

פרשת ויחי / Parashat Vayechi

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32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
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5

The Tanach shapes our Messianic Expectation!

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 47:28-50:26
הפטרה: 1 Kings 2:1-12
הברית: 1 Peter 1:1-9
החדשה

10 It is relatively easy to find texts in the Tanach which have their fulfillment in
the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic writings) but the subject of messianic prophecy
is not quite as simple as picking and choosing verses which appear to fit. As
believers some (unbelievers) might suggest that since we have the Ketuvei
15 Shelachim, we are fully developed in messianic expectation and therefore
conclude such textual references referring to “messianic prophecy” are pulled out
of context. I believe the Tanach actually lays out the groundwork for the larger
prophetic descriptions of the Messiah and in fact have been significant in shaping
the messianic expectations. In this week’s Torah portion, we find 5 verses which
20 have great significance pointing to the coming Moshiach. Additionally, this week
we will look at rabbinic commentary, particularly Rashi’s commentary. Rather
than providing the P’shat on the text this week Rashi makes a nice mini Drash.
While reading I would like you to take note of Rashi’s interpretation of these
verses *Bereshit / Genesis 49:8-12* and how the Tanach lays out the groundwork
for the prophetic descriptions of the Messiah even in the Rabbinic literature.

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בארשית 49:8-12

8 יהודה אתה יודוך אחיך ידך בערף איביך ישתחוו
9 לך בני אביך: גור אריה יהודה ממרף בני עליה
10 קרע רבץ כאריה וכלבאי מי יקימנו לאיסור שבט
מיהודה ומחזק מבין רגליו עד פייבא שילה ולו
11 יקרת עמים: אסרי לגפן עורה ולשרקה בני אתנו
12 כפם ביין לבשו ובדם ענבים סותה: חכלילי עינים
מיין ולבן שנים מחלב:

מט. v. 6 וכן ה"ש, ת"י, ת"ע ות"ס. v. 8 יהודה בראש עמוד סימן ביה שמו.
v. 8 ב"נ ישתחוו בלא געיא. v. 10 שילו קרי. v. 10 בזנבוקי יקרת קמץ. v. 11 עירו
קרי במגה עורה בלא קרי, בהללי עורה כתיב וק' עירו. v. 11 במגה כפם בסגול.
v. 11 סותו קרי, במגה סותה בלא קרי, בהללי סותה כתיב וק' סותו. v. 12 ח רבתו.
v. 13 סביר עדי וכן ברוב ספרים כ"י, ה"ש, ת"י, ת"ע ות"ס. v. 14 ב"ג יששכר.

Drash / Midrash

Midrash (מדרש; plural midrashim) is a Hebrew word referring to a method of exegesis of a Biblical text. The term "midrash" can also refer to a compilation of Midrashic teachings, in the form of legal, exegetical or homiletical commentaries on the Tanakh.

Genesis 49:8-12

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.

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I would like to begin by looking at *Bereshit / Genesis 49:10* and then look at Rashi's thoughts upon the verse.

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Bereshit / Genesis 49:10

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 (gathering) of the peoples. (NASB)

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Rashi's on *Bereshit / Genesis 49:10* is quite lengthy as you can see below:

רש"י לתורה ספר בראשית פרק מט

(י) לא יסור שבט מיהודה. מדוד ואילך י אלו ראשי גליות שבבבל (סנהדרין ה). שרודים את העם בשבט. הממונים על פי המלכות. ומחקה מבין רגליו. תלמידים, אלו נשיאי ארץ ישראל. עד כי יבא שילה. מלך המשיח שהמלוכה ש שלו, וכן תרגמו אונקלוס ומדרש אגדה, שילו, שי ת לו שנאמר יובילו שי למורא (תהלים עז, יב). ולו יקחת עמים. אסיפת העמים, שהיו"ד עיקר היא ביסוד, כמו יפעתה, ופעמים שנופלת ממנו, וכמה אותיות משמשות בלשון זה, והם נקראים עיקר נופל, כגון נו"ן של נוגף, ושל נושך, ואלף שבאחותי באזניכם (איוב יג ז), ושבאבחת חרב (יחזקאל כא, כ). (והוא לשון חרב ופירוש אימת חרב והוא לשון זיין) ואסוך שמן (מלכים ב ד, ב), אף זה יקחת עמים, אסיפת עמים, שנאמר אליו גוים ידרשו (ישעיה יא, י), ודומה לו עין תלעג * לאב ותבוז ליקחת אם (משלי ל יז), לקבוץ קמטים שבפניה מפני זקנתה, ובגמרא דיתבי ומקוהו אקתתא בשוקי * דנהרנצא [דפומבדיתא] במסכת יבמות (ק"ג), ויכול היה לומר קהיית עמים: (יא) אסרי לגבן

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Rashi interprets *Bereshit / Genesis 49:10* on "the rod" to refer to that of dominating the people by enforcing their edicts through corporal punishment such as striking violators with the rod. The rod also refers to the throne or the crown and alludes to kingship. The reference to a lawgiver alludes to that descendents of Judah will teach Torah to students who sit at their feet. Rashi further interprets Shiloh to be a reference to the Messiah and to him will be the gathering / assembling of the people

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Interestingly since Rashi interpreted Shiloh as a reference to the Messiah, Rashi also cites *Isaiah 11:10* to speak of the "שרש ישי" "the descendent of the root of Jesse," to show how "his will be an assemblage of nations" really applies to the Messiah. Rashi says the "people will search their way to him, the Messiah." Rashi alludes to the verse in Isaiah as being the same as the "obedience / gathering / assemblage of nations" of our verse. Let's look at the relevant verses from the book of Isaiah.

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Isaiah 11:1

11:1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. (NASB)

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Rashi's on the Torah, book of Genesis, chapter 49 verse 10
10 The rod shall not depart from Judah. From King David and onward. These are the exilarchs in Babylonia who dominate the people by the rod for they are appointed by royal authority. Nor a lawgiver from between his feet. Students. These are the princes of the Land of Yisrael. Until Shiloh arives. Shiloh is the King, Moshiach (the Messiah), for the kingship is his, and thus did Onkelos interpret it. And an aggadic Midrash explains "Gift to him," as it says "they will deliver a gift to the revered one." And his will be an assemblage of nations. The term יקחת עמים means the gathering of nations, for the י is an essential element of the root, like the י in "your appearance."

Isaiah 11:10

11:10 Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious. (NASB)

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In *Bereishit Rabba 98:8 and 99:9*, the *Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98b* discusses the Messiah's given name. One opinion there adduces the verse to prove that his name is Shiloh. Shiloh (שילה) is a city just north of Jerusalem in Yisrael. Looking at the marginal Masorah, there is a circulus over the word שילה in which we find a Qere and Ketiv referring to a difference in the scribal tradition and what is read out loud. It is noted that שילה is read as שילו which interestingly is interpreted as being a form of שלו meaning "his." This verse indicates that the kingship, which is represented by the rod will remain with Judah until the one whom "the rod" belongs will appear. The question then in this prophetic message is who is the one "the rod" belongs too?

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We can gain a little further insight by looking at the standard translation of the Torah the Targum Onkelos. The Targum Onkelos renders this verse as "until Moshiach will come, for his is the kingship." Clearly Rashi has his interpretation of *Bereshit / Genesis 49:10* from the Targum Onkelos as well as from the Hebrew text where the name Shiloh is a reference to the Messiah.

Qere and Ketiv,
from the Aramaic qere or q're, ("[what is] read") and ketiv, or ketib, kethib, kethibh, kethiv, ("[what is] written"), refer to a small number of differences between what is written in the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible, as preserved by scribal tradition, and what is read.

תרגום אונקלוס ספר בראשית פרק מט

י לא יעדי עביד שולטן מדבית יהודה וספרא מבני בנוחי עד עלמא עד דנתי משיחא דדליה היא מלכותא עליה ישתמען עממא יא יסחר ישכאל לקרתיה עמא יבנון חיקליה יחון צדיקא סחור סחור ליה ועבדי אורייתא באולפן עמיה יהי ארגון טב לבושהי כסותיה מילא מילא צבע זחורי וצבעונין יב יסקון טרוהי בכרמוהי

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The fact that the Targumim connect a Messianic reference to this text is interesting indeed. This early reference to a Messianic interpretation no doubt underlies later Messianic interpretation and most definitely has had an influence upon Rashi's commentary.

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Reading through the next verse, *Bereshit / Genesis 49:11*, there are a few obvious questions that can be asked, (i) Why fasten a colt to a vine? What is the significance of the vine? (ii) Why would Judah or a seed of Judah wash his cloths in wine or grape juice?

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Bereshit / Genesis 49:11

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. (NASB)

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Rashi says the Targum Onkelos links the verse in *Bereshit / Genesis 49:11* to the comment of the Gemara on the verse in *Shoftim / Judges 5:10 'You who ride on white donkeys, You who sit on rich carpets, And you who travel on the road*

105 *sing! (NASB)*: רכבי אתנות צחרות ישבי על מדין והלכי על דרך שיחור: “These are the Torah
scholars who ride from town to town and district to district to study. The root צחר
is related to צהר and צחרות means that they make the Torah like צהרים noon”
(*Talmud Bavli Eruvin 54a*) In other words, through studying the Torah from
110 different teachers being exposed to different outlooks, the Torah becomes clear as
noon to them.

Now, according to this interpretation, the vine in *Bereshit / Genesis 49:11*
represents the righteous and the vine branch represents those who engage in
studying the Torah. The righteous will congregate around the Messiah, while
“those who engage in Torah” will study with the Messiah. Interestingly, Yeshua
115 said in *Yochanan / John 15:1* “I am the vine.” It is possible this teaching of the
vine referring to the righteous was a prevalent teaching in Yeshua’s day, and
Yeshua being the perfectly righteous one from above He truly is the vine.

Now naturally garments are not washed in wine, nobody does this no matter
what time, place or cultural setting. This obviously has another meaning. What is
120 referred to here where he washes his garments in wine and his robes in the blood
of grapes? What do wine and grapes represent? Grapes are the fruit of the vine
and are one of the most important products of the Palestinian region. The first
mention of it in biblical history is of Noah in *Bereshit / Genesis 9:20*. In
Yochanan / John 15:1 Yeshua said of himself “I am the vine” and in one of His
125 parables in *Mattityahu / Matthew 21:33* the believers are referred to as a vineyard
where a certain householder planted and then hedged around about it. See Also
Yochanan / John 5:1-5, the teaching on the vine, wine, and blood of grapes is
quite significant.

130 ***Yochanan / John 5:1-5***
*15:1 ‘I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 15:2 ‘Every
branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch
that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 15:3 ‘You are
135 already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 15:4
‘Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless
it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. (NASB)*

Conclusion

140 As we can see here in *Bereshit / Genesis 49*, the Tanach lays out the Messianic
expectation. We have looked at the Rabbinic Literature to see how the Sages
throughout the centuries have interpreted the text under consideration. Our goal
really is to ask ourselves the following questions, (i) what does the text tell us
about the character of the Messiah and (ii) what does the text tell us about the
145 work of the Messiah? By doing so we can analyze what the Sages have said
concerning prospective messianic prophetic texts and make a comparison on what
we would expect Him (the Messiah) to be doing. This section of verses speaks of
the rod and the staff, along with the vine, wine, and the blood of grapes. The
work of the Messiah is found in the rod and the staff. One of the two most
150 important tools of the Sheppard was the rod and staff. The rod and the staff also
speak of the throne and alludes to kingship. The prophetic message in these

verses tells us the character of the Messiah, he will be a king, a lawgiver, teacher of the Torah, and will have an everlasting throne. The rabbinic concept of the vine with the righteous suggests the Messiah would become the vine into which we would be lead to become a part of. In Hebrew parallelism, wine and the blood of grapes is the same thing. The work of the Messiah in this Hebrew parallelism can be a reference to the staining of one's garments to appear purple which is symbolic of kingship. If we accept this interpretation there is an interesting parallelism that follows the rod and staff. The Messiah will be and is a king!

160 Considering each of these interpretations that have been given for this text in an attempt to give a plausible explanation of the narrative, the Messiah will certainly be a King, a Ruler, and a teacher of the Torah. Also, much more could be said about these verses further clarifying the character and work of the Messiah. I will leave that as an exercise for further study for those who would seek to learn more.

Questions for further study

1. What are the uses of the rod and the staff in the occupation of Sheppard?
2. How did Yeshua the Messiah fulfill the role of Sheppard?
3. Can you list the biblical usage for wine and the blood of grapes? Are there any symbolic usages here that might point to the work of the Messiah?

175 In this week's study it was fascinating to see how the Tanach lays down our messianic expectation. Interestingly though there was a time when an orthodox friend of mine claimed that the only proof that can bring Yeshua to be the messiah is found in Isaiah chapter 53, though he claimed it was a misinterpretation on my part, he acknowledged the P'shat meaning of the verses appear to refer to Yeshua. He said the only proof is found in Isaiah 53. I have since found 37 prophecies which Yeshua fulfilled in his coming which I have listed below. Unlike my friends claim, these verse references are not simply picking and choosing out of the Tanach based upon a preconceived messianic expectation from the Ketuvei Shelacim (Apostolic Writings). In a similar manner, each of these verses lays the groundwork for the larger prophetic descriptions of the work of the Messiah. It is possible to take each of these references and do the same thing we have done in this week's parsha.

37 Prophecies fulfilled by Yeshua's coming!

1. HaMoshiach will be of the seed of Woman - Genesis 3:15
2. HaMoshiach will be of the seed of Abraham - Genesis 12:3 and 18:18
3. HaMoshiach will be of the tribe of Judah - Genesis 49:10
4. HaMoshiach will be of the seed of Jacob - Numbers 24:17-19
5. HaMoshiach will be of the seed of David - Psalms 132:11, Jeremiah 23:5 and 33:15, and Isaiah 11:10
6. HaMoshiach will be a Prophet like Moshe - Deuteronomy 18:15-19
7. HaMoshiach will be the Son of God - Psalms 2:7 and Proverbs 30:4

- 200 8. HaMoshiach will be will be raised from the dead - Psalms 16:10
 9. HaMoshiach will experience crucifixion - Psalms 22 and 69:21
 10. HaMoshiach will be betrayed by a friend - Psalms 41:9
 11. HaMoshiach will ascend to Heaven - Psalms 68:18
 12. Homage and tribute will be paid to HaMoshiach by great kings - Psalms
 72:10-11
- 205 13. HaMoshiach will be a priest like Melchizedek - Psalms 110:4
 14. HaMoshiach will be at the right hand of God - Psalms 110:1
 15. HaMoshiach will be the stone which the builder rejected, to become the
 head cornerstone
 a. Psalms 118:22-23, Isaiah 8:14-5 and 28:16
- 210 16. HaMoshiach will be born of a virgin - Isaiah 7:14
 17. Galilee will be the place his ministry begins - Isaiah 9:1-8
 18. HaMoshiach will be meek and mild - Isaiah 42:2-3 and 53:7
 19. HaMoshiach will minister to Gentiles - Isaiah 42:1 and 49:1-2
 20. HaMoshiach will be smitten - Isaiah 50:6
- 215 21. HaMoshiach will suffer, die and rise again - Isaiah 52: 13 and 53:12
 22. HaMoshiach will be the bringer of a NEW and everlasting covenant
 between God and
 2. man - Isaiah 55:3-4, Jeremiah 31:31-33
- 220 23. HaMoshiach will be the right hand of God - Isaiah 53:1 and 59:16
 24. HaMoshiach will be the intercessor between God and man - Isaiah 59:16
 25. HaMoshiach will perform miracles - Isaiah 35:5-6
 26. HaMoshiach will be both human (God in the flesh John1:14), and God and
 is called "The
 3. Lord" - Jeremiah 23:5-6
- 225 27. The time of HaMoshiach's coming prophesied - Daniel 9:24-26
 28. Bethlehem will be the birth place of HaMoshiach - Micah 5:2
 29. HaMoshiach will enter the Temple with authority - Malachi 3:1
 30. HaMoshiach will enter Jerusalem on a donkey - Zechariah 9:9
 31. HaMoshiach will be pierced - Zechariah 12:10, Psalms 22:16
- 230 32. HaMoshiach will be forsaken by his disciples - Zechariah 13:7
 33. The coming of Ruach HaKodesh (the Holy Spirit) in the days of
 HaMoshiach - Joel 2:28-29
34. Oppositions of the nation; HaMoshiach's final victory over death - Psalms
 2:2, Isaiah 25:8
- 235 35. The glorious HaMoshiach; HaMoshiach will be King - Isaiah 63:1, Psalms
 2:6-9
36. Submission of all nations to Messianic rule - Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:1-4
 37. Gentiles will seek after HaMoshiach - Isaiah 11:10

240 **Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!**

245 הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד
 Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
 "Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever