



Names

Esav (ěšāv)– Esau

Hevron – Hebron

Ya'akov – Jacob

Kefa – Peter

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed

Moshe – Moses

Rivkah – Rebecca

Shaul – Paul

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

Yěhōvāh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)

Y'hudah – Judah

Yochanan – John

Yosef – Joseph

Terms

Cohen – priest

Haftarah – reading from the prophets

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible

Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah

Vayeshev - 9th Torah portion

VaYeshev means, “and he settled.” This portion begins by telling us about Ya’akov’s love for his son Yosef and the long-sleeved coat he made for him when he was seventeen. One time, Yosef reported on his brothers and his brothers became jealous of their father’s favoritism. Yosef also had a couple dreams where his brothers prostrated themselves to him and they hated Yosef even more.

In this tragic portion we see the destructive nature of sibling rivalry, jealousy, and worldly thinking. We also see a lack of trust by Yosef’s (Joseph) family in God’s leading through Yosef’s dreams. But we also see how God favored and protected his prophet Yosef. This should remind us that God can protect His people and give them favor even in difficult situations, and that the prophetic can be instrumental in helping God’s people.

I have been amazed at what God will do for us if we will follow how He is leading us. Perhaps all we are doing is to live right, and God turns that around for us and blesses us in many different ways. Sometimes I just think of something and it happens. This one time I was at the store and I was looking at an expensive jacket that was marked down half price to \$250. I thought to myself, "Too bad it's not \$50." Two months later I was there and it was marked down to \$50. My wife was with me and she bought the same style of jacket too. There were only a few left and they just happened to fit us and they were in the colors we wanted. My size is difficult to find because I am tall. It was no coincidence to me. I knew it was God.

Ya’akov sends Yosef to see how his brothers are doing and when his brothers saw him in the distance, they plotted to kill him and then throw him in a cistern. When he arrived they threw him in the cistern and took his long sleeved coat. A caravan was coming at the time, so instead of killing him, they sold Yosef to them and the caravan went on toward Egypt. His brothers took his coat and put goats blood on it and told their father he must have been

killed by a wild animal. Then the portion talks some about Y'hudah and his children. Tamar was not given proper treatment by Y'hudah's family and she entices Y'hudah to sleep with her and she has a child by him.

In the meantime, Yosef becomes a servant of Potifar, a captain of Pharaoh's guard. God favored everything that Yosef did and he was appointed to manage Potifar's household. Potifar's wife tried to seduce Yosef, but he would not comply so she pulled off his garment when he fled and accused him of trying to sleep with her. Yosef ends up in prison, but God gives favor to Yosef and he is put in charge of the prisoners. God just keeps blessing Yosef even in difficult times.

Pharaoh became angry with his baker and cup bearer and put them in prison. They had dreams that Yosef interpreted for them. He told the cup bearer that his position would be restored and the baker that he would be killed. Yosef asked that the cup bearer to remember him. Yosef's predictions turned out as expected, but the cup bearer forgot about Joseph's interpretation of his dream. We find out later that God works it out and Yosef even becomes second to Pharaoh, the leader of Egypt. Absolutely amazing, isn't it.

That just goes to show you how important hearing from God is. Shaul tells us that it is very important. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy." Some say we are not supposed to hear from God, but Shaul says that what he is saying is a commandment of God. 1 Corinthians 14:37 NKJV says, "Let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." So the people who are saying we shouldn't do this are disobeying God.

We are supposed to be having words of prophecy. That's what they did in the early congregations; 1 Corinthians 14:26 NKJV says, "Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." The reason Shaul says that all things are to build up the believers is because it seems the meetings were laborious; in the context, Shaul puts limits on what they do and we also need to have meetings that divide up time between activities and that are orderly.

What God tells us through the prophetic should not go against the truths of the Bible. The Bible tells us to test what is spoken. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 says, "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil." Prophecies should encourage us. 1 Corinthians 14:3 NKJV says, "But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men." The people who think prophecy is just for telling the future are wrong. If God says to be strong in His prophecy, that is a word of encouragement. If it happens that some testing comes after that, it was meant as a prophecy for something we would have to face. In either case, it was encouragement. Making up prophecy or making up what will happen **is wrong**. If we are speaking prophecy, we are to speak what God says and **NOT** what's on our mind. Look what the prophetic did in the case of Yosef. He saved the lives of his family and the lives

of the people in Egypt and all around that area. The prophetic is powerful. God worked out things for all the people of that region through his prophetic gifting.

Shaul tell us that God can work out things in our lives. Just like God worked out things for the good of Yosef and eventually for his whole family, we know that God can also work out the situations in our lives and bring good. Romans 8:28 NKJV says, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Stay faithful and seek God's spiritual gifts.

The Haftarah for VaYeshev is Amos 2:6-3:8. Amos was from Judah, but prophesied to the northern kingdom of Israel. Amos predicts doom for the northern kingdom of Israel's neighbors in the beginning of the book of Amos. Then, in today's portion, he predicts God's judgment on the northern kingdom.

Northern Israel is treating good people badly and the poor badly, they are committing sexual sins, and they are drinking wine in their meeting places (synagogue). God destroyed the Emori and brought Israel out of Egypt and into the Emori's land. Israel though caused the Nazirites to sin and silenced the prophets. They should have valued their relationship with God. Their own strength will not save them. Then God uses some examples of cause and effect to show why they are doomed.

They would not listen to the prophet of God, just like Yosef's brothers did not listen to Yosef. So northern Israel would bring trouble on themselves for not obeying God. We should always remember that God will restore and forgive us if we will change and do what is right and good.

It says in Amos 2:12 NKJV, "But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, And commanded the prophets saying, 'Do not prophesy!'" It says in 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy." It's the same in our time for some isn't it. People say you can't prophesy. Guess what, they are contradicting the Bible and losing out in their relationship with God.

In this portion we see the destructive nature of worldly thinking and the end result of pushing away of God's words through the prophetic. Ya'akov and his family suffered because they did not trust Yosef's words from God. Israel did worse and was completely destroyed because they didn't listen to the prophets. God will work out His will. We have to decide if we will be part of it and stand strong for our faith. God may have to find someone else to do His work if we won't do it. Through the prophetic, God saved a whole region from disaster; God was able to do that because Yosef was willing to stand for God, do what is right, and be bold enough to trust in what God told him.