

# VAYIGASH - GENESIS

*-And He Drew Near-*

Dan Stolebarger - Holy Ground Explorations

Chapter 44:18-47:27

# INTRODUCTION



PARASHAT VAYIGASH - 'And He Drew Near'

He commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in his sack's mouth. <sup>2</sup> Put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, with his grain money." He did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

**Joseph's master stroke:** He tested their concern for Benjamin in order to get them to recognize their evil. (If they had no compassion for this second son of Rachel, then they would have no part in the fulfillment of the promises. God could start over again and make Joseph into a great nation if the others proved unworthy.)

<sup>11</sup> Then they hurried, and each man took his sack down to the ground, and each man opened his sack. <sup>12</sup> He searched, beginning with the oldest, and ending at the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack. <sup>13</sup> **Then they tore their clothes**, and each man loaded his donkey, and returned to the city.

<sup>14</sup> **Judah and his brothers** came to Joseph's house, and he was still there. They fell on the ground before him. <sup>15</sup> Joseph said to them, "What deed is this that you have done? Don't you know that such a man as I can indeed do divination?"

<sup>17</sup> He said, "Far be it from me that I should do so. The man in whose hand the cup is found, he will be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father."

<sup>18</sup> **Then Judah came near to him**, and said, "Oh, my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and don't let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even as Pharaoh.

<sup>33</sup> **Now therefore, please let your servant stay instead of the boy**, my lord's slave; and let the boy go up with his brothers. <sup>34</sup> For how will I go up to my father, if the boy isn't with me?—lest I see the evil that will come on my father."

All the conditions were present for another betrayal when Benjamin was accused.

- As Benjamin stood before Joseph accused of the theft of a chalice, **Judah “drew near” (vayigash)** and offered himself in exchange for his brother, pleading with Joseph to spare his father the loss of yet another son. Moreover, since he had personally pledged for his safe return from Egypt, Judah asked to remain in Egypt as Joseph’s slave in Benjamin’s place. **At this point Joseph now knew that the his brothers had truly changed.**
- REMEMBER ... **It was Judah’s idea to sell Joseph into slavery, but later he was willing to become a slave in exchange for Benjamin’s freedom.**

## **JACOB and JOSEPH COMPARED**

Both begin with the father being deceived and the brothers being treacherous (Gen 27; 37); both include a 20-year period of separation, with the younger brother in a foreign land. Both conclude with a reunion and reconciliation of the brothers (33:1-15; 45:1-15).

Then Joseph couldn't control himself before all those who stood before him, and he called out, "Cause everyone to go out from me!" No one else stood with him, while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup> He wept aloud. The Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. <sup>3</sup> Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Does my father still live?"

His brothers couldn't answer him; for they were terrified at his presence. <sup>4</sup> Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please."

They came near. He said, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Now don't be grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

Joseph cleared the room of everyone but the brothers and said to them, "You told me that Benjamin's brother is dead. Is that certain or not?" "Yes, your excellency, we are sure. He is dead." Joseph then spoke in Hebrew: "How can you lie like that? You sold him as a slave. How can you know that he is dead? Indeed, I purchased him as a slave and can call him right now. With that, Joseph began calling out, "Joseph! Joseph! Joseph son of Jacob, come here immediately! Come and speak to your brothers." The brothers eyes widened as they looked around to see if Joseph was in fact coming. When Joseph saw this, he then said, "What are you looking for? I am Joseph – is my father alive?"

They were so startled they were dumbstruck and could not answer him a word, and they began to grovel at his feet.

A midrash says that the brothers literally died and God had to resurrect them to stand before Joseph.

**24** So he sent his brothers away, and they departed. He said to them, "See that you don't quarrel on the way."

He knew them - they had so much guilt to still deal with that it would be within their nature to begin pointing the finger at one another!

**25** They went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan, to Jacob their father. **26** They told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." His heart fainted, for he didn't believe them. **27** They told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them. When he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived. **28** Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Israel traveled with all that he had, and came to **Beersheba**, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father, Isaac. <sup>2</sup> God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!"

He said, "Here I am."

<sup>3</sup> He said, "I am God, the God of your father. **Don't be afraid to go down into Egypt**, for there I will make of you a great nation. <sup>4</sup> I will go down with you into Egypt. I will also surely bring you up again. Joseph's hand will close your eyes."

**BEERSHEBA** - Various theophanies occurred there, first to Hagar (21:17), then to Isaac (26:24), and now to Jacob (46:2). Apparently Jacob went there to ask God for permission to leave the Promised Land (the midrash states Jacob also went there to cut down some cedar trees that later would be used for the Tabernacle).

Remember God prohibited Isaac from going down to Egypt

**28 Jacob sent Judah before him to Joseph**, to show the way before him to Goshen, and they came into the land of Goshen. **29** Joseph prepared his chariot, and went up to meet Israel, his father, in Goshen. He presented himself to him, and fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. **30** Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive."

They could settle in the land of Goshen, which was about 40 miles from the site of present-day Cairo. Joseph had good reason to choose Goshen - He wanted to keep them segregated from the mainstream of Egypt's idolatrous, immoral life.

Finally, after 22 years Joseph and Jacob were reunited. The last time Joseph saw his father was when Joseph was 17 (37:2).

According to midrash, all of the high officials of Egypt accompanied Joseph, and Pharaoh gave Joseph his own crown to wear as a symbol of his regal power and authority. When Jacob first saw this grand parade of people surrounding Joseph, Jacob prostrated himself before his son, in fulfillment of the earlier prophetic dreams.

- 5 Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you.  
6 The land of Egypt is before you. Make your father and your brothers dwell in the best of the land. Let them dwell in the land of Goshen. If you know any able men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock."  
7 Joseph brought in Jacob, his father, and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. 8 Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?"  
9 Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are one hundred thirty years. The days of the years of my life have been few and evil. They have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." 10 Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.  
11 Joseph placed his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession

Jacob said, "My life of wandering has lasted 130 years. Those years have been few and bitter. All my life I lived without rest. When I was young, I had to flee my brother Esau. For many years I lived in hiding in a strange land. Now that I am old, I have again been uprooted to come here."

According to Jewish tradition, what blessing did Jacob give Pharaoh? The sages teach that Jacob's blessing was that the famine should end and the Nile River would rise and irrigate the land once again.

**19** Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate."

**25** So they said, "You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves."

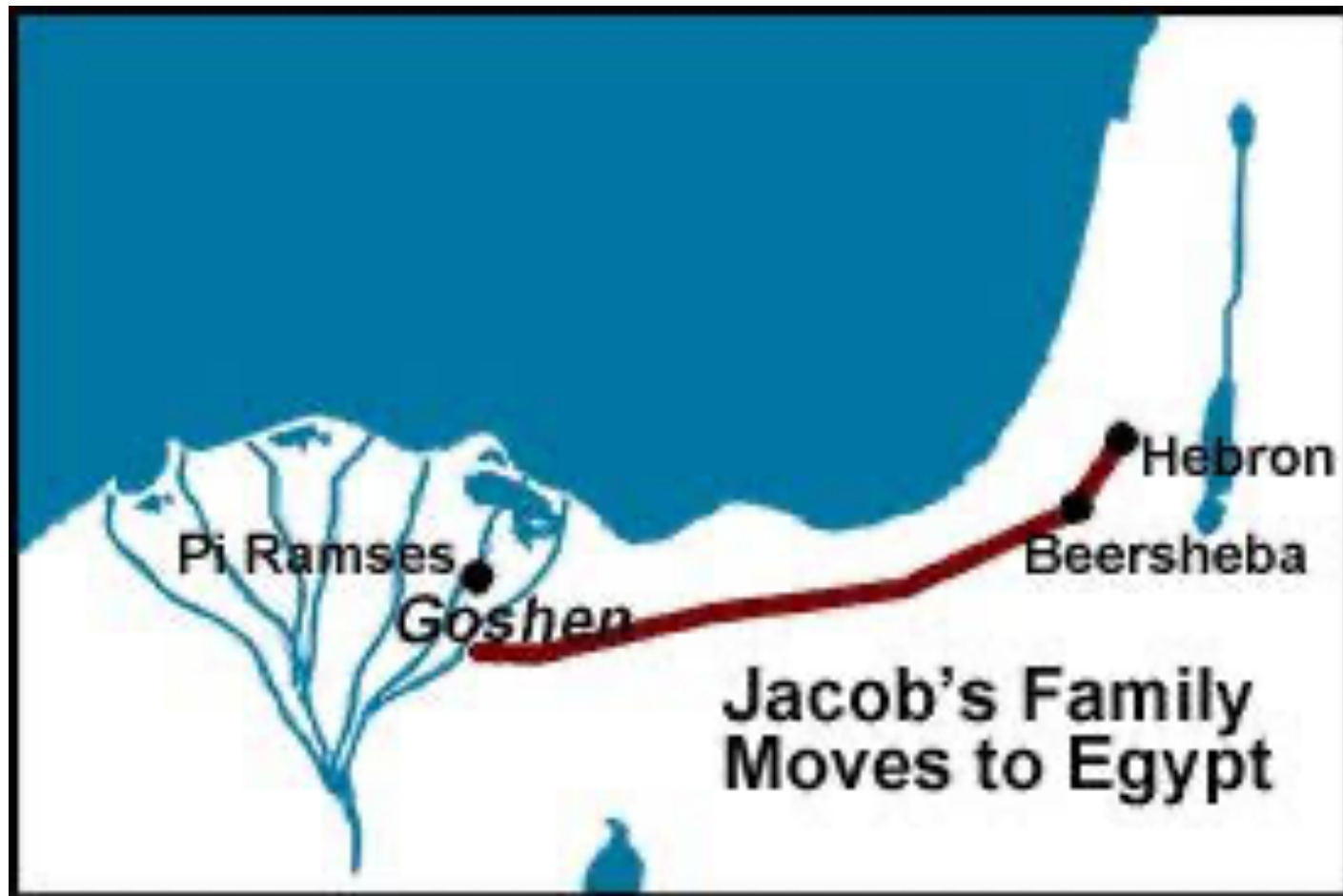
Troy - This sounds like what we are currently going through in America. One step at a time our government wants to convince us that we need them to provide for us and we will give up a little of our own freedom or treasure until we have nothing left of our own and we are nothing more than slaves that worship the state rather than our Lord. Be cautious of what you get when you have your hand out and what is required of you in exchange. Reach out to the Lord and give freely from what you have been blessed with.

# LESSONS

- 1) God's plans and purposes are far greater than our own!
- 2) God provides and blesses those who persevere to follow Him.
- 3) Suffering to God's people is not always bad! God can use the most painful time of our life for His good.
- 4) There is value in self-control living in the do-whatever-you-want culture.
- 5) God honors patience and perseverance in time of troubles.
- 6) Strive for honesty and strong work ethics. They are sadly missing these days.
- 7) There is something to be said about fear of Lord and faithfulness to Him.

Even though your life might suck right now, do you have the courage to trust God despite your current circumstances?

**Heartstone Journey - Tim Young**



The word VaYigash describes an act of deliberate and thoughtful entry into an ambiguous situation. It is an act that is driven by faith and trust. Yet at times it is simply an act that is initiated because it is the right and truthful thing to do without taking into account the implications. G-d created a universe wherein choice determines the path through which destiny travels. In fact Jewish theology has declared that one of the greatest gifts G-d has given mankind is the power to choose.

This verse reiterates that although the choice is free, every decision comes with implications. It is that determined decision to make the right choice that changes history. Even if that right choice is clouded with trepidation and fears about outcome. The right choice remains the right choice and one must step forward to seize it in order to put things right. Hashem's plan necessitates people having the courage to step forward. Hashem waits for people to gather the strength "to approach" and step into the path of destiny.

This was the courage that was demanded of Esther in Persian city of Shushan as it was with the Maccabees in Modiin. It was critical as well for Nachshon Ben Aminadav at the shores of the Red sea. This was also the spiritual underpinnings of Ben Gurion's decision to declare the state of Israel as it was the same inner strength to decide to liberate the old city of Jerusalem in 1967. It continues to be the courage of all those who venture to reclaim and rebuild Hashem's land. We consistently need to have the courage of "a lion" exemplified by the VaYigash of Judah before pharaoh. It is that courage that forced Balaam to bless the people of Israel, though that was not his intention, with the following words. ; "Behold, the people rise like a lioness; they rouse themselves like a lion," (Numbers 23;24). They will step and step in when they know that it is the right thing to do. **MOSHE SHORASHIM**

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