1. How is Ezekiel 37:24-25 (“***David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd***; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; ***and My servant David shall be their prince forever.***) thematically connected to the Torah portion?[[1]](#endnote-1)
2. How is Ezekiel 37:25 (***Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant***, where your fathers dwelt; ***and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children,*** forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?[[2]](#endnote-2)
3. How is Ezekiel 37:26 (Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; ***I will establish them and multiply them***, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?[[3]](#endnote-3)

In order to find more connections between our two texts, we need to do two things, 1) delve deeper into the events, situations and circumstances of the Torah portion and 2) gain a better understanding of the historical reason for Ezekiel’s prophetic message in Ezekiel 37. Ezekiel is addressing the situation of the divided kingdom of Israel. After Solomon’s reign, the nation of Israel was divided into two warring kingdoms, the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah (I Kings 12). This was a breach in the Davidic Kingdom that was ordained by Adonai (I Kings 12:21-24) and was to remain so until the advent of the Messianic age (Ezekiel 37). I will ask you some questions about the Torah portion so that we can reach conclusions that will help you understand the remaining connections to the Haftarah reading.

1. Who seem to be the two central characters of our story (especially towards the beginning of the Torah portion) and why?[[4]](#endnote-4)
2. How is Ezekiel 37:16-17 (“As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘***For Judah and for the children of Israel***, his companions.’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘***For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim***, and *for* all the house of Israel, his companions.’ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.)thematically connected to the Torah portion?[[5]](#endnote-5)
3. How is Ezekiel 37:17 (Then ***join them one to another for yourself into one stick***, and they will become one in your hand.) thematically connected to the Torah portion?[[6]](#endnote-6)
4. How is Ezekiel 37:18 (“And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘***Will you not show us what you mean by these***?’”) thematically connected to the Torah portion?[[7]](#endnote-7)
5. How is Ezekiel 37:21-22 (“Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; ***and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.***) thematically connected to the Torah portion?[[8]](#endnote-8)

1. The Haftarah passage speaks of a Messianic figure (David) who will rule over the children of Israel. The Torah portion establishes that Joseph is such a figure, a descendant of Jacob in a leadership position. Genesis 45:9 – Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph: “***God has made me lord of all Egypt***; come down to me, do not tarry.”’ Secondly, the Messianic figure is seen as one who will shepherd (or care for) the descendants of Jacob. A) Genesis 45:10-11 – You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. ***There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have***, come to poverty; for *there are* still five years of famine.”’ B) Genesis 47:11-12 – And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.  ***Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father’s household with bread***, according to the number in their families. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Genesis 45:10 – ***You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children***, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. Genesis 45:18 – Bring your father and your households and come to me; ***I will give you the best of the land of Egypt***, and you will eat the fat of the land. Although the Haftarah looks prophetically to the time when Israel will dwell securely in the land of Israel, the Torah portion is true to the theme of a special land set aside for the children of Israel. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Genesis 47:27 – So ***Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt***, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there ***and grew and multiplied exceedingly***. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Joseph is a major character because he has been responsible for orchestrating all the major events in the last two Torah portions. Furthermore, he is the central character who reveals himself to his brothers and steps forward to redeem them from the dangers of the famine. Judah also is a major figure because he has emerged as the primary spokesman for the family. He is the one brother who has been willing to lay down his life for the sake of his father and Benjamin, his brother. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. ***Judah*** and ***Joseph*** are the two primary characters in the Torah text just as the ***House of Judah*** and the ***House of Israel (Joseph/Ephraim)*** are the two primary characters in the Haftarah text. As I said during the introduction, the primary reason why thematic connections exist is to show equivalence between people, places, things and events. Thus, the sages who chose the Haftarah readings clearly saw a connection between Judah representing the House of Judah and Joseph representing the House of Israel. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Genesis 45:4 – And Joseph said to his brothers, “***Please come near to me***.” So they came near. Then he said: “I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.” Genesis 45:10-11 – You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, ***and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children***, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. ***There I will provide for you***, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for *there are* still five years of famine. The primary connections are two-fold. First, the Torah portion emphasizes the concept of drawing the brothers near to one another. This corresponds to the two sticks being joined together, although they were once separate. Secondly, the joining of the two sticks is symbolic of the reconciliation of the warring kingdoms of Judah and Israel. This is paralleled in the Torah portion as Genesis 45 recounts the reconciliation of Joseph with his brothers. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Genesis 45:4-8 – And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. The connection is that just as Ezekiel is told to explain the meaning of the coming together of the two sticks, so likewise, Joseph explained to the brothers the reason 1) why they were separated and 2) why they were being reunited at that particular time. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. The focus of the Haftarah verses is the reunification of the two kingdoms, Judah and Joseph/Ephraim. This theme is connected to the reunification of Jacob’s household. The climax of this story has been how Judah (who represents all the other brothers as well as himself) repents for his treatment of Joseph and their father. This repentance paves the way for forgiveness, reconciliation and reunification. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)