



**ויחי Vayechi And He Lived**  
**Genesis 47.28—50.26 / 1 Kings**  
**2.1—12 / Matthew 26—28**

**Precious תורה** Imagine a child playing with a diamond engagement ring. The ring represents a promise to love and cherish forever. But the child knows nothing of this. After a while, he tires of the old ring and forgets what he did with it. This is how many Christians have learned to treat תורה **Torah** Law/Instruction. “That’s just Old Testament” is a common refrain in many churches.



**ישוע Yeshua** Jesus/salvation says in [Matthew 13.52](#) that a teacher of the תורה who has been instructed about the Kingdom of Heaven is able to keep bringing treasures, new and old, out of his storeroom. Knowing the fuller revelation of the Gospel and the living Word, ישוע doesn’t negate תורה, but enriches it.

**Supporting the Word** This תורה portion concludes the lives of Joseph and his relatives that join him in Egypt. Joseph’s name is spelled יוסף **Yosef**. Each Hebrew character carries a meaning. י yod hand/symbolically work, ך vav nail/symbolically attach/establish, ם samech prop/support, and פ or ף peh mouth/speak/word/open.

Together, יוסף can mean Hand and Nail Supporting the Word. 2,000 years later, ישוע demonstrates with His hands and nails that He supports the Word, [Psalm 22](#) and [Isaiah 53](#). יוסף rescues his brothers after he is sold into slavery against his will. ישוע rescues His brothers and the Gentiles voluntarily as a sheep led silently to the slaughter, a living example of the Word of God.



**Goshen ישראל Yisra’el** Israel settles in the land of Goshen, where they have possessions and multiply greatly, [Genesis 47.27](#). It’s a blessed place. In Exodus, ישראל grows too comfortable in Goshen, even longing to go back during trials in the wilderness after escaping Pharaoh’s army. We, too, need to guard from getting too comfortable in our earthly home. ישוע promises in [Matthew 6.33](#) that if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, we’ll have everything we need and we won’t have to worry about anything. Then God won’t be ashamed to be called our God, [Hebrews 11.16](#).

**Goshen, Dreidel, and Messiah** A popular toy during Hanukkah is the spinning top, a *dreidel*, which has four sides, each with a Hebrew letter, נ *nun*, ג *gimel*, ה *heh*, and ש *shin*. The letters stand for נס גדול היה שם *Nes Gadol Hayah Sham* A Great Miracle Happened There, referring to the defeat of the Greeks and the Temple lamp burning for eight days on one day's oil supply. (In modern ישראל, the letter פ *pei*, which stands for פה *poh* here, is substituted for ש, meaning A Great Miracle Happened *Here*, referring to the 1948 War for Independence.)



100	ק	→ 10	י	1	א
200	ך	20	כך	2	ב
→ 300	ש	30	ל	→ 3	ג
400	ת	→ 40	מ,ם	4	ד
		→ 50	נ,ן	→ 5	ה
		60	ס	6	ו
		70	ע	7	ז
		80	פ,ף	→ 8	ח
		90	צ,ץ	9	ט

Goshen is spelled גשן 13 times and גשנה *Gosh'nah* twice, “And he sent Judah before him unto יוסף, to direct his face unto גשנה,” [Genesis 46.28](#), and “And יוסף made ready his chariot, and went up to meet ישראל his father, to גשנה,” [Genesis 46.29](#), the same letters as on the dreidel. Hebrew letters carry numerical values. In Jewish tradition, words with the same numerical values are considered related. As you can see in the chart, the letters for גשנה and משיח *Mashiyach* Messiah each total 358.

The dreidel, גשנה, and משיח are related, reminding us of the salvation ישראל finds in Goshen, experiences at Hanukkah, and ישוע brings us when graft into ישראל.

**שכם Shechem** This city seems to be the first place Abraham and his family stay as they arrive in Canaan, [Genesis 12.6-7](#). God promises to give this Land to Abraham, so Abraham builds an altar to God at a place called אלון מורה *Elon Moreh* Great Tree/Terebinth of Moreh. In [Genesis 22.18-19](#), instead of going to בית אל *Beit El* Bethel as had promised God earlier, Jacob buys land in Shechem and has the trouble associated with [Genesis 34](#). Jacob sends יוסף to look after his brothers in Shechem in [Genesis 37](#), leading to יוסף being sold into slavery, ישראל living in Egypt, and centuries later, the Exodus. In [Genesis 48.22](#), Jacob tells יוסף that he is giving him a שכם *shechem* portion/shoulder/back/shoulder blade, apparently a reference to שכם Shechem, an elevated tract of land, like a back (see Gesenius' Lexicon entry). שכם is where ישראל gathers to pronounce the blessings and curses of the Law in [Joshua 8.30-35](#), as Moses directes in [Deuteronomy 11.29](#) and [27.11](#). The covenant is confirmed again in [Joshua 24](#), and in that same chapter bones of יוסף, which had been brought up out of Egypt, are buried in שכם after the conquest of the Land, verse 32.

**Palestinian Control** שכם lies between the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, where the blessings and curses of the Law were pronounced. Today it is the Palestinian-controlled city of Nablus. In the picture, you can see Mt. Gerizim on the left (south) and Mt. Ebal on the right (north). Between the two is a natural amphitheater which helped everyone to hear the blessings and curses.



In the picture below on the left is the tomb of יוסף in שכם as it appeared in AD 1894. In the picture on the right is Jacob's tomb on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000, after the IDF retreated and Palestinians gained control of the tomb. (Palestinians rebuilt the site after desecrating it). ישראל regained the right to make monthly visits to the tomb in 2007, and make these visits at night under protection of the IDF.



Rabbis met with the American ambassador to Israel, James Cunningham, on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, to complain that “land for peace” never works and only results in providing territory for Palestinians to launch attacks against Israel. The rabbis suggested to the ambassador that it was time to take a biblical approach to hostilities, [Israel National News](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/135280), which the article describes as “going biblical.” Two days later thousands planned to protest at the entrance to שכם to demand free travel to and from Jacob's tomb. At the entrance to the city while the event was being planned was a large red sign which read, “Beyond this point is the PA; it is forbidden for Israelis to enter,”

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/135280>. ישראל mainly allows Palestinians to travel in and out for work or to visit religious sites, but Palestinians bar Jews from many locations.

**Ephraim and Manasseh** In [Genesis 48](#), יוסף goes to an ailing Jacob with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. In verse 5, Jacob mentions that the sons were born in Egypt.

This would be obvious, since יוסף was 17 and childless when he was sold into slavery.

Perhaps Jacob mentions it to emphasize how יוסף had been living a righteous life in a pagan land while the other sons had been having issues in the Land of promise. Though the sons are Gentiles, ישראל includes them in his family.

Jacob perhaps is apologizing in verse 7 for burying Rachel, his favorite wife and the mother of יוסף, in Bethlehem rather than in the same tomb as the patriarchs in Hebron. If there is a problem, it's usually better to handle it "in the living years."

Verse 10 says that ישראל is blind with age. יוסף hands his two children to him and then bows to the ground. When he looks up, he sees Jacob has crossed his hands so that his right hand is on Ephraim, the younger, and his left hand is on Manasseh, the older.

יוסף tries to correct this, perhaps thinking that Jacob was mixed up, being blind, but it is no mistake. Like Jacob and Esau, the younger will be greater than the older. In verse 16, Jacob asks that the Angel (Who named him ישראל for wrestling with God and prevailing, in other words the Angel is ישוע) would bless the boys.

In [Genesis 41.51](#), יוסף names his firstborn Manasseh. But in [Jeremiah 31.8](#) (Hebrew), Ephraim is called the firstborn. So "firstborn" in the Bible does not mean "born first" as we think of it. Instead, firstborn implies *preeminence*. This is why Paul can say in [Colossians 1.15](#) that ישוע is the "firstborn over all creation." Paul isn't saying that ישוע is the first creation of God, but rather that ישוע is preeminent over all of creation.

In the next verse, Colossians 1.16, sects which deny the deity of ישוע insert the word "other" to read, "For by Him all *other* things were created," but *other* is not in the text. It is added by sects to twist the verse to say that ישוע is a created thing.



In [Genesis 48.20](#), Jacob "blessed them (Manasseh and Ephraim) that day saying: 'בך *b'cha* By you (*singular*) shall ישראל bless...'" Jacob addresses the two boys as one, and says ישראל will do so in the future. Why? One explanation: brothers have fought since Eden when Cain killed Abel, then Abraham left his family, Ishmael and Isaac struggled, Jacob fled from Esau, and Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. Now Jacob is hoping that the struggle between brothers will cease and he regards the two as one.

**Assemble and Hear** At the start of [Genesis 49](#), Jacob calls his sons and tells them to “assemble and hear” what **ישראל** has to say. This instruction also lays the foundation for the **שמע** *Shema* hear/listen/obey of [Deuteronomy 6.4](#), “Hear O **ישראל**: יהוה **יהוה** the LORD our God, יהוה is one.” It is important for the twelve tribes of **ישראל**, and those of us who would join with them, to assemble and hear in order to maintain unity and to serve God. It’s the essence of weekly fellowship, whether in a synagogue or



a church, as well as in a family. Fellowship and studying God’s Word keep us on the same page. Dads, take advantage of opportunities to establish family identity. Give your wife and children reasons to be glad they are part of your home and heritage. An observant Jewish dad will bless each of his children every Erev Shabbat, Friday evening. How many children need their father’s blessing—often!

Interestingly, when I searched Google for an illustration of a dad blessing his children, I went through several pages of “dad pray,” “dad bless,” “bless children,” and other options and still came up blank. Then I searched with **ברוך ילדים** *baruch yeladim* bless children in Hebrew and found Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manasseh (a bonus that it relates directly to this portion) and the farmer with his children. I searched “bless children” in vain in English, but found what I was looking for right away in Hebrew. *Why is that?*

**Bless and Be Blessed** After Abraham’s aborted sacrifice of Isaac, God tells Abraham in [Genesis 22.16-18](#) that in blessing will Abraham be blessed, and in his seed will all the nations of the earth be blessed. Ingrained into the Jewish mind is this idea of blessing and being blessed. There’s a story of two kids in the same classes at school, one Jewish child and one Gentile child. Each gets straight As except each also gets an F in the same class. The Gentile parent says, “What were you thinking? Are you an idiot?” The Jewish parent says, “What was that teacher thinking?” Cursing and blessing are choices.

**שוע** says in [Matthew 5.43-48](#) that God causes the sun to shine on the evil and the good and rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. He follows that up with saying that we should bless those whom we dislike. If we only bless and love those who are kind to us, we’re no different from pagans and tax collectors! The sword and death, or life and health, are in the tongue, [Proverbs 18.21](#) and [Proverbs 12.18](#).

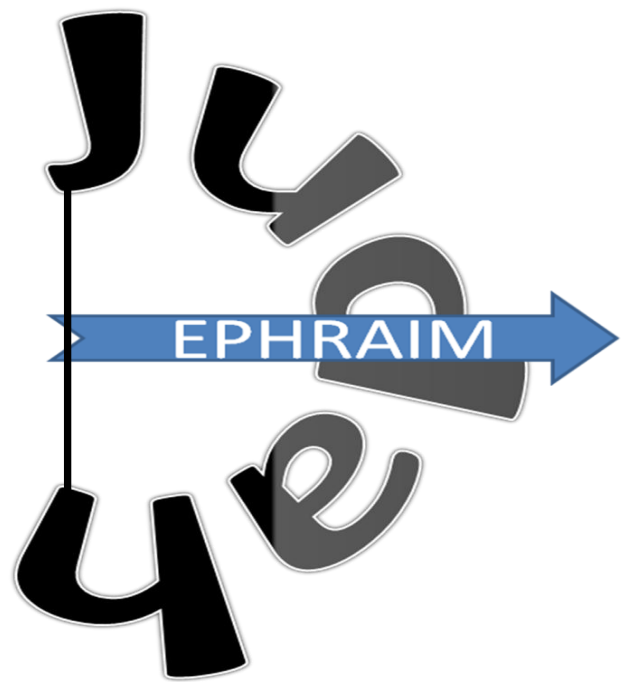
When **יהוה** appears to Moses, He said that He is merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, extending mercy to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, [Exodus 34.6-6](#). And one of the main reasons for the advent of **שוע**, besides forgiving sin, is to give us life to the full, [John 10.10](#).

**Ephraim's Fullness** Since Ephraim is a born of an Egyptian mother, yet promised great blessings and brought into the family of **ישראל**, he is a type of believing Gentile. When **יוסף** tries to correct Jacob blessing Ephraim with his right hand, Jacob says in [Genesis 48.19](#) that Ephraim shall be a **מלא** *melo* fullness/handful/mass/multitude of **גוי** *gowy* nation/people/usually non-Hebrew/Gentile. **ישראל** is blind when he gives this blessing, and check this out: Paul says that **ישראל** is blind/hard in part until the “fullness of the Gentiles be come in,” [Romans 11.25](#)!



So God is waiting for us to mature to bring **ישראל** back? What a responsibility! But what do we say? “Surely I am become rich, I have found me wealth; in all my labors they shall find no iniquity in me that were sin,” [Hosea 12.9](#) (Hebrew). Isn't this our tendency? It's the same as the church in Laodicea which says, “I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.” But the truth is that we are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, and in desperate need of the covering that only God can give, [Revelation 3.17-18](#). In other words, we act like the original Gentiles, Adam and Eve. After they sinned and realized they were naked, they covered themselves with fig leaves, [Genesis 3.7](#). Instead, in verse 21 God makes them coverings of skin, the first shedding of blood to cover sin.

In rebellion, we cover ourselves with something other than God's Spirit, [Isaiah 30.1](#). At some point we realize our sin and come to God from the ends of the earth, saying, “Our fathers inherited only lies, vanity, and things without profit,” [Jeremiah 16.19](#), and “What have I to do any more with idols?” [Hosea 14.9](#) (Hebrew). When I study Hebrew Roots, I feel I am leaving behind the lies of my fathers and peeling back the layers of the onion, flying into the flame. The flame doesn't destroy, but purifies. That's my hope for all believers. It's time to quit trusting in traditions and run to the truth of the Written Word and the Living Word. When Ephraim—the believing Gentiles—and Judah join as one, then God will have the victory of [Zechariah 9.13](#), “When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.” Gentiles and Jews united as one, the mystery of the Gospel, is what Satan fears.



Confess that **ישוע** is the Door [Leviticus 26.40-42](#) says that God forgives when we **ידה** [yadah](#) throw/shoot/cast/confess (can also mean praise) our guilt. See how hand, reveal, confess, praise, Judah, door, and God's Name are connected:

י	Yod	(Hand)	
יד	<a href="#">Yad</a>	Hand	
ה	Hey	(Present/reveal)	When we ה hold up our יד hands in surrender we...
ידה	<a href="#">Yadah</a>	Confess/Praise	confess/praise, which opens the door to heaven as it did for Judah...
יהודה	<a href="#">Yehudah</a>	Judah	"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise," <a href="#">Genesis 49.8</a>
ד	Dalet	(Door)	(ישוע said,) "I am the Door," <a href="#">John 10.9</a>
יהוה			ישוע is the Door between Judah and God, so when we...
יהוה	<i>YHVH</i>	<a href="#">God's Name</a>	Confess/praise with Judah that ישוע is the Door; this leads us to God

**All Things Work Together for Good** In [Genesis 50.20](#), יוסף tells his brothers of their selling him into slavery, "You meant it for רע [ra](#) evil, but God meant it for טוב [toy](#) good. Through the suffering of יוסף, ישראל and the nations are rescued from death because of famine. Today, through the suffering and salvation of ישוע, ישראל and the nations are rescued from death because of sin. Along the way, things will happen which we don't understand. But God has a perspective that we do not, as expressed in this poem:

### THE WEAVER

My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me,  
I cannot choose the colors, He worketh steadily.

Oft times He weaveth sorrow, and I in foolish pride,  
forget He sees the upper, but I the under side.

Not till the loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly,  
shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needed in the Weaver's skillful hand,  
as threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned.

—Benjamin Malachi Franklin (1882-1965)

Glossary, in order of appearance:

ויחי	<i>vayechi</i>	and he lived
תורה	<i>Torah</i>	Law/Instruction
ישוע	<i>Yeshua</i>	Jesus/salvation
יוסף	<i>Yosef</i>	Joseph/ Hand and Nail Supporting the Word
י	<i>yod</i>	hand/symbolically work
ו	<i>vav</i>	nail/symbolically attach/establish
ס	<i>samech</i>	prop/support
פ or ף	<i>peh</i>	mouth/speak/word/open
ישראל	<i>Yisra'el</i>	Israel
נ	<i>nun</i>	
ג	<i>gimel</i>	
ה	<i>heh</i>	
ש	<i>shin</i>	
נס גדול היה שם	<i>Nes Gadol Hayah Sham</i>	A Great Miracle Happened There
פ	<i>pei</i>	
פה	<i>poh</i>	here
נס גדול היה פה	<i>Nes Gadol Hayah Poh</i>	A Great Miracle Happened Here
גשנה	<i>Gosh'nah</i>	Goshen
משיח	<i>Mashiyach</i>	Messiah
אלון מורה	<i>Elon Moreh</i>	Great Tree/Terebinth of Moreh
בית אל	<i>Beit El</i>	Bethel
שכם	<i>shechem</i>	portion/shoulder/back/shoulder blade
שכם	<i>Shechem</i>	Shechem/an elevated tract of land
בך	<i>b'cha</i>	by you ( <i>singular</i> )
שמע	<i>shema</i>	hear/listen/obey
יהוה	<i>YHVH</i>	the LORD/God's holy Name
ברוך ילדים	<i>baruch yeladim</i>	bless children
מלא	<a href="#"><i>melo</i></a>	fullness/handful/mass/multitude



גוי	<i>gowy</i>	nation/people/usually non-Hebrew/Gentile
ידה	<i>yadah</i>	throw/shoot/cast/confess/praise
יד	<i>yad</i>	hand
ה	<i>hey</i>	present/reveal
ידה	<i>yadah</i>	confess/praise
יהודה	<i>Yehudah</i>	Judah
ד	<i>dalet</i>	door
רע	<i>ra</i>	evil
טוב	<i>tov</i>	good