

Triennial Torah Study – 5th Year – 10/05/2014 _ _ _ _ .

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Gen 38	2 Sam 3	Ps 78	Mark 16 - Luke 1:26
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Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38)

The story of Judah and Tamar is of notable significance. It is placed here in the middle of Joseph's story, not because it is directly related, but because the events took place after Joseph was sold into slavery and before the sons of Jacob traveled to Egypt. As can be seen, the end of the account is the birth of twin sons, Perez and Zerah, to Tamar. These two boys become important fathers in the lineage of future kings. If Onan and Judah had had their way, Tamar would not have given birth to the very son whose descendants include both King David and Yeshua Messiah.

Although the account does prominently show some of Judah's shortcomings, that is not its main purpose. This account is about proving lineage. Both Luke 3:33 and Matthew 1:3 show that Perez is the son of Judah through whom Yeshua was descended. The Messiah would be a descendant of Judah (see Genesis 49:10). But why the detailed version of this lineage?

Many of the other lineages in Genesis simply list who fathered whom—wouldn't that suffice? No, for without the story of how Tamar conceived and Judah's subsequent public acknowledgment of fatherhood, the Jewish heritage of the descendants of Perez, including Yeshua, may have been unknown or disputed.

Another interesting item in the account is Judah's statement: "She has been more righteous than I." This was certainly true. Notice that although Tamar did dress as a prostitute, it was Judah who solicited her. Yet later, Judah sentenced Tamar to be burned as punishment, even though he had been very willing to go into one whom he thought was a harlot and participate in such a sin himself. In contrast, Tamar was ensuring that an heir would be raised up to her husband (compare Deuteronomy 25:5-6), a responsibility that Judah had willfully abandoned (Genesis 38:14).

David's Harem; Abner's Defection (1 Chronicles 3:1-4; 2 Samuel 3:2-21)

Clearly one of David's weaknesses is his passion for women. And in the ancient Middle East, kings were often judged by the size of their harems. The larger the harem, the more powerful the king was considered to be. But Israel was supposed to be different. One of God's instructions for Israel's king was written in Deuteronomy 17:17: "*Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away.*" Sadly, David succumbed to this temptation, which would cause hardship in his family and his own life and set a terrible example for his son Solomon. Listed here are David's wives and the sons he fathered by them while he lived and reigned in Hebron:

Ahinoam (Jezreelitess) bore Amnon (later killed by his half-brother Absalom)

Abigail bore Chileab (Daniel)

Maacah (Geshurite) bore Absalom (who later betrayed David and was killed by Joab)

Haggith bore Adonijah (later executed by Solomon for betrayal)

Abatal bore Shephatiah

Eglah bore Ithream

That's at least six children by six different women in seven years—not a very good way to start a family. And his former wife Michal is about to be thrown into this mix. What a terrible mess!

After a power struggle between Ishbosheth and Abner over one of Saul's concubines, Abner, probably seeing the handwriting on the wall, is now ready to pledge his loyalty to David. David tests that loyalty by demanding that his first wife, Michal, be returned to him. Ishbosheth (who fears Abner, 2 Samuel 3:11) carries out the demand. Though David seems satisfied with Abner's pledge of support, it is not so with Joab, who will not forget that his brother died by Abner's hand.

“Again and Again They Tempted God” (Psalm 78)

Like Psalm 74, **Psalm 78** is a *maskil*—an instructional psalm or “contemplation” (NKJV)—of Asaph. In this closing psalm of the first cluster of Book III, the second-longest psalm in the Bible, Asaph reflects on God's faithfulness despite Israel's history of rebellion against Him—and on God's decision to dwell with Judah rather than with Israel at large. Where the KJV and NKJV have “my law” in verse 1, the NIV has “my teaching,” as the Hebrew word *torah* means instruction—principles to understand and live by, thus a law for life (compare Proverbs 1:8; 3:1; 4:2).

In Psalm 78:2, “the terms *parable* and *dark sayings* or riddles indicate sayings with ‘deeper meanings’ or ‘teachings with a point’ (Prov. 1:6)” (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Psalm 78:1-2). The apostle Matthew quoted Psalm 78:2 as a prophecy of Yeshua's use of parables (Matthew 13:34-35)—using stories to teach lessons. In Psalm 78 the story is that of Israel's history—a pattern followed by Christ's disciple Stephen in his message of Acts 7.

The general instruction here is not new, Asaph explains, as it was to have been passed down from one generation to the next so that succeeding generations would come to know God's laws and learn from the mistakes of past generations who failed to follow these laws (Psalm 78:3-8). Asaph is participating in this passage of instruction on a broad scale through the composition and performance of his psalm for the national audience.

Yet what may be new, the more subtle point of the psalm, as we will see, concerns the shift of the center of God's worship and of civil rule from the northern tribes to Judah. This is first hinted at in verses 9-11. The tribe of Ephraim son of Joseph here, as the leading tribe in Israel, was representative of the nation of Israel in general, particularly the northern tribes. Indeed, the mention of Ephraim in verse 9 with respect to a battle may be specific. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* states: "From the description of God's judgment on Israel, on Shiloh ([the site of His tabernacle through the period of the judges] located in the mountains of Ephraim), and, particularly, on Ephraim (vv. 56-64, 67), the psalmist may be thinking of the Philistine incursion and victory at Ebenezer, which resulted in the loss of the ark and the destruction of Shiloh (1 Sam 4:1-11)" (note on Psalm 78:9).

The loss at Shiloh, due to Israel's refusal to obey God, was a momentous development, as the psalm later points out. Yet it followed a pattern of Israel's rebellion since the nation's deliverance from Egypt, which is recounted in the psalm. (Zoan in verses 12 and 43 was an Egyptian city in the Nile Delta.)

Despite God's awesome deliverance (verses 12-16), the Israelites rebelled in the wilderness, trying God's patience (verses 17-18). Though He had divided the Red Sea, they didn't believe He would provide food and drink for them in the desert. They thought they would starve because of His "deliverance" (see Exodus 16). And when He did provide, they were later unsatisfied with what He gave them (see verses 18-22)—even though He gave them manna, the "bread of heaven...angel's food" (verse 24), which Yeshua later explained was symbolic of Himself given for others to partake of in a spiritual sense (see John 6). So God gave them what they craved—sending birds in abundance to provide them with meat—but He struck them with a plague for their voracious lust and outrageous ingratitude (Psalm 78:26-31). The full account of this episode is found in Numbers 11.

"In spite of this," says Psalm 76:32, the Israelites continued to sin against God, not believing "in His wonderful works" (Psalm 78:32). How is this possible when they saw the supernatural intervention with their own eyes? Perhaps some did not trust what they had seen—or they willfully forgot. Yet on a wide scale this probably means that the people did not retain confidence in these things as proof of God's care for them or an indication that He would judge evil the next time as He had before. This too is a form of forgetfulness. In Hebrews 3:12-13, believers are warned against following the Israelites' example in developing an "evil heart of unbelief...hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Because they didn't believe Him, God caused the Israelites to spend the rest of their days "in futility" and "fear" rather than entering the Promised Land (Psalm 78:33). For 40 years they

wandered, seeking God then forgetting Him and becoming unfaithful (verses 34-42). Yet in His compassion, God averted His wrath on many occasions, remembering “that they were but flesh” (verses 38-39). God is still the same merciful God, for which we can be ever thankful (compare Malachi 3:6).

Again, at the root of the Israelites’ unfaithfulness was their failure to remember—in the way they should have—God’s power as exercised to deliver them from their enemies (Psalm 78:42). Asaph, expressing what parents should have been teaching their children, again recounts God’s striking of Egypt to free His people and His driving out of the Canaanites to give His people the Promised Land (verses 43-55). Having come to “His holy border” in verse 54, “this mountain” in the same verse is evidently the whole land of Israel (as mountains often represent nations in Scripture).

Even in the Promised Land, the people “turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers” (verse 57). A major reason is probably that succeeding generations failed to pass on what God did for the nation—and to pass on God’s laws. Verses 58-59 show that the Israelites sank into syncretistic and idolatrous practices, which infuriated God.

We come, then, to verse 60. Because of their pattern of unfaithfulness, God forsakes the tabernacle at Shiloh, allowing the enemy Philistines to capture, for a period of time, “His strength...and His glory” (verse 61)—referring to the Ark of the Covenant (compare 1 Samuel 4:22). Many Israelites were killed in the battle, including the high priest Eli’s wicked sons Hophni and Phinehas (see Psalm 78:62-64; 1 Samuel 4).

In Psalm 78:65-66, God is portrayed as afterward rousing Himself and, with a great shout, beating back His enemies, putting them to a “perpetual reproach.” Asaph is speaking of events leading up to the time he wrote this, essentially describing God leading Israel to defeat its enemies in the time of King David, creating an ongoing period of Israelite peace and triumph under Solomon.

As part of this process, Asaph says that God “rejected the tent of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved, and He built His sanctuary like the heights” (verses 67-69). Thus, the center of worship is moved from the tabernacle of Shiloh in the territory of Ephraim to the temple of Jerusalem in the land of Judah. Focus is also placed on God choosing David, of Judah, as king over all Israel (verses 70-71). David’s demeanor and care-giving knowledge as an actual shepherd of sheep was valuable training for shepherding God’s people on behalf of God Himself, the great Shepherd (see Psalm 23).

Yet there may be much more to this psalm. After all, Psalm 78:2 is prophetic of Christ’s parables. His parables mostly concerned His servants and the Kingdom of God. Might there be a Kingdom parable here in Psalm 78? Certainly the need to remain faithful to God and His continual faithfulness to forgive upon repentance are Kingdom themes. But there may be more.

The exaltation of Judah as God's dwelling in Psalm 78 would take on greater meaning after the division of the kingdom into north and south upon Solomon's death and the subsequent apostasy of the northern kingdom. As the prophet Hosea would later write in Hosea 11:12: "Ephraim has encircled Me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit [following Israel's historical pattern in Psalm 78—see especially verse 36]; but Judah still walks with God, even with the Holy One who is faithful." Judah was in essence the faithful remnant of Israel. But Judah would later apostatize as well. Even then, however, an elect few remained as the true Jews, so to speak—the true Jews of today, the elect remnant according to grace, being God's people (compare Romans 2:28-29; 11:5).

In that sense, God building His sanctuary on Mount Zion could today figuratively represent the building of His spiritual temple, His people, the spiritual Zion. Indeed, the psalm could be seen, in type, as showing the center of God's worship being moved from the physical nation of Israel to the spiritual remnant of Israel—again, the people. Yet in looking forward to God's Kingdom, we should understand that the people of spiritual Zion will be established at the earthly Zion and all Israel will ultimately be saved—no longer enslaved to the pattern outlined in this psalm. David in the concluding verses of Psalm 78 is in this picture representative of the rulers of God's coming Kingdom, especially the chief ruler, David's descendant Yeshua Messiah, the Good Shepherd who will reign from the throne of David over all nations. David himself and all the saints will then reign with Him in perfect integrity and skill.

Mark 16 – Luke 1:26

The two Miryams go to the tomb to anoint the body of Yeshua, but when they arrived, they saw He was not there. A young man wearing a white robe told them that Yeshua had been raised and for them to go and tell His taught ones that He would go before them to Galil.

Mark records the appearances of Yeshua to people: first to Miryam of Magdala, then to two others on the road to Emiais, then to all the other taught ones.

He instructed them to go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to every creature.

Luke

Luke begins his account as writing to Theophilos, and believes he is worthy because he did witness many or most of all the matters that were being testified of in that day.

He begins with Zekaryah and Elisheba and their miraculous birth bringing forth Yohanan. He tells of the experience Zekaryah had with the messenger of Elohim while conducting his duties of burning the incense in the Dwelling Place during a festival time. This child will "turn many of the children of Yisra'el to YHWH their Elohim."