

פרשת

וישב

Parashat Vayeshev

*Bereshit / Genesis 37:1-40:23, Amos 2:6-3:8,
John 2:13-4:42*

Listening to the Sound of the Trumpet

In this week's Torah Portion we learn about Joseph, his dreams, how his brothers become jealous of him, how they wanted to kill him, and instead sold him into slavery. This is where we pick up in the narrative according to *Bereshit / Genesis 39:1-4*, וְיוֹסֵף הַיְהוּדִי הוֹבֵד מִצְרָיִם, מָה וַיִּקְנֵהוּ פוֹטִיפָר סֹרִיס פְּרֹעֶה שֶׁר הַטַּבָּחִים אִישׁ מִצְרָיִם מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמַעֲלִיִּים וַיְהִי יְהוֹנָה. *39:1 When Joseph was taken down to Egypt, a certain Egyptian, Potiphar, a courtier of Pharaoh and his chief steward, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him there.* וַיְהִי אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מִצְלָיִם וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרָיִ: *39:2 The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he stayed in the house of his Egyptian master.* וַיִּרְא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי יְהוֹנָה אִתּוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה יְהוֹנָה: *39:3 And when his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD lent success to everything he undertook,* וַיִּמָּצָא *39:4 he took a liking to Joseph. He made him his personal attendant and put him in charge of his household, placing in his hands all that he owned. (SEFARIA)* The text here states that God's blessing was upon Joseph causing him to prosper in all that he set his hand to do. The rab-

Let us draw out an interesting observation according to the commentary *Abarbanel on Torah, Bereshit / Genesis 39.2 Part 1*.

Abarbanel on Torah, Bereshit / Genesis 39.2 Part 1

והנה יוסף עם היותו עבד מושלים תמיד היתה יראת
אלדים לנגד עיניו ובכל מעשיו שוה י"י לנגדו תמיד ועל
זה אמר ויהי י"י את יוסף שהיה תמיד לנגד עיניו ובשכר
זה היה איש מצליח בכל אשר יעשה.

Now Joseph, despite being merely a slave to the ruling classes, constantly retained the fear of God before his eyes, and had the Almighty in mind throughout the course of his activities. It is regarding this that (the Torah) states: 'And the Lord was with Joseph', i.e. that the thought of Him was always in Joseph's mind. Accordingly, as a reward for this, he became a person who succeeded in every venture he undertook.

The commentary points out that Joseph regained his fear of the Lord and kept the fear of God before his eyes throughout the course of his activities and his life. This is an important point and is one Paul draws out in His commentary to the Colossians saying in *Colossians 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB)* and *3:22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men. (NASB)* This is a very important observation as Joseph functions to remind us how keeping the way of God in our minds daily will lead to the Lord being with us in everything we do. This is similar to what Solomon wrote in the Proverbs saying in *Mishley / Proverbs 3:5-6, בְּטַח אֶל־יְהוָה בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ, וְאַל־כְּפִינְתָךְ אֶל־תִּשְׁעֶנָּה: בְּכָל־דְּרָכֶיךָ דַּעְהוּ יְיָ הוּא יִשְׁׁר אֲרָחֶיךָ. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. (SEFARIA)* Solomon writes how we are to trust in God and acknowledge Him in all our ways *יְיָ הוּא יִשְׁׁר אֲרָחֶיךָ "He will make*

the course of your life straight.” This is another way of saying the Lord will direct our path or our lives. The way Joseph relied upon the Lord, it did not matter what situation life had brought him, and even the injustice that he received from Potiphar’s wife, her false accusation, and Potiphar punished him by imprisonment. Joseph remained faithful to the Lord.

Now the Rabbis say that it was because Joseph had kept the through of God in his mind and in his heart as the reason why God had blessed him. As we read on in the Scriptures, there was more to Joseph than simply keeping the thought of God in his mind. We are told according to the text, “*the Lord was with Joseph*” וַיְהִי יְהוָה אִתּוֹ because Joseph was faithful to walk in God’s ways of truth and life, so as not to sin with Potiphar’s wife the Lord God did not abandon him. Because of this, the Lord blessed him not just in Potiphar’s house, he was blessed when he went into prison as well, and he was blessed to become the viceroy of Egypt for 80 years of his life. The point is those how are poor generally express their gratitude to God in all that they have displaying the fear of the Lord when compared to those who are wealthy. It is remarkable how Joseph responded as being in a position of great power in Potiphar’s household, being in charge over all that Potiphar owned. Joseph responded in the fear of the Lord refusing to do something God would not approve of. Joseph continued to be faithful in this way even when placed in charge over all of Egypt too.

The commentary *Or HaChaim on Bereshit / Genesis 39:17 Part 2* makes another interesting observation. The commentary states the following:

Or HaChaim on Bereshit / Genesis 39:17 Part 2

לאמר כדברים וגו'. פירוש לא שהאמין בה כי כדבריה כן
 היה אלא לצד שאמרה אשתו כן עשה תנועה קטנה, ולזה
 לא יסרו ולא עשה לו דבר כמשפט הנעשה לעבד הנותן
 עיניו באשת אדונו:

לאמור כדברים האלה, “*to corroborate such words.*”
Potiphar did not believe his wife. Since the accus-

er was his own wife, however, he had to make some gesture otherwise his wife would have been publicly discredited. This is why Potiphar did not discipline Joseph nor had him executed, the normal penalty for a slave who dared to aspire to the wife of his master.

The interesting observation is how the rabbis describe Potiphar as not disciplining Joseph in the normal manner. If this had happened to the average slave, the typical response would be to have the slave executed. This is not what Potiphar had done to Joseph, instead, he had Joseph punished by imprisonment. The rabbis suggest that because of this scenario, it appears as if Potiphar did not believe his wife however, a response was required and so he put Joseph in prison. These things also reveal to us how the Lord God is in control, how He has the power to save our lives from the cruelty of ungodly men. Joseph's life was spared and it was because the Lord God Almighty was with him! The commentary *Tur HaAroch on Bereshit / Genesis 39:17 Part I* goes on to say that Potiphar simply wanted to suppress the scandal of the situation and so he imprisoned him instead of execution. Another possibility was that Potiphar favored Joseph and could not bear killing him suggesting Potiphar might have been bisexual? Which is another explanation of the rabbis. Another explanation the rabbis say the Torah also hints, that as soon as Potiphar heard the story of his wife about what Joseph had supposed to have done to her, i.e. her words were not necessarily the true events, meaning he did not believe her, having faith in Joseph's uprightness, however, seeing that he had to save face, he incarcerated Joseph instead of executing him, thus saving face for his wife also. It is difficult to speculate about exactly what Potiphar was thinking, but what we do know is what the Scriptures tell us. We are told according to the text, "*the Lord was with Joseph*" *וַיְהִי יְהוָה אִתּוֹ* because of Joseph remained faithful to walk in God's ways of truth and life, the Lord God did not abandon him. These things have great application for us today and function as both an encouragement and a warning, to always keep the fear of the Lord before us as we walk and live our lives in service to the Lord God of Israel and His Messiah Yeshua!

The scriptures we are looking at for this week are from *Bereshit /*

ספר בראשית פרק לט

א וְיוֹסֵף הוּרַד מִצְרָיִמָּה וַיִּקְנֶהוּ פוֹטִיפַר סָרִיס פְּרֹעֶה שֶׁר הַטְּבָחִים אִישׁ מִצְרֵי מִד הַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵלִים אֲשֶׁר הוּרְדָהוּ שָׁמָּה:

ב וַיְהִי יְהִנָּה אֶת-יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצָלִים וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרָיִ: ג וַיִּרְא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי יְהִנָּה אִתּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-הוּא עֹשֶׂה יְהִנָּה מְצָלִים בְּיָדוֹ: ד וַיִּמְצָא יוֹסֵף חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּשְׁרַת אִתּוֹ וַיִּפְקְדֵהוּ עַל-בֵּיתוֹ וְכָל-יֵשׁ-לוֹ נָתַן בְּיָדוֹ: ה וַיְהִי מֵאֵז הַפְּקִיד אִתּוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְעַל כָּל-אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ-לוֹ וַיִּבְרָךְ יְהִנָּה אֶת-בֵּית הַמִּצְרָיִ רִי בְּגַלְל יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי בְרַכַּת יְהִנָּה בְּכָל-אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ-לוֹ בְּבֵית וְבִ-שְׂדֵה: ו וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ בְּיַד-יוֹסֵף וְלֹא-יָדַע אִתּוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי אִם-הִלְחָם אֲשֶׁר-הוּא אוֹכַל וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יָפֵה-תָאֵר וַיִּפֶּה מְרָאֵה: [ששי] ז וַיְהִי אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּשָּׂא אִשְׁת־אֲדֹנָיו אֶת-עֵינֶיהָ אֶל-יוֹסֵף וַתֹּאמֶר שְׂכָבָה עִמִּי: ח וַיִּמָּאֵן | וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-אִשְׁת־אֲדֹנָיו הֵן אֲדֹנִי לֹא-יָדַע אִתִּי מֵה-בְּפִית וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יֵשׁ-לוֹ נָתַן בְּיָדִי: ט אֵינְנִי גְדוֹל בְּבֵית הַזֶּה מִמְּנֵי וְלֹא-חָשַׁף מִמְּנֵי מְאוּמָה כִּי אִם-אוֹתָךְ בְּאֲשֶׁר אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאִיךָ אֲעֹשֶׂה הֲרַעַה הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְחָטַאתִי לֵאלֹהִים: י וַיְהִי כַּדָּבָר רָה אֶל-יוֹסֵף יוֹם | יוֹם וְלֹא-שָׁמַע אֶלֶיָּהּ לְשֹׁכֵב אֶצְלָהּ לְהִיּוֹת עִמָּה: יא וַיְהִי כִּהְיוֹם הַזֶּה וַיָּבֵא הַבַּיִתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלֹאכְתּוֹ וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבַּיִת שָׁם בְּפִית: יב וַתִּתְּפֹשֶׂהוּ בְּבִגְדוֹ לֵאמֹר שְׂכָבָה עִמִּי וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיִּנָּס וַיֵּצֵא חֲחוּצָה: יג וַיְהִי כִּרְאוּתָהּ כִּי-עָזַב בְּגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיִּנָּס חֲחוּצָה: יד וַתִּקְרָא לְאֲנָשֵׁי בֵיתָהּ וַתֹּאמֶר לָהֶם לֵאמֹר רְאוּ הֵבִיא לָנוּ אִישׁ עֵבְרִי לְצַחֵק בָּנוּ בָּא אֵלַי לְשֹׁכֵב עִמִּי וְאֶקְרָא בְּקוֹל גְּדוֹל: טו וַיְהִי כַּשָּׁמְעוּ כִּי-הָרִימְתִי קוֹלִי וְאֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלִי וַיִּנָּס וַיֵּצֵא חֲחוּצָה: טז וַתִּנְחַח בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלָהּ עַד-בּוֹא אֲדֹנָיו אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ: יז וַתִּדְבַר אֵלָיו כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֵאמֹר בָּא אֵלַי הָעֶבֶד הָעֵבְרִי אֲשֶׁר-הִבֵּאתָ לָנוּ לְצַחֵק בִּי: יח וַיְהִי כִּהָרִימִי קוֹלִי וְאֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלִי וַיִּנָּס חֲחוּצָה:

Bereshit / Genesis 39:1-18

39:1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. 39:2 The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. 39:3 Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand. 39:4 So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. 39:5 It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD'S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field. 39:6 So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. 39:7 It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." 39:8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. 39:9 "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?" 39:10 As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her. 39:11 Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. 39:12 She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside. 39:13 When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand

and had fled outside, 39:14 she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed. 39:15 "When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside." 39:16 So she left his garment beside her until his master came home. 39:17 Then she spoke to him with these words, "The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me; 39:18 and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside." (NASB)

In the life of Joseph, we see how significant an influence Jacob had on his son Joseph in matters of faith as the text states, *"the Lord was with Joseph"* יהוה יְהִי־עִתְּיֹסֶף because of Joseph's faithfulness to walk in God's ways of truth and life, the Lord God did not abandon him. Joseph retained his fear of the Lord and kept the fear of God before his eyes throughout the course of his activities and his life. These things illustrate for us how important it is to keep God's Word in our hearts. In the words of the prophet Ezekiel, there is a parallel to what we are reading here according to *Ezekiel 33:1-13* as Ezekiel speaks concerning the watchman and the sounding of the trumpet.

Ezekiel 33:1-13

33:1 Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 33:2 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: 33:3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; 33:4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. 33:5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliv-

er his soul. 33:6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. 33:7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. 33:8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 33:9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. 33:10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 33:12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. 33:13 When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. (NASB)

Ezekiel 33 speaks of setting a man as a watchman to see if the enemy is coming to make war. When he sees the enemy coming, he is to

sound the trumpet to warn the people. Ezekiel then discusses the situation when the trumpet is sounded that the people are to heed the call and warning. If one does not heed the warning, he will be destroyed. If one does heed the warning, then his soul (nefesh/life) will be saved. Ezekiel parallels this saying, *33:7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me (NASB)*. Notice how the Lord sets His word as a warning to us and our lives concerning the righteousness of God. Ezekiel states, *33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (KJV)* The Lord desires that we turn from sin, and so at the beginning of *Ezekiel 33*, he states to listen to the sound or the warning of the trumpet call. Note how the Word of God functions also as a trumpet calling us to turn from unrighteousness and sin. In fact as we continue to read in *Ezekiel 33*, he also parallels what we read in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:1-5* concerning personal righteousness. Ezekiel says, *33:12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. 33:13 When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. (NASB)* These things speak of the insufficiency of our righteous works. These words are not meant to minimize the importance of walking in righteousness, but that there is something about relying upon personal righteousness for salvation. The point of these things is related to Joseph having always kept the fear of the Lord before His eyes. When it comes to the matter of sin, it is a form of bondage, this is why there are parallels to God delivering Israel from Egypt, the land of bondage, to the Lord delivering us from our sins. Peter wrote that if we struggle with sin, the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation according to *2 Peter 2:9-11*.

2 Peter 2:9-11, 2:19

2:9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 2:10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, 2:11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. (NASB)

2:18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, 2:19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. (NASB)

In addition to 2 Peter 2:9-11, Peter discusses the great difficulty of overcoming sexual sin (2:18-19), the man who does so is a slave to corruption, and he is overcome and is enslaved. We need the Lord to help overcome all temptation and Peter says that the Lord is able to deliver from all temptation.

The life of Joseph demonstrates for us the great faith and trust Joseph had in the Lord God Almighty illustrated in his always keeping the fear of the Lord before His eyes. These things illustrate the importance of reading God's Word and hiding His word in our hearts. The Word of God becomes a sounding trumpet to remind us the enemy is always ready to strike and take from us both our freedom and our lives. These are the reasons why The Lord God Almighty sent His son Yeshua to die for our sins. Yeshua functions in the manner in which Joseph does, as one who demonstrates the unrelenting faithfulness to God in heaven regardless of one's situation, even unto death! In addition to this, believing upon Yeshua and in what He has done, the Lord sends His Holy Spirit into our lives and into our hearts, so we always keep the fear of the Lord before our eyes and empowers us, and keeps us from sin. The truth of the matter is when believing upon Yeshua and having the presence of God in our lives via His Holy Spirit, we

still must be very attentive to the call of the trumpet, the warning call of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, Yeshua, and of the disciples and Paul. God has given us in the Scriptures, such that we can know what God expects of us, that we are not to give our lives over to sin, regardless of what it is. Every day we must seek the help of the Lord in order to overcome this world. And we have one whom we can trust in, Yeshua, who has already overcome the world leading the way in the truth and life of God, according to the Scriptures!