

# Triennial Torah Study – 5<sup>th</sup> Year 19/04/2014

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<b>Gen 34</b>	<b>1 Sam 25-27</b>	<b>Ps 70</b>	<b>Mark 12:18 – 13:37</b>
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## The Violation of Dinah (Genesis 34)

Genesis 34:2 says that Shechem took Dinah and “lay with her, and violated her.” Does this indicate that Shechem raped Dinah or was what happened consensual? Verse 1 says that Dinah “went out to see the daughters of the land.” Some commentators suggest that she was in her late teens and was possibly going to attend some kind of public affair or celebration. It is then suggested that, perhaps because she had no sisters, she was seeking to fit in a little too much with the other girls her age and got herself into a situation she was not ready to handle, losing her virginity not by violence, but by indiscretion.

Still, the vengeful reaction of Dinah's brothers might imply that Dinah had not wanted this to happen. It is possible that Shechem had plied her with alcohol or wouldn't back down from any protestations she gave—at which point she didn't fight. Perhaps it was what we today often call date rape, which is itself a hideous offense. And considering that Dinah appears to have been around 14 or 15 years of age, we would today also call it the crime of statutory rape. Yet that was often considered marriageable age in the ancient Middle East—the society of arranged marriages of that day being often unconcerned with the maturity of those matched together.

Shechem clearly did wrong by taking advantage of Dinah and not betrothing her with her father's consent prior to their physical relations. However, the violation seems non-violent as he spoke kindly to the young woman after the event and even “loved” her (verse 3). (Contrast Shechem's attitude to Tamar's rape by Amnon in 2 Samuel 13, where Amnon wanted nothing to do with Tamar after he violated her by force.)

Further, Shechem seemed very willing to meet all the demands of Dinah's brothers in order to marry her, as painful as the conditions would turn out to be. His men's willingness to go through the same sacrifice on his behalf could perhaps lend credence to his reconciliatory attitude—though they were also persuaded by the prospect of sharing in the wealth of Jacob's family, which

circumcision would make possible. However, verse 19 does say that Shechem was “more honorable than all the household of his father,” seeming to indicate this was a good-faith attempt to right the wrong he had done. Perhaps the omission of any objection by Dinah could possibly indicate her feelings about what had happened.

Jacob’s attitude also seems to indicate that he did not see it as a violent rape, though he surely was not pleased with the situation. He had done business with Shechem’s father, Hamor, in the past (33:19) and was certainly disturbed—perhaps even enraged—at what had now happened. However, he was clearly willing to give Dinah as wife according to the agreement his sons offered, as she was found in the city with her new husband after the arrangement was made (verse 26). God later instructed the nation of Israel on how to handle this kind of situation, leaving it in the hands of the father whether the offender could still marry the woman, the offender having to pay a financial penalty regardless of the father’s decision (Exodus 22:16-17; Deuteronomy 22:28-29). So Jacob could have refused to give her as wife if he really felt strongly that this marriage should not have taken place—which he probably would have felt had there been a violent rape. Indeed, God equates the heinousness of rape with that of murder (Deuteronomy 22:25-27).

### Cruel and Unusual Punishment? (Genesis 34)

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Simeon and Levi’s violent revenge was not looked upon favorably by their father. He believed that their treachery would give the family a bad name and that their neighbors might unite and destroy his household. It was Esau who was to live by the sword (27:40), not Jacob. The brothers’ attack seemed exceedingly brutal, since not only did they kill Shechem, the one who committed the offense, but they slew all the men in Shechem’s hometown.

Although Jacob’s sons offered justification for their behavior, their father’s displeasure was not abated. For even after Jacob’s prediction that his family would be wiped out did not come to pass—due to God’s protection (35:5)—Jacob still showed deep disapproval with Simeon and Levi’s actions long afterward. Shortly before his death, Jacob delivered this prophecy from God: “Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruelty are in their habitation.... Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel” (49:5-7). Here we see that family traits are passed down, probably through a combination of heredity and family upbringing. And in the case of Simeon and Levi, God judged that their descendants would be too volatile to be all together, having their own nations. Indeed, more than likely, this would only spell trouble for the rest of the world.

Later, we will see the fiery, emotional demeanor of the family of Levi channeled into a zeal for serving God.

## David Joins the Philistines (1 Samuel 27:1-28:2; 1 Chronicles 12:1-7; 1 Samuel 29; 1 Chronicles 12:19-22)

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As 1 Samuel 27 opens, we see an example of one who was instrumental in God's hands apparently at a point of weakness in his faith and perhaps fallen into depression. As is clear from other biblical examples, such as Elijah (1 Kings 19:4) and Jonah (Jonah 4:3), servants of God sometimes suffered terrible depression. With evidence to the contrary, David here imagines that Saul will one day succeed in killing him (verse 1). One would think that with God having already had David anointed as king (16:13) and having delivered him on so many occasions, there would be no reason to be depressed. In this chapter, we can understand David's weaknesses as much as we can acknowledge our own. The Bible reveals both the ups...AND the downs of God's servants.

So David, ironically, seeks refuge in Gath, one of the royal cities of the Philistines, home of Achish the king. Accompanying David are his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail (remember that David's first wife, Michal, had been given to another man by Saul in contempt for David, 1 Samuel 25:44). Also with him were his 600 men with their wives and children. So the total number of people would, no doubt, exceed 1,000. Being under the constant watchful scrutiny of the enemy of Israel probably proved to be rather strenuous for David and his company. After a time, David is given his own city, called Ziklag, about 20 miles south of Gath, as a city of refuge from Saul. When Israel first entered the Promised Land under Joshua, Ziklag belonged to Judah but was eventually ceded to Simeon (Joshua 19:1-9). Using Ziklag as his fortress, David now has the freedom to attack neighboring nations. However, he is not forthright in his explanation to Achish of his attacks on these nations. Even though David is accomplishing what the Israelites have previously failed to do in driving out the Canaanites (Numbers 33:51-53), he gives Achish the impression that he is warring against his own people. Therefore Achish says, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him" (1 Samuel 27:12). We are skipping over the remainder of chapter 28 at this point, and will return to it just before the death of Saul.

In 1 Samuel 29, we find the Philistines gathering for battle at Aphek, about 30 miles north of Gath and "about 13 miles northeast of Joppa" (Nelson Study Bible, note on 29:1-2)—close to modern Tel Aviv. The Israelites under Saul are approximately 40 miles further to the north in Jezreel. David has evidently gathered his forces and marched behind Achish and his troops as they come together at Aphek. Whether David sincerely intends to fight against Saul and his own people is not made evident. It certainly would not be consistent with David's established pattern, however, as he has previously refused to fight against Saul.

But we do know this: God gives David a way of escaping this volatile situation (compare 1 Corinthians 10:13). The Philistine generals do not have the confidence in David that Achish does and strongly persuade the king to send him back to Ziklag. Thus, David will not have to fight

against Saul in the upcoming battle—but neither will he be there to help Saul in defense of his own country against the Philistines. And this battle, as we will shortly learn, will be Saul’s last.

### Saul Consults a Medium and Pays the Price (1 Samuel 28:3-25; 31; 1 Chronicles 10)

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The Philistines move from Aphek, where they had dismissed David (1 Samuel 29), to Jezreel (29:11) to confront Saul and the Israelites. They gather at the town of Shunem, a place we will again read about in the days of the prophet Elisha (see 2 Kings 4:8ff), while Saul pitches his camp at Mount Gilboa, about four miles south (1 Samuel 23:4).

David had previously stated regarding Saul, “As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish” (26:10). Saul’s time to die is now at hand. It is a very gloomy and depressing time for him. Samuel has died and any appeal to God goes unanswered. God explains to us, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2).

Saul does not have the confidence he possessed when God’s Spirit was working with him (compare 1 Samuel 11:6; 16:14). The day before the battle (28:19), he becomes fearful and desperate and, instead of true repentance, once again turns away from God—this time by essentially turning to Satan for an answer.

God’s instructions to Israel are quite clear in this matter:

“Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 19:31).

“And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people” (20:6).

“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The original King James Version renders “medium” as “consulter with familiar spirits.”

Saul in fact, during his reign, did obey God’s instruction in this matter by removing these “abominations” from the land (1 Samuel 28:3). Evidently, though, there is at least one who evaded detection, a woman of the town of En Dor.

Now we come to a two-part question that many, including many biblical scholars, do not know how to answer: Does the woman really conjure up a spirit? And is that spirit actually the prophet Samuel? Let’s look at some facts:

Some would argue that there is no entity really brought up here because Saul does not actually see one himself—he only reasons that Samuel is present from the woman’s description. But whether or not the woman is a fraud and trickster, what happens surprises even her (verse 12). And even though Saul does not see anyone, the account says that “the woman saw Samuel” (verse 12). Moreover, there is clearly spoken communication from this “Samuel” (verses 15-16). But is this truly Samuel, the deceased prophet of God? It would not have to be from the wording here. For instance, a person on a hallucinogenic drug might say he saw something that was not really there, and we would consider that he did “see” it—seeing in this context being a matter of perception rather than sensory input from light actually entering the eye. Since the Bible says the entity spoke, something was definitely present. But what the woman sees is not actually visible to the naked eye—or Saul would be able to see it too. This means that the image the woman sees must be projected into her mind through supernatural means. So we ask: Is the prophet Samuel the one doing this?

First of all, the Bible very clearly points to a future resurrection of the dead. Many “orthodox” believers, however, maintain that this is simply the rejoining of a conscious, disembodied soul with a new body. Yet the Bible repeatedly describes the current state of the dead as one of “sleep” (Daniel 12:2; 1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-15; 2 Peter 3:4). Ecclesiastes makes it even more clear: “For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing.... for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (9:5, 10). Thus, a dead person is completely unconscious. The resurrection is an awakening—a return to consciousness.

What this means is that there is no such thing as ghosts, as they are commonly defined—the spirits of the dead still wandering the earth. But there certainly are spirit beings who, unable to materialize, can appear as ghostly apparitions (compare Luke 24:39—where Christ shows His disciples that He is not one of these). The Bible elsewhere calls these beings unclean spirits— or demons. They are fallen angels, spirit beings who have rebelled against God under the arch-demon, Satan the Devil.

Now, the woman of En Dor is a medium, consulting with, as already noted, “familiar spirits” (1 Samuel 28:7 KJV). Are these dead people? No. For we have already seen that there is no consciousness in death. Consider also: Why would God impose the death penalty for communicating with dead friends and relatives if that were really possible? One scholar explains: “The reason the death penalty was inflicted for consulting ‘familiar spirits’ is that these were ‘evil spirits,’ or fallen angels impersonating the dead.... God hardly could have prescribed the death penalty for communicating with the spirits of deceased loved ones if such spirits existed and if such a communication were possible. There is no moral reason for God to outlaw, on pain of death, the human desire to communicate with deceased loved ones. The problem is that such communication is impossible, because the dead are unconscious and do not communicate with the living. Any communication that occurs is not with the spirit of the dead, but with evil spirits” (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection?*, 1997, p. 168).

Furthermore, it would be quite odd for God to send a message to Saul through the prophet Samuel when the account very clearly states that God will not answer Saul's inquiries "either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets" (verse 6). And consider that this is because of Saul's disobedience (compare Isaiah 59:2). So why would God now go ahead and answer him in the face of even greater disobedience on Saul's part in the use of a medium? That just does not seem reasonable.

Thus, the being the medium sees ascending out of the earth (1 Samuel 28:13) is nothing more than a demon. Even "the church fathers [early Catholic theologians] believed that a demon impersonated Samuel and appeared to Saul" (Nelson Study Bible, note on 28:12). Saul only perceives that it must be Samuel. He certainly wants it to be Samuel! The apostle Paul is inspired to write: "And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into [or disguises himself as] an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into [or disguise themselves as] ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). So it would not be unusual for a demon to appear as Samuel. And we know from all other scriptures that pertain to this subject that this is not the prophet Samuel speaking.

Let's look at the conclusion of Saul's deed. He certainly doesn't come away with anything profitable. In fact, he is so disheartened that he can barely eat! These scriptures should once again remind us of God's instructions against consulting with the evil spirit realm.

Continuing on, in 1 Samuel 31 and 1 Chronicles 10, we arrive at the very sad conclusion to Saul's reign as king over Israel. Severely wounded, he commits suicide. Yet not only Saul, but also three of his sons, including David's close friend Jonathan, die in this battle. Afterward, in a particularly heinous incident, the Philistines cut off Saul's head and put it on display in the temple of Dagon while his body and those of his sons are fastened to the wall of Beth Shan, at the junction of the Jezreel and Jordan valleys, to advertise their victory.

In a daring move, the men of Jabesh Gilead swoop in under cover of darkness and recover the bodies of Saul and his sons. In our highlights on 1 Samuel 11, we mentioned that Saul may have had ancestral roots in Jabesh Gilead in relation to Judges 21. Furthermore, this was the city that had been rescued from the Ammonites by Saul in his first act as king, and the Jabesh Gileadites apparently had a very fond remembrance and debt of gratitude to him, which they repaid in their recovery and burial of his and his sons' bones and a week of fasting. The bodies they burned—quite unusual among the ancient Israelites and perhaps done because these bodies had been mutilated by the Philistines. Years later, David will have the bones of Saul and Jonathan exhumed and reburied in Benjamin, in the tomb of Saul's father Kish (2 Samuel 21:11-14).

The account in 1 Chronicles 10 describes the reason for the death of Saul: "So Saul died for his unfaithfulness [or 'transgressions' KJV] which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him [by the circumstances He directed], and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse" (verses 13-14).

One may ask, Did not David also commit transgressions before God?

Yes, all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). The difference is in the heart. When David sins, he has a pattern—a habit—of acknowledging his sins before God and repenting. By contrast, Saul took no responsibility for his actions, seeking to deny his sins or reverse their consequences instead of repenting of them. Moreover, Saul's habit was that of continually seeking his own will. Remember that when Saul did not follow God's instruction, Samuel said, "But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart [David], and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you" (1 Samuel 13:14).

As for Jonathan's death, we don't know why God allowed it. Perhaps his presence would not have fit into God's continuing plan for David's life. In the same way, we might wonder why God allowed Herod to put James the brother of John to death early in the New Testament era, while Peter was miraculously delivered from Herod. God has not revealed His reasons, but we can always be confident that His decisions are for the ultimate good of His servants (see Romans 8:28).

## Psalm 70

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Psalm 70, as mentioned earlier, repeats Psalm 40:13-17 with several minor word changes these changes perhaps suggesting a different tune. It is interesting that Psalm 70, being taken from Psalm 40, follows Psalm 69, which itself carries imagery over from Psalm 40.

Thematically, Psalm 70 appears to be a condensed version of the material in Psalm 69—and it also seems to introduce Psalm 71 (compare 70:1-2; 71:12-13).

The superscription of Psalm 70, like that of Psalm 38, in the NIV says, "A petition." But the KJV and NKJV give the literal rendering of the words here as "To bring to remembrance." In the present case, this terminology could reflect this psalm being a reprise of the end of Psalm 40 and a summary of Psalm 69—i.e., a recounting of the need for deliverance.

One point of indirect contact between Psalms 70 and 69 is found in 70:3. This verse, with enemies saying "Aha, Aha!" (also 40:15), finds a counterpart in Psalm 35:21. These enemies, it is said two verses earlier in Psalm 35:19, "hate me without a cause"—a phrase that also appears in Psalm 69:4 (all of these being messianic psalms).

David focuses on God throughout his trial—continually praising Him (70:4) and seeking His help.

## Mark 12:18-13:37

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The Sadducees came to Yeshua to try Him concerning matters of the topic of resurrection (for they did not believe in resurrection of the dead). They proposed the ordinance of the Levirate marriage involving one woman and several brothers who had successive deaths and married the woman

each time to raise up children for their brother. So they wanted to know, whose wife will she be in the resurrection.

Yeshua responds, "You do not know the Scriptures."

"When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as messengers in the heavens.

Then a Pharisee asks Him, "Which is the first command of all?"

Yeshua answered, "The first of all the command is, 'Hear, O Yisra'el, YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is one. And you shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your being, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Yeshua asks and teaches the crowd, "How is it that the scribes say that the Messiah is the Son of David? David himself said by the Set-apart Spirit, 'YHWH said to my Master, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool of Your feet.'"

"David himself calls Him 'Master.' In what way then is He his Son?"

Yeshua warns them to beware of the Pharisees who put on an outward display of righteousness but inwardly they only desire power and recognition.

Yeshua notices the poor woman who gave all she had to the treasury even though it was comparatively a small amount, it was the greatest gift because it was all she had.

## Chapter 13

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The disciples were marveling at all the stone buildings and Yeshua tells them that not one stone will be left standing upon another. They ask Him, "when will these things be?" Yeshua answers with telling them what will take place first:

Many will come in His Name saying, "I am He" and lead many people astray. Hearing of fighting's, reports of fighting's, nation against nation, reign against reign. Earthquakes, famine, disturbances. All these are the beginnings of the birth pains.

They will be delivered up before councils as a witness and testimony. The Good News has to be proclaimed first to all the nations. Brother will deliver up brother, father to children and children against parents and these will be put to death. You will be hated by all because of Me, Yeshua says.

But he who should have endured to the end shall be saved.

When you see the abomination that lays waste that Daniel spoke of, run to the mountains quickly and do not tarry for any reason. Things will be worse than they have ever been since the beginning



of mankind. And do not believe when people say, "Messiah is here, or Messiah is out in the desert, or over there." For false Messiahs and Prophets will come so that many will be deceived, even the chosen if it were possible.

Stay alert, watch, pray, look for these signs and be ready.