

## פרשת וישב / Parashat Vayeshev

Shabbat Kislev 23, 5769, December 20, 2008  
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d  
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### All of scripture has great significance.

#### השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 37:1-40:23

הפטרה: Amos 2:6-3:8

הברית: Matthew 1:1-6, 16-25

החדשה

10 For anyone who has studied the bible for a while, this week's Parsha should call to memory some interesting verses. What do the following verses remind you of from the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings)?

### בראשית 38:1-11

ס וַיְהִי בְּעֵת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה מֵאֵת אָחִיו וַיֵּט עַד-אִישׁ לַח  
עַד לְמִי וּשְׁמוֹ חִירָה׃ וַיֵּרָא שָׁם יְהוּדָה בַּת-אִישׁ פְּנֵעֵי  
וּשְׁמוֹ שׁוּעַ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ׃ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַיִּקְרָא  
אֶת-שְׁמוֹ עֵר׃ וַתַּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ  
אוֹנָן׃ וַתִּסְקֶה עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שִׁלָּה וְהָיָה  
בְּבוֹיֵב בְּלִדְתָהּ אֹתוֹ׃ וַיִּקַּח יְהוּדָה אִשָּׁה לְעֵר בְּכוֹרוֹ  
וּשְׁמָהּ תָמָר׃ וַיְהִי עֵר בְּכוֹר יְהוּדָה רָע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה  
וַיִּמְתְּהוּ יְהוָה׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְאוֹנָן בֵּא אֶל-אִשְׁתִּי אַחִיָּה  
וַיְבִיט אֹתָהּ וְהִקָּם וְרָע לְאַחִיָּה׃ וַיֵּרַע אוֹנָן כִּי לֹא לוֹ  
יְהִי תוֹרֵעַ וְהָיָה אִם-בָּא אֶל-אִשְׁתִּי אָחִיו וְשָׁחַת אֶרְצָה  
לְבִלְתִּי נָתֹן-זֶרַע לְאָחִיו׃ וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה  
וַיָּמָת גַּם-אֹתוֹ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְתָמָר כִּלְתֹּו שְׁבִי אֵלַי בְּיַד-  
בֵּית-

v. 31 וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-כִּתְנַת יוֹסֵף וּשְׁחָטוּ שְׁעִיר עִזִּים. v. 33 בַּהֲלִילִי וַיִּפְרָה חֶסֶר.  
v. 35 וַיִּסְבֵּר אֶרֶץ. v. 36 סָבִיר מְצַרְיָמָה וְכֵן ח"ש. לַח. v. 3 וַיִּקְרָא וְכֵן ח"ש.  
ת"י ות"ע. v. 5 צ"ל וְהָיָה כֵן ת"ע. v. 7 וַיִּמְתְּהוּ מֵלֵא. v. 9 כֵּן מְנוּגָן בְּרוּב  
סְפָרִים כ"י, ס"א לֹא-לוֹ.

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These verses remind us of a parallel portion of scriptures from the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) found in *Matthew 22:23-28*, *Mark 12:18-25*, and

#### Bereshit / Genesis 38:1-11

38:1 And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. 38:2 Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her and went in to her. 38:3 So she conceived and bore a son and he named him Er. 38:4 Then she conceived again and bore a son and named him Onan. 38:5 She bore still another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she bore him. 38:6 Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 38:7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord took his life. 38:8 Then Judah said to Onan, 'Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.' 38:9 Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. 38:10 But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord; so He took his life also. 38:11 Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, 'Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up'; for he thought, 'I am afraid that he too may die like his brothers.' So Tamar went and lived in her father's house. (NASB)

20 *Luke 20:27-35.* In the surrounding text, the Pharisees and Sadducees were attempting to catch Yeshua in saying something in public for the purpose of turning him over to the authorities to have him placed in jail or put to death. They were probably hoping he would express anti-Roman sentiment and thus possibly turn him over to the Roman authorities.

25 ***Luke 20:20-25***

25 *20:20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor. 20:21 They questioned Him, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. 20:22 'Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?' 20:23 But He detected their trickery and said to them, 20:24 'Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?' They said, 'Caesar's.' 20:25 And He said to them, 'Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'* (NASB)

35 Having shut down the Pharisees attempts the Sadducees took it upon themselves to ask Yeshua a question on the resurrection. The Sadducees thought they had a theological question that could not be answered by anyone who believed in the resurrection as Yeshua did (see *John 11:23-26*). The theological question dealt with what is called the Levirate marriage. The Levirate marriage is a type of marriage in which a woman marries one of her husband's brothers after her husband's death if there were no children in order to continue the line of the dead husband's brother. The Torah instruction of the levirate marriage is found in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:7-10*. The Sadducees had ruled out the possibility of resurrection and held to this belief. As a result they asked Yeshua hoping to catch him in order to have reason to speak harshly against him. Let's look at the following verses in *Matthew 22:23-28*, *Mark 12:18-25*, and *Luke 20:27-35*.

50 **Matthew 22:23-28**

22:23 On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him, 22:24 asking, 'Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up children for his brother.' 22:25 'Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother; 22:26 so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. 22:27 'Last of all, the woman died. 22:28 'In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her.' Matt22:29 But Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. 22:30 'For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. (NASB)

55 **Mark 12:18-25**

12:18 Some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) came to Jesus, and began questioning Him, saying, 12:19 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother. 12:20 'There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no children. 12:21 'The second one married her, and died leaving behind no children; and the third likewise; 12:22 and so all seven left no children. Last of all the woman died also. 12:23 'In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her.' 12:24 Jesus said to them, 'Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God? 12:25 'For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. (NASB)

60 **Luke 20:27-35**

20:27 Now there came to Him some of the Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection), 20:28 and they questioned Him, saying, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he is childless, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother. 20:29 'Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless; 20:30 and the second 20:31 and the third married her; and in the same way all seven died, leaving no children. 20:32 'Finally the woman died also. 20:33 'In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her.' 20:34 Jesus said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 20:35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; (NASB)

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In response Yeshua authoritatively expounded upon *Shmot / Exodus 3:6* (see *Matthew 22:32* and *Mark 12:26*) and *Shmot / Exodus 3:15-16* (see *Luke 20:37*) to show that Moshe's words would have been entirely inappropriate if the Sadducean doctrine of extinction without hope of resurrection held true for Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov after their deaths.

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***Shmot / Exodus 3:6***

*3:6 He said also, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (NASB)*

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***Shmot / Exodus 3:15-16***

*3:15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. 3:16 'Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, 'I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. (NASB)*

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Coming back to the portion of Torah for this week you might have noticed the narrative on the episode of Yoseph (Joseph) being sold into slavery was interrupted by these passages in *Bereshit / Genesis 38:1-11*. Explanation on the placement of these verses is attempted in the rabbinic literature along with the question why Judah would take a Canaanite woman as a wife (See Rashi's commentary).

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**בראשית 38:1-2**

שׁוֹ וַיְהִי בְעֵת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה מֵאֵת אָחִיו וַיֵּט עַד-אִישׁ לַח  
עַדְלָמִי וּשְׁמוֹ חִירָה׃ וַיֵּרָא-שָׁם יְהוּדָה בַּת-אִישׁ פְּנִיעִי 2  
וּשְׁמוֹ שׁוֹעַ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ׃ וַתַּהַר וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַיִּקְרָא 3

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Reading through the portion of scriptures there are no obvious textual issues to speak upon. We do however find some “behind the scenes” information on Judah's life after taking Tamar as wife. One question that arises is why Yaakov (Jacob) didn't emphasize to his son not to take from the daughters of Canaan? As a result, Judah's sons were evil in the eyes of the Lord and the Lord puts them to death. The first son “Er” we are not told what he has done to be put to death outside of being evil in the eyes of HaShem. The second son Onan, we are told causes his seed to spill upon the earth thus preventing Tamar from becoming pregnant which was an act considered to be evil in the eyes of the Lord. I believe there is more to this than simply the act of spilling seed on the ground. The mindset behind Onan's desire not to give his brother's wife children in his

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brother's name is evil. Finally Judah decides to prevent his third son from being put to death and causes Tamar to remain without marrying Shelah.

110 Examining the Jewish methods for Torah interpretation such as the פשט (Pshat, simple understanding), רמז (Remez, hinted meaning), דרש (Derash, allegorical explanation) or סוד (Sod, esoteric understanding) I don't see any apparent meaning that might be hidden inside of *Bereshit / Genesis 38:1-11*. It isn't quite clear the reason the scriptures are placed where they are but there is an interesting implication in the use of these scriptures to formulate a question to Yeshua by the Sadducees in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings).

115 Yeshua had arrived in Jerusalem demonstrating himself to be Yisrael's Messiah. A number of people believed in him but not everyone fully understood who he was or the implications of his coming. I am certain many questions were asked of Yeshua during his period of time. The question remains why did Luke choose to record this particular question and Yeshua's answer? Note we had not heard from the Sadducees prior to this point in the book of Luke.

120 In conclusion, though the scriptures from this week's portion may appear out of place and insignificant in *Bereshit / Genesis 38:1-11* there is a very important message. The story of Judah and his sons, and the mitzvot of Levirate marriage found in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:7-10* has played a very significant part in our understanding of the resurrection. The resurrection of the dead is a crucial part of the future kingdom of G-d. The resurrection of the dead enables us to live and stand boldly in Yeshua the Messiah. Furthermore, the degree to which we live obediently to the mitzvot (commandments) of our Lord in this life, the more we will cling to His promises concerning the resurrection of the dead and eternal life.

135 G-d's loving instruction given to us in the torah is given to us in order to teach us what honors Him and what is best for us. As we study the Torah we discover more and more what it is like to live according to G-d's schedule and requirements rather than our own. As we grow in faith and understanding of the Lord we learn of His redemptive plan and sovereign rule in all the earth. One of the reasons we choose to obey G-d in His holy Torah is for the purpose of honoring Him and we learn to fashion our lives with the Lord as the focus and center. Does your life reflect His awesome glory and might? In an age when we should be shining distinctively as lights in a dark place can you think of a way to reflect His glory?

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### Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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