

פרשת וישלח / Parashat Vayishlach

Shabbat Kislev 18, 5770, December 5, 2009
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
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Faith that is Alive

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 32:4-36:43
הפטרה: Hosea 11:7-12:12, Obadiah 1:1-21
הברית: Hebrews 11:11-20, Matthew 26:36-46
החדשה

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Outline of Parashat Vayishlach

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1. *Bereshit / Genesis 32:3-33:17* Yaakov's faces Esau upon his return to the land of Canaan.
2. *Bereshit / Genesis 33:18-20* Yaakov stops in Shechem.
3. *Bereshit / Genesis 34:1-31* The incident with Dena in Shechem.
4. *Bereshit / Genesis 35:1-8* Yaakov's ascent to Bethel to flee from Shechem, and his building of a mizbayach (altar).
5. *Bereshit / Genesis 35:9-22* God's blessing to Yaakov at Bethel, followed by Rachel's death and Benjamin's birth.
6. *Bereshit / Genesis 35:23-29* A listing of Yaakov's children, followed by the death of Yitzchak, and then a list of Esau's children.

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After successfully facing Esau, Yaakov continues on into the land of Canaan. He builds an altar to thank G-d similarly to what Avraham had done. While in Shechem Yaakov purchases a piece of land. After purchasing a field in Shechem and building an altar, Yaakov continues on to Bethel where the Lord appears to him and Yaakov confirms his desire to fulfill the vow that was made at the site where G-d appeared to him before. Our reading for this week in the Triennial cycle: *Bereshit / Genesis 35:16-36:43* is the portion of scriptures where G-d confirms His blessing to Yaakov and changes his name to Yisrael (*35:9-12*). It is interesting to note that at *32:26-28* the angel of the Lord had changed his name to Yisrael however it wasn't until this point that Yaakov was referred to as Yisrael by name in the text. After this Yaakov travels to Hebron to see his parents.

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In *Bereshit / Genesis 35:16-20*, the scriptures go into great detail on the death of Rachel. It is interesting that the death of Rachel is mentioned explicitly but Leah's death is mentioned only obliquely later on in *Bereshit / Genesis 49:31*.

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Bereshit / Genesis 49:31

49:31 'There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah.

בְּרֵאשִׁית 35:16-20

16 מִסְדָּה הַפְתַּח לַפְתַּח הַמִּשְׁכָּן: אֵת | מִזְבַּח הָעֹלָה וְאֵת-
מִכְבַּר הַנְּהַשֵּׁת אֲשֶׁר-לֹא אֶת-בְּדָיו וְאֶת-כָּל-כְּלָיו אֵת-
17 הַכִּיֹּר וְאֵת-כִּנּוֹ: אֵת כָּלְעֵי הַחֲצֵר אֶת-עַמּוּדָיו וְאֵת-
18 אֲדָנֶיהָ וְאֵת מִסְדָּה שַׁעַר הַחֲצֵר: אֶת-יְתֵדֵת הַמִּשְׁכָּן
19 וְאֶת-יְתֵדֵת הַחֲצֵר וְאֶת-מִיתְרֵיהֶם: אֶת-בְּגְדֵי הַשָּׂרָד
לְשָׂרֵת בְּקֹדֶשׁ אֶת-בְּגְדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וְאֵת-
20 בְּגְדֵי בָנָיו לְכַהֵן: וַיַּצְאוּ כָל-עַדְתַּת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלִּפְנֵי
21 מִשְׁהָ: וַיָּבֹאוּ כָל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׂאוֹ לְבֹו וְכָל אֲשֶׁר נָדְבָה

Bereshit / Genesis 35:16-20

35:16 Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor. 35:17 When she was in severe labor the midwife said to her, 'Do not fear, for now you have another son.' 35:18 It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. 35:19 So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). 35:20 Jacob set up a pillar over her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day. (NASB)

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The story of Yaakov's life demonstrates the importance of a later mitzvah (command) given to Moshe in *Vayikra / Leviticus 18:17-18* on not marrying a second wife who is a sister of the first wife. The importance of this commandment is derived from the text on the description of the death of Rachel and Leah. Leah's death was only mentioned whereas Rachel was described in detail. During Leah's life, her reaction to Yaakov's favoritism for Rachel was to become obsessed with having children. When she failed to conceive she panicked that she had become barren. She asked that Yaakov lay with her maid servant Zilpah in order to produce more children on her behalf. During the first seven years of their marriage (Yaakov and Leah), Leah had six sons and one daughter. Having children was a prized status symbol in ancient times, Leah was greatly blessed. Leah's comment in *Bereshit / Genesis 30:20*, "Now will my husband dwell with me" suggests Leah and Yaakov's relationship was not based upon mutual love.

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There is a close relationship between conception, love, and faith as is described by the author of the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:11-20

11:11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. 11:12 Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. 11:13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 11:14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 11:15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who

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80 *had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son 11:18 it was he to whom it was said, 'In Isaac your descendants shall be called.' 11:19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type. 11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. (NASB)*

85 *Hebrews 11* begins with a discussion on having the right kind of faith. Verse *11:1* provides for us a definition of faith “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The substance of faith is that which is the basis of something, assurance, guarantee, or confidence that is motivated by a trust in G-d’s word. The context of chapter 11 in Hebrews gives an example of the life of Avraham and Sarah. The faith of Yaakov, Leah, and Rachel is demonstrated by the external conduct of their lives. I propose that because of Yaakov’s lack of mutual love for Leah, Leah struggled with her faith in G-d evidenced by her having Yaakov lay with Zilpah in order to have more children.

95 Faith is made evident in the external conduct of our lives. Faith is like a building and its foundation, if no foundation exists, the building soon begins to tilt and warp and in most cases collapse and become unusable. Rav Shaul (Paul) said that “We walk by faith, not by sight” (*2 Corinthians 5:7*) and thus our underlying conduct as believers is not to merely believe in G-d. We need to have a constant and abiding trust in Him. We as the people of G-d need to understand the biblical text and think differently in order to live differently so that we can live faithful to G-d’s Word. We need to be robust in our thinking, seek out believers who are really living out holiness and faithfulness to Yeshua and being mutually accountable (have personal accountability). Faith means that we trust what G-d has recorded for us to live by is absolute and must be obeyed. Faith becomes vital in our understanding, thinking, conduct, and understanding of G-d. Faith in Yaakov’s life revolved around a return to the Promised Land (Land of Canaan) and keeping the vow he had made in obedience to G-d’s commands and thus G-d would keep His promises. Our faith today revolves around our Father in Heaven, Yeshua His son, the message of the gospel of the kingdom of G-d, etc. Faith is a composite mixture of believing, knowing, understanding, and trusting which all work together to a life lived for the Lord. Faith has a significant influence on our behavior, with this in mind, ask yourself, has your faith influenced you today? If your faith wields little or no influence on your life, maybe faith has become purely an intellectual exercise rather than something that moves forward, grows, and produced good works in your life? Test yourself on the kind of faith that you have. We are subjected to all sorts of tests throughout our lifetime; take the driving test as an example. If you want to drive you are subjected to a written exam, then performance test driving, and an eye exam, all prior to you receiving a driver’s license. These are tests that are mandatory, but what about a voluntary test of ourselves, searching our heart for the kind of faith that we have? The following four questions will help in your personal self examination.

125 **Four questions for self examination:**

1. Am I well grounded in my faith?
2. Does my lifestyle reflect my faith in obedience to Yeshua and the way in which G-d wants me to live my life?
3. Am I committed to living and following G-d's Word and His ways?
- 130 4. Do I pray for others around me, whether they are believers or not, and whether they are a friend or foe?

King David made a prayer as a result of his personal self examination. This is a great example we should follow.

135 ***Tehelim / Psalms 51:1-15***

135 *51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. 51:3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge. 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. 51:9 Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities. 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 51:11 Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit. 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You. 51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise. (NASB)*

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

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