

Triennial Torah Study – 5th Year 12/04/2014

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We continue this weekend with our regular Triennial Torah reading which can be found at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

Gen 33	1 Sam 22-24	Ps 69	Mark 11 – 12:17
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Reconciliation (Genesis 33)

In the morning, Jacob departed, and after a short journey he caught sight of Esau advancing with 400 men. Jacob had ordered his family, dividing the children among their mothers, placing the concubines first, followed by Leah, with Rachel trailing the caravan. This was done to provide maximum protection for Rachel (possibly pregnant with Benjamin) and Joseph. For if Esau attacked, perhaps he would have had enough of slaughter by the time he reached Rachel. Jacob positioned himself at the head of the caravan, alternately walking and prostrating himself as he approached Esau, thereby showing the highest regard and deepest humility.

The meeting with Esau, however, was anything but hostile. Esau was genuinely glad to see Jacob. Twenty years had significantly moderated his feelings and, given the size of the fighting force accompanying him, it appears that Esau had achieved a good deal of personal success—enough, at least, for him to feel sufficiently blessed. Jacob presented gifts and introduced his family, but wisely begged-off accompanying Esau back to Seir, perhaps anticipating that Esau’s mercurial nature would once again change and he would revert to his former embitterment over the evil Jacob had done to him.

After departing from his encounter with Esau, Jacob came to Shechem (verses 18-19). Here he bought a parcel of land and dug a well. This is apparently the same well at which, long afterward, Yeshua met and talked with a Samaritan woman—the place at this much later time being known as Sychar (John 4:5-6), near today’s city of Nablus in the West Bank. Jacob, renamed Israel, also built an altar to God here, which he named El Elohe Israel, meaning “God, the God of Israel” (Genesis 33:20). Jacob’s “conversion process” is well underway at this point. No longer does he look upon God as simply the God of His fathers. Rather, he sees God as his God—seeming to indicate that he has developed a personal relationship with Him.

Murders the Priests of God (1 Samuel 22:6-23; Psalm 52)

Saul has become a coercive, wrathful man full of curses for his son and his soldiers—essentially calling them a bunch of dirty double-crossers (verses 7-8). His paranoia indicates that he is losing his grip on reality. Such paranoia often accompanies demonic influence. His jealous and unreasonable anger toward those in his high command reminds one of the aberrations of Hitler and other corrupt rulers of history.

Doeg the Edomite, seeking to ingratiate himself with Saul, tells the king what he had witnessed—that the high priest Ahimelech had helped David (verses 9; 21:7).

Ahimelech explains that he considered David to be a faithful servant of Saul (verse 14). Nevertheless, Saul orders that Ahimelech be put to death along with all of the priests! It is such a heinous order that, to their credit, Saul's men refuse to carry it out (verse 17). But Doeg is up to the gruesome task. He puts to the sword 85 priests, their wives, children and animals.

It is interesting to consider here that, although Doeg's actions were inexcusable, God apparently used him to carry out part of the curse He had placed on Eli (compare 1 Samuel 2:27-36). These priests and their families were probably all Eli's descendants. Only Abiathar escapes—and he will eventually be deposed by Solomon. God often uses unrighteous men and circumstances in carrying out His will.

Still, Saul proves himself an evil tyrant by this wholesale slaughter. He has done in anger to the many priests of God and their families what he was unwilling to do, at God's command, to Israel's enemy King Agag of the Edomite Amalekites (see 1 Samuel 15). And Saul has committed this atrocity by the hand of an Edomite. He is clearly becoming more and more deranged.

But it is David who will feel the burden of responsibility in the matter and suffer the pain of guilt. He laments to Abiathar, the one escapee of Saul's carnage, "It's all my fault. I've caused the death of all your relatives" (compare verse 22). In Psalm 52 we see how David brings this unbearable burden to God in prayer, asking God's vengeance on Doeg along with all those who love evil, and to avenge those who love righteousness. David ends his Psalm with the sure faith that God will come through—we have only to wait on Him.

David Gathers a Following (1 Samuel 22:1-5; Psalm 142; 1 Chronicles 12:8-18)

David flees from the Philistine city of Gath to a cave near the city of Adullam, "about ten miles southeast of Gath and sixteen miles southwest of Jerusalem" (Nelson Study Bible, note on 1 Samuel 22:1). At first, he is a man who feels all alone with no one to help him. In that forlorn condition, David cries out to God for help and deliverance. It is with these thoughts that David composes Psalm 142.

But God answers David's prayer. His family and followers soon gather to him (1 Samuel 22:1-2). Indeed, an ever-charismatic, inspiring leader, David puts together a militia of fighting men from the tribes of Gad, Benjamin and Judah with powerful captains. We read in 1 Chronicles 12 about the makeup of this force and how God through the Holy Spirit inspires these men to accept David as their leader (verse 18). In 1 Samuel 22:2, we see that this group of men is not some noble knighthood. Rather, they are malcontents, the dregs of society, men on the run like David himself. And yet, they form a rather formidable force of about 400 men that grows to 600—the cave of Adullam being referred to in 1 Chronicles 12 as a stronghold.

Realizing that his parents are in imminent danger from King Saul, David asks the King of Moab to provide refuge for them, which is granted (verses 3-4). It is to Moab's advantage that Israel be weakened through an internal power struggle. Furthermore, David's family has Moabite connections, as his father Jesse's grandmother or earlier ancestor was Ruth, a Moabitess (Ruth 1:4; 4:21-22; Matthew 1:5).

Jonathan's Encouragement;

David Betrayed Again (1 Samuel 23:15-29; Psalm 54)

Jonathan understands and believes that David is destined to be king of Israel and that nothing can upset God's plan. Incredibly, Jonathan reveals that, deep down, Saul realizes it too (1 Samuel 23:17). David and Jonathan, so much alike, renew their covenant pledge to one another (verses 18; 18:3; 20:8).

Notice these particular words of Jonathan: "You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you" (23:17). Jonathan, heir to Saul's throne, is content to take second place beside David. However, this is not to be, as Jonathan will soon die.

Yet who knows what God has in store? We know that David, when resurrected at Christ's return, will again reign as king over Israel (Ezekiel 37:24). And it appears that Jonathan, by the amazing character he displays and the deep closeness and fellowship he shares with the spiritually-minded David, may himself have been one of the few in the Old Testament period who, like David, received God's Spirit before it was more generally given in New Testament times. If so, then Jonathan too will be in the first resurrection with David. Then, might he not at last stand next to David, assisting him in ruling over Israel? That would, perhaps, give Jonathan's words a prophetic sense. Whether or not his words were inspired, this scenario as fulfillment of them remains an intriguing possibility.

But God's Kingdom is yet far away as we read these verses. David is here betrayed again. First the Keilahites and this time the Ziphites betray him to Saul (verses 19-20). Saul then takes God's name in vain as before by crediting God with the Ziphites' evil betrayal of David (verses 7, 21).

Saul's forces surround David (verses 22-26). Betrayed and seemingly facing imminent death, David goes to God with the words recorded in Psalm 54. In cases like this, when all seems lost, deliverance arises in unseen ways. This time a Philistine invasion diverts Saul's attention so that David and his men are saved once again. Here is a lesson for us to look to when it seems that things just aren't going to work out.

David Saves Keilah;

In the Shadow of God's Wings (1 Samuel 23:1-14; Psalm 63)

As we study the life of David, we see some similarities between his life and the life of Yeshua. In chapter 23, we see David as "savior." Furthermore, David does not act on his own initiative. Instead, he inquires of the Lord whether or not to fight the Philistines, who are assailing the city of Keilah, a city about 15 miles southwest of Jerusalem belonging to Judah (see Joshua 15:44) and just south of David's stronghold at the cave of Adullam. Likewise, all of Christ's saving work is subject to and in harmony with the will of God the Father.

Moreover, David renews his inquiry as conditions warrant, the condition in this case being the fear David's men naturally have in facing such a formidable foe. Though not fearful himself, David is understanding of his men's fears and goes back to God for their reassurance. Yeshua is the same way with us. He knows our frame (Psalm 103:8-14), sympathizes with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15) and intercedes for us with the Father. (The Father, of course, knows our frame too—yet He has appointed Christ, who has actually walked in our shoes, as intercessor.)

David then saves the inhabitants of Keilah (verse 5). But in doing so, he puts himself in jeopardy by giving away his position to Saul. In Christ's saving work, He divested himself of divine glory to die an ignominious death in human flesh (Philippians 2:5-8). Part of Christ's saving work, which we must all learn

to emulate, was laying down His life for others (compare John 15:13). While David did not literally die for others in this case, it is clear that he was willing to. He certainly endangered himself.

Saul, in 1 Samuel 23, makes a classic mistake in the way he deludes himself and takes God's name in vain—crediting God for his own evil plan seeming to work out (verse 7). Sadly, people sometimes use God's name this way to lend credibility to their clearly ungodly wrong motivations or actions. In verses 6 and 9, we find out how David was able to inquire of the Lord—through the use of the ephod, to which was attached the Urim and Thummim. Abiathar had managed to take it when he escaped from the scene of Saul's massacre (22:20).

With the ephod, David learns very distressing news—the people of Keilah will betray him to Saul. In this world, loyalty is too often only one-sided. David has been loyal to the Keilahites, but they do not reciprocate. How often Yeshua has experienced this with mankind. He has laid down his life for us but even the whole professing believing world, though considering Him Savior, betrays Him time and again through failing to always honor and obey Him.

God saves David by revealing to him that the ungrateful Keilahites are about to betray his presence (verses 10-12). God's plan is sure. Our prayers are always answered when they are in accordance with His will. David and his men depart to the Wilderness of Ziph (verses 13-14), “about four miles southeast of Hebron [in Judah]. This region had many ravines and caves in which David's men could hide” (Nelson, note on 23:13-14).

Psalm 63

Psalm 63 is introduced as being written by David “when he was in the wilderness of Judah,” so it was likely written around this time. Though still pursued by Saul, things are going somewhat better for David as God continues to give him victories. David remains humble and gives God all the credit. As we read this psalm, we sense that David is more secure, realizing that God is working out His plan. David, enjoying true fellowship with God, knows he has God's protection: “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice” (verse 7).

When David mentions “the king” in verse 11, he is referring to himself. Despite present conditions, He knows that he is the rightful king—anoointed of God by Samuel. And he knows that God will yet fulfill this purpose in him. As believers, we too can be confident in God's promise to make us kings and priests in His coming Kingdom (see Revelation 1:6).

Prayer for Safety from Enemies; David Spares Saul (Psalm 57; 1 Samuel 24)

David and his men are hiding out in En Gedi, a lush oasis with rugged cliffs, canyons and caves near the Dead Sea. As soon as Saul finishes with the Philistines, he receives word that David is hiding out here and returns to seek him. David and his men are taking refuge in a particular cave (1 Samuel 24:3). What must have been going through David's mind as he once again appears hopelessly trapped? The answer is Psalm 57. David pleads with God to be protected from his enemies.

In answering David's plea, God must have been driving the point home to him: “I will protect you and save you—I will always be there for you.” And what an answer it is! While hidden deep within their cave, David

and his men are astounded to see Saul choose this particular cave for a restroom. David's men tell him, "This is the day we've been waiting for—God has delivered your enemy for you to do whatever you like" (compare 1 Samuel 24:4). Indeed, David could have easily killed Saul and assumed the royal throne—particularly since it was clear that this must have been from God. But David's heart isn't like that. Instead, he evidently sees what God is doing here as a test. David has the faith to realize that since God had established Saul, only God should remove him. David trusted God to handle the problem in His own time and way. Again, David sets an example of godly leadership, resisting bad advice.

However, David can't resist the temptation to cut a piece from Saul's robe, demonstrating that he could have easily killed him. Some even see the cutting of the hem as symbolic of taking the emblem of royalty. But David would not be the one to take Saul out. He immediately regrets shaming the king in the eyes of his 3,000 soldiers (verse 5). The men with David would take matters into their own hands so David has to restrain them from killing Saul (verse 7). David explains to his men, and then to Saul, that he will not lift his hand to harm God's anointed king (verses 6, 10). "Isn't this proof that I've never sought, nor ever will seek, to harm you or take your throne?" David asks Saul (compare verses 8-14).

Verse 15 explains what has been going on since Saul set out to destroy David. God had already delivered David out of Saul's hand time and again. Indeed, what has just happened in the opportunity to spare Saul is itself an amazing deliverance—as Saul responds gratefully to it, even acknowledging David as the successor to the throne (verse 20). But even with Saul's public display of remorse and sorrow, David knows that he can't count on Saul keeping his word, so he continues to keep his distance from the unstable king (verse 22).

“Let Me Be Delivered From Those Who Hate Me” (Psalms 69-70)

With Psalm 69 we come to the final group of psalms in Book II (Psalms 69-72). The Zondervan NIV Study Bible comments on these four psalms: “Book II of the Psalter closes with a cluster of three prayers and an attached royal psalm—in perfect balance with its beginning (...Ps 42-45). These three prayers [69-71] were originally all pleas of a king in Israel [stated to be David in the superscriptions of 69 and 70] for deliverance from enemies (apparently internal) determined to do away with him. They all contain certain key words that are found elsewhere in Book II only in Ps 42-44 and in the seven psalms (54-60) placed at the center of the Book. Another link between Ps 69-71 and 42-44 is the placement of a short psalm at the center of each triad. These placements have the appearance of deliberate editorial design. In the former cluster Ps 43 has been artificially separated from 42...while in the latter cluster Ps 70 repeats (with some revision) Ps 40:13-17 and was probably intended to serve as an introduction to Ps 71. The attached prayer for the king [also referred to as the king's son] (Ps 72) stands in similar relationship to Ps 69-71 as Ps 45 stands to Ps 42-44 and brings Book II to its conclusion. Thus, as with Ps 45, its placement here hints at a Messianic reading of the psalm already by the editors of the Psalter.... It should be further noted that in Ps 65-68 all peoples on earth are drawn into the community of those praising God.... Here in Ps 69 all creation is called to join that chorus (v. 34), and Ps 72 envisions that all peoples and kings will submit to the son of David (vv. 8-11) and be blessed through his reign (v. 17)” (note on Psalms 69-72).

Yet the resounding praise in Psalm 69 does not come until the end. Most of the psalm constitutes an urgent prayer by David for deliverance while lamenting over life-threatening circumstances and enemy persecution. While he meant himself as the sufferer, this was also prophetic. “The authors of the N[ew] T[estament] viewed this cry of a godly sufferer as foreshadowing the sufferings of Christ; no psalm, except Ps 22, is quoted more frequently in the N[ew] T[estament]” (note on Psalm 69). As The Nelson Study Bible

states: “This highly messianic psalm presents a remarkable description of the sufferings of Yeshua. Whereas Ps. 22 describes Yeshua’s physical sufferings, Ps. 69 focuses more on His emotional and spiritual suffering. Yet like Ps. 22, this psalm was written by David approximately a thousand years before the events it describes. Both psalms begin with the sufferings of David but have their full meaning in the sufferings of Yeshua. For these reasons, the apostles in the New Testament acknowledge that David was a prophet of God (Acts 2:30)” (note on Psalm 69).

David likens his anguish to sinking in mud and deep water, being swallowed by the ocean deep or the pit—that is, the grave (verses 1-2, 14-15). This imagery was also used in Psalm 40 (see verse 2), another messianic psalm quoted in the New Testament. Psalm 40 is part of the cluster of psalms closing Book I of the Psalter, just as Psalm 69 is part of the cluster of psalms closing Book II. A further link here can be found in the fact that the very next psalm, Psalm 70, is, as was noted above, a reprise of Psalm 40:13-17—and it seems like a quick summary of Psalm 69.

David has sought God so earnestly, through crying and constant prayer, that he says, “My throat is dry; my eyes fail while I wait for my God” (verse 3). While the latter expression may denote in part his eyes being swollen from crying, it probably also has to do with diminished joy and hope. (For more on the metaphor of eyes failing, see the Bible Reading Program comments on Psalm 38.)

David is wearied by his host of enemies who, he says, “hate me without a cause” (69:4). We saw this same description earlier in Psalm 35:19 and will see a similar one in Psalm 109:3-5. As pointed out in the Bible Reading Program comments on Psalm 35, this baseless antagonism was prophetic of Yeshua’s experience—as He specifically declared it to be (John 15:25).

David does confess sins to God, but his point here is to say that God knows his enemies aren’t opposing him for this reason (Psalm 69:5). As in other messianic passages, Yeshua does not share the fault of sin—yet He did suffer for sins (the sins of others, including David’s).

In verse 6, the implication is that others on David’s side are praying for him. David prays that none of these will suffer shame and discouragement as a result of what happens to him. Indeed, Yeshua no doubt prayed for His disciples this way in the time before His trial, crucifixion and death. In David’s case, he was asking for God to rescue Him and thereby demonstrate that those who were praying for Him were in the right. In Yeshua’s case, He would have been asking for His disciples to be helped through what was happening until they were completely vindicated when God truly rescued Yeshua from death by resurrecting Him. We should learn a lesson from the fact that Christ was not preserved from death but was ultimately saved out of it. If God does not deliver us from some circumstance in the here and now, we should not let that discourage us. Indeed, God is always alongside the believer, whether He rescues him now or not.

David further states: “For Your sake I have borne reproach...and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me” (verses 7, 9). He is speaking here of the life of the righteous in general terms—of which his present circumstance is only an example. The godly suffer when they turn away from the world to obey God. They often go through difficulties not of their own doing: “Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered” (Psalm 44:22, NIV). As Yeshua told His followers: “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12)—David having been one of these prophets. Yeshua Himself was, of course, the premier example of being hated for following God.

In describing his devotion to God for which he is persecuted, David says, “Zeal for Your house has eaten me up” (verse 9). David was consumed with wanting to honor God—filled with desire to serve God’s

tabernacle and God's nation and to build God's temple. Christ's disciples recognized this passage as applying to Him after He ran the moneychangers out of the temple of His day-evidently already having understood Psalm 69 to be a messianic psalm (see John 2:17). God's people today should have this same zeal for His house, which at this time is His People (see 1 Timothy 3:15).

David was in sore grief, which in itself became something for others to ridicule (verses 10-11). He was scorned by many at all levels of society-from "those who sit in the gate" (city elders) to drunk commoners singing mocking bar songs about him in the taverns (verse 12). Yeshua also faced such contempt.

In verses 13-18 David returns to pleading with God to rescue him-"speedily," he asks (verse 17), trusting that he is praying "in the acceptable time" (verse 13)-also translated "in the time of your favor" (NIV). Considering the messianic nature of this psalm, it is interesting that God will later declare that He has heard His Servant (representative of both the Messiah and Israel) "in an acceptable time" (Isaiah 49:8; see also 2 Corinthians 6:2).

David can't find anyone to comfort him (Psalm 69:20). Consider that Yeshua's disciples abandoned Him during His trial and suffering so that the only ones to turn to for pity were His adversaries and other onlookers, and they gave him none. David further states that those from whom he sought comfort instead gave him "gall" (denoting a bitter substance) to eat and, for his thirst (compare verse 3), vinegar to drink (verse 21). David was here employing "vivid metaphors for the bitter scorn they made him eat and drink when his whole being craved the nourishment of refreshment and comfort" (Zondervan, note on verse 21). Yet this was prophetic of what Christ experienced, both figuratively and literally (see Matthew 27:34, 48; Mark 15:23, 36; Luke 23:36; John 19:28-29).

For their mistreatment of him, amounting to defiance of God, David calls on God to curse his enemies with punishment (Psalm 69:22-28). Verse 25, combined with Psalm 109:8, is understood in the New Testament as prophetic of Judas Iscariot no longer having a place among the apostles following his treachery and suicide (see Acts 1:20). Indeed, we should understand David's words here more as a prophecy of judgment on God's enemies than as a model to follow in our own prayers. Yeshua gave us the pattern of what to say during persecution when He was being executed: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). We are to pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44)-the best thing we can pray for being that they will repent.

Of course, there are circumstances where it is proper to seek God's intervention and justice against those who refuse to repent. This, however, does not mean wishing people out of God's Kingdom forever. David's prayer about blotting his enemies out of the book of life and that they not be written with the righteous (Psalm 69:28) might seem to imply this-leaving them utterly hopeless. Yet we should consider that what David was really saying here is that God would not accept these enemies as they were at that time-giving them eternal life in spite of the evil they had done. And in fact God does not do this. None of the enemies David speaks of here may ever receive eternal life in God's family-until, that is, their repentance, acceptance of Christ's atonement for their sin and their transformation into wholly new people. The people they were will never be in the Kingdom of God. (Even David's old self-which, frankly, was his greatest enemy-will not be in God's Kingdom. And so it is with all of us today.) Indeed, knowing David's character as a man after God's own heart, we can be confident that if one of those of whom he spoke here sincerely repented and begged him for mercy, he would have shown it-making it clear that he did not mean that they should never be able to repent.

David's statement in verse 29, "But I am poor and sorrowful," again calls to mind Psalm 40: "But I am poor and needy" (verse 17), which is repeated in Psalm 70:5. As before, "poor" in this context does not mean

financially indigent but, rather, broken in spirit (humbled) and in great need of help-as Yeshua also was in His fatal circumstances.

Yet David is confident of God's intervention, declaring that he will praise and thank God (69:30)-stating that the proper attitude is what God desires more than the ritualism of the sacrificial system (verse 31), as David also stated in Psalm 40 (verse 6) and in other psalms.

The humble seeking God on his behalf will then rejoice (69:32-33)-just as Christ's followers would later rejoice after His resurrection (and just as all His followers today will rejoice after His return in power and glory to rule all nations).

Verse 34, as pointed out earlier, calls on all creation to join in praising God. And verses 35-36 speak of the salvation and restoration of Zion and Judah. David may have been referring to present circumstances- perhaps to Jerusalem and outlying towns taken over by enemies during Absalom's or Sheba's rebellion afterward reverting to David and those loyal to him. Yet some contend that David did not write these words-seeing the specific reference to Judah and the need to rebuild its cities (in a literal sense) as an indication that verses 34-36 were added to David's psalm by a later king in Jerusalem, such as Hezekiah at the time of Assyria's invasion. That could be. In any case, the words here likely refer not just to ancient Zion, but prophetically to spiritual Zion today (God's People) and to Jerusalem at the time Christ returns to establish God's Kingdom.

Mark 11 – 12:17

It is near the Passover and Yeshua commands two of His taught ones to go and find a colt tied, on which no one has sat and to loosen it and bring it.

As Yeshua rode on the back of the colt, people praised Him, laid down branches for Him, and laid down garments for Him in His path into Jerusalem.

The next day He and the twelve travel to Beth Anyah and He was hungry. He saw a fig tree and went to see about picking some figs to eat them. But the tree had no figs, only leaves for it was not the season for figs. Yeshua cursed the fig tree such that no one should ever eat figs from it again.

Yeshua enters into the Set apart Place and overturns the money-changers there and prohibits anyone entering who was carrying a vessel to enter in. He accused them of turning His Father's House into a "den of robbers."

The scribes and Pharisees plotted on how they would destroy Him because the people were being moved greatly by His truth and authority.

Yeshua teaches on prayer and on forgiveness. As they traveled again to Jerusalem and into the Set apart place, He was met by the Priests and Scribes and they asked Him by what authority was it that He was teaching as He was and doing the things He was doing in the Temple. There was a temple tax and other things one had to do to be able to have recognized authority in the temple during those times. Yeshua refused to answer them plainly, for they would not have believed anyway.

Chapter 12

Parable of the Farmer who sent out servants to gather the increase of his land, but each time a servant was sent out... the workers would seize him, beat him, and send him away empty handed. Two servants were

done this way until the man sent his own son thinking surely the workers would honor the son. But in fact, the workers murdered his son in order to steal his inheritance.

Testing Yeshua yet again, the Pharisees and Herodians asked Yeshua about paying taxes. They were trying to catch Him in some sort of self incrimination or imposed sedition of some sort. He simply said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to Elohim what is Elohim's." And the people marveled.