

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter

And Ya'akov lived in the land of Mitzrayim...(Vayechi, Gen 47:28)

How Will You Live?

In this week's *Parashah* we conclude the book of *Bereshit*—literally, *In the beginning*. Genesis has 50 chapters—4 major events and 4 major people—12 *parashot* in all. Do you remember the 4 events? Mainly, creation, fall, flood, nations. And the 4 people? They are *Abraham, Yitzchak, Ya'akov* and *Yosef*.

In last week's *Parashah* *Yosef* is almost 40 years old, and *Ya'akov* is 130, and *Yitzchak* is dead. We are told that our father *Ya'akov* lived in *Mitzrayim* for 17 more years. At the age of 147 then “*the time drew nigh that Israel must die...*” (see Gen. 47:29) That is, the conclusion of the time of our fathers (*zman avoteinu*) is at hand. When it was all said and done, the text states: *Our father Ya'akov lived...* This was not in his father's house, nor in his father-in-law's land, nor in the promised land — it was *Goshen in Mitzrayim*. *Sh'lomo HaMelech* said at the end of *Kohelet*: “¹³*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.* ¹⁴*For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*” (Ecc. 12:13-14) At the end of the *Beginnings*, when times are tough, in the company of family, even in a strange land, after G-d's promises, when he is tired, when he is old, after so many have died, in sickness and in health, *Ya'akov* lived. So should we live—in the fear and admonition of G-d.

As the record of the life of *Yosef* also concludes, we see that although *Yosef* spent a lot of time crying (Gen. 43:30; 45:1-2, 14-15; 46:29; 50:1,17), yet when it was all said and done, he persevered to the end: “*But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but G-d meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*” (Gen. 50:20, KJV)

What an amazing testimony before his brothers who did him much wrong and who are responsible for years in prison and untold hardship! I want us to get this phrase into our spirit: “**Ye thought evil against me; but G-d meant it unto good.**” Let us repeat this until we can quote it the same way we quote Rev. 12:11 in our congregation: “*Ye thought evil against me, but G-d meant it unto good.*” *Yosef* cried in Gen. 50:17 when the brothers brought back the memories of the past: “*So they sent a message to Yosef which said, "Your father gave this order before he died. 'Say to Yosef, "I beg you now, please forgive your brothers' crime and wickedness in doing you harm."*” *So now, we beg of you, forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.*” *Yosef wept when they spoke to him...*” In our congregation, many can say this same statement from their heart, having themselves experienced extenuating and trying circumstances. You see, Satan meant it for evil, but G-d meant it unto good for us. Consider:

*“And without **trusting**, it is impossible to be **well pleasing to G-d**, because whoever approaches him must trust that he does exist and that he becomes a Rewarder to those who seek him out.” (Heb. 11:6)*

*“**Trusting** is being confident of what we hope for, convinced about things we do not see.” (Heb. 11:1)*

“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.” (Hab 2:4)

“Furthermore, we know that G-d causes everything to work together for the good of those who love G-d and are called in accordance with his purpose.” (Ro. 8:28)

*“Looking unto the Initiator and Completer of that **trusting**, *Yeshua*—who, in exchange for obtaining the joy set before him, endured execution on a stake as a criminal, scorning the shame, and has sat down **at the right hand of the throne of G-d.**” (Heb. 12:2)*

Life is tough. Many people, not just believers, experience hardship, difficulties, suffering. But we have *Mesiah Yeshua*. We should be able to live—as our father *Ya'akov* lived, even in the not so perfect circumstances.

Enduring Power

Scripture uses the word “*endured*” in Heb. 12:2 referring to *Messiah Yeshua*’s life. I know that this same character quality — endurance — is important to all of us in our walk. *Yeshua* said in Matt 24:13 “*But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*” Scripture uses the same Greek word in both references, mainly, Strongs’ 5278 *hupomeno* (hoop-om-en'-o); to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; figuratively, to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere: in the KJV-- abide, endure, (take) patient (-ly), suffer, tarry behind. Do you think *Yeshua* meant it? Maybe you feel that He was just speaking to His *Talmidim* and that it only applies to them. Really? What does this have to do with *Parashat Vayechi*? Everything! What does this have to do with our lives? Everything! What is endurance? A good operational definition for endurance is: “*the inward strength to withstand stress to accomplish the best.*”

“So then, you, my son, be empowered by the grace that comes from the Messiah Yeshua. And the things you heard from me, which were supported by many witnesses, these things commit to faithful people, such as will be competent to teach others also. Accept your share in suffering disgrace (endure hardness, KJV) as a good soldier of the Messiah Yeshua.” (2 Tim. 2:1-3)

The Greek word used in 2 Tim. 2:1-3 is Strong’s 2553 *kakopatheo* (kak-op-ath-eh'-o); to undergo hardship: in the KJV-- be afflicted, endure afflictions (hardness), suffer trouble. Is it possible that *Messiah Yeshua* wants us to *endure afflictions* and suffer trouble so that *Adonai* may bring forth His ultimate purposes in our lives for good like it was in *Yosef*’s life?

Yosef’s (יֹסֵף) name means— “*and He added.*” *Rachel* eagerly anticipated a second son; hence she named her first one a word which indicated, “*May the Lord add on for me another son.*” In other words, the name *Yosef* refers to double fruitfulness. As we read in this week’s *Parashah*, our father *Ya’akov* adopted the two sons of *Yosef* (see *Bereshit* 48) and gave *Yosef* an additional portion above his brothers. In Gen. 48:21-22 we read: “*And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.*” By accepting suffering and disgrace and enduring afflictions *Yosef*’s destiny is fulfilled with his sons: though born from a Gentile mother, though raised in *Mitzrayim* as Egyptians, the sons will become two tribes that inherit property in the promised land. At the end of *Bereshit*, *Yosef* is doubly fruitful in his seed!

Another operational definition of endurance is “*setting aside privileges which weaken me or others.*” True love will always show deference, which is limiting our freedom in order not to offend the convictions of other brethren. The alternative to deference is defending our right to engage in questionable activity. This defense usually involves trying to prove that the activity is acceptable, but the real question does not ultimately concern the activity at all—it concerns the heart.

Another secular new year has begun. What is our resolution for this new year? Do you KNOW THAT WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT THAT G-D HAS A SPECIAL PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE? YOU HAVE A PURPOSE IN GOD! WE MUST ENDURE UNTIL THE END AND WE WILL ACCOMPLISH YOUR DESTINY! Set out, against all odds, to fulfill His calling upon your lives. Let us build up fathers (parents) and their children and eliminate the potential curse upon “our corner of the world.” Let us strive to obey first and understand later whatsoever the L-rd has asked us to do. Let us resolve to seek Him and meditate in His Torah daily so whatsoever we do shall prosper. Let us finish our course and not become weary in well doing. Let us “*press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of G-d in Messiah Yeshua.*” *Bereshit* is over! So let us *chazak, chazak, venitchasek*—*be strong, be strong and be strengthened.* Let us purpose to be all He wants us to be, individually, and as His congregation. May He be pleased with us in 2009!