

## 7 – Mikeitz-Vayigash & Joshua 5

### The Turning Point

1. These two portions are showing us the exact moment the inner work for the spiritual year is accomplished and the emphasis shifts to a more outer work. The text is pointing us to a small number of verses that are a picture of this climactic moment that marks this shift from inner to outer.
2. Mikeitz is the final build up, pointing us to the climactic moment of spiritual development in the year
  - a. the name of this portion means “to cut off”
  - b. it ends as a cliffhanger, bringing the tension of the entire story right to its highest point, leading us right up to the moment of resolution, which are the first verses of the next portion, Vayigash
  - c. Mikeitz is setting us up for something big, something that is perhaps what the whole year up to this point is leading to
  - d. Mikeitz and Vayigash, together, with Hanukkah, take us across a line in the year, the line between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> months; it takes us from the completion of the pregnancy to the birth moment
3. So, what is the moment? If you blinked, you might miss it!
  - a. the Torah portions and the calendar and Hanukkah are all pointing us to take special notice of this one moment at the beginning of Vayigash, this moment when Judah draws near to Joseph
    - i. this is the meaning of the word “Vayigash,” “to draw near,” specifically Judah draws near to Joseph to say something to him
    - ii. read the verses: (Genesis 44:18-34; 45:1-3)
  - b. it’s all hinging on this meeting between Joseph and Judah; let’s try to understand what’s happening here in the light of the salvation pattern
    - i. Joseph springs from Yesod, Judah from Malchut
      1. “*Geulah* is from the attribute of Yesod, and so is Joseph; *tefilah* is from the attribute of Malchut, and so is Judah. See Sefer Hamaamarim 5629 p. 13 and on, 5666 p. 119 and on, 487 and on, 5672 volume 2 p. 794 and on.” (footnoted in this [source](#))
    - ii. I only have a glimmer of what’s going on, but I’ll put it out there as one perspective to build upon as we continue to walk with these portions and this cycle
  - c. First, let’s note that we can tend to see Joseph and Judah as at odds, but this isn’t the fullness of the picture
    - i. the Northern Kingdom comes to be known as “Joseph” or “Ephraim,” Joseph’s son, and the Southern Kingdom – consisting of Judah and Benjamin and maybe Simeon and transplants from all the tribes – comes to be known as “Judah;” they end up not getting along very well, which is obvious when they split into two kingdoms

- ii. There is a kind of tension from the beginning with the birthright, which passes from Reuben to Joseph. Listen to the two verses in 1 Chronicles that describes this, and you'll hear Judah in the mix:
  - "...[Reuben] was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph...though Judah became strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph." (1 Chronicles 5:1-2)
- iii. Certainly there is a tension between the two, but the fullness of the picture is that Joseph the tzaddik exists to help elevate Judah
- d. **Joseph represents the accumulation of the spiritual growth** in the family up to that point – the spiritual journey that started with Abraham has produced Joseph.
  - i. Joseph has the faith of Abraham, the Torah knowledge of Isaac (digging wells), and the upper-lower connection of Jacob - his reacquaintance with Esau – which brings along a kind of emotional intelligence and even a prophetic intelligence
  - ii. He inherits all this from the womb
  - iii. *He has everything to pass on because everything was passed on to him*
    - 1. This is a masculine role, the giver, "may He add," so it is meaningful that Joseph becomes the giver of SEED to the known world (in the form of grain, which is gathered in because of his prophetic insight and under his oversight)
      - a. Judah is in the feminine role, the receiver; Judah has trouble giving and has to be tricked by Tamar into doing so
      - b. Judah's name ends in a "heh," the feminine ending
- e. You see, **Joseph is not the goal** in the same way that the Messiah is also not the goal
  - i. The Messiah comes to bring out something from within humanity
    - 1. that process is partly pictured here in this meeting of Joseph and Judah
  - ii. Their names indicate that Joseph is not the goal but Judah is
    - 1. "Joseph" means "may He add," indicating that we're still waiting for something more, another step
    - 2. "Yehudah," "Judah," means "praise" or "admit." Admitting is a response after something is REALIZED, when you've gotten to the end of the thing.
      - a. The name "Yehudah" is connected to the word for "hand," "yad," and gives us the picture of hands lifted in praise of Adonai, admitting to God's superior position and power and sway in the world and our inferior position
    - 3. Joseph is second to the "king" of Egypt, not in that ultimate position
- f. **What is the goal? Who is Judah?**
  - i. Judah is the key to *action* within the body of Israel
    - 1. this is one reason the Temple is partly built in Judah
  - ii. Joseph brings out of Judah a lowering down in the humility of self-sacrificial service (which results, eventually, in God raising him up to the place of

leadership among his brothers). This lowering down in service is the goal, the service with the hands that brings glory to God.

1. Judah can't reach his essence, his name, without this moment
2. Joseph can't reach his essence, his name, without this moment either
- iii. The haftarah for Vayigash is a beautiful picture of the essence of this part of the salvation story:
  1. "The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.' And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand." (Ezekiel 37:15-17)
- g. this praise of God is expressed in the calendar at this time of year in the tradition that the Hallel be read every day of Hanukkah
  - i. unusual – read only 21 days of the year, 8 at Hanukkah
  - ii. this reading of the Hallel is deeply connected to Hanukkah for observant Jews
- h. The tzaddik is the bridge between God and a generation
  - i. in the same way, God acts through the Messiah, the real Tzaddik, to help all generations of humanity to reach down inside and bring out something from within which is a truer expression of humanity
    1. this truer expression becomes visible as actions of sacrificial service that bring glory to God
  - ii. How does God act through the Tzaddik, the Messiah to accomplish this pushing of humanity
    1. Being both God and man, He is the connection between God and mankind
    2. With this foundation, God sends the Messiah twice, the first time to elevate us and inspire us to walk in a transcendent way, and the second time to model for us how to live at that higher level
      - a. Yeshua's first coming
        - i. Yeshua opens the pathway to **forgiveness** through His blood and models for us the righteous, transcendent life, **inspiring** us to live this kind of life.
        - ii. Giving up His life for us, He also **empowers** us to live higher by touching our emotions.
      - b. Yeshua's second coming
        - i. Yeshua will show us how to live as a king, how to serve consistently, day in and day out, how to rule ourselves and manage the affairs of the world on a transcendent level
      - c. In coming twice, Yeshua is our example of both Joseph and Judah, both of these end points of the salvation cycle
        - i. He comes first as Yeshua ben Yosef (the name of His adoptive earthly father)

- ii. He comes second as Yeshua ben David, the King, King David being of the line of Judah; we will know Him then more as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah rather than the Lamb Who Is Slain
- 4. What does this deeper understanding of the text mean to us in practical terms?
  - a. first, it helps us to see Joseph and especially Yeshua from a different angle
  - b. second, focus on praise during Hanukkah
    - i. the fact that we're reading about Judah during Hanukkah and that the story for the whole year is building toward a movement in Judah – and Judah's name means "praise" – is a kind of biblical support for the Jewish tradition of reading the Hallel at Hanukkah
    - ii. lower yourself down and acknowledge God's higher place and that He works everything for good in our lives, and it's miraculous beyond our understanding
  - c. third, understand that we're crossing a hard line in the calendar
    - i. emulate Judah now: now is the time to rededicate your life to God as an outward-looking life of service to Him and others
    - ii. Trust that God is going to be making it easier for us to put spiritual growth into action now; be looking for ways to do that now, and be in prayer about it.
- 5. Joshua 5
  - a. I'm not going to try to directly connect this Torah portion conversation to this chapter of Joshua except to say one thing: God helps us in our walk with Him by continually drawing a definite line in the sand. Those lines are mile markers. They help us to gauge our journey. They help to make our journey more solid, and that's important because we're prone to forget or even to doubt what happened to us in the past, how God brought us from one stage to the next. Here in Joshua 5, we see one such mile stone – the second circumcision.
  - b. This second circumcision seems a bit confusing at first, but it makes a lot of sense if we understand it through the lens of the Salvation Pattern. On the surface, it looks like a curious lapse in the *covenant* of circumcision. Joshua 5 describes this seeming lapse:
    - i. "At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time." So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised." (Joshua 5:2-5)
    - ii. Notice that the text says that "all the males of the people who came out of Egypt" were circumcised, implying that the circumcision happened as they were leaving or just after they came out of Egypt.
    - iii. Why would it be the case that there was no circumcision during the 40 years in the wilderness? It makes sense when we understand that these two generations – the generation that came out of Egypt and the generation that

enters the Land – are showing us two halves of a single picture of salvation, the salvation pattern. Within the salvation pattern, there are two circumcisions:

1. the first is done by the father at birth – this is the circumcision that happened for those who came out of Egypt when God was leading Israel as a strong Father
  - a. in calendar, this first circumcision is associated with the month of Nissan
2. the second is the circumcision of the heart, which comes later at the part of the cycle God is acting more in the capacity of Groom rather than Father. This second circumcision is associated with Yeshua's leadership, and here in Joshua we're seeing the text say that Joshua, himself, as the text says, "So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel..."
  - a. in the calendar, this second circumcision is associated with the month of Tishrei and the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Sukkot
- iv. In the salvation pattern, circumcision is not associated with Shavuot and the 3 Weeks and high summer, that portion of the cycle which is also associated with the 40 years of dying in the wilderness, so there's no circumcision in the wilderness. Again, God is using these two generations of Israel to show one complete picture, and in that picture, there are two distinct points of circumcision.

#### **Quote Regarding the Importance and Power of Custom and Tradition vs. Commandment**

"This concept of the upsharin [first haircut for a boy – connected to the beginning of formal education] is not found clearly in the Torah. It's hinted in the Torah with the large gimel, but we call this a "minhag;" it's a custom. And even though it's a custom, it's not, God forbid, less important, but perhaps even more important. As we find throughout the Jewish calendar, we have holidays that are mitzvos, commandments, like the holiday of Sukkot. It's a very joyous holiday. And then we have holidays that are rabbinic law, like Purim. It's even more joyous than Sukkot, or Sukkas. And then we have a holiday that's a minhag, a custom, and that is Simchas Torah. The joy of Simchas Torah, which is a custom, is even greater than the joy of the mitzvah of Sukkas or the joy of Purim, which is a rabbinic mitzvah. And the reason basically is because when the king commands you to do something, and the slave does it, the king is very happy. That's a mitzvah. When the king hints something, and the servant does it, the king is even more happy because he didn't say it clearly, but he hinted, and you got it, and now that makes the king happier, and that is a rabbinic decree. And then sometimes a servant does things on his own, and because he did it on his own, the king became even happier. And that is the concept of a custom. It's such a high light that it cannot be described with words on parchment, or letters on parchment, but rather, it comes in the form of a custom. And that is the formal education of a 3-year-old boy, which is called the upsharin, when you begin to cut his hair." (R' Raskin, Tazria: The Number Three, 13:20m)"

**Extra Notes (delete):**

Joseph's prophetic ability must be received from Jacob, who exhibits a more concrete form of prophecy than the other patriarchs, though not as concrete as Joseph (Jacob's blessings to the 12 tribes are described first as prophecies of what will become of the tribes). Prophetic ability is associated with the lower sefirot of *netzach* and *hod*, and Jacob represents the lowest penetration of the sefirot among the patriarchs: Jacob is most often associated with *tiferet*, Abraham with *chesed*, Isaac with *gevurah*. Without *tiferet*, *netzach* and *hod* would tend toward imbalance, so *tiferet* is critical for the proper regulation of *netzach* and *hod*, through which prophecy reaches its most concrete and useful form, as can be seen in Joseph (whose prophecy is found in the interpretation of dreams).

On the Fourth day, the sun and the moon and the stars were created. Light was too infinite and sublime to be of use to the finite worlds; thus, on the Fourth day, a finite, usable form of light was apportioned. On the Fifth day birds and sea-creatures were created, the first recipients of G-d's benevolence and the first created beings able to fulfill the commandment *pru u'rvu*, "be fruitful and multiply".

According to Kabbala, the powers of prophecy and divine inspiration derive from the *sefirot* of *netzach* and *hod* — for they actually receive the effusion of G-dly light.

[https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article\\_cdo/aid/380802/jewish/Netzach-Hod-Yesod.htm](https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/380802/jewish/Netzach-Hod-Yesod.htm)

R'Anava: *Netzach* represents ambition, the power to achieve one's ambitions. *Hod* is related to admitting one's limitations and failures. We start with the right first.

## Transcript (not exact)

7 – Mikeitz-Vayigash & Joshua 5  
The Turning Point

### Review:

Hi everyone, and thanks for joining in on this part of the weekly discussion where our focus is on the spiritual seasons of the year and how they relate to the weekly Torah portion. This week we'll be briefly looking at portion Mikeitz before turning to Vayigash and spending much of our time there.

By way of review, we've been establishing that the second half of the year starting in the 7<sup>th</sup> month is a time for maturing in the Lord. The fall is the time in the year when the young girl who was rescued from Egypt in the spring reaches a point of maturity to where she grows into being the Bride of the King of the Universe. During this fall part of the yearly salvation pattern, we have to release the old life and learn a new identity within our marriage to God. We learn to step up and offer Him not only consistent keeping of the Torah commandments but also expressions of love for our Groom that go beyond what He has commanded. We see examples of this "going beyond the commandment" with the holidays of Hanukkah and Purim, two celebrations added to the calendar by the bride.

In recent teachings, we've talked about the central role that the New Covenant plays in this season. The root of the New Covenant is Torah written in the gut and heart. The way God empowers us to walk out the Torah consistently is by helping us to get excited about the Torah and become passionate about the Torah, engaging our emotions for it. Part of this involves Him opening it up for us so that we can see Him in the hidden places there. So, the New Covenant is critical in engaging our passion for Torah and empowering us to walk by it.

Last week, we talked about how the month of Kislev brings us – by the end of the month— to a point of rest when the work of salvation shifts from being especially inward to now being more outward in the deep winter. We said that this point of inner completion is associated with our lights starting to shine outwardly – and that shining light is also associated with a new kind of persecution as the darkness is exposed for what it is. This week, we will continue with this idea of the turning point from the completion of an inner work to a more outward emphasis. Portions Mikeitz and Vayigash form a very distinct line in the sand. We will see that the text is pointing us to a small number of verses that are a picture of this climactic moment that marks this shift from inner to outer, from truth to action.

### **Mikeitz**

Let's begin in Mikeitz. The portion starts with Pharaoh having two dreams and Joseph being brought out of prison to interpret them. Joseph is appointed to run the country. During the years of plenty, Joseph stores up vast amounts of seed. During the years of famine, he begins distributing the grain. It's in Mikeitz that Joseph brilliantly sets up his brothers with the great test. As the portion ends, Joseph's plan to frame Benjamin is successful, and he takes Benjamin from the brothers for stealing his goblet. And that's where the portion ends – a real cliffhanger! The tension in the portion builds and builds to this climactic moment and stops just before Judah draws near to speak to Joseph.

Mikeitz brings the season of the fall to a close. The portion is read during Hanukkah, which, itself, crosses over the line from the fall to the winter, crossing from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> month. Nine months is the duration of pregnancy. There is about to be a kind of birth. The name "Mikeitz," itself, means "at the end" and is from the root "to cut off." The portion is drawing a sharp line by cutting the action off at what feels like an unnatural point. It's telling us that everything that happens after this line belongs to a different spiritual season. The inner work is done. The outer work begins.

So, what is the moment? If you blinked, you might have missed it! Let's turn to portion Vayigash now and consider these important verses that the structure of the Torah portions and the physical seasons and the holiday of Hanukkah are all pointing toward. It is the moment when Judah draws near to Joseph and tries to rescue Benjamin from Joseph's hand. In fact, the meaning of the word "Vayigash" is "to draw near." It's all leading us to the coming together of Judah and Joseph and what happens there. There's an important substory in the Torah that has to do with these two brothers in particular, and we need to become sensitive to it. Let's read that important moment of the two coming together, starting in Genesis 44:18:

"Then Judah went up to him and said, 'Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh himself. My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father, or a brother?' And we said to my lord, 'We have a

father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' We said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall not see my face again.' "When we went back to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And when our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food,' we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother goes with us, then we will go down. For we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. One left me, and I said, "Surely he has been torn to pieces," and I have never seen him since. If you take this one also from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in evil to Sheol.' "Now therefore, as soon as I come to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the boy's life, as soon as he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. For your servant became a pledge of safety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father all my life.' Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my lord, and let the boy go back with his brothers. For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the evil that would find my father." Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, "Make everyone go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence." (Genesis 44:18-34; 45:1-3)

The structure of the Torah portions – Mikeitz and Vayigash— and the lights of Hanukkah starting to show on the outside, and the winter solstice forming a line for us – all of it is pointing us to this moment when Judah draws near to Joseph. Let's try to understand what's happening here in the light of the Salvation Pattern. I only have a glimmer of what's going on, I have to say, but I'll put it out there as one perspective among many to build upon as we continue to walk with these portions and this cycle year after year.

First of all, let's note that Joseph and Judah are two names that are associated with being at odds with each other. We see the tension between them in the history of Israel, where the Northern Kingdom comes to be known as "Joseph" or "Ephraim," and the Southern Kingdom comes to be known as "Judah." They end up not getting along very well, which is obvious when they split into two kingdoms.

But even long before this Joseph-Judah split happens in history, there is a kind of tension very early regarding the birthright. We are told in 1 Chronicles that the birthright passes from Reuben to Joseph. Ok, easy enough – Joseph gets the birthright. But hang on. Listen for how Judah somehow gets into the mix. In 1 Chronicles chapter 5 it says:



“...[Reuben] was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph...THOUGH JUDAH became strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph.” (1 Chronicles 5:1-2)

So, here we see what almost looks like a kind of splitting of the birthright – Joseph gets a double portion in that two tribes descend from him, while Judah gets the responsibility of leading the tribes, becoming the tribe from which the kings will come.

Now, God does not intend for two of the tribes to be permanently at odds. These two are connected for good reasons, for salvation reasons. We will see that, in a way, they are almost married to each other. So, let's see if we can dig into that a bit.

In Jewish thinking, Joseph is a tzaddik, a righteous one. In the last teaching, we talked about how Joseph is a kind of point of inner maturity. JOSEPH REPRESENTS THE ACCUMULATION OF THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH in the family up to that point. He has the faith of Abraham, the Torah knowledge of Isaac (who was always digging and re-digging wells), and the upper-lower connectedness that we see in Jacob when he reunites with Esau – the coming back together of spiritual and physical, which is a connection that brings a kind of emotional and even prophetic intelligence. He's got it all, and he's even good looking. He inherits all this from the womb. In the last teaching, we talked about the emergence of Joseph as a point of inner rest and the beginning of a more outward work, and this outward work is necessary for Joseph because for much of his story, he's not in control of his outer world. So, point number one, who is Joseph? Joseph is the tzaddik. Joseph is the one who has everything to pass on because it was all passed on to him. So Joseph has to find a way to give what was passed on to him. [Joseph is in the male position, the giver, “may He add,” and so it is meaningful that Joseph becomes the giver of seed to the known world, and this seed (grain) is gathered up because of his prophetic insight and it is distributed under his oversight – Joseph's work from beginning to end. Judah, on the other hand, is in the female position, the receiver. Judah has trouble giving and has to be tricked by Tamar into doing so. Judah's name ends in the feminine “heh.”] Joseph is the righteous one, a source of great inspiration but also a source of jealousy.

Obviously we can see in Joseph many parallels with the Messiah, Who is THE TZADDIK. Yeshua is the Righteous One for the whole world. Joseph is a shadow of Yeshua. Joseph is the Messiah figure in his generation.

But guess what, the Messiah is not the goal, and Joseph is not the goal. He has to pass something on, something he has been given. The goal is actually found with Judah. The Messiah COMES TO BRING SOMETHING OUT FROM WITHIN HUMANITY so that humanity can transcend to a higher level, like Judah does. In some ways, the Messiah is a midwife, bringing out from within humanity our full potential. The realization of that potential is the goal. And we find that realization in Judah.

And we get a clue that Joseph is not the goal when we look at the meanings of their names. “Joseph” means “may He add,” indicating that we're still waiting for something more, another step. Joseph implies giving, and giving needs a receiver. The receiver is the end point, not the giver. “Yehudah,” “Judah,” means “praise” or “admit.” Admitting is a response after something is REALIZED, when

you've gotten to the end of the thing. When you see that someone else is higher and better and more righteous than you, you admit to that; in other words, you praise. The name "Yehudah" is connected to the word for "hand," "yad," and gives us the picture of hands lifted in praise of Adonai, as if we've come to the end of something in our walk with Adonai, and we've experienced His deliverance, and we are holding our hands up in praise and admitting to God that He is in a superior position and He holds all the power and sway in the universe. This is an end gesture. Yehudah comes at the end, not Yosef. [another point here: Joseph is *second* to the "king" of Egypt, Pharaoh. Joseph is not quite occupying that malchut position, the ultimate position, but he is immediately adjacent to it.]

So, if Judah is the goal, who is Judah? Judah is understood to be the critical point of ACTION within the 12 tribes. Let me say that again: Judah is the key to action in the body of Israel. Judah is where all the spirituality is translated into doing in the real world, which is one reason the Temple is partly in Judah's territory, because the Temple is partly about translating the spiritual into real-world action. Again, Judah is the key to this moment of transition from the inner work to the outer more action-oriented work. Until this week, I didn't know that Judah was seen in this light. But it makes perfect sense that we're reading especially about Judah now because this is exactly what we should be looking for at this point in the year when we are moving from the 9<sup>th</sup> month to the 10<sup>th</sup>, from fall to winter, because with this transition of seasons, God is helping us change our emphasis from the inner work to the outer, action-oriented work.

Here is the goal Joseph is aiming for with all his machinations and testing of the brothers: Joseph brings out of Judah A HUMBLE LOWERING DOWN IN SERVICE, a surrender of his own life in service to others. As it turns out, this lowering down results in God raising him up to the place of leadership among his brothers. So this lowering down is the goal, the lowering down of surrendering one's own life in service to others. In this case, Judah says, "Take me as your slave and let Benjamin go." He's trying to, above all, serve his elderly father by sparing him the loss of Benjamin. Judah is making a great sacrifice, indeed, giving up everything, and for Benjamin of all the brothers? Benjamin, after all, is now taking the place of the despised Joseph, the two sons of Rachel most beloved by their father. Now, though, rather than getting rid of his brother, Judah says, "Take me instead of him." It's a vast transformation.

This kind of surrender is what service to others always is – we lower ourselves down to be someone else's slave, in a way. And what we find is that God raises us up. It's like that in our fellowships, too. I recall Grant saying that one of the guiding principles we've had here at BT is that, when there is a need to appoint another elder, the current elders look around for the men who are already doing the service work within the body because those are the ones who are best suited to being raised up to the position of the head. And that's what we see happen with the tribe of Judah, with God making them the royal tribe, the tribe of Israel's kings.

There's another important point to draw out here. Without Joseph finagling and manipulating to give Judah the chance to make his big decision, Judah is not able to express his essence. Judah's essence is action with the hands that brings praise to God. That's Judah's name. But he isn't really Judah until this moment when he offers to give up everything for the sake of Benjamin and the sake of his father. **YOU DON'T GET THE FULLNESS OF JUDAH WITHOUT THE HELP OF JOSEPH.**

By the same token, Judah's need gives Joseph the chance to be Joseph. Joseph is essentially the idea of giving, "may He add." Joseph's essence is giving, guiding, which is what we see him doing all throughout his life. Judah illicitly from Judah Judah's highest form of giving. Judah's journey requires a kind of guidance that only Joseph can give. So Judah also helps Joseph to be Joseph. So these two are intimately connected. They are designed to complement each other almost like husband and wife.

The haftarah for Vayigash, too, is a beautiful image of the bigger picture of how these two are to work together. Here are the first 3 verses of the haftarah, from Ezekiel 37:

"The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.' And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand." (Ezekiel 37:15-17)

The two sticks of Judah and Joseph are meant to come together in the hand to become one stick.

Let's make one more connection now between this discussion and the calendar. The centrality of this image of the hands raised in praise to God – the essence of Judah – is expressed in the calendar at this time of year in the tradition that the Hallel be read every day of Hanukkah. The Hallel is the recitation of Psalms 113-118, which are psalms of praise. The Hallel is not read in its entirety frequently— only 21 times in the year— and 8 of those 21 are the 8 days of Hanukkah! For observant Jews, this reading of the Hallel is deeply connected to Hanukkah.

Now let's shift our focus more squarely to Yeshua. Again, Joseph is like the Messiah in that Joseph is a tzaddik, a righteous one. The tzaddik serves as a bridge between God and a generation. In this case, Joseph the tzaddik serves as a bridge between God and the brothers; GOD ACTS THROUGH JOSEPH TO RAISE UP JUDAH.

In the same way, God acts through the Messiah on the level of the entire world rather than the level of Joseph's generation. Again, Yeshua is the real Tzaddik Who Joseph is a shadow of. Yeshua helps all of humanity in all generations to reach down inside and bring out something from within which is a truer expression of humanity, an expression that is the essence of who we are, our name. This truer expression becomes visible as actions of sacrificial service done in the name of Yeshua that bring glory to God.

How does God act through the Tzaddik, the Messiah, to accomplish this pushing of humanity, this function of midwife? First of all, being both God and man, Yeshua is the connection between God and mankind. With this all-important fact as a foundation, God acts through the Messiah by sending Him to us twice, the first time to elevate us and inspire us to walk in a transcendent way, and the second time to model for us how to live at that higher level. Let's talk about each of these comings quickly.

Yeshua's first coming is like Joseph. At His first coming, He was called "Yeshua ben Yosef," since Yosef was his adoptive father's name. His first coming is as "Moshiach ben Yosef." At Yeshua's first coming,

He opens the pathway to forgiveness through His blood and He also models for us the righteous, transcendent life. Seeing His righteous life, we also aspire to live a righteous life. And when we understand that He gave up His life for us, a flame is added in the belly of humanity to reach up for this righteous, transcendent life. So, we're not only inspired by His example, but His death empowers us by touching our emotions.

Yeshua's second coming is more like Judah. He will be known at His second coming as "Yeshua ben David," Messiah Son of David, and King David is from the tribe of Judah. At Yeshua's second coming, He will show us how to live as a king, how to serve consistently, day in and day out, how to rule ourselves and manage the affairs of the world on a transcendent level.

So, Yeshua is both the ultimate Joseph and the ultimate Judah. Yeshua is the epitome of every step of salvation because He IS salvation.

Let's ask the practical question now, what does this deeper understanding of the text mean to us in practical terms? First, this deeper understanding helps us to see especially Yeshua from a different angle, not to mention Joseph, who is a shadow of Yeshua. The understandings in this teaching also help us to understand the tension we see playing out throughout the Bible between Joseph and Judah. Second, we can take from this study the encouragement to focus on praise during Hanukkah. The fact that we're reading about Judah during Hanukkah and that the story for the whole year is building toward a critical work in Judah – and Judah's name means "praise" – is a kind of biblical support for the Jewish tradition of reading the Hallel at Hanukkah. At this special holiday, lower yourself down and acknowledge God's higher place and that He works everything for good in our lives, and it's wonderfully miraculous beyond our understanding. Third, understand that we're crossing a hard line in the calendar and we need to adjust our focus and our sensitivities to how God is working now. Emulate Judah. Now is the time to rededicate your life as an outward-looking life of service to God and others. Trust that God is going to be making it easier for us to put spiritual growth into action now. Be looking for ways to do that in this season, and be in prayer about it. That is, STEP INTO the energy of the new season. Get in tune with it. It is what God is specially providing for a new season of growth.

Lastly today, let's turn to Joshua 5. I have a point to make here, but I'm not going to try to directly connect this Torah portion conversation about Joseph and Judah to this chapter of Joshua except to say one thing: God helps us in our walk with Him by continually drawing definite lines in the sand – some obvious, like the mo'edim, some less obvious, like the line between Mikeitz and Vayigash. Those lines are mile markers. They help us to gauge our journey. They help to make our journey more solid, and that's important because we're prone to forget or even to doubt what happened to us in the past, how God brought us from one stage to the next. We need these mile markers, and God has designed them into the Salvation Pattern.

Here in Joshua 5, we see one such mile stone for a certain generation – the second circumcision. This second circumcision seems a bit confusing at first, but it makes a lot of sense if we understand it through the lens of the Salvation Pattern. On the surface, it looks like a curious lapse in the COVENANT of circumcision. Joshua 5 describes this seeming lapse:

"At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time." So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. Though all the people who came out had been circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised." (Joshua 5:2-5)

Why would it be the case that there was no circumcision during the 40 years in the wilderness? It makes sense when we understand this: THESE TWO GENERATIONS – THE GENERATION THAT CAME OUT OF EGYPT AND THE GENERATION THAT ENTERS THE LAND – ARE SHOWING US TWO HALVES OF A SINGLE PICTURE OF SALVATION, two complimentary halves of the Salvation Pattern. Within the pattern, there are two circumcisions. The first is done by the father at birth – this is the circumcision that happened for those who came out of Egypt when Israel was a newborn and God was leading them as a strong Father. In the calendar, this first circumcision is associated with the month of Nissan. In the same way that circumcision has a part in the beginning of the journey, it also has a part at the beginning of the second half of the journey. This second circumcision is the circumcision of the heart, when God is acting more in the capacity of Groom rather than Father. This second circumcision is associated with Yeshua's leadership, and here in Joshua we're seeing the text imply that Joshua, himself, does the circumcision. The text literally reads, "So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel..." In the calendar, this second circumcision is associated with the month of Tishrei and particularly the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Sukkot.

In the Salvation Pattern, circumcision is not associated with Shavuot and the 3 Weeks and high summer. That portion of the cycle is also associated with the wilderness journey, the 40 years of dying in the parched wilderness. Since that part of the salvation pattern doesn't include circumcision, there's no circumcision in the wilderness. Again, God is using these two generations of Israel to show one complete picture of salvation, and in that picture, there are only two distinct points of circumcision with the wilderness journey wedged in between.

Well, we'll end it there today. Thank you so much for listening. I will include an outline link below the video. Let's focus now on how we can be turning truth into action. That's what this season ahead is all about. Thanks again for listening, and may He make us into the people He wants us to be. Shalom.

