**Parashat Vayishlach / פרשת וישלח**

Shabbat Kislev 14, 5768, Nov. 24, 2007

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**This Weeks Reading List:**
Torah: Genesis 32:4-36:43

Haftarah: Hosea 11:7-12:12, Obadiah 1:1-21
B’rit HaChadashah: Hebrews 11:11-20, Matthew 26:36-46

**Summary of this week’s parsha**

1. Ya’akov confronts Esav when entering the Promised Land (*Genesis 32:3-33:17*)
2. Ya’akov settles in the vicinity of Ir Shechem (city of Shechem, *Genesis 33:18-20*)
3. Ben Chamor the Chivvi takes Dena the daughter of Ya’akov sexually. Shimon and Levi take action to kill all the men in the city. (*Genesis 34:1-31*)
4. Ya’akov moves to Beit-El and builds an altar to Adonai (*Genesis 35:1-8*)
5. Elohim blesses Ya’akov at Beit-El, followed by the death of Rachel in child birth of Binyamin. (*Genesis 35:9-22*)
6. A summary of Ya’akov’s children, and the death of Yitzchak. (*Genesis 35:23-29*)

 Reading through this week’s parsha, Parashat Vayishlach, I find Ya’akov’s actions very interesting. After having found assurance that his brother Esav will not kill him, Ya’akov decided to settle down next to Ir Shechem (city of Shechem). (*Genesis 33:18*)

***33:18בראשית***

 *וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב שָׁלֵם עִיר שְׁכֶם אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן בְּבֹאֹו מִפַּדַּן אֲרָם וַיִּחַן אֶת־פְּנֵי הָעִֽיר׃*

***Genesis 33:18***

*33:18 Having traveled from Paddan-Aram, Ya'akov arrived safely at the city of Sh'khem, in Kena'an, and set up camp near the city. (CJB)*

 I find this interesting because Ya’akov did not immediately return to “the place” where he had made his vow with God. In the previous parsha, Parashat Vayetzei, Ya’akov set up a pillar in Beit-El stating that if Elohim will keep his promise, and return him to the land then Elohim would be his Elohim. However, when Ya’akov returned to the land he did not return to the place (Beit-El) but instead settled next to Ir Shechem.

 Do you think Ya’akov has become complacent with his relationship with God after having made reconciliation with his brother Esav? The reason I ask that question is because Ya’akov did not immediately return to the place where he had made his vow with Hashem. Settling next to Ir Shechem I believe this is an example of complacency in Ya’akov’s life. Complacency says that it is ok to take a break from God or to be a little lazy with our studies, prayer time, and the things of the world will not harm us. With this in mind let’s read what happens after Ya’akov finally arrives in the land builds for himself a Succot.

***Genesis 34:30-35:7***

*34:30 And Ya'akov said to Shimon and Levi, Ye have brought trouble on me to make me a stench among the inhabitants of HaAretz, among the Kena'ani and the Perizzi; and I being few in mispar, they shall gather themselves together against me, and attack me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my bais. 34:31 And they said, Should he deal with achoteinu like with zonah? 35:1 And Elohim said unto Ya'akov, Arise, go up to Beit-El,and settle there; and make there a Mizbe'ach unto El (G-d) that appeared unto thee when thou didst flee from the face of Esav achicha. 35:2 Then Ya'akov said unto his Bais, and to all that were with him, Put away the elohei hanekhar that are among you, and be tahor, and change your simlah (garments); 35:3 And let us arise, and go up to Beit-El; and I will build there a Mizbe'ach unto El (G-d) Who answered me in my yom tzoros, and was with me in the derech in which I went. 35:4 And they gave unto Ya'akov kol elohei hanekhar which were in their yad, and all their nezamim which were in their oznayim; and Ya'akov buried them under the elah (terebinth) which was at Shechem. 35:5 And they journeyed; and the chittat Elohim (terror of G-d) was upon the cities that were around them, and they did not pursue after the Bnei Ya'akov. 35:6 So Ya'akov came to Luz, which is in Eretz Kena'an, that is, Beit-El, he and kol haAm that were with him. 35:7 And he built there a Mizbe'ach, and called the makom (place) El Beit-El; because there HaElohim appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of achiv.*

 What happens when we enter into complacency in our lives? Hashem is going to work to bring us and draw us back into a closer relationship with Him. So what happens in Ya’akov’s life? (i) Ya’akov’s daughter Dena is violated by Ben Chamor the Chivvi, (ii) Shimon and Levi decide to kill all of the men of Shechem, and (iii) God told Ya’akov to go to Beit-El. Now remember, I am not saying that God has caused Dena to be violated, and God did not cause Shimon and Levi to kill all of the men of Shechem. However, in the midst of the problems God uses the circumstances to call Ya’akov to Beit-El to build an altar and renew His covenant. We are so quick to put our lives and priorities ahead of Hashem failing to see the importance of reading the word of God daily and seeking His face.

When the spirit of God speaks to you, it is time to clean house!  Ya’akov removed all the idols in the house and buried them at the bottom of the tree.

If the leader of the house would humble himself, in the power of God, and humble himself, and seek God earnestly and seek his face, that God will answer his prayers!

Each of us must go through a spiritual surrender, we must yield to God’s spirit.

***Deuteronomy 4:7-8***

*4:7 For what nation is there so great, who hath elohim so near unto them, as Hashem Eloheinu is in all things for which we call upon Him? 4:8 And what nation is there so great, that hath chukkim and mishpatim tzaddikim as all this torah, which I set before you today? (OJB)*

 Understanding God’s will is important

**Discerning God’s leading**

* Study the Bible for guidance – Regular Bible study saturates us with knowledge of God’s word which helps to condition our minds keeping us on the right path. Now studying God’s word is important because God does not guide us contrary to what His written word says. We can learn from the mistakes in the lives of people which are recorded in the Bible.
	+ Psa119:105 Your word is a lamp for my foot and light on my path. (CJB)
* Seek to do the will of Adonai which begins by obeying what Hashem has commanded. Ask God for guidance and rely on God’s promise to guide.
	+ Psa32:8 "I will instruct and teach you in this way that you are to go; I will give you counsel; my eyes will be watching you." (CJB)
	+ Isa58:11 ADONAI will always guide you; he will satisfy your needs in the desert, he will renew the strength in your limbs; so that you will be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails. (CJB)
	+ Psa25:12 Who is the person who fears ADONAI? He will teach him the way to choose. (CJB)
	+ Prov3:6 In all your ways acknowledge him; then he will level your paths. (CJB)
	+ Col1:9 Therefore, from the day we heard of it, we have not stopped praying for you, asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all the wisdom and understanding which the Spirit gives; (CJB)

God says: Jer29:11 For I know what plans I have in mind for you,' says ADONAI,'plans for well-being, not for bad things; so that you can have hope and a future. (CJB)

**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 for ever and ever