

Introductory Study For Parsha #10: Miketz¹

<i>Torah:</i>	Genesis 41:1 - 44:17
<i>Haftarah:</i>	I Kings 3:15 - 4:1
<i>B'rit Chadasha:</i>	I Corinthians 1:1-2:5



... The Holy One has showed Pharaoh what He is about to do ...
[Genesis 41:25]

Welcome to the study of the tenth parsha of Torah - *Miketz*. *Miketz* is the second parsha in a four-part unit of Torah that we always read during the *Chanukah* season. I call this tetrad '*the Chronicles of the Shadow of Mashiach*'. Our eyes may see a man named Yosef; but our spirits will catch glimpses of Messiah standing in the shadows. And with the Psalmist we will all cry out to the Holy One:

*Keep me as the apple of Your eye;
under the shadow of Your wings hide me
from the wicked who oppress me,
from my deadly enemies who surround me.*
[Psalm 17:8-9]

On the surface the four-part '*Chronicles of the Shadow of Mashiach*' saga we read in Torah at this time each year covers the era between the death of Yitzchak and the death of Yosef. It is the vehicle through which the Divine Writer of Torah explains exactly how the Covenant people group came to leave the patriarchal pasturelands in *Eretz Yisrael* and *wind up totally at peace with an exile that would soon morph into captivity*. At deeper levels, however, the *Shadows of Mashiach* tetrad reveals to us prophetically how the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant in the latter days will foolishly think we can carry on life-as-usual in various lands and states of exile in the face of the Divine Call to *'come out of her, my people,*

¹ All rights with respect to this publication are reserved to the author, William G. Bullock, Sr., also known as 'the Rabbi's son'. Reproduction of material from any *Rabbi's son* lesson without written permission from the author is prohibited. Copyright © 2015, William G. Bullock, Sr.

lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. Revelation 18:4; see also 2 Corinthians 6:16-18. As it was with our forefathers, so *it is with us*. As the Holy One told Avram:

*Know for certain 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.
And then the nation whom they serve I will judge;
afterward they shall come out with a great rekush [i.e. harvest, acquired substance]
[Genesis 15:13-14]*

These Words of the Creator of the Universe set in motion a prophetic cycle that is destined to keep repeating itself every few hundred years, until the ultimate season of fulfillment that leads us into the earthly reign of Mashiach. Ah, but right now we are not reading about Mashiach, are we? We are reading about Ya'akov's 11th son, Yosef. Or *are we*? How surreal. Suddenly we have the strange feeling that nothing is quite as it seems.

*Mah Yosef? [Who is Yosef?]:
A Life Begun – and Lived - in the Shadow of “Another Son”*

‘*The Shadow of Mashiach Chronicles*’ tetralogy revolves around a prophetic figure known as **Yosef**. The long-awaited firstborn son of Ya'akov by Rachel, Yosef was the last child born to Ya'akov in Paddan-Aram. When Yosef was born his theretofore barren mother chose for him a Hebrew name meaning ‘*He will add*’. Even as he was being born, you see, she was praying the prayer “*May the Holy One add to me another son*”.

To make sense of the stories that deal with Yosef's life and life experiences the first thing one must understand is that he is as his mother declared a ‘prototype’ son. Yosef is never – can never be - ‘*just Yosef*’. He is always a promise of – and always somehow connected to - *another son*. Thus while Yosef turns out to be a very special lad and a unique gift of the Holy One in his own right, his *primary function* is to serve as an *illustration of* and a *down payment on* the ‘another son’ for which his mother Rachel prayed.

But *who then is the ‘another son’ that Yosef prefigures?* At one level the ‘another son’ of whom Yosef is the forerunner has to be **Ben-yamin** – the only other child born to Rachel, and the only son of Ya'akov who was born in Eretz Yisrael. **Ben-yamin** is also somewhat of an enigma however. Called **Ben-oni** [son of my sorrow] by his dying mother, this youngest member of Ya'akov's family was after Rachel died called instead by the name **Ben-yamin** [which can mean either *son of the right side*, or *son of the South* (the direction located to the right of the sun at sunrise)].

On a deeper level, as many writers have pointed out, the ‘another son’ to come of whom Yosef serves as an *illustration* and functions as a *down payment* is none other than Mashiach Himself.

In last week’s first installment of the *Chronicles of the Shadow of Mashiach* we read about the special giftings the Holy One invested in Yosef, about the special relationship he had with his father, and about two very interesting prophetic dreams he had at age 17. We read as well last week how after Yosef was misunderstood, rejected, resented and despised by, his own flesh and blood. We read how his elder brothers attacked him, stripped him of the garment that represented his special position of favor with his father, and threw him into a pit. We then read how he was pulled from the pit and sold as a slave to descendants of Yish’mael. We learned how his older brothers deceived Ya’akov into believing he had been killed by wild animals. We read how, unbeknownst to his brethren, the Yish’mael traders to whom Yosef had been sold eventually resold him at a slave market in Egypt, to a high official in government named Potifar. We learned how a group of gentiles – even pagans – highly valued the very life his own brothers had despised. We saw Yosef thrown into an underground dungeon for a crime he did not commit, and how while in prison he correctly ministered to the captives, including Pharaoh’s private cupbearer and royal baker when they fell from favor.

The Prophetic Connection Between the Chanukah Story and the Yosef Narrative

The sages arranged it so that sons and daughters of the Covenants would always study the story of Yosef and his brothers at the *Chanukah* season. This was not by chance. They saw a connection between the two narratives. And so, I propose, should we.

What does the Yosef narrative have to do with the festival of *Chanukah*, you wonder? We all know that Chanukah revolves around the retaking, cleansing, and ceremonial rededication of the Temple in c. 164 BCE by the faithful remnant of the Hebrew people under the leadership of the ‘Maccabees’. It is all about zeal for YHVH, for the Covenants He has instituted, and for the purity of the earthly Temple in which YHVH has consented for His Presence, His Majesty, His Holiness, His Mercy, and His Forgiveness to manifest.

When we begin to look a little deeper and start to study the books of the Maccabees we find that *the reason the Covenants had to be restored to first place and the Temple retaken, cleansed and rededicated* was because a group of faithless Hebrews-by-lineage had surrendered their souls to the assimilation seduction strategies of the predominant secular culture of the day - i.e. the culture of Greece.

This was, of course, the poison root out of which most of modern secular Western Culture developed.

Losing sight of the majesty and goodness of YHVH, of the beauty and stimulating depth of the Covenant Lifestyle, and of the inestimable privilege of constant access to the Manifest Presence and Forgiveness of the Holy One, these shortsighted men and women let their flesh urges, appetites, drives and aspiration pine and lust after the sleight-of-hand illusion masters of Greek culture. They became enamored by a lifestyle built around the *Gymnasium* and the Greek culture's obsession with developing the human body to maximal levels of attraction and peak levels of athletic and artistic performance. This was assimilation seduction trap #1.

Others fell headlong into the seduction of an entertainment-based lifestyle that turned the Hebraic worldview described the Torah, the Prophets, and the Sacred Writings on its head by focusing all attention on what men can do instead of on the deep mystery of Who YHVH is and what He wants from His People. This and stirring their fleshy emotions with whatever the latest drama or comedy was being featured at the Amphitheater. This was assimilation seduction trap #2.

Still others, instead of delighting themselves in meditating upon the Torah and finding ways to co-labor with YHVH in the Grand Plan of Redemption as had their forefathers, began to join their Greek neighbors down at the Forum exhausting their time, their passion, and their energies studying and arguing over things from the *chol* [i.e. common, profane, human reasoning obsessed] realm - things like politics and philosophy. This was assimilation seduction trap #3.

And finally, instead of rejoicing in and humbly accepting the privilege of meeting and interacting with the Creator of the Universe in the sacred courts of the *Beit Ha-Mikdash* their ears began to tickle for stories about the gods of the Greek pantheon – basically super-humans who, like them, were shamefully obsessed by their own bodies, their own public images, their own fleshly appetites and their own natural urges. They gladly embraced gods who, unlike YHVH, could not care less what men did or did not do with their minds, their bodies, their organs of speech, their time, their passion and energy, and their lives. Such gods opened the door for men to be as profane, unclean, and self-obsessed in thought, speech, reaction, and behavior as their fallen human imaginations would let them. This was assimilation seduction trap #4.

Those who succumbed to these assimilation seduction traps became very vocally anti-Covenant. Feeling nothing but contempt for those who clung to the Ways, Judgments and Laws of YHVH, to the great co-laboring mission spelled out in the

Covenants, and to sanctity of the Holy Temple, they sold out their fellow Jews for a few foreign coins. They willingly handed Jerusalem – including, of course, its crown jewels, the Holy Temple and the Torah - into the hands of the gentiles to pillage and desecrate in every disgusting way imaginable.

What does all this have to do with Yosef, and what his brothers did to him? Look closer. In prophetic imagery, Yosef, the specially favored *son of his father*, is comparable to *the City of Jerusalem*, the specially favored *place of the Holy One*. Likewise, the special garment Ya'akov gave to Yosef is comparable to the Temple, with its gold, silver and bronze adornments, its finely crafted blue, purple, crimson and white linen cloths, and its intricate artwork.

Moreover, the incredible gifting and blessing on the life of Yosef can be compared to the Holy One's gift of the *Sh'kinah* – the manifest Presence of the Holy One – to the Temple.

The brothers who hated Yosef because he was specially beloved of his father, and who therefore defiled him, stripped him of his garment, threw him in a pit with scorpions and serpents, and sold him into slavery can be compared to *the actions of corrupted Hellenistic priests like Jason and Menelaus*, who chose the religion, philosophy, and ways of foreigners over the ways of the Holy One, and who, for bribes, turned over the Temple to foreigners who desecrated it, stripped it of its finery, and put it to profane use in the service of gentile kings.

And so we see that the *Chanukah* story and the Yosef narrative are actually *one tale*, much as we discover that the two dreams of Pharaoh were actually 'one dream'. And when we remember that all that is written of Yosef is prophetic of yet 'another son', we also begin to see 'through a glass darkly' that not only the wonderful reconciliation of Yosef and his brothers about which we will read next week in parsha *Vayigash*, but also the events we celebrate every year at *Chanukah*, will be gloriously repeated in the fullness of time. May it happen quickly, in our day.

The Meaning of the Name 'Miketz'

In order to get a feel for what the second parsha in the Yosef Chronicles tetralogy holds in store for us let's start by taking a look at the meaning of the name of the parsha - *Miketz*. What does *Miketz* mean? It is usually translated, as above, *at the end*. In Hebrew thought however *miketz* can mean either "at the end" or "at the beginning" - or both. For in Hebrew thought every ending is *a new beginning*, and every beginning is *an ending to that which went before*. It all depends upon one's perspective, doesn't it?

So as we contemplate what we will be studying this week it behooves us to ask two questions: *what is it that is ending*, and *what is it that is beginning*?

Of what are we 'at the end'?

As this parsha begins we find ourselves *at the end* of several things. The 'breaking point' is nearing for both Yosef's 13-year *period of slavery* and his *season of imprisonment for a crime he did not commit* – i.e. the attempted rape of Potifar's wife.

After the opening aliyah of this parsha however Yosef will never again in his life be either a *slave* or a *prisoner*. More importantly as this parsha opens we find ourselves perched right on the brink of *the end of the era of the patriarchs' sojourn in the land of Israel* — that very special period which began with Avram's arrival in the promised land in Genesis 12:5 will officially end with the final God-encounter of Ya'akov's life, as recorded in Genesis 45:28.

Of what are we 'at the beginning'?

As the curtain of parsha *Miketz* opens we simultaneously find ourselves *at the beginning* of several things as well. We are at the beginning of ***a special 14-year period during which the Holy One will dramatically redistribute the world's food supplies***. There will be 7 years of supernatural abundance in Egypt. There will follow, throughout the known world of the day, 7 years of horrible, devastating famine. During that latter 7-day period of trouble everyone in the known world will have to turn to the storehouses of Egypt for sustenance. Economic and climatic conditions will make Egypt the economic power of the world.

We also find ourselves at the beginning of ***the long period of enslavement/captivity which the Holy One prophesied to Avraham*** long ago would take place and set the stage for the greatest deliverance the world had ever seen².

Furthermore we find ourselves at the beginning of ***a new generation of leaders of the Holy One's covenant people*** – with the birth of Yosef's sons *Menashe* and *Efrayim* [which our parsha reports], and the birth of three sons to Levi [which our parsha will not report], one of whom – *K'hat* – will be the ancestor of *Moshe* (Moses) and *Aharon* (Aaron), the ones who will eventually be used by the Holy One to lead us out of the very period of captivity that is just now beginning.

² This prophecy is recorded in Genesis 15:13.

What about *you*, Dear Reader? What aspects your present life, what circumstances with which you have grown accustomed, and which of your relationships in which you presently find yourselves are, according to the Divine schedule, *supposed to come to an end this week*? What ‘breaking points’ are you approaching? And on the other hand what *new beginnings* loom before you this week?

Be alert and prayerful. Try to look beyond the traumatic circumstances of the changes that are going on in your world and see the glorious end result. There is, you see, much, much more going on in your life and your relationships than you realize. The Hand of the Holy One is hard at work, molding and shaping your destiny, propelling you toward the next stage in the fulfillment of your Divine purpose in life. Please, please, surrender to that Hand *voluntarily*.

And so . . . based upon the pattern established for us in the lives of the patriarchs thus far, what kind of changes should we expect this week in ourselves and our world?

A Parsha Miktetz Travelogue

This week’s parsha is going to prove to be perhaps the most *surreal* of Torah. It begins appropriately enough with another ‘dream sequence’³. This time however the dreamer just happens to be the most powerful man then living on earth – Pharaoh of Egypt. Let’s take a peek at a parsha *Miktetz* travelogue.

1. Pharaoh Has Two Very Troubling Dreams

As the curtain rises on the parsha for this week Ya’akov still thinks Yosef is dead, torn to pieces by a wild animal. Unbeknownst to him, Yosef is very much alive – but remains locked up in the Egyptian prison to which Potifar had assigned him. That situation is about to change dramatically.

It all starts when Pharaoh has a very unusual and disturbing set of dreams. These dreams will wind up playing a major role in the plan of the Holy One to bring about immediate and drastic changes not only in Yosef’s life but in the world.

2. Pharaoh Seeks Interpretation of His Dreams From the Members of His Court

³ According to Talmudic tradition the dreams of Pharaoh occurred on Rosh HaShanah in 1532 bce. *Rosh HaShanah* 10b ff. If so the Egyptian monarch in question would have been **Amenhotep I**, who ruled Egypt from 1545-1525 bce. For historical information on Amenhotep I and the era in which he reigned you may wish to visit:

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/egypt/timeline.html>, <http://www.touregypt.net/18dyn02.htm>
and/or <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/amenhotep1.htm>.

The only other likely candidate would be **Ahmose** [Amenhotep I’s father], the first king of the 18th Dynasty, who drove the Hyksos out of Egypt and reigned from 1570 to 1545 BCE.

After dreaming two disturbing dreams Pharaoh will wake up obsessed with finding out what the dreams mean. He will ask Egypt's wise men and magicians what they think his dreams mean. They will have no answers that satisfy him.

3. Pharaoh's Cupbearer Remembers Yosef, and Recommends Him to Pharaoh as a Proven Interpreter of Dreams

Pharaoh's cupbearer will then suddenly remember how two years previously Yosef – the Hebrew slave he met in prison - accurately interpreted his dream.

3. Yosef Receives and Responds to A Summons to Appear Before Pharaoh

Yosef's will then be hastily brought forth from the prison and escorted to Pharaoh's palace to see what, if anything, he could make of Pharaoh's dreams. Pharaoh will describe his dreams to Yosef, and to his delight Yosef will interpret them with great clarity.

4. Yosef Reveals the Interpretation of Pharaoh's Dreams

Yosef's interpretation of the dreams will be that the Holy One is revealing to Pharaoh what will happen in the next 14 years. For the first seven of that fortnight of years, Yosef will tell Pharaoh, Egypt will produce bumper crops, much more than they would need. Yosef will go on to explain that at the end of that seven-year period of plenty things in Egypt and throughout the world were going to change dramatically. A famine would come upon the earth, would last seven years, and would – unless provision was made during the seven years of plenty – cause widespread disaster.

5. Yosef Advises Pharaoh on How To Respond to the Message of the Dreams

Yosef then goes far beyond what he was called out of prison to do, and suggests to Pharaoh that the Holy One wants him to appoint a wise person to store grain in preparation for the famine.

6. Yosef Is Elevated to Pharaoh's Right Hand

Pharaoh will be extremely impressed - not only by Yosef's interpretation of his dreams, but also by Yosef himself. In a move that shocks his nation Pharaoh will immediately elevate Yosef to the position of *viceroys in charge of agriculture* – a kind of '*food-czar*' answerable to no one but Pharaoh himself.

As good as that sounds, however, things turn out *even better*. Yosef very quickly – and inexplicably – will find himself elevated to Pharaoh's second-in-command. He will thus become *the second most powerful man in the world*. In that capacity he will find himself placed in charge of not only all the food, but also all the internal

programs and foreign policies of greatest world power of the day. Now an honorary Egyptian, he will even be given an Egyptian name. From this day forward, he will be known as *Tzafanat-Paneach*. Talk about your rags to riches story!

7. Yosef Is Given a Royal Wife, and Becomes a Father

Pharaoh will even give Yosef a wife – namely, *Asenat*, believed by some commentators to have been the daughter of his former master Potifar. Then Yosef and Asenat will have two sons: *Menashe* and *Efrayim*.

8. The Seven Years of Plenty Unfold

The seven years of supernatural abundance about which Yosef prophesied will then come just as he predicted. In accordance with the Divine instructions received via Pharaoh's dream, Yosef will store up excess grain in preparation for seven years of famine that the Holy One has warned Pharaoh will immediately follow.

9. The Seven-Year Period of Famine Begins

After seven full years of abundant harvest, the great famine of which Yosef prophesied will begin right on schedule. The famine will devastate not only Egypt but all countries around it – including, of course, the land of Kena'an in which Ya'akov and his family reside.

The only food to be found for anyone will then be in Egypt, where Yosef has been storing up great volumes of grain in storehouses for the past seven years.

10. Ya'akov Sends His Ten Eldest Sons to Egypt to Purchase Grain

As the famine deepens Ya'akov will send his ten eldest sons down to Egypt to buy grain to sustain them. When the brothers arrive in Egypt in search of food they will find themselves having to deal with Pharaoh's second-in-command. Of course they will have no idea that this person is their long-lost brother Yosef. After all the years and all the changes they do not recognize 'the dreamer'. Yosef was only 17 the last time they saw him. He is now 30, dresses like as an Egyptian, lives in an Egyptian palace, and is called *Tzafanat-Paneach*. Yosef, however, will recognize his brothers, but he will not say anything. He will be content, for the time being, to leave them in ignorance about his true identity.

11. Yosef's Brothers Are Blinded To His True Identity For a Prophetic Season

Without revealing who he is, Yosef will pretend to take a hard line with the delegation from the Hebrews. He will accuse them to their faces of being spies.

He will take one of them, *Sh'mon* [known to most English readers by the Anglicized name

‘Simeon’], as a prisoner, holding him hostage while the rest of the brothers are sent home to fetch their youngest brother and bring him to Yosef as a display of ‘good faith’. That youngest brother just happens, of course, to be Yosef’s only full brother, Binyamin.

12. The Brothers Report To Ya’akov of Their Strange Encounter

When the brothers return to Kena’an they will report to their father Ya’akov everything that happened in Egypt. Understandably, already having experienced Dinah’s kidnapping and rape and having lost Yosef to who knows what, when Ya’akov finds that Sh’mon has been abducted he will become far too upset to deal with the prospect of letting Binyamin out of his sight.

13. Ya’akov Sends the Brothers – And Binyamin – Back to Egypt To Purchase More Food

As the famine continues however, and the food supplies dwindle again to a point of extreme danger, Ya’akov will finally be forced to agree to let Binyamin go with the brothers to Egypt to try to rescue Sh’mon and acquire more food.

14. The Brothers Are Invited to Dine at Yosef’s Palace – the Era of Philo-Semitism

When the brothers return to Egypt they will be surprised to find themselves invited to a special dinner at the palace of the man who took Sh’mon prisoner. They will attend the dinner, be reunited with Sh’mon, and get the sense that the favor of Tzafanat-Paneach has finally fallen upon them. But they will be wrong. They will soon find out that it was all a ploy.

15. Binyamin is Arrested on Suspicion of Stealing Yosef’s Silver Cup

The following morning the Hebrew delegation will pack up their camels with grain and depart for Kena’an thinking all is well. Before they reach the Egyptian border however the caravan will be stopped by Egyptian authorities. The stunned sons of the Covenant will find themselves accused of making a mockery of Tzafanat-Paneach’s generous hospitality the night before by stealing from the palace the Egyptian viceroy’s personal silver cup.

Despite protestations of innocence, a hurried search will be conducted, and to the horror of the Hebrew brothers the cup will be found in the pack of their youngest brother, Binyamin. Binyamin will then be arrested for the crime and sentenced on the spot to become an Egyptian slave for life.

The parsha will then come to an end with the brothers in an absolute quandary, totally dependent for their very lives upon the goodwill of a man they know as

Tzafanat-Paneach, but who is in reality Yosef – the one they plotted to kill so long ago.

It Is All A Matter of Perspective – Every Ending is Also a New Beginning, and Every New Beginning Also Marks an Ending

What are we to make of these surreal-seeming events? Perhaps, Dear Reader, at the very least we can learn through meditating on the events of parsha *Miketz* to look at difficult situations in our lives from a different perspective. If nothing else parsha *Miketz* teaches that however bad or hopeless things look in a given situation the entire picture can change in *a moment* - in the virtual *twinkling of an eye*.

After all Yosef's slavery and imprisonment were both seemingly permanent. But all that changed in an instant. Although it appeared that the duration and terms of his imprisonment and his slavery were dependent on the whims of his mortal captors, that proved not to be the case at all. Rather the Almighty had decreed a set time for Yosef to *be in prison*, a set time for him to *be set free*, and a set time for him to *be vindicated, elevated, and brought to his place of highest destiny*.

It is *the stuff dreams are made of* . . . for partakers of the blessing of the covenant of the Holy One with Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, that is.

A Brief Look at Haftarah Miketz

I Kings 3:15 - 4:1

The historical background of the haftarah for parsha *Miketz* is right after Sh'lomo assumed the throne of his father David – around 965 BCE. The assigned haftarah reading begins as Sh'lomo is *awakening from a dream*. Remember, the theme of the season is *the God-inspired dream*.

Sh'lomo's God-inspired dream is much misremembered by theologians. In the course of that dream, Sh'lomo heard the Holy One say to him: “***Ask! What shall I give you?***” Contrary to what most theologians teach what Sh'lomo asked for in response was not wisdom. He instead asked that the Holy One give him a *lev shama* - i.e. a *sh'ma*-ing [listening, attentive, hearing, responsive, obeying] heart in order that he might *rule and dispense justice among* the people of Israel. See **I Kings 3:5-9**.

A *sh'ma*-ing heart is far more precious and valuable than wisdom. After all, there are *different kinds of wisdom*. See **James 3:13-18**. And what *seems like wisdom to men* is often not wise at all in the eyes of God. See **I Corinthians 1:22-29, 2:5-7 and 3:19**. Indeed sometimes – as would be the case with Sh'lomo – what passes in human understanding as wisdom can actually work like serpent venom when

injected into a *sh'ma*-ing heart.

The highlight of the *haftarah* reading will be the famous story of King Solomon, a baby, and two female practitioners of the world's 'oldest profession' both claiming to be the baby's mother. Was this the product of *human wisdom* – or it the product a *sh'ma*-ing heart?

Consider the two prostitutes who petition Sh'lomo for 'justice'. They are, of course, real people, with a real problem. Understand it, and empathize with it as best you can. Ask the Holy One to give you *love* for both – and for the child over which their dispute arises. Hear their *very real desperation*. Feel their *very real pain*.

But do not stop there. Once you have grasped these things, ask the Holy One to *take you further* into the passage. For at least a few moments, this week, as you meditate on this *haftarah*, consider these women also as *prophetic types*. These women are both daughters of harlotry – who or what are they meant to symbolize? These women have both conceived and borne offspring of their illicit alliances – one lifeless and cold, and the other the picture of life. Of whom or of what do the children they have borne speak prophetically?

Do these women perhaps symbolize the *two kingdoms* which will come forth out of Israel in the days to come – the nation called Y'hudah, consisting of the descendants of the tribes affiliated with Y'hudah, on the one hand, and the nation of Israel, consisting of the descendants of the tribes affiliated with Yosef's sons, Efrayim and Menashe, on the other hand? Or could these two prostitutes possibly symbolize *the two world religions* that will come forth from the loins of Avraham in the centuries to follow — Christianity and Islam?

And what does the death of the bereaved prostitute's offspring represent? And what does the coveted life and health of the compassionate prostitute's child refer to? And who is the judge who issues a decree that the baby that is full of life and health be pierced by the sword and split between them both?

Think on these things, Dear Reader. And marvel at the depth, the breadth, and the height of the redemptive plan of the Holy One for His creation.

A Peek at the Brit Chadasha Reading for Miketz

I Corinthians 1:1-2:5

The reading from the writings of Y'shua's apostles which I have selected to correspond to parsha ***Miketz*** is taken from the first letter written by Shaul of Tarsus to a group of people in the Greek city of Corinth. The recipients of this letter were those in Corinth who had *sh'ma*-ed [i.e. *heard, heeded, and totally changed their lives*

based upon] the Messiah's call to return from the various forms of organized religions of their day back to the Torah-based reality of the covenant the Holy One made with Avraham and his descendants. In these readings, Shaul will, this week, address the very serious problem of the jealousies, divisions, disagreements, and controversies which, unfortunately, seem to plague groups of Messianic believers just as much as they plagued the family of Ya'akov – Yosef vs. his brothers - and the two prostitutes about which we read in the haftarah.

Shaul is not happy about the ways in which the Corinthians have surrendered to fleshly jealousies and petty disputes. He will declare:

*. . . I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Messiah Y'shua,
that you all **speak the same thing**, and that there be **no divisions** among you,
but that you be **perfectly joined together**
in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**.*

Shaul, ever the stickler for due process, will then reveal his source of information concerning the controversy that necessitates his letter, and the substance of the evidence he has received:

*For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren,
by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.*

*Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of **Shaul**,"
or "I am of **Apollos**," or "I am of **Kefa**," or "I am of **Messiah**."*

*Is Messiah divided? Was Shaul crucified for you?
Or was the mikveh you underwent in the name of Shaul?*

Shaul will then urge the Corinthians - and us - to set our sights far above the petty jealousies and controversies that divide us and to turn our attention to those things that really matter, which compose our destiny:

*. . . the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of the Holy One.
For what man knows the things of a man
except the spirit of the man which is in him?
Even so no one knows the things of God except the **Ruach HaQodesh**.*

*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world,
but the Spirit who is from the Holy One,
that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by the Holy One.*

*These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches
but which the **Ruach HaQodesh** teaches,
comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

*But the natural man does not receive the things of the **Ruach HaQodesh**
for they are foolishness to him;
nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

*But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.
For "who has known the mind of the Holy One that he may instruct Him?"
But we have the mind of Mashiach.*

Is all the *squabbling* really worth missing your destiny? Is being declared 'right' about some minor doctrinal issue - or 'winning' an argument - worth wasting a single moment of our precious '*time such as this*' upon the earth? I don't think so. I think we can 'contend for the faith' just fine without *attacking, accusing, slandering, fussing and fighting with and losing respect for each other.*

*May you, with Yosef, experience the vindication of the Holy One,
And may you find the place in the service of Heaven
For which the Holy One has created you and given you life at such a time as this.*

The Rabbi's son

Amidah Prayer Focus for the Week

The Seventh Petition: Kabatz- Ingathering

T'kah b'shofar g'dol l'charuteinu

Sound the shofar for great deliverance

v'sah nes l'kabetz galuteinu

Make a miracle, and ingather us from our lands of exile

v'kabetzeinu yachad m'arba kn'fot ha-aretz

ingather us by your Hand from the four corners of the earth

Baruch Atah Adonai M'kabetz ni'dchai amo Yisrael

Blessed are You, Oh Holy One, Who gathers the outcasts of His People Israel