

TORAH PORTION "MIKETZ", DECEMBER 25-31, 2005

"THE TIME PERIOD JUST BEFORE THE RESURRECTION"¹

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I hope you are all enjoying the LIGHT of God in this "Feast of Lights"/Feast of *Chanukah* or "Dedication" (See John 10:22). Most of us are very familiar with the story of *Chanukah*, a feast commemorating the events that took place here in the Promised Land about 2170 years ago. The Jews, led by Judah and his brothers (known as the *Maccabim*), rebelled against the Greek Assyrians. These pagan Assyrians tried their best to prevent Jews from worshiping their God, the only true God. The most terrible thing they managed to do was placing Zeus' statue at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, thus, desecrating it!

It took the *Maccabim* about three years to win the war against the Greeks. It was approximately towards *the end of the second year* of the revolt that their efforts started to bear fruit. And it was on the *third year* of the revolt that the *Maccabim* succeeded in pushing the Greeks out of Jerusalem, and rededicated their Holy Temple.

This week's Torah portion is named after the Hebrew word, *Miketz*. In English it is translated as, "At the end of." At the end, of what? At *the end of the two years*, during which Joseph was in a dungeon (Gen. 39:20, 41:14). In other words, Joseph's "resurrection" out of the dungeon took place at the beginning of the *third year*!

Some of you, who are familiar with my Torah teachings, know how I like to show the many parallels between Joseph's life and Yeshua's life. Joseph's life was a prototype/foreshadow of Yeshua, especially in His First Coming. Here is a short list of just some of the similarities:

- Joseph was Jacob's first born (out of his beloved wife – Rachel). Yeshua is God's First Born!
- Jacob sent his son to see "if it is well" (in Hebrew, "*Shalom*"/Peace), with his brothers—The children of Israel (Gen. 37:13-14). Yeshua was sent by His heavenly Father, The God of Israel, to bring the only true peace to His chosen ones—The children of Israel!
- Joseph was rejected by his own brothers. Yeshua was (and still is) rejected by His own brothers!
- Joseph was sold to gentiles who took him down to Egypt. Yeshua was "sold" to the Gentiles who "brought Him" down to Egypt/the World. (Egypt is a picture of "the World" where He is still venerated and worshiped).
- Joseph was thrown down to the pit, and later on down to the dungeon. Yeshua was (probably) kept in Caiaphas' dungeon and later on was crucified and put in the grave.
- Joseph was resurrected *at the end of two years*, into his glorious position, as second to Pharaoh, and was given all authority in Egypt. Yeshua was resurrected on the *third day*, to go back into His Glorious heavenly position, as the "second to God" (seated at His right hand), and was given *all* authority both in the world/Egypt and in heaven!

This week's portion describes the beginning of a wonderful process that eventually led to the great and glorious reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers.

My beloved, don't we all love 'happy endings'? Don't we all love to commemorate the *Maccabims'* victory over these pagans? Don't we all love the story where Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and they are all reunited again? Don't we all love to remember Yeshua's glorious resurrection from the dead? Don't we all eagerly anticipate the moment when Yeshua will reveal Himself to His own? Don't we all await the glorious reunification between Israel and her Messiah

Yes! Of course we do! But let us not forget that it was only "*at the end of two years*" (in the Dungeon), that Joseph was brought up and stood before Pharaoh. It took another seven or eight more years until he saw his brothers for the first time (See Gen. 45:6). Some Jewish sages calculated and concluded that *at least 20 long years* passed from the tragic event where Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites (i.e. came down to Egypt), and the time he was finally reconciled to his brothers!^[1]

What do you think had happened in the time period just before Joseph was "resurrected"? What happened in these two years in the Dungeon? What happened during the twenty years he was in Egypt? What did Joseph face during these long years, before he was able to possess all the power in Egypt and reunite with his own flesh and blood (his family)?

What did the *Maccabim* face in the two to three year period just before they could win and rededicate the Holy Temple in Jerusalem? What did Yeshua face just before He was resurrected into His Glorious heavenly position? When speaking about Yeshua's resurrection, the answer is very simple. Just before the resurrection, Yeshua was—in the grave! He was dead! Actually, before any resurrection can take place, there must be death! This is the very same truth concerning the other above examples. Joseph, as well as the *Maccabim*, first needed to pass through "a period of dying", mostly to *self*.

Yes, my beloved, if we are to be true disciples of Yeshua, we need to walk in His footsteps! Dying to self is quite a painful process! It is *not* a pleasant experience! It involves being beaten up (by life's circumstances for example), being mocked, and at times even suffering through deep depressions!

Dying to self usually takes some time! It is *not* a brief process! We, who live in the western world, are so used to quick fixes (kind of a McDonald's/fast food pace). We are so impatient at times, we like for everything to move fast, quickly and efficiently. We want to see the best results in as short a time as possible.

Unfortunately, my beloved, the Bible shows us quite a different picture when it deals with the subject of dying to self, which require patience! Our forefathers needed to wait for quite a long time until they heard the voice of the Lord. *They did not experience Him on a daily basis!* Here are just a few examples:

^[1] Looking again at the great parallels between Joseph and Yeshua, it is worth noticing: *Two millenniums* have passed since the First Coming of Yeshua! We are now at the beginning of the *third millennium!* Moreover, the last chapters of the book of Genesis are dealing with Joseph's life while down in Egypt (with the exception of chapter 38). It seems like Jacob and his children (the children of Israel) are kind of "put aside" for a while, (*about twenty years*), and only then are they brought back into the picture. The same has happened with the Jews since Yeshua's First Coming. The Jews were kind of "put aside" for a while, (*about two thousand years*), and "*at the end of*" *almost twenty centuries*, they were "resurrected" and put back into the picture (the establishment of Modern Israel)!

- Abraham: How long did it take God to fulfill His promises to him concerning a child?
- Isaac: How long did it take until He answered his and his wife's intercessions for a child?
- Jacob: How long did he need to suffer before he came back to his father's house?
- Moses: How long did it take until Moses was raised into his position as Israel's redeemer?

Getting back to Joseph, try to think for a moment. What passed through Joseph's mind while in Egypt for these long years? What kind of feelings did he experience?

Where are we today? Historically, we are already in the third millennium since Yeshua's First Coming. Many of us feel we are "at the break of something big", something glorious. Many of us acknowledge the times we are living in as the very end time and thus, many of us are sure Yeshua will come in our own life time!

As mentioned above, this week's Torah portion describes the "beginning of the end" concerning Joseph's trials. After twenty years of separation from his own family, his own flesh and blood, Joseph is going to show his own who he really is. Yes. Joseph passed the test. The very long time of testing which God allowed him to go through.

I would like to end this commentary with the following questions:

1. Do we have the kind of patience that Joseph, Yeshua, the *Maccabim*, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had?
2. Do we have the patience that Yeshua's disciples had? Are we willing to hang on to the very end?
3. Are we ready to pay the price (death to self), so that God can resurrect us into our glorious position in His Son, our Messiah Redeemer?

I admit, from my own life experience, that I fall short, especially since the move back here, to the Promised Land!

My only prayer is: Oh Father, our Father in heaven, may You grant us Your mercies these last days; when everything around us seems to go so crazy and out of control. We need Your mercies and comfort so that we can continue running the race which You have placed before us, and which Your only begotten Son—Yeshua, Israel's Messiah, has already run before us; run and won!!!

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