



מִקֵּץ Miketz At the End

[Genesis 41.1—44.17](#) / [Zechariah 2.14—4.7](#) / [Matthew 21—22](#)

God's Dreams The last תורה *Torah* portion, *Vayeshev*, starts with

יוסף *Yosef* Joseph telling his family his dreams in a bragging way and he suffers for it. Now Pharaoh dreams of cows and corn and no one can interpret it until

יוסף is called out of prison. In verse 15, Pharaoh says he has heard that יוסף can interpret dreams.

But יוסף has learned a lesson the hard way. In verse 16, he tells Pharaoh that it is not in him to interpret dreams—only God can do that. Previously, יוסף was the center of his dreams. Now God is.



Unfortunately, this is a lesson each of us has to learn—usually more than once. We are anxious to put ourselves on the throne. “I did it my way,” is more than a song by Frank Sinatra, it’s a boast we tend to share. יוסף is slammed with betrayal, near-death, slavery, false accusation, and extended imprisonment in order to learn his lesson. When we read his story, it’s easy to find fault with the chief butler who waits two years to tell Pharaoh about the clever Hebrew in prison. But it isn’t the butler’s fault; God has a timetable for יוסף and each of us.

Would you be willing to suffer as much to learn as much?

[Isaiah 46.10](#) says that God declares the end from the beginning. I had a visual of this concept in the early 90s that’s stayed with me. I was clearing a 300’ path for a pasture fence through thick brush. I had the corner stakes marked, but visibility was low. After several hours with a chain saw, I cleared a path stake to stake. As I surveyed my work, I could stand about midway and see both the beginning and ending stakes. It looked good. But then I went to the first corner stake, I found I could not see the end. My straight line was not straight at all, more of an arc. When I was in the middle it looked good, but I was mistaken. I thought of this verse from Isaiah—God has a perspective from start to finish that we don’t. We get confused in the middle, thining everything is OK. But we need to trust God to stay on course. This is a lesson יוסף learned.

יוסף is Promoted When Pharaoh hears the interpretation of his dream and the suggestion to appoint someone to manage food in preparation for the coming famine, he says in [Genesis 41.39](#) that none is so able to **בין** *biyn* discern/understand/observe and **חכם** *khakham* wise/skilful/shrewd/learned/prudent as **יוסף**. Wouldn't it be great if each of us had this type of reputation, even among non-believers like Pharaoh? It seems that being "a person of faith" has lost this meaning of "of tremendous value."

More Parallels to יצוע In telling this story, God shows us more parallels between **יוסף** and **יצוע**. **יוסף** is brought out of the dungeon hastily, his clothing is changed, and he's taken before Pharaoh. He is recognized as one on whom rests the Spirit of God, discerning and wise. He forgets his toil and becomes fruitful in the land of his affliction.

יצוע is recognized as One on whom the Spirit of God rests, known for discernment and wisdom. He rises from the dead to stand before His Father in heaven with a new body. As one writer put it, **יצוע** is not known ever to have put a pen to paper, yet He set more pens in motion than any other person. **יצוע** is fruitful in the land of His affliction, earth.

More Hearts Change **יוסף** is a different man from the one his brothers sold into slavery. But he needs to see if their hearts have changed as well, and he gets that chance when the brothers come to him to get grain during the famine in [Genesis 42](#).



יוסף recognizes his brothers, but they have no idea who he is. In [verse 21](#), they admit among themselves that they did **ראה** *ra'ah* see/look at/inspect/consider the anguish of **יוסף**, and they did not **שמע** *shama* hear/listen/obey, so now they are in distress. Not knowing **יוסף** can understand them, Reuben, the oldest, reminds his brothers in [verse 22](#) that he told them not to sin against the child (**יוסף**), but they would not **שמע** to him, either. So **יוסף** in [verse 24](#) takes **שמעון** *Shimown* Simeon, second-eldest, from them as surety. The root for **שמעון** is **שמע**, a riddle for the brothers to think about on their journey: Joseph takes his brothers' "hearing" because they didn't listen. God takes away hearing, too, [Romans 11.8](#). As **יוסף** sends his brothers back with grain, so God blesses us, even when we aren't listening.

Another Famine In [Amos 8.10-12](#), God says that there will come another famine, not of bread or water, but לשמע ל' *leeshmo 'ah* of hearing the words of יהוה *YHVH* the LORD. People will wander all over, but not find God's Word. Right now, when we can study God's Word freely and live it without persecution, is precious, [Hebrews 4.6-11](#).

Another Riddle As the brothers return to Canaan, they find the silver they spent on food in their sacks. Now they are worried that the ruler (יוסף) will think them thieves. As Joseph's brothers earned silver for betraying him, so יוסף gives them silver, something else to ponder on their trip.

Loss of Sons יוסף insists that the brothers not return to Egypt unless they have Benjamin with them. In [Genesis 43](#), Jacob refuses to send Benjamin. יוסף and Benjamin are his only sons by his most-loved wife, Rachel. Jacob argues that he has already lost יוסף and now Simeon, and he doesn't want to lose Benjamin as well. Reuben offers to let Jacob kill his own two sons if they do not return with Benjamin, but that doesn't appeal to Jacob—what good will two more deaths accomplish? But a change has come over Judah. In [Genesis 37.26](#), it was Judah's idea to sell יוסף into slavery. Now, after losing two sons himself and better understanding Jacob's loss, [Genesis 38](#), in [Genesis 43](#) he offers himself as surety for Benjamin.

A Heart- and Clothes-Rending Test In [Genesis 44](#), after meeting Benjamin, יוסף sends his brothers back to Canaan, but arranges for his silver (there's that tie-in to silver again) cup to go secretly into Benjamin's sack. The brothers feel they have dodged an arrow, especially Judah who offered himself as surety for Benjamin. So it creates a huge upset when they are overtaken and accused of taking the silver cup. They say in verse 9 that if the cup is found in anyone's sack, let him die. This is a parallel to what Jacob said to Laban in [Genesis 31.32](#). Laban overtook Jacob, and someone stole Laban's gods as Jacob snuck away with his family. Jacob, not knowing that Rachel stole the gods from her father, offers that the thief will die. Rachel in fact did die not long after that event. So when the brothers see the silver cup taken out of Benjamin's sack, they rend their clothes in despair for Benjamin.



Rending Clothes Garments are torn in the Bible as an act of mourning. [Joel 2.13](#) emphasizes the rending of the heart, not just the clothing over the heart. Here are some examples of *keriah*. Note especially the last example:

- Job rends his garments upon news of the death of his children, [Job 1.20](#)
- Reuben rends his garments when he finds Joseph is not in the pit, [Genesis 37.29](#)
- Jacob rends his garments, believing Joseph has been torn apart, [Genesis 37.34](#)
- Joshua and Caleb rend their garments when the people doubt, [Numbers 14.6](#)
- David and his men rend their garments upon news of Saul's death, [2 Samuel 1.11](#)
- Hezekiah's men rend their garments at Rabshakeh's slander, [2 Kings 18.37](#)
- Hezekiah rends his garments and puts on sackcloth, [2 Kings 19.1](#)
- These passages are repeated in [Isaiah 36.22](#) and [37.1](#)
- A messenger rends his clothes upon the taking of the ark, [1 Samuel 4.12](#)
- The high priest rends his garments upon the testimony of יְשׁוּעַ, [Matthew 26.65](#)
- God rends the veil of the Temple upon the death of His Son, [Matthew 27.51](#)

Keeping the Secret The brothers are brought back to יוֹסֵף, who continues to withhold his identity and accuses them of being thieves. In the last verse of this portion, [Genesis 44.16](#), the brothers admit they have no defense, saying only that God has found out their sin. This leads to the final confrontation initiated by Judah approaching יוֹסֵף, the beginning of the next Torah portion, *Vayigash* And He Approached.

The brothers betray יוֹסֵף for silver. In his hidden identity, he has power over their lives. Yet he doesn't reveal himself until they repent and return with Benjamin, Jacob's other favorite son by Rachel, who played no part in the betrayal of יוֹסֵף.

יְשׁוּעַ is betrayed by his brothers. Jews today don't know He is the Messiah. In His hidden identity, He has power over their lives. Yet He won't reveal Himself until they repent and return with Benjamin, the faithful Jew who plays no part in His betrayal.





Not Ready in the Time of Visitation In

[Matthew 21.1](#), יֵשׁוּעַ and His disciples approach Jerusalem, immediately before His triumphal entry, and come upon the town of Βηθφαγή [Bēthphagē](#) Bethphage, Town of Unripe Figs. The Hebrew root for the name of this town is פֶּג [pag](#) unripe fig/green fig. This is the week before Passover, in the Spring, a time referred to in Song of Songs chapter 2, where [verse 13](#) says that the fig tree puts forth its פֶּג green figs. The beloved has been sleeping all winter and now her lover tries to awaken her. יֵשׁוּעַ arrives but the people are spiritually asleep and don't awaken.

[Micah 4.1-5](#) speaks of the Messianic age, when (verse 2) the תּוֹרָה of יְהוָה will go forth from Zion and every man will be at peace under his vine and fig tree. [Zechariah 6.12-13](#) says that the Branch or Shoot will build the Temple. [Isaiah 11.1](#) describes Messiah as a Shoot out of the stock of Jesse (the father of King David, the ancestral line of יֵשׁוּעַ). In [Zechariah 3.8-10](#), God promises to bring forth His Servant the Branch, and every man will sit under his vine and fig tree. [Jeremiah 8.12-13](#) concludes a passage about יִשְׂרָאֵל [Yisra'el](#) Israel falling away and says that in the time of their visitation there will be no figs on the fig tree or grapes on the vine. In [Luke 19.44](#), יֵשׁוּעַ refers to this passage by saying that destruction will come to יִשְׂרָאֵל because they did not recognize the time of their visitation, this time of unripe figs, His first appearance.

Cursing the Fig Tree Now this should shed some light on why יֵשׁוּעַ curses the fig tree. The day before, at the beginning of [Matthew 21](#), He enters the Town of Unripe Figs on His way into Jerusalem for the Triumphal Entry. He tells His disciples to get a donkey and its colt and, if anyone asks, tell them the Lord needs them, and Matthew says that this is all in fulfillment of [Zechariah 9.9](#), the same prophet who, in Zechariah 8, talks about there being no figs on the tree in the time of visitation. The crowds rejoice and the children sing, but the rulers reject Him. יֵשׁוּעַ spends the night at Bethany and returns the next morning. On the side of the road is a fig tree, but it has no figs and יֵשׁוּעַ curses it. The tree with no figs is symbolic of יִשְׂרָאֵל rejecting their Messiah in the time of their visitation. יִשְׂרָאֵל and the fig tree both wither.

Two Messiahs at Once vs. One Messiah Twice As believers in ישוע, we take for granted that He came the first time to be a perfect example of תורה and to die for our sin as the perfect Passover Lamb, and we believe that He will come again at some unknown date to gather His church and to rule and reign on the earth (well, most believers accept that last part). The first appearance is represented by [Zechariah 9.9](#), His arrival in Jerusalem on a donkey, and other passages, and the second appearance is represented by [Daniel 7.13-14](#), when the Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days and is given an everlasting dominion which will never be destroyed, and other passages. ישוע promises this second coming by referring to the Daniel passage at His trial, [Matthew 26.64](#).

Many Jews, on the other hand, based on these and similar verses, expected then and still expect two different Messiahs, the first one the Son of יהושע, because of His suffering, and the second one the Son of David, because of His power.

Believers in ישוע have the benefit of 20/20 hindsight—one Messiah already came to suffer and teach and the next time He is coming to rule. In the meantime, our job is to be like Him.

Some Last Parallels יהושע leaves his father's house, is fruitful outside of his natural home, the nations come to him, he has Gentile children, his own brothers come to him, but they don't receive him, since they don't recognize him and they are sure he is dead.

ישוע left His Father's house, is fruitful on earth, the nations come to Him, He has Gentile children, His own do not receive Him, [John 1.11](#), since they don't recognize Him, and many think He is dead.



Glossary, in order of appearance:

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|---------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| מקץ | <i>miketz</i> | at the end |
| תורה | <i>Torah</i> | Law/Instruction |
| יוסף | <i>Yosef</i> | Joseph |
| בין | <i>biyn</i> | discern/understand/observe |
| חכם | <i>khakham</i> | wise/skilful/shrewd/learned/prudent |
| ראה | <i>ra'ah</i> | see/look at/inspect/consider |
| שמע | <i>shama</i> | hear/listen/obey |
| שמעון | <i>Shimown</i> | Simeon |
| לשמע | <i>leeshmo'ah</i> | of hearing |
| יהוה | <i>YHVH</i> | the LORD |
| Βηθφαγή | <i>Bēthphagē</i> | Bethphage/Town of Unripe Figs |
| פג | <i>pag</i> | unripe fig/green fig |
| ישראל | <i>Yisra'el</i> | Israel |