



## MORDEKAI'S DRASH — VAYESHEV

**Torah:** *Vayeshev* (And he settled), *B'resheet* (Genesis) 37.1-40.23

**Haftorah:** *Amos* 2.6-38

**Suggested Messianic Writings reading:** Acts 7.9-16 (esp 9-10)

Shalom,

Yosef (Joseph) is now the focus for the rest of the book of B'resheet. We are told in 37.3 that Yosef was the favorite son of *Israel* (Ya'akov/Jacob), and we were given a hint of that back in chapter 33.2, when Ya'akov was preparing to come face to face with *Esav* (Esau) after all of those years apart. Ya'akov put the servant-girls and their sons first in line, then Leah and her children, followed at the back by Rachel and Yosef. The favorite son, along with the wife Ya'akov had originally chosen, were put in the position with the most protection in case of trouble. In our current chapter, we are told that Yosef was out pasturing the flock with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah (Dan & Naftali, Gad & Asher). Rabbi Hertz' commentary notes that with Yosef's favored position, even at the young age of 17, it was very probable that he was in fact out *supervising* the sons of the servant-girls.

Another reason we can possibly determine that Yosef was supervising is because of the robe Ya'akov had given him. Depending upon the translation, this may be a robe with long sleeves, a robe with many colors, or both. The Septuagint translates "many colors," but the Hebrew **כְּתֹנֶת פְּסִים** *k'toh-neht pah-seem* may simply mean "by implication a *long and sleeved* tunic (perhaps simply a *wide* one; from the original sense of the root, that is, of *many breadths*)." The robe may have had stripes with varying colors, but it was more than likely *not* the multi-colored squares we see popularized in many pictures. Archeology has discovered that in those days, leaders in the middle-eastern area would wear robes, or coats, with varied colors, which was a symbol of leadership. Yosef's robe, given to him by his father, marked him as becoming the leader of all of the brothers upon his father's death. (*Re'uven* (Reuben) lost this position as first-born when he slept with Bilhah, see B'resheet 35.22 & 49.3-4.) Thus, when Yosef impetuously related his dreams of superiority over his brothers, this only fueled the rage and jealousy of the brothers.

At some later point, Ya'akov sent Yosef out to check on the brothers, who were pasturing the sheep. The brothers seized upon the opportunity, hoping to kill Yosef, until Re'uven convinced them to throw Yosef into an empty pit, or cistern.

The brothers then apparently went some distance off from the pit, possibly to avoid Yosef's screams, and sat down to eat, awaiting a caravan of *Yishmaelites* (Ishmaelites), to whom *Y'hudah* (Judah) convinced them to sell Yosef. It is said that in the clear desert air, a caravan could be seen 2-3 hours out, at the slow speed at which it would travel. There is to some a confusion as to why it seems the Yishmaelites were a verse later called Midianites, but Hertz believes what actually happened was that while the brothers were away from the pit, some Midianites came by, heard Yosef, pulled him out and sold him themselves to the Yishmaelites. He bases this upon Yosef's own words in 40.15, "For the truth is that I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews...." That explains why Re'uven discovered Yosef missing, and returned to tell the other brothers. Yosef may have been sold more than once, for 37.36 states that the *Medanites* sold him to Potiphar, although 39.1 says that Potiphar bought him from the Yishmaelites, which may simply refer to the initial "purchase". There is discussion among the commentators as to whether the Midianites and the Medanites are the same or different people; the Hebrew for the former is **מִדְיָנִים** *Mid'yanim*, the latter is **מִדְנִים** *M'da-nim*. Midian was one of the sons of Avraham by Keturah (B'resheet 25.1-2), after Sarah's death. Irregardless of who they were, ADONAI's plan for the coming nation of Israel was being put into motion. This will continue in the next parashah.

The path of Israel would be difficult all through their history. The reason they have gone through so much woe is given in a verse from the Haftorah for this week, from Amos 3.2, spoken by ADONAI: "Of all the families on earth, only you have I *intimately known*. This is why I will punish you for all your crimes." The Hebrew for "known" here is **יָדַע** *yada*, a term we are familiar with, meaning the intimacy of marriage, as from "Adam *knew* Eve". "From him who has been given much, much will be demanded" (Luke 12.48). ADONAI would use human means to punish Israel, but woe to those who went/go overboard with their cruelty. "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" (Heb 10.31).

If Israel would return to that intimacy with their Creator, they would understand His plans. That is precisely what it meant by the words in Amos 3.3-8, "Do two people travel together without having so agreed?...." Only in intimacy are wisdom, knowledge, joys, fears, as well as plans shared. In *B'Midbar* (Numbers) 11.29, Moshe desired that all of ADONAI's people were prophets, and that His Spirit was on all of them. Only in intimacy can anyone accept and understand Amos 3.8b, "ADONAI, God, has spoken. Who will not prophesy?" Only in intimacy will He share His plans.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Pray for the persecution of Messianic Jews to cease, and for righteous leadership to be raised up in the Land. May Israel come to “know יָדַע *yada*” their Messiah Yeshua.

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah  
(Blessings & thank you very much)

## Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.  
(Acts 1.11 CJB)