



VAYECHI/AND HE LIVED  
Bereshith/Genesis 47:28-50:26

Our parasha begins by informing us of the **number of years** that **Jacob “lived” in Egypt**, and the **total number of years** of his **life**:

*Bereshith 47:28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.*

**Numbers** are always **significant**, and it is exciting when we can attribute meaning to them... especially when they **point** to the **Messiah**. **Jacob lived 17 years in Egypt**, and this is the **same number of years Joseph lived with his father in Canaan** before he was sold as a slave. Every **Hebrew letter** has a **number** associated with it. Thus you can **add up the letters of words** and find some **interesting associations**. Let's key in on the number **17** and find its link with **Messiah**:

- **Good** (tov) - טוֹב                      2 (ב) + 6 (ו) + 9 (ט) = 17
  - *Luke 18:19* So **Yeshua** said to him, "Why do you call Me **good** (טוֹב)? No one is **good** (טוֹב) but One, that is, Yah.
  
- **Sacrifice** (zevach) - זֶבַח            8 (ח) + 2 (ב) + 7 (ז) = 17
  - *Shemot/Exodus 12:27* "that you shall say, 'It is the **Passover sacrifice** (זֶבַח) of יהוה (Yahweh), who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households....
  - *Hebrews 10:12* But this Man, after He had offered one **sacrifice** (זֶבַח) for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of Yah,
  
- **To Fish** (deeg) - דֵּיג                    3 (ג) + 10 (י) + 4 (ד) = 17
  - *Jeremiah 16:16* " Behold, I will send for many fishermen," says יהוה, "and they shall **fish** (דֵּיג) them..."
  - *John 21:11* Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large **fish**, **one hundred and fifty-three**; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.

**John 21:11** above points out another **interesting number** – there were **153 fish** caught in the nets:

- **The Passover** (haPasach) - הַפֶּסַח    8 (ח) + 60 (ס) + 80 (פ) + 5 (ה) = 153
  - *Shemot/Exodus 12:21* Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill **the Passover** (הַפֶּסַח) lamb.
  
- **Covenant** (be'reet) - בְּרִית        400 (ת) + 10 (י) + 200 (ר) + 2 (ב) = 612 (4 x 153)
  - *Jeremiah 31:33* "But this is the **covenant** (בְּרִית) that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says יהוה: I will put My Torah in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.

We can conclude that there is indeed a **Messianic link** with the numbers **17** and **153**. And here's another **math link** between the numbers themselves as **153** is the **sum of the integers** from **1** to **17**:

$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9 + 10 + 11 + 12 + 13 + 14 + 15 + 16 + 17 = \underline{153}$$

Now there's even more. In the *JPS Torah Commentary on Genesis*, **Nahum Sarna** points out that the **life spans** of the **three patriarchs** lend themselves to **factorization** according to the following pattern:

- **Abraham** lived to be  $175 = 5 \times 5 \times 7$        $5 + 5 + 7 = \underline{17}$
- **Isaac** lived to be       $180 = 6 \times 6 \times 5$        $6 + 6 + 5 = \underline{17}$
- **Jacob** lived to be       $147 = 7 \times 7 \times 3$        $7 + 7 + 3 = \underline{17}$

In the above series, the **squared number increases by one** each time while the **coefficient decreases by two**. Not only that...in each case the **sum of the factors is 17!!** The **patriarch's lives** all point to **Messiah!**

I guess I can't stop here. **Brad Scott** does a teaching series on "**numbers**" on his website – [www.wildbranch.org/Archive/lesson95.html](http://www.wildbranch.org/Archive/lesson95.html). I would encourage you to read the entire article, but here is part of what he has to say about the **number 17**...I hope you appreciate his bit of humor at the end (emphasis mine):

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"...I do believe that the **number '17'** does represent **victory** and **resurrection**....the time of **Messiah's resurrection** fell on the **17<sup>th</sup> of Aviv** in the year He was tried and crucified.... It is clear to all that call on the name of Yeshua, that His **resurrection** was **victory** for all and the beginning of our rest in Him. This **victory** and **rest** was pictured when the **ark of Noach** and his family **rested upon Mt. Ararat** on the **17<sup>th</sup> day** of the **7<sup>th</sup> month**. For you see, in Noach's time the beginning of the year was still in Tishri. The commandment for Aviv to be the beginning of the year did not occur until the time of Mosheh. This meant that in Noach's time the **7<sup>th</sup> month** from Tishri was Aviv. So the ark actually rested on the **17<sup>th</sup> of Aviv**. We are also told a detail of one of the most obvious types of the Messiah, **Yoseph**, that he was **17** years old when he had the dream concerning the prophecy of the Messiah and the 11 other tribes in B'reshith 37:2-14. I believe that it can be shown that the **Israelites crossed the Gulf of Aqaba** on the **17<sup>th</sup> of Aviv**....The city **Jerusalem** appears in the Tehillim (Psalms) **17 times** and there are **17 things unable to separate us** in **Romans 8:35-39**. Yirmeyahu's (Jeremiah's) **17 prayers** ended in **Yirmeyahu 32:9**, when buying the field for **17 shekels**. There are **17 appearances of angels** in the gospels and the book of Acts. And finally, we must not forget one of Frank Sinatra's greatest hits was, 'When I was Seventeen'." (end of quote)

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Okay, we'll move on. It was extremely **important to Jacob/Israel** that he **not be buried in Egypt**. He leaves his **request** with **Joseph**:

*Bereshith 47:29* *When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt,*

**Jacob** wanted to make sure that his **children never forgot** that **Egypt** was **not their home**. No matter how much **success** or **suffering** they **experienced in Egypt**, they needed to **remember** that they were **temporary sojourners** in a **foreign land**. To **Jacob**, **Egypt** represented the **power of assimilation** that could potentially **swallow up the Israelites**. **Egypt** was a **melting pot**. **Jacob** knew that one day **Elohim** would **fulfill his promise** to **Abraham** by giving **Israel** the **land of Canaan**. Therefore, **Jacob's burial** in the **Promised Land** served as a **symbol** to his **children** of his **faith** in the **promises of יהוה**. **Egypt** would **not claim him** as its own. He would **return** to his **Hebrew heritage**.

**Jacob** took special interest in the **two sons of Joseph** who were **born in Egypt**:

*Bereshith 48:5 "And now your **two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh**, who were **born** to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, **they shall be mine**."*

Why did **Jacob** take such an interest in these **two grandsons** and even **elevate** them to the **position of his own sons**? These **boys** were a part of the **Egyptian culture**. Their **mother** was the **daughter** of an **Egyptian priest**. Presumably they **spoke Egyptian**. Some teach that **Jacob** was attempting to **rescue** them from the **grasp of Egypt**. He **blesses** them with **Israelite identity**.

For a moment, **Jacob** gets a little **historical** and we are tempted to gloss over this verse:

*Bereshith 48:7 "But as for me, when I came from Padan, **Rachel died** beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to **Ephrath**; and I buried her there on the way to **Ephrath** (that is, **Bethlehem**)."*

**Ephrath** (עֲפְרַתָּה) means "place of fruitfulness" and is a related word to "Ephraim" (עֲפְרַיִם). **Jacob** is relating that **incident** where it **appeared** that **Rachel's "fruitfulness"** had **ended**. In fact, **shortly before Rachel's death**, **Jacob** had received a **promise** at Beth El that his **family should be fruitful**:

*Bereshith 35:11 Also Elohim said to him: "I am El Shaddai. **Be fruitful** and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body."*

How could that **promise** be **fulfilled** when his **last wife of child-bearing age died**? So imagine how **Jacob felt** when he found out that **Joseph** had a **son** whose name meant "**doubly fruitful**" (**Ephraim**)! It was as if **he** and his **beloved Rachel** were **achieving** that **promise of fruitfulness** after all! By **dying**, her "**fruitfulness doubled**" because she made room for this "**doubly fruitful**" son. When **Jacob** adopted **Ephraim** and **Manasseh** as his own, they were **no longer sons of Egypt**, but **sons of his beloved wife, Rachel**! He would be able to begin raising them as **Hebrews**! Like these boys, **we** also have been **snatched out of Egypt** and **adopted** into the **family** in order to be **raised as Hebrews** by our **tender and loving Father**!

**Ephrath**, or **Bethlehem**, is of course the **location** where the **Messiah (the ultimate fruitfulness of Jacob)** would be **born**. He also would have to **die** in order that **His fruitfulness** might **continue** by others being **adopted** into the family of **Israel**:

*Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, **Yah sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the Torah,<sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the Torah, **that we might receive the adoption as sons**.<sup>6</sup> And **because you are sons**, Yah has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "**Abba, Father!**"*

There is a **constant drama** that occurs between **younger** and **older brothers** throughout the book of **Bereshith**. We will see it **one more time** in the story of the **sons of Joseph** as he brings his sons in for his **father to bless**:

*Bereshith 48:13 And **Joseph** took them both, **Ephraim** with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and **Manasseh** with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him.<sup>14</sup> Then **Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head**, who was the younger, and his left hand on **Manasseh's head**, guiding his hands knowingly, for **Manasseh was the firstborn**.<sup>15</sup> And he blessed Joseph, and said: "Elohim, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The Elohim who has fed*

me all my life long to this day,<sup>16</sup> The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, **Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.**"<sup>17</sup> Now when **Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.**<sup>18</sup> And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."<sup>19</sup> But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."<sup>20</sup> So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May Elohim make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' "And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

**Joseph** tried to make sure that his **older son** was **blessed first**. After all, **three times** his father, **Jacob**, had been **involved** with **setting the younger before the elder**, and **each time** it had led to **calamity**. **Jacob** had:

- **Stole the blessing** from his **older brother, Esau**, resulting in his **exile** from his home and family for many years
- **Favored the younger Rachel** over Leah resulting in **tension** between the sisters
- **Favored the youngest of his children**, Joseph and Benjamin, resulting in **hostility between the brothers**

As a **result** of his **father's favoritism**, **Joseph** had been **thrown into a well** by his **brothers**, and **eventually sold as a slave**. Was **Joseph** afraid there may be another **negative consequence** in **Jacob's** choosing **Ephraim** over **Manasseh**? Did **Jacob** know something that **Joseph** did not? According to **Rabbi Jonathan Sacks**, **Jacob** knew **two things** that caused him to **choose Ephraim over Manasseh**. First, he knew his **family's stay in Egypt** would be an **extended stay**. **Before leaving Canaan** to see **Joseph**, **Elohim** had **appeared** to **Jacob** in a vision:

*Bereshith 46:3* So He said, "I am Elohim, the Elohim of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.

**Jacob** was aware that their **entrance into Egypt** was a part of the **long exile** which **Elohim** had told **Abraham** would be the **fate of his children**:

*Bereshith 15:13* Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.

The **second thing** **Jacob** knew was based on something about the **names** of his grandson's, **Ephraim** and **Manasseh**. To understand this, we will have to go back to **Joseph's circumstances surrounding the naming of his children**. When **Joseph** finally **emerged from prison** to become the **governor of Egypt**, he **married** and had **two sons**:

*Bereshith 41:50* And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him.<sup>51</sup> Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For Elohim has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house."<sup>52</sup> And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For Elohim has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

The following quotes are excellent insights from **Rabbi Sacks** (emphasis mine):

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"With the **utmost brevity** the **Torah intimates an experience of exile** that was to be **repeated** many times across the centuries. At **first, Joseph** felt **relief**. The years as a slave, then a prisoner, were over.

He had risen to greatness. In Canaan, he had been the youngest of eleven brothers in a nomadic family of shepherds. Now, **in Egypt, he was at the center of the greatest civilization of the ancient world, second only to Pharaoh in rank and power.** No one reminded him of his background. With his royal robes and ring and chariot, he was an Egyptian prince (as Moses was later to be). The **past was a bitter memory** he sought to **remove from his mind.** **Manasseh means “forgetting.”**

But as time passed, **Joseph** began to **feel quite different emotions.** Yes, he had arrived. But **this people were not his; nor was its culture.** To be sure, his family was, in any worldly terms, undistinguished, unsophisticated. Yet they remained **his family.** They were the matrix of **who he was.** Though they were no more than shepherds (a class the Egyptians despised), **they had been spoken to by G-d** – not the gods of the sun, the river and death, the Egyptian pantheon – but **G-d, the creator of heaven and earth,** who did not make His home in temples and pyramids and panoplies of power, but **who spoke in the human heart** as a voice, **lifting a simple family to moral greatness.** **By the time his second son was born, Joseph** had undergone a **profound change of heart.** To be sure, he had all the **trappings of earthly success** – **“G-d has made me fruitful”** – but **Egypt had become “the land of my affliction.”** Why? **Because it was exile.** There is a sociological observation about immigrant groups, known as Hansen’s Law: **“The second generation seeks to remember what the first generation sought to forget.”** **Joseph** went through this **transformation very quickly.** It was already **complete** by the time his **second son was born.** By calling him **Ephraim,** he was **remembering what, when Manasseh was born, he was trying to forget: who he was, where he came from, where he belonged.**

**Jacob’s blessing of Ephraim over Manasseh** had nothing to do with their **ages** and **everything to do with their names.** **Knowing** that these were the **first two children of his family to be born in exile,** **knowing** too that the **exile** would be **prolonged** and at times difficult and dark, **Jacob** sought to **signal to all future generations** that there would be a **constant tension** between the **desire to forget** (to assimilate, acculturate, anaesthetize the hope of a return) and the **promptings of memory** (the knowledge that this is “exile,” that we are part of another story, that ultimate home is somewhere else). The **child of forgetting (Manasseh)** may have **blessings.** But **greater are the blessings of a child (Ephraim)** who **remembers the past and future of which he is a part.”** (end of quote)

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Okay, let’s focus in on some more of the interesting details of this scenario with Ephraim and Manasseh. First, let’s specifically look at this verse:

*Bereshith 48:14 Then Israel stretched out his **right hand** and laid it **on Ephraim's head**, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.*

The **“right hand”** represents the **Messiah,** who we know is at the **right hand of the heavenly Father.** Today, the **Messiah’s hand** is on **Ephraim** though he is **still in Egypt** (dispersed among the nations). That **“right hand”** seeks to **bring Ephraim back.** When **Jacob crossed his hands,** he formed an **“X”** or a **✚** which is the letter **“Tav”** in the **archaic Hebrew aleph-bet.** The letter symbolizes **“sign”** or **“covenant.”** **Yeshua** said he was the **“Alef”** and the **“Tav”** (remember Yeshua spoke Hebrew):

*Revelation 22:13 "I am the **Alef** and the **Tav**, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."*

Therefore, these **boys** were **sealed** with the **“sign”** of the **completed work** of the **Messiah.** It is because of **Messiah Yeshua** that the **children** who are **born in the gentile world** can be **adopted into and blessed by Israel.**

**Glenn McWilliams** ([http://www.michaelroodministries.com/torah/PDF/2007\\_Vayechi.pdf](http://www.michaelroodministries.com/torah/PDF/2007_Vayechi.pdf)) does an excellent job in his commentary on **Vayechi** in explaining the **prophetic implications** of the **blessing** over **Ephraim and Manasseh**. Don't miss the **additional reference to 153!** I will quote from McWilliams's commentary, making slight additions in the Hebrew and adding emphasis:

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"Let us now look at this unique blessing:

***Bereshith 48:16** The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; **Let my name be named upon them**, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them **grow** (גָּדְלוּ) into a multitude in the midst of the earth."*

Here we see that **Israel prays** that his name "**Israel**" and the names of his father's **Abraham and Isaac** would be named upon them. In other words, **Israel** is asking that when people **see Ephraim and Manasseh**, and **by implication their descendants**, that they would indeed **recognize them** as belonging to the **heritage of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel**. There is also a somewhat **hidden reference** to the **future** of the **descendants of Ephraim**. Here we should remember that much to the disappointment of Joseph, **Israel crossed his hands**, placing his **right hand upon Ephraim** the younger son, and the **left hand upon Manasseh**. Thus **Ephraim** becomes the **dominant one**. The Hebrew word translated as "**grow**" in this blessing is the Hebrew word *yidgu* (יִדְגּוּ) from the root word *dag* (דָּג), which means "**fish**." It should seem strange that **Israel would ask יהוה** to **cause Ephraim to multiply like fish** upon the **earth**. This is especially strange, since **fish do not multiply upon the earth** but in the seas. But here **Israel** is making an **allusion to another spiritual reality**. Just as the **House of Ephraim** or the **House of Israel would be scattered to the four corners of the earth**, there are also numerous prophecies concerning the **gathering** of the **House of Israel**, not the least of which is found in the prophet **Jeremiah**, where יהוה declares,

***Jeremiah 16:15** "but, יהוה lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.<sup>16</sup> " Behold, I will send for many **fishermen**," says יהוה, "and they shall **fish** them..."*

We may also remember that **Yeshua** called his **disciples** to a **unique ministry**.

***Mark 1:16** And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.<sup>17</sup> Then Yeshua said to them, "**Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men**."*

**For whom** would the **talmidim (disciples) of Yeshua** be **fishing?** **Yeshua** made this very clear.

***Matthew 10:6** "But go rather to **the lost sheep of the house of Israel**."*

***Matthew 15:24** But He answered and said, "**I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**."*

There is yet another obtuse reference to the **scattered House of Israel** being "**fish**" found in a resurrection appearance story in the gospel of John. **After Yeshua's death and resurrection Yeshua's talmidim returned** once more to their actual **fishing nets**. They fished all night and caught nothing. The next morning **Yeshua** was standing on the beach, and he **called to them to cast their net on the right side of the ship**. When they did so, their **net** was **filled**. The gospel tells us exactly **how many fish they caught**.

***John 21:11** Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, **one hundred and fifty-three**; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.*

Most of us would have been quite content to know that they caught a lot of fish, or 100 fish, or even 150 fish. But the **gospel writer** tells us that it was exactly **153 fish**. If the author took the time to relay this **specific**

**detail**, we should reckon that it must have a **specific significance**. The sages tell us that the **number 153** is a reference to a statement by the **prophet Hosea**.

*Hosea 1:10 " Yet the **number of the children of Israel** Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, '**You are sons of the living Elohim.**'<sup>11</sup> Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, For great will be the day of Jezreel!*

To understand the **connection** between this **prophecy of Israel's return**, the **reconciliation** of the **two Houses** of the nation of Israel, and the **153 fish** that were **caught by Yeshua's talmidim**, we need to recognize that the **gematria** of the phrase "**the sons of Elohim**" is **153**:

$$\text{בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים} - \text{בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים} \\ 40 (\text{מ}) + 10 (\text{י}) + 5 (\text{ה}) + 30 (\text{ל}) + 1 (\text{א}) + 5 (\text{ה}) + 10 (\text{י}) + 50 (\text{נ}) + 2 (\text{ב}) = \underline{153}$$

(my addition to McWilliam's commentary):

*John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become **sons of Elohim**, to those who believe in His name:*

Quote continues - "Thus the number of **fish** in the net was to serve as a **confirmation** and a **reminder** of the **mission Yeshua gave the talmidim to go out among the nations and gather the lost sheep of the House of Israel**. While this gematria may seem somewhat arbitrary to some, I assure you there is yet **further confirmation of this reality**.

**Joseph objected to Israel crossing his hands** so that **Ephraim**, the **younger son**, would **receive the blessing of the right hand**. Assuming that Israel did not realize that Joseph had placed the children in the proper order for blessing, **he tried to correct his father**. But **Israel assured him** that he was **doing what יהוה had ordained**. **Israel responded** to Joseph's plea for Manasseh, saying,

*Bereshith 48:19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a **multitude of nations** (הַגֵּוִיִּם)."*

Here we see that **Israel blesses Ephraim** to become a "**multitude of nations**." The **Hebrew** uses the word "**goyim**" (גוֹיִם) or "**Gentiles**." Thus we see **not a blessing**, but a **prophecy** that **Ephraim, the House of Israel**, would become a **multitude of Gentiles**. It is interesting that in the **Septuagint**, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, this passage is rendered as *playthos ethnov* (πλήθος ἐθνῶν). We should note the **similarity** between this **phrase** and that used by the **apostle Shaul (Paul)** when he describes how the **Gentiles** were **broken off the wild olive tree** and **grafted into the cultivated tree**.

*Romans 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the **fullness of the Gentiles** (πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν) has come in.*

The phrase "**fullness of the Gentiles**" in the Greek manuscripts is a similar "**playroma ton ethnon**" (πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν). The **similarities** are **too blatant** not to see the **connection** between them. Clearly **Shaul understood the ministry of reconciliation** of **Messiah** and his **talmidim**. So **Shaul** would write to the brethren in **Ephesus**:

*Ephesians 2:11 Therefore remember that you, **once Gentiles in the flesh** -- who are called **Uncircumcision** by what is called the **Circumcision** made in the flesh by hands --<sup>12</sup> that at that time you were without **Messiah**, being **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel** and **strangers from the covenants of promise**, having no hope and without **Adonai** in the world.<sup>13</sup> But **now in Messiah** you who once were*

*far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.* <sup>14</sup> *For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,*

*Ephesians 2:19* *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of Adonai,*

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End of quote.

It is a **custom** in **Jewish** and **Torah-observant** homes to **bless** sons on the **evening of Shabbat** with the words, “**May you be like Ephraim and Manasseh,**” based on the **blessing** Jacob gives Joseph’s sons in **Bereshith 48:20**. **Why** are sons **blessed** with **these names** and not with the names of our **more famous patriarchs**? One reason is the **desire for our children** to be **strong enough** to **keep their Hebrew identity**, even if it is within a **hostile and pagan environment**.

Another thought is that **Ephraim and Manasseh** were the **first pair** of **Hebrew brothers** who did **not fight**. They **broke the pattern of contention** found **between Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, as well as Joseph and his brothers**. Nothing **pleases our Father** more than **peace “among brothers”**:

*Psalm 133:1* *A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!*

Now I’d like to take a leap to the **end of our parasha** where we find something interesting:

*Bereshith 50:25* *Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "Elohim will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones (עצמותי) from here."*

We find this verse alluded to in **Hebrews 11**, the chapter known as the “**Hall of Faith.**” With all the **extraordinary events** that **occurred in Joseph’s life**, it is **amazing** what **Joseph** is **recognized for**:

*Hebrews 11:22* *By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones (עצמותי).*

Let’s journey through the Scriptures following the “**bone**” trail:

*Bereshith 2:23* *And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."*

**Eve** was the “**bride**” of **Adam**. Having been **taken from his very “bones”**, she was the very **essence of the bridegroom**. As a couple, they would **unite** and again become **one (echad) flesh**. Let’s see where else we find **bones....**

*Shemot/Exodus 12:46* *"In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.*

Like the **Passover lamb**, **Yeshua** also would **not endure any broken bones**. His **body** is a picture of the “**oneness**” of the **bridegroom and his bride**. At the time of the Exodus, we are told that **Moses** sees to it that the **bones of Joseph** will be **taken along to the Promised Land**:

*Shemot 13:19* *And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "Adonai will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."*

After the **Israelites** are **settled** into the **Promised Land**, we read the sad story of an **adulterous concubine**. You can read the story yourself in **Judges 19**, but upon her **death**, **her husband cuts her body into 12 bones** (עצמות) and sent each **tribe** one of her **bones**:

*Judges 19:29* And when he had come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and **divided her**, together with her **bones** (עצמות), into **twelve pieces**, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel.

The story is so gruesome, but let's see if we can attach some **Hebraic understanding to it**. **Jeff Benner**, known for his **ancient Hebrew insights**, paints an interesting picture of the word for “**covenant**” that just might tie in. The following is quoted from his book, *The Living Words ~ Vol. 1* (emphasis mine):

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“While the Hebrew word בְּרִית beriyt means “**covenant**,” the **root** of the word and its **cultural background** are helpful in understanding its **fuller meaning**. This word comes from the **root** בָּרַח barah meaning “**to select the choicest meat**.” The word בְּרִית beriyt is literally the **choicest, fattest, animal** that is **slaughtered** for the **covenant ceremony**.

*Bereshith 31:44* "Now therefore, come, let us make a **covenant** (beriyt), you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me."

The phrase “**make a covenant**” is found thirteen times in the Hebrew Bible where the word “**make**” is the Hebrew word קָרַת karat meaning “**to cut**.” Literally, the phrase “**make a covenant**” means, “**cut the choice pieces of meat**.” When a **covenant is made**, the **fattened animal** is **cut into two pieces** and laid out on the ground; **each party of the covenant then passes through the pieces**. This **symbolic act signifies** to both parties that **if one of the parties fails to meet the agreement, then the other has the right to do to the other what they did to the animal**. (See Jeremiah 34:18-20).

**Countless times** over the years following the institution of this covenant, **Israel failed to abide by the covenantal agreement**. **Just as the animal** of the sacrifice was **cut in two pieces**, **Israel was also cut in two** for their **unfaithfulness to the covenant** by being **cut into two nations – Israel and Judah**.” End of quote.

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Could we perhaps add to this that as a **result of Israel's unfaithfulness**, they were also **cut into 12 bones** like the **unfaithful concubine**? Is this another **picture** of the **scattering of the tribes**?

**Yeshua physically** took on the **unfaithfulness of the tribes** when He **hung on the tree**. The **Hebrew word** for “**out of joint**” (פָּרַד - parad) also means “**divided**” or “**disconnected**”:

*Psalm 22:14* I am poured out like water, And all My **bones** are **out of joint** (פָּרַד)...

Because of **Yeshua's sacrifice**, we are able to put the **out of joint bones** back together and become **one** (echad) **with Him** once again. We can become **bone of his bone**, in the same way that **Eve became one** with **Adam**. This was the **goal of Messiah** when he said he had come for those **scattered pieces....the lost sheep of the house of Israel**.

*Ephesians 5:30* For we are **members of His body**, of His flesh and of His **bones**.

*1 Corinthians 12:12* For as the **body is one** and has many members, but **all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Messiah**.

Now let's finish with this exciting picture of the **bones coming together**:

*Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of יהוה came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of יהוה, and set me down in the midst of the valley (root word indicates something split - בקע); and it was full of bones.<sup>2</sup> Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry.<sup>3</sup> And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Adonai יהוה, You know."<sup>4</sup> Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear (shema - שְׁמַע) the word of יהוה!'<sup>5</sup> Thus says Adonai יהוה to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.*

Notice in verse 4 the **bones** are told to “hear” (shema) the word of יהוה! To “shema” is not only to “hear”, but to “obey”! Once this occurs, the **bones** can begin to be knitted together in community:

*Ezekiel 37:8 Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.<sup>9</sup> Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says Adonai יהוה: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' "<sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.<sup>11</sup> Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' "<sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy and say to them, 'Thus says Adonai יהוה: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."<sup>13</sup> Then you shall know that I am יהוה, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.<sup>14</sup> "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, יהוה, have spoken it and performed it," says יהוה.' "*

Verse 11 tells us that these **bones** are the “whole house of Israel”! Like **Joseph**, these **bones** have been taken to the land of Israel! This is a promise for Israel, friends! Now just “one more thing”...guess what the parent root for **bones** (עצם) is? It is עץ, the word for “tree”! If you continue on reading in **Ezekiel 37**, you will come to the very familiar “two stick” prophecy detailing the restoration of the House of Judah and the House of Ephraim. And guess what the Hebrew word for “stick” is? עץ, the word for tree!

So now, what do you think it was that **Joseph understood** about **bones** that gained him entrance into the faith chapter of Hebrews? I think **Joseph understood** that his life was a living representation of the restoration of the 12 tribes of Israel before they had even split. He knew that the return of his **bones** to Israel paralleled the eventual return of all of Israel to the Promised Land. **Joseph** was noted for his faith in Hebrews 11 because he caught that vision! **Baruch HaShem!**

Shabbat Shalom,  
**Ardelle**

**Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!**

חזק חזק ונתחזק