶל-הַמַּעֲרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשֵׂדֶה עֶפְרוֹן הַחֲתָי:
 ל בַּמַּעֲרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשֵׂדֶה הַמַּכְפֵּלָה אֲשֶׁר-עַל-פְּנֵי מִמְרָא בְּאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן
 אֲשֶׁר קָנָה אַבְרָהָם אֶת-הַשְּׂדֵה מֵאֵת עֶפְרוֹן הַחֲתָי לְאַחֲזוֹת-קְבָרָה: לא
 שְׁמָה קְבְּרוּ אֶת-אַבְרָהָם וְאֵת שָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתוֹ שְׁמָה קְבְּרוּ אֶת-יִצְחָק וְאֵת
 רַבְּקָה אֲשֶׁתוֹ וְשְׁמָה קְבַרְתִּי אֶת-לֵאָה: לב מִקְנֵה הַשְּׂדֵה וְהַמַּעֲרָה
 אֲשֶׁר-בוֹ מֵאֵת בְּנֵי-חֵת: לג וַיִּכַּל יַעֲקֹב לְצוֹת אֶת-בְּנָיו וַיִּיאָסֹף רַגְלָיו
 אֶל-הַמַּטָּה וַיִּגְוַע וַיִּיאָסֹף אֶל-עַמְּיוֹ:

Bereshit / Genesis 49:1-33

49:1 Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, 'Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come. 49:2 'Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob; And listen to Israel your father. 49:3 'Reuben, you are my firstborn; My might and the beginning of my strength, Preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. 49:4 'Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it

he went up to my couch. 49:5 'Simeon and Levi are brothers; Their swords are implements of violence. 49:6 'Let my soul not enter into their council; Let not my glory be united with their assembly; Because in their anger they slew men, And in their self-will they lamed oxen. 49:7 'Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, And scatter them in Israel. 49:8 'Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. 49:9 'Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? 49:10 'The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. 49:11 'He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. 49:12 'His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk. 49:13 'Zebulun will dwell at the seashore; And he shall be a haven for ships, And his flank shall be toward Sidon. 49:14 'Issachar is a strong donkey, Lying down between the sheepfolds. 49:15 'When he saw that a resting place was good And that the land was pleasant, He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, And became a slave at forced labor. 49:16 'Dan shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel. 49:17 'Dan shall be a serpent in the way, A horned snake in the path, That bites the horse's heels, So that his rider falls backward. 49:18 'For Your salvation I wait, O Lord. 49:19 'As for Gad, raiders shall raid him, But he will raid at their heels. 49:20 'As for Asher, his food shall be rich, And he will yield royal dainties. 49:21 'Naphtali is a doe let loose, He gives beautiful words. 49:22 'Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a spring; Its branches run over a wall. 49:23 'The archers bitterly attacked him, And shot at him and harassed him; 49:24 But his bow remained firm, And his arms were agile, From the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), 49:25 From the God of your father who helps you, And by the Almighty who blesses you With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb. 49:26 'The

blessings of your father Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; May they be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers. 49:27 'Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he devours the prey, And in the evening he divides the spoil.' 49:28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him. 49:29 Then he charged them and said to them, 'I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 49:30 in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site. 49:31 'There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah 49:32 the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth.' 49:33 When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people. (NASB)

The things that we learn about the tribe of Dan and Joseph are very important as we read through the rest of Scripture. Note, studying the Torah is absolutely foundational to understanding the rest of Scripture. This point is illustrated so profoundly when we study the book of Revelation, according to *Revelation 7:1-10*.

Revelation 7:1-10

7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 7:3 saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.' 7:4 And I heard the

*number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: 7:5 the tribe of **Judah**, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of **Reuben** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Gad** twelve thousand, 7:6 the tribe of **Asher** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Naphtali** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Manasseh** twelve thousand, 7:7 the tribe of **Simeon** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Levi** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Issachar** twelve thousand, 7:8 the tribe of **Zebulun** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Joseph** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Benjamin**, twelve thousand were sealed. 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 7:10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.' (NASB)*

While reading through *Revelation 7*, note how the tribes of Israel are mentioned here, but there are a few things that are amiss. The first thing is the tribe of Dan is missing, and the second is the tribe of Ephraim is missing. In Ephraim's place we find Joseph being called the tribe of Joseph which is different from what we read in the Torah. The question for us then is why is Dan missing from this list, and why is Joseph mentioned instead of Ephraim? The reason for Dan not being mentioned is connected to what we read about the blessing of Jacob:

Dan (49:16-18)

דָּן יִדְיִן עַמּוֹ כְּאַחַד שְׁבֵטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: *Dan shall govern his people, As one of the tribes of Israel.*¹⁷ יְהִי־דָן נָחֵשׁ עַל־יָרֵךְ אֶרְבֵּי עַקְבֵי־סוּס וַיִּפֹּל רֶכֶבֹּ: *Dan shall be a serpent by the road, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that his rider*

is thrown backward 18 יְהוָה: קְנִי־תִי לְיִשׁוּעָתְךָ *I wait for Your deliverance, O LORD!*

In his blessing, Jacob speaks of him being a viper striking the heels of the horse. This parallels what we read in *Bereshit / Genesis 3:15* “the man will crush the serpent’s head” (הוא ישופך ראש) Note that it is *Chizkuni, Genesis 49:17 Part 2*, who suggests this connection. We also know that *Bereshit / Genesis 3:15* is a messianic prophecy. This historical point of view is also of interest as it helps to explain why the tribe of Dan is not mentioned in *Revelation 7:4-8*. According to the Tanach, the tribe of Dan as a whole was guilty of gross idolatry, even to the point of stealing the idols they used to practice their religion (see *Judges 18:14-31*). It was also Dan who first organized idolatry in ancient Israel, and the longest in duration. (*Judges 18:30*) Jewish tradition says that Dan was the first tribe to follow Jeroboam into his sin of idolatry, and the rabbinic literature the tribe of Dan is often used to represent idolatry. Note the following references

Rashi on Deuteronomy 34:1 Part 3

וַיַּרְא UNTO DAN — He showed him the children of Dan practicing idolatry, as it is said, “And the sons of Dan erected the graven image for themselves”; and He showed him also Samson who would in the future (Ref. Pentateuch with Rashi’s commentary by M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silbermann, 1929-1934)

Sifrei Devarim 357:7

Variantly: “until Dan”: We are hereby taught that He showed him the seed of Dan, serving idolatry, viz. “And the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image, etc. (Ref. Sifrei by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein)

Tur HaAroch, Numbers 2:2 Part 1

[*Judges 18* describes that the tribe of Dan hired themselves a phony priest and instituted idolatry in their newly conquered territory, formerly known as Layish.

(Ref. *Tur on the Torah*, trans. Eliyahu Munk)

Rashi on Ezekiel 16:15 Part 3

This entire allegory represents the Calf of the desert and the other idolatry that the tribe of Dan worshipped in the desert, as it is written : "all those who trailed after you," and we find in the Pesikta Ezekiel, (English translation by S. Fisch, Soncino Press, 1950)

We note also that Dan is missing from the genealogies in *1 Chronicles 1-9*. This is also a significant observation in light of *Revelation 7*. Many have suggested that Dan may have not returned from captivity and thus lost his place in the tribes. We note that Ephraim is not mentioned, and Ephraim in both the Scriptures and the Rabbinic literature at times are synonymous to the entire northern kingdom in terms of idolatrous worship. The prophet Hosea speaks of Ephraim as describing the 10 tribes (northern kingdom) as being in apostasy in idolatry. The historical and literary analysis of this does suggest these as reasons, however, I feel it is prophetic word Jacob spoke over Dan that is most significant. Dan being connected to *Bereshit / Genesis 3:15*, Jacob says: *עַל־יִדְרָךְ שָׁפִיפֹן עַל־יֶאֱרַח הַנֶּשֶׁף עַקְבֵי־סוּס וַיִּפֹּל רֹכֵבוֹ אָחֹר: Dan shall be a serpent by the road, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that his rider is thrown backward.* Notice how Dan is the serpent, representing the evil one (Satan). In *Revelation*, we learn how Yeshua the Messiah overcome Satan and the world. The reason Dan is not mentioned specifically in *Revelation 7* is because of this connection, as representing the evil one, and Yeshua's victory over the evil one in fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

The last line in Dan's blessing from Jacob states, *לְיִשׁוּעָתֶךָ קִנִּיתִי יְהוָה: I wait for Your deliverance, O LORD!* Notice how Jacob by inspiration of the Lord, speaks to Dan concerning the salvation (לְיִשׁוּעָתֶךָ) deliverance of the Lord God Almighty in heaven. This connects us to why Joseph was mentioned in *Revelation 7* in opposition to Ephraim which represents idolatry and sin. We are being told in *Revelation 7* to remember the life of Joseph, how he was faithful, long suffering, forgiving, and merciful, and most importantly, he was a savior of the world as a type of messiah. The things that we learn about

the tribe of Dan and Joseph here in relation to the book of Revelation are very important and illustrate for us why studying Torah is so important for our lives, especially for understanding all of Scripture! The Torah speaks to the salvation of God and of His Messiah Yeshua! We even see Yeshua's (ישוע) name right here in the blessing, לְיֵשׁוּעַ מְתָהּ, קְנִייתִי יְהוָה: of waiting upon the Lord! Now, should we ask ourselves why it is so important that we believe in Yeshua as the NT text states we should? Certainly, faith in Yeshua as the Savior Messiah of God is taught from the very beginning of the pages of Scripture!