

Parashat Vayechi / פרשת מקץ

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Our Willingness to Receive

This Weeks Reading List:

Torah: Genesis 47:28-50:26

Haftarah: 1 Kings 2:1-12

B'rit HaChadashah: 1 Peter 1:1-9

Genesis 47:28-30

47:28 Ya'akov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; thus Ya'akov lived to be 147 years old. 47:29 The time came when Isra'el was approaching death; so he called for his son Yosef and said to him, "If you truly love me, please put your hand under my thigh and pledge that, out of consideration for me, you will not bury me in Egypt. 47:30 Rather, when I sleep with my fathers, you are to carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried." He replied, "I will do as you have said (CJB)

At the beginning of the parsha we find that Ya'akov dies, and at the end of the parsha Yoseph dies. An obvious question I have is why didn't Ya'akov's family return to Eretz Canaan once the famine ended? *Genesis 47:28* says Ya'akov lived in the land of Mitzrayim (Egypt) for seventeen years. This is quite a few years after the famine in the land. I guess one could suggest that they could have returned but they opted instead for the "good life" in Eretz Mitzrayim. Is this similar to what happened between Avraham and his brother Lot?

Genesis 13:4-14

13:4 where he had first built the altar; and there Avram called on the name of ADONAI. 13:5 Lot, who was traveling with Avram, also had flocks, herds and tents. 13:6 But the land could not support their living together, because their possessions were too great for them to remain together. 13:7 Moreover, quarreling arose between Avram's and Lot's herdsmen. The Kena'ani and the P'rizi were then living in the land. 13:8 Avram said to Lot, "Please, let's not have quarreling between me and you, or between my herdsmen and yours, since we're kinsmen. 13:9 Isn't the whole land there in front of you? Please separate yourself from me - if you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left." 13:10 Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Yarden was well watered everywhere, before ADONAI destroyed S'dom and 'Amora, like the garden of ADONAI, like the land of Egypt in the direction of Tzo'ar. 13:11 So Lot chose all the plain of the Yarden for himself, and Lot traveled eastward; thus they separated themselves from each other. 13:12 Avram lived in the land of Kena'an; and Lot lived in the cities of the plain, setting up his tent near S'dom. 13:13 Now the men of S'dom were evil, committing great sins against ADONAI. 13:14 ADONAI said to Avram,

after Lot had moved away from him, "Look all around you from where you are, to the north, the south, the east and the west. (CJB)

Lot looked towards the plain of the Yarden (Jordan) that it was well watered and would provide the good life. Is this what the children of Israel were thinking of remaining in the good life by staying in Eretz Mitzrayim? While Yosef still lived, I am certain Ya'akov and his family was well taken care of.

It is also possible however that the children of Israel felt it was their divine destiny to stay in Mitzrayim. G-d promised Ya'akov prior to his departure to Mitzrayim saying "Do not fear going down to Mitzrayim, for you will become a great nation there. I will go down with you and I will bring you back" (*Genesis 46:3-4*).

בראשית 46:3-4

3 וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב | יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי : וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי הֵאֵל אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבֹתְךָ אֵל-תִּירָא מִרְדָּה מִצְרַיִם כִּי-לָגֹי גְדוֹל אֲשִׁימְךָ שָׁם :
4 אָנֹכִי אֶרֶד עִמָּךְ מִצְרַיִם וְאָנֹכִי אֶעֱלֶךָ גַּם-עִלְיָה וְיוֹסֵף יִשִׁית
5 יָדוֹ עַל-עֵינֶיךָ : וַיָּקָם יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיֵּשֶׂא בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל

Whether or not the children of Israel wanted the "good life" or felt it was their "divine destiny," I believe there is something more which Adonai wants to reveal to us here. In this last parsha of sefer Bereshit (book of Genesis) G-d wants to show us the importance of having a willingness to receive the Gift of G-d. I believe the children of Israel understood how to receive the gift of G-d at the hand of Yosef. They also understood that G-d said "I will bring you back to Eretz Canaan" and thus remained waiting upon the Lord to bring them back to the land.

Our willingness to receive is essential as a follower of Messiah Yeshua. However sometimes it is difficult to receive G-d's gift; why is it so difficult to receive? One reason is because of pride. We all know how pride can hinder our relationship with Adonai because it leads us in the direction of (i) our own self justification, (ii) our opinion that we know better, and (iii) that we do not rely upon anyone besides ourselves. This is why Yeshua came into the world and the world did not recognize Him. Why? The world is looking for a person of power, successful, prestige, someone to overthrow the government, etc. We want someone who can give us what we think we need (i.e. pride). This however is not G-d's plan; G-d wants us to be humble rather than prideful. Though He has been rejected, the option to believe still exists because G-d is the one who comes to us. Yochannan (John) said it this way:

John 1:9-13

1:9 This was the true light, which gives light to everyone entering the world. 1:10 He was in the world -- the world came to be through him -- yet the world did not know him. 1:11 He came to his own homeland, yet his own people did not receive him. 1:12 But to as many as did receive him, to those who put their trust in his person and power, he gave the right to become children of G-d, 1:13 not because of bloodline, physical impulse or human intention, but because of G-d. (CJB)

G-d is saying “I want you to be my child; I want you to belong to me!”

So, what does G-d want for us? He wants us to be his children; we find this throughout the Torah (i) G-d reveals to us His Holiness, and His requirements for Holy Living, (ii) G-d shows us how He loves His children in the covenant relationship He designed in the Torah, and (iii) He consistently points towards the ultimate goal of making all of peoples the children of G-d. (i.e. G-d delivering a mixed multitude from Mitzrayim demonstrates that he does desire all peoples to come to him by faith; for further study see the article titled “Kingdom of priests and a holy nation” http://www.matsati.com/Kingdom_of_priests_and_a_Holy_nation.pdf). Finally, in the B’rit HaChadashah, we find how it is possible for anyone to become a child of G-d.

One of the greatest illustrations of the need for Yeshua our Messiah is found in the story of the Passover. If G-d comes to the door of our hearts and there is no blood, then we die; we are not made alive. If G-d comes to the door of our hearts and there is blood, the shed blood of Yeshua Hamoshiach, then He makes us alive, revives us and makes a special relationship with Him as His children. This all hinges upon our willingness to receive the gift of G-d, the gift of His Messiah. In this week’s parsha, Ya’akov and his family had faith and were willing to remain and receive the gift from G-d through the hand of Yosef. Today we need to have faith and receive the gift of G-d through the hand of Yeshua Hamoshiach.

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah for ever and ever