

Triennial Torah Study – 2nd Year 21/05/2011

sightedmoon.com /triennial-torah-study-2-year-04042015 /

By Joseph F. Dumond

Ex 15	Isaiah 4-7	Ps 121	John 4:43 – 5:29
--------------	-------------------	---------------	-------------------------

Ex 15

While in Egypt's Goshen, the Israelites had lived in the well-watered Nile Delta region. They were accustomed to plentiful water – in stark contrast to the wilderness where they “found no water”

Many of you today are living in the lap of luxury and have so much to be thankful for; A place to sleep at night, Food in the fridge and no fears of being killed or robbed. Yet even now you complain about what you do not have.

People mistakenly assume that once they decide to follow Yehovah, everything will be perfect. But once we start to follow the truth then we are attacked by Satan and his forces.

Israel had just experienced the blessing of a miraculous escape, they had walked through the Red Sea and saw how it was over 250 feet high of frozen glacial ice, Verse 8, and the sea bed floor was frozen so they could walk on it. They also just watched the entire Egyptian army; 251,000 men, who were killed in those few moments. [https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/?page_id=107]

And yet after just three days of no water they quickly grumbled when they grew thirsty.

In this life there will be trials as well as blessings; when we are mindful of this, we can stand prepared for whatever may come our way.

Exo 15:25 Then he cried out to ????, and ???? showed him a tree. And when he threw it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a law and a right-ruling for them, and there He tried them.

Yehovah tried the people with a short 3 day test of no water.

Psa 66:10 For You, O Elohim, have proved us; You have refined us as silver is refined.

Exo 15:26 And He said, “If you diligently obey the voice of ???? your Elohim and do what is right in His eyes, and shall listen to His commands and shall guard all His laws, I shall bring on you none of the diseases I brought on the Mitsrites, for I am ???? who heals you.”

Just three days after witnessing the Red Sea miracle and after watching the cloud by day and the fire by night the Israelites had now grumbled because they did not have faith in Yehovah who was leading them. They were now told if they obey and guarded His commands then none of the plagues of Egypt would come on them.

Deu 8:1 “Guard to do every command which I command you today, that you might live, and shall increase, and go in, and shall possess the land of which ???? swore to your fathers.

Deu 8:2 “And you shall remember that ???? your Elohim led you all the way these forty years in the

wilderness, to humble you, prove you, to know what is in your heart, whether you guard His commands or not.

You will notice that the one thing that the people continued to get wrong was the heart. And it is the heart that Yehovah is testing with these trials we all go through. Well we guard His commandments and keep them and teach them? Is it something we do because we have to or is what we want to do because we love it and know it is good for us? Is our heart in it?

According to tradition, one of the mitzvot that Yehovah taught at Marah was keeping the Sabbath (Sanhedrin 56b). It appears that Marah was a prelude of sorts for receiving the Torah at Sinai.

Exo 16:4 And Yehovah said to Mosheh, “See, I am raining bread from the heavens for you. And the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, in order to try them, whether they walk in My Torah or not. 5 “And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” 6 And Mosheh and Aharon said to all the children of Yisra’el, “At evening you shall know that Yehovah has brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim. 7 “And in the morning you shall see the esteem of Yehovah, for He hears your grumblings against Yehovah. And what are we, that you grumble against us?” 8 And Mosheh said, “In that Yehovah gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to satisfaction, for Yehovah hears your grumblings which you make against Him. And what are we? Your grumblings are not against us but against Yehovah.” 9 And Mosheh said to Aharon, “Say to all the congregation of the children of Yisra’el, ‘Come near before Yehovah, for He has heard your grumblings.’ ” 10 And it came to be, as Aharon spoke to all the congregation of the children of Yisra’el, that they looked toward the wilderness and see, the esteem of Yehovah appeared in the cloud. 11 And Yehovah spoke to Mosheh, saying, 12 “I have heard the grumblings of the children of Yisra’el. Speak to them, saying, ‘Between the evenings you are to eat meat, and in the morning you are to be satisfied with bread. And you shall know that I am Yehovah your Elohim.’ ” 13 And it came to be that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. 14 And the layer of dew went up, and see, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground. 15 And the children of Yisra’el saw, and they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Mosheh said to them, “It is the bread which Yehovah has given you to eat. 16 “This is the word which Yehovah has commanded: ‘Let every man gather it according to each one’s need, an omer for each being, according to the number of beings. Let every man take for those who are in his tent.’ ” 17 And the children of Yisra’el did so and gathered, some more, some less. 18 And they measured it by omers, and he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered according to his need. 19 And Mosheh said, “Let no one leave any of it until morning.” 20 And they did not listen to Mosheh, so some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Mosheh was wroth with them. 21 And they gathered it every morning, each one according to his need. And when the sun became hot, it melted. 22 And it came to be, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Mosheh. 23 And he said to them, “This is what Yehovah has said, ‘Tomorrow is a rest, a Sabbath set-apart to Yehovah. That which you bake, bake; and that which you cook, cook. And lay up for yourselves all that is left over, to keep it until morning.’ ” 24 And they laid it up till morning, as Mosheh commanded. And it did not stink, and no worm was in it. 25 And Mosheh said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to Yehovah, today you do not find it in the field. 26 “Gather it six days, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there is none.” 27 And it came to be that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. 28 And Yehovah said to Mosheh, “How long shall you refuse to guard My commands and My Torah? Footnote: 1 Torah – plural of Torah, teaching. 29 “See, because Yehovah has given you the Sabbath, therefore He is giving you bread for two days on the sixth day. Let each one stay in his place, do not let anyone go out of his place on the seventh day.” 30 So the people rested on the seventh

day 1. Footnote: The seventh day of the week, the weekly Sabbath, was observed before the Ten Words were given on Mt. Sinai.

The weekly Sabbath is the test that is given to each and every generation since Marah up to and including us today. Well we keep the Sabbath or do we find ways to get around it and break it?

Lev 23 also expands on the Sabbath to show us it also includes the Holy Days and in Lev 25 we learn it also includes the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. Does our heart seek to obey or find excuses not to keep the 4th commandment?

Psa 78:7 And place their trust in Elohim, And not forget the works of ?l, But watch over His commands, 8 And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation which did not prepare its heart, Whose spirit was not steadfast to ?l. 9 The children of Ephrayim, armed bowmen, Turned back in the day of battle. 10 They did not guard the covenant of Elohim, And they refused to walk in His Torah, 11 And they forgot His deeds And His wonders which He had shown them. 12 He did wonders in the sight of their fathers, In the land of Mitsrayim, in the field of Tso?an. 13 He split the sea and caused them to pass through, And He made the waters stand up like a heap, 14 And led them with the cloud by day, And all the night with a light of fire. 15 He split the rocks in the wilderness, And made them drink, as from the great depths, 16 And brought forth streams from the rock, And caused waters to come down as rivers. 17 Yet they sinned still more against Him To rebel against the Most High in the desert. 18 And they tried ?l in their heart By asking food according to their desire. 19 And they spoke against Elohim. They said, "Is ?l able to set a table in the wilderness? 20 "Look, He struck the rock, So that the waters gushed out, And the streams overflowed. Is He able to give bread also? Would He provide meat for His people?" 21 Therefore ???? heard, and He was wroth; So a fire was kindled against Ya?aqob?, And displeasure also came up against Yisra'?l, 22 Because they did not believe in Elohim, Neither did they trust in His deliverance. 23 Yet He had commanded the clouds above, And opened the doors of the heavens, 24 And He rained down manna on them to eat, And He gave them the grain of the heavens. 25 Men ate bread of the mighty; He sent them provisions to satisfaction. 26 He made an east wind blow in the heavens; And by His power He brought in the south wind. 27 And He rained meat on them like the dust, And winged birds like the sand of the seas, 28 And let them fall in the midst of His camp, All around His Dwelling Place. 29 So they ate and were completely satisfied, For He brought them what they desired. 30 They had not turned away from their desire, Their food was still in their mouths, 31 When the wrath of Elohim came against them, And He slew among their fat ones, And He struck down the choice ones of Yisra'?l. 32 In spite of all this they still sinned, And did not believe in His wonders. 33 So He ended their days in a breath, And their years in trouble. 34 When He slew them, then they sought Him, And they returned and did earnestly seek ?l. 35 And they remembered that Elohim was their rock, And the Most High ?l their redeemer. 36 But they flattered Him with their mouth, And they lied to Him with their tongue, 37 For their heart was not steadfast with Him, And they were not true to His covenant. 38 But He, the Compassionate One, Pardoned crookedness, And did not destroy them. And many a time He turned His displeasure away, And did not stir up all His wrath. 39 For He remembered that they were but flesh, A passing breath that does not return. 40 How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness, And grieved Him in the desert! 41 And again and again they tried ?l, And provoked the Set-apart One of Yisra'?l. 42 They did not remember His hand, The day when He redeemed them from the adversary, 43 How He worked His signs in Mitsrayim, And His wonders in the field of Tso?an.

Num 33:8 And they departed from before Hah?iroth and passed over through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, went three days' journey in the Wilderness of ?tham, and camped at Marah. 9 And they departed from Marah and came to ?lim. And at ?lim were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, so they camped there.

The waters of Marah are contrasted with the springs of Elim. Be on guard, it is easy to quickly grumble and complain only to be embarrassed later by Yehovah's help in His perfect timing.

Isaiah 4-7

CHAPTER 4

Verse 1 of Chapter four is a direct continuation of the previous section, and brings it to a conclusion: in the Hebrew text, a section break follows verse 1, and verse 2 opens a new section. Verse 1 is characterizing the sweeping nature of the disaster that was to overtake the men of Judah and Jerusalem, which would leave so many unattached and vulnerable woman that as many as seven women would all beg one man to marry them without even having to take responsibility for their support, just to remove their shame at being unmarried. [Midrash Eichah Rabbah 5:12 cited by Rashi on v 1 explains that Nebuchadnezzar's invading armies were ordered not to rape married women.]

“On that day.” (v 2) – “this is the day of salvation that will arrive with the coming of the Redeemer” (RaDaK). “.the plant (TZEMACH) of HaShem will be beautiful.” TZEMACH is one of the names of Mashiah (TZEMACH has the same gematria as Menachem). After the great cleansing that will take place with the removal of the wicked, “he that remains in Zion and he that remains in Jerusalem shall be called holy, everyone in Jerusalem that is written for life.” (v 3). From this verse the Talmudic rabbis learned that “In time to come, people will call out ‘Holy’ before the Tzaddikim just as they do before the Holy One blessed be He” (Bava Basra 75b). [Thus people refer to ARI HaKadosh, Rabbenu KaKadosh.] “And if you say that the Tzaddikim who died before that time will have lost their glory, the verse says ‘everyone who is written for LIFE’, i.e. the life of the world to come, will be in Jerusalem (Rashi on verse 3).

“And Hashem will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion and upon her assemblies [1] a cloud and [2] smoke by day and [3] the shining of a [4] flaming [5] fire by night, for upon all [6] the glory shall there be [7] a canopy” (verse 5). This verse speaks of seven canopies – each being one aspect of the “encompassing light” that will radiate over each of the Tzaddikim in time to come (Bava Basra 75a; Rashi on verse 5). Thus the righteous will have a tabernacle to protect them against the streams of fire flowing down from the River Dinor and the rains that will come pelting down upon the wicked at the time of God's judgment (verse 6, see Rashi ad loc.).

CHAPTER 5

“Let me sing for my Beloved – my Beloved's song about His vineyard” (v 1). The metaphor of Israel as God's vineyard was introduced in Chapter 3 verse 14 and is elaborated as a parable (MASHAL) in our present chapter vv 1-6, while the NIMSHAL (that which is symbolized by the metaphor) is explained in v 7. The prophet sings this “song” on behalf of his Beloved and as His emissary to His beloved people, using terms of endearment in order to emphasize God's great love for Israel despite the harshness of the allegory. The vineyard was planted on a very fruitful hill: this is the Land of Israel . The vine was the choicest species. In the Hebrew text, this is called a SOREK. The gematria of Sorek is 606, alluding to the 606 commandments God gave to Israel in addition to the Seven Universal Commandments of the Children of Noah, making a total of 613. Other Midrashic explanations see the choice vine as the Holy Temple (Succah 49a) or as the soul of Adam, which was planted in the Garden of Eden (see Rashi on verse 7).

The tragedy of this vineyard is that after all the care invested in cultivating it, it brought forth bad grapes, causing the owner to abandon it and leave it to go to rack and ruin.

Vv 11ff: “Woe to those who rise up early in the morning that they may seek out strong drink.” The object of the reproof implicit in the allegory of the vineyard that went bad is the drunken rulers of the people, who drink and play music “but they regard not the work of HaShem neither consider the operation of His hands” (v 12). The “work of HaShem” specifically refers to the stars and constellations, the wisdom of whose movements and seasons leads man to apprehend the glory of the Creator (see RaDaK on v 12). Astronomy

and the secrets of the heavenly cycles are the very summit of Torah wisdom, but those who have the capacity to understand them yet instead saturate themselves with drinking and feasting have despised the work of God (Talmud Shabbos 75a). The same applies to those who neglect to recite the blessings of YOTZER OHR before the morning SHEMA and MA'ARIV ARAVIM before the evening SHEMA, both of which praise God for the luminaries of the heavens (see Rashi on v 12).

“Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge” (v 13). The collapse of Torah knowledge among the people is the main cause of the exile, leading to degradation (v 15).

In vv 18f the prophet further elaborates his complaints against the sinners, who begin with thin cords of vanity and end up being tied and bound by their sins as with the thick ropes of a cart (v 18). “They say, Let Him make speed and hasten His work.” (v 19): the sinners heard the prophet’s warnings of coming doom and mockingly challenged Him to bring it speedily in order for them to test if it would really come.

Verses 20-23 typify the culture of evil, in which moral language becomes twisted out of its proper meaning in order to rationalize and justify the worst excesses. It is because the people have despised God’s Torah that they will be smitten with His retribution (vv 24ff). “And He will lift up a banner to the nations from far.” (v 26). This refers generically to all Israel’s enemies and persecutors, but specifically to the armies of Assyria, which in the time of King Hezekiah invaded and ravaged the whole of Judea (RaDaK on v 29).

ISAIAH CHAPTER 6

“In the year of the DEATH of King Uzziah.” (v 1) As discussed in the Introduction to the book of Isaiah (KNOW YOUR BIBLE Isaiah 1-2) and also in the commentary on II Chronicles ch 26 dealing with the reign of Uzziah, Targum and all the commentators agree that Uzziah’s “death” refers to his being struck with leprosy in punishment for trying to usurp the role of the priests by burning incense in the Temple Sanctuary (II Chron 26:16-21). It was in that year that Isaiah’s prophetic ministry began despite the fact that the chapter in which it is described does not stand at the beginning of his book. Yet it is clear that our present chapter marks the beginning of his ministry, because it says: “Who shall I send and who will go for us? And I said, here I am, send me” (v 8).

“and I saw the Lord (A-D-N-Y) sitting upon a lofty and exalted throne.” The use of the holy name of Lordship (ADNUS) indicates that Isaiah’s vision was of the Shechinah (Divine Presence) “seated” upon the “Throne of Glory”. The “train” (i.e. the lower levels garbing and hiding the upper levels) extended down to and “filled the Sanctuary”. RaDaK (on v 1) explains that “the Sanctuary” (HEICHAL) may mean the Temple but can also refer to the heavens (cf. Psalms 11:4).

“Serafim stood above Him” (v 2) – “Serafim were ministering on high before Him” (Targum). “These are the holy angels that exist forever” (RaDaK ad loc.). The “wings” of the Serafim refer to the causal nexus through which these angels accomplish their missions: “wings are the cause of the fastest of all kinds of movements” (RaDaK). While Ezekiel, prophesying after the destruction of the Temple, saw the Chayos with only four wings, Isaiah, prophesying while the Temple was standing, saw the Seraphim with six wings (Hagigah 13b). Rashi (on our verse) explains that each Saraph hid his “face” with two wings so as not to gaze in the direction of the Shechinah, hiding his legs with two wings out of modesty, so that his whole body should not be visible before his Creator. The “flying” that was the function of the third set of wings refers to the actual service that each Saraph performed. The Hebrew word for “wing” is KANAF, which has the connotation of covering, hiding and concealing (cf. Is. 30:20). I.e. the prophet perceived an outer garb that both revealed yet at the same time concealed the inner essence. “And this whole vision was a prophetic vision through the apprehension of the intellect and not through any apprehension outside of the intellect [i.e. not through sensory perception] for these angels that he called Seraphim have neither faces nor legs nor wings. He called them Seraphim because he saw them in his prophetic vision in the likeness of burning fire,

and this was in order to reveal the sin of the generation – for they were liable to complete destruction” (RaDaK *ibid.*).

“And one cried to another and said.” (v 2) – “They ask permission from one another so that not a single one should begin [the heavenly chant] before all the others, thereby making himself liable to be burned, but rather, they all begin together, as it says in the blessing of YOTZER OR, ‘all of them answer the Sanctification TOGETHER” (Rashi *ad loc.*). All the angels are in complete unison in their praise of God, for all creation is a unity.

The formula with which the heavenly angels praise God as revealed here in Isaiah was adopted as the formula with which Israel daily sanctify Him at the height of the communal repetition of the Amidah prayer in the KEDUSHAH (“Sanctification”) at every morning, afternoon and Musaf service in fulfillment of the commandment in Leviticus 22:32, “And I shall be sanctified amongst the Children of Israel”.

“Holy, holy, holy is HaShem of hosts.” “Holy” (KADOSH) means “separate”. HaShem completely transcends His entire universe. “It mentions ‘Holy’ three times corresponding to the three worlds: [1] The supernal world of the angels and souls; [2] The intermediate world of the heavenly spheres, stars and planets; [3] The lower world – i.e. This World, the most glorious member of which is man. The prophet says that He is holy, exalted and elevated above all three worlds. Yonasan’s Targum, which says ‘Holy in the supreme heavens, the house of His indwelling presence, holy upon earth, the work of His might, holy for ever and ever’ includes all the upper worlds as one, thereafter mentions the earth, this lowly world, and finally says that just as this is true now, so it will be for ever” (RaDaK *ad loc.*).

“the whole earth is full of His glory” – “for He created everything” (RaDaK).

“Then I said, Woe is me for I am ruined.” (v 5). Likewise Mano’ah, father of Samson, was convinced that he and his wife would die after seeing the angel (Judges 13:22).

“Then one of the Serafim flew to me with a live coal (RITZPAH) in his hand.” (v 6). Touching the prophet’s mouth with the coal was to cleanse him of having uttered an evil report against Israel in saying “I am in the midst of a people of impure lips” (v 5). Thus RITZ-PAH has the connotation of “smash” (=RITZ) “the mouth” (=PEH). Likewise Elijah ate a “cake of coals” (RETZAPHIM, I Kings 19:6) on account of having reported that Israel had broken the Covenant (Rashi on v 6).

It was the living coal FROM THE ALTAR that cleansed the prophet’s mouth in preparation for receiving the word of Hashem. Likewise, when we sanctify the way we eat at our table (=the Altar) we are able to speak words of purity and wisdom.

“And He said, Go and say to this people, Hear indeed but understand not! And see indeed but perceive not! Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and smear over their eyes.” (vv 9-10). God was warning the prophet that his rebukes and admonitions were liable to have the effect of making the people even more stubborn. For when the sinner wants to sin, God withholds from him the ways of repentance until he receives his punishment, as in the case of Pharaoh (Ex. 9:12) and Sichon king of the Emorites (Deut. 2:30; see RaDaK on v 9 of our present chapter).

“lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and return and be healed” (v 10): This verse expresses the three conditions of Teshuvah (Repentance). It is not sufficient to “see with one’s eyes” – to attain a perception of God – without “hearing with the ears”, i.e. seeking to contemplate, grasp and internalize the perception in order to come to “understanding in the heart”, whereby the perception actually governs one’s future actions. It is repentance that brings true healing (Likutey Moharan I, 6).

“And I said, until when, O Lord?” – “How long will they harden their hearts and not listen?” “And He said, Until the cities be wasted.” – “I know that they will not repent until the punishments come upon them and they go into exile” (verse 10 with Rashi’s explanations ad loc.).

“And if one tenth remain in it, then that shall again be consumed.” When this prophecy was given in the reign of Uzziah, ten kings were yet destined to rule in Judah prior to the exile: Yotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Menasheh, Ammon, Josiah, Yeho-ahaz, Yeho-yakim, Yeho-yachin and Tzedekiah (Metzudas David, RaDaK). The image of the oak tree and the terebinth repeatedly shedding their leaves (v 13) expresses how all the sinners will be successively cast off with repeated refining until only the trunk of the tree – the complete Tzaddikim who will return to God with all their hearts – will be left (Rashi on v 12).

CHAPTER 7

“And it was in the days of Ahaz.” (verse 1). The prophecy in the previous chapter was dated to the year that King Uzziah was struck with leprosy. Uzziah lived another twenty-five years during which his son Yotham was regent. Yotham then reigned in his own right for sixteen years, after which he was succeeded by King Ahaz. The invasion of Judah by the armies of Retzin king of Aram and Pekah ben Ramaliah king of Israel took place in the early years of King Ahaz (see II Chronicles 28:5-8 & 16). Thus we have now fast-forwarded over forty-one years from the previous chapter to the present chapter, yet the two prophecies are thematically linked because we now see Isaiah engaged in his mission of reproof despite the stubbornness of his listeners.

“Ahaz son of Yotham son of Uzziah.” (v 1). “Why does the text trace Ahaz’ lineage? To explain why Retzin and Pekah were unable to fight against Jerusalem (as it says in v 1) – because the merit of Ahaz’ fathers Uzziah and Yotham protected him. The ministering angels said to the Holy One blessed be He, ‘This king is wicked’, but He said to them, ‘His fathers were righteous Tzaddikim and I cannot stretch out My hand against him’” (Rashi on v 1).

V 2: “And it was told to the House of David” – “Because Ahaz was wicked, it does not mention his name” (Rashi; cf. v 13).

The narrative in II Chronicles 28 about the joint campaign against Judah by the Arameans and the kingdom of Israel tells of the colossal blow they struck. Pekah alone slew Judean 120,000 warriors in one day, and leading members of the Ahaz’ household were killed. This would explain why “his heart was moved and the heart of his people as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind” (v 2).

“And HaShem said to Isaiah, Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and She’ar-yashuv your son.” While the simple meaning is that She’ar-yashuv (“the remainder will return”) was Isaiah’s son, Targum renders “the remainder of your students who have not sinned and who have repented of sin” – i.e. Isaiah went out with his students, who are called sons.

The specification of the precise location of Isaiah’s encounter with King Ahaz – in “the highway of the field of the washer (KOVEIS)” (v 3) – is explained in Talmud Sanhedrin 104a as alluding to Ahaz’ having tried to hide (KOVEISH) his face from Isaiah out of shame. Because of this shame Ahaz merited not to be enumerated among the wicked kings who have no share in the world to come.

The prophet reassured the king that Retzin and Pekah were nothing more than smoking firebrands (wooden rods used repeatedly to turn the logs of a fire until the rods are so thin that they are useless and are discarded). Rashi explains that “Ben Tav’al” – whom they wanted to appoint as king of Jerusalem – was none other than Pekah ben Remaliah himself: in the ALBAM cipher (where Aleph is replaced with Lamed, Beis with Mem etc.) TaVAL = ReMaL[i]A.

But God said this would not come to pass. “Within sixty-five years Ephraim shall be broken in pieces and no more be a people” (v 8). Rashi explains that the exile of the Ten Tribes was to take place not sixty-five years after Isaiah’s present prophecy but rather, sixty-five years after the prophecy about it by his teacher

Amos, which was delivered two years before Uzziah was struck with leprosy (Amos 1:1). Uzziah had lived for 27 years after that prophecy; Yotham and Ahaz then reigned for 16 years each, followed by Hezekiah, in the sixth year of whose reign the Ten Tribes went into exile. $27 + 16 + 16 + 6 = 65$.

Vv 10ff tell how God asked Ahaz to specify a sign of his own choosing that would testify to the truth of the prophecy, but Ahaz disingenuously declined, excusing himself on the grounds that he did not want to “test” God – “I don’t want His name to be sanctified through me” (Rashi on v 12; see RaDaK).

Accordingly God himself gave a sign: “Behold, the young woman is with child, and she will bear a son.” This cannot be a prophecy of the birth of Ahaz’ son Hezekiah since he was already nine years old when Ahaz came to the throne (Rashi on v 14; RaDaK on v 15). RaDaK states that the prophesied son was either a son who would be born to Isaiah’s wife or another son who would be born to Ahaz. The essence of the prophetic sign was that by the time this son would have the intelligence to distinguish between right and wrong – at about the age of three or four years old – the threat to Judah from Aram and the kingdom of Israel would disappear. Indeed, in the fourth year of the reign of Ahaz, by which time the newborn son would have been three years old, the Assyrians conquered and exiled Aram, killing Retzin (II Kings 16:9), while Pekah ben Remaliah was killed in the same year in a conspiracy (ibid. 15:30).

It is perfectly obvious that it would have been quite pointless for Isaiah to have offered Ahaz a sign that would only take place more than 400 years after his death – yet this is exactly how some Christians try to explain this passage, claiming that a prophetic allusion to the “virginal conception” of their founder is contained in the words, “Behold, the young woman (ALMAH) is with child.” This interpretation is based upon a severe distortion of the meaning of the Hebrew word ALMAH, which cannot be a virgin since it is specifically used in Proverbs 30:19 to refer to a maiden with whom a man has intercourse. ALMAH is simply the feminine form of ELEM meaning a “young man” (I Samuel 17:56). RaDaK on v 15 cites a work called Sepher HaBris (The Book of the Covenant) written by his father decisively refuting such distortions of the meaning of our text.

[H5959 ????? ?alma?h al-maw’

Feminine of H5958; a lass (as veiled or private): – damsel, maid, virgin.

What this Jewish Commentator does not understand is that what Isaiah is referring to is the constellation bethulah which means virgin and in this constellation she is giving birth to the BRANCH which we have already referred to above as the TZEMACH. That TZEMACH, that BRANCH that this is speaking of is Yehshua, and do not let anyone tell you otherwise. See article on Conjunction or Sighted Which?

at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/?page_id=22]

“HaShem will bring upon you and your people and upon the house of your father days that have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, namely the king of Assyria” (v 17). Isaiah had already alluded to the looming specter of Assyria (Isaiah 5:25ff), which was soon to become a world empire that would radically transform the geopolitical realities of the entire region. Yet although the Assyrian armies would occupy all of Judah at the time of Sennacherib’s siege against Jerusalem, God would “shave them with a hired razor” (for which one only pays money because it is very sharp, Metzudas David), miraculously decimating his army and killing his officers and finally Sennacherib himself. Although the vineyards of Judah would become prey to briars and thorns, its hills and mountains would provide pasture for plentiful sheep and cattle bringing great blessing to the inhabitants (vv 21, 23 and 25). God’s miraculous providence over Judah even amidst the worst ructions would prove that God is with us – IMMANU-EL.

[this prophecy of Isaiah is also speaking of Germany who were once called Assyria and how they will be hired in the last days. I refer you to The Prophecies of Abraham where this explained in great detail. Also Immanuel God with us is showing us again that Yehshua was in fact and is Yehovah.]

Isaiah 6:1-13, 7:1-6 and 9:5-6 are read as the Haftara of Parshas Yisro (Ex. 18:1-20:23) containing the account of the Giving of the Torah.

Ps 121

Psalm 121, the second song of ascents in the first set of three, is one of trust in God as helper and keeper. It is written as a dialogue—a two-party discussion (note the use of “I” and “my” in verses 1-2 and of “you” and “your” throughout the remainder of the psalm). Some believe this suggests antiphonal, responsive singing, yet you would have one group or person singing only two verses and then others singing all the rest. It is conceivable that the first stanza, verses 1-2, was intended as a solo introduction and that the remaining three stanzas—3-4, 5-6 and 7-8—were intended as a choir response. Other commentators, however, believe the dialogue here is within an individual. That is, the one speaking in verses 1-2 is also seen as speaking in the remaining verses but to his inner self.

The song begins with looking up to the hills and considering the source of help (verse 1)—then declaring the Creator God as that source (verse 2). What do hills have to do with help? In the context of ancient Israel, hills were a place of refuge. Armies converged in war on the plains. The Israelite nation in the Promised Land began in the hill country—where they did not have to fight the Canaanites and Philistines out on the open plains. Hills provided a barrier against advancing forces. For individuals, being out in the open was dangerous. The hills provided many hiding places.

We can draw a comparison with the help and protection that God provides. Note what another of the songs of ascents has to say: “As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people from this time forth and forever” (125:2). Jerusalem is at the top of the Judean hill country. And here the City of David and Temple Mount are surrounded by higher hills, which provided a natural defense against invasion. Sadly, the people of Israel and Judah often placed undue emphasis on such natural protection. They even used the heights of mountains and hills as false worship centers—the high places. Jeremiah 3:23 says, “Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly, in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.”

The author of Psalm 121 understands this well. Lifting his eyes to the hills probably refers to looking ahead as he ascends in his journey to the hills of Jerusalem. “Ps. 120 sets the stage for the Israelites’ journey to the Holy City; this poem [121] is a song ‘for the road’” (Nelson Study Bible, note on Psalm 121). Rather than the natural defenses of the hills, the psalmist understands that true help is to be found in the One who made those hills and everything else—Almighty God (verse 2; compare 124:8; 134:3). There was help to be found in the hills of Jerusalem—but only because God’s blessing and protection was on this place of His sanctuary, where He commanded His people to convene and observe His spiritual feasts. Note the prayer in still another song of ascents: “Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens” (123:1).

In the remainder of Psalm 121 (verses 3-8), the psalm repeatedly affirms that God is our keeper—our watcher or guardian. We should note that the word translated “keeps” in verses 3-4 is the same one translated “preserve” in verses 7-8—so that a form of the word for “keep” is used six times in this psalm.

We see in these verses that God will protect us on our journey—both on our journey to His festivals and, in a figurative sense, on our lifelong journey to His Kingdom. He will be there to keep our foot from slipping (verse 3, NIV) and, though we have to sleep along the way, God never sleeps (verses 3-4)—He is always vigilant in His care for His people.

Verses 5-6 say that God is a shade “at your right hand” (meaning readily accessible) so that the sun won’t strike you by day or the moon by night. Travelers in the Middle East needed shade from the sun to prevent heat exhaustion, heatstroke and severe sunburn. Yet what of the moon? “In ancient times people saw the

harmful effects of the rays of the sun, and they thought that certain illnesses (especially mental disorders) were also caused by the rays of the moon” (Word in Life Bible, note on verse 6). Thus our modern words moonstruck and lunacy. We should be careful, however, to note that verse 6 does not acknowledge this as a genuine phenomenon. The point is that God would protect the travelers from those things that posed concerns to them on their journey. Of course, a bright moon could pose a real problem in that it would make travelers more visible to bandits-and staring directly at it will briefly diminish night vision, which might be needed at that moment to better see such bandits and wild animals.

Verses 7-8 say that God will preserve us from all evil in all our goings and comings-i.e., at all times in our lives. “Preserve” here is a better sense than the English “keep,” as the latter would seem to imply that nothing bad will ever happen to God’s people. We have enough examples in the remainder of the psalms and throughout Scripture to show that this is not the case. The point, as we consider the rest of the Bible, is that whatever happens to us is within God’s care and oversight. He watches over us and sees us through. He certainly does protect us as we go through life and keeps us from harm in far more ways than we are aware of. Yet He allows a certain degree of trials to befall us, though never more than we can handle (1 Corinthians 10:13). Most importantly, He will work things out to what is best for His people in the end (Romans 8:28)-a glorious end that will pale all present trials by comparison (verse 18). Accordingly, the focus of Psalm 121 is not merely for the here and now, but “from this time forth, and even forevermore” (verse 8). Here we have the promise of God watching over His people in such a way as to eventually lead them to the glorious future of eternal life.

John 4:43 – 5:29

The pool of Bethesda was likely another water reserve re-configured as a mikvah. The pool may have been built by Simeon, a high priest who lived about 200 B.C. (Sirach 50:3). Charlesworth showed several snake figures excavated at the pool, indicating that the area also housed an Asclepeion, a pool dedicated to the healing god Asclepius. It is possible then that the blind, lame, and paralyzed were not waiting for the God of Israel to heal them, but rather the god Asclepius. If this is true, then there is a tension in the story: who are you going to believe can heal you, the god Asclepius, or the God, Jesus?

In honor of Asclepius, snakes were often used in healing rituals and non-venomous snakes were allowed to crawl on the floor in dormitories where the sick and injured slept. From about 300 BC onwards, the cult of Asclepius grew very popular and pilgrims flocked to his healing temples (Asclepieia) to be cured of their ills. Ritual purification would be followed by offerings or sacrifices to the god (according to means), and the supplicant would then spend the night in the holiest part of the sanctuary – the abaton (or adyton). Any dreams or visions would be reported to a priest who would prescribe the appropriate therapy by a process of interpretation.[20] Some healing temples also used sacred dogs to lick the wounds of sick petitioners.[21]

The original Hippocratic Oath began with the invocation “I swear by Apollo the Physician and by Asclepius and by Hygieia and Panacea and by all the gods ...”[21]

To learn more about this pool and it’s location you can go to <http://www.netours.com/content/view/176/47/>

Joh 5:14 Afterward ????? found him in the Set-apart Place, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more,1 so that no worse matter befalls you.”

What does Yehshua mean when He says so that a worse matter befalls you if you sin again?

Joh 8:11 And she said, “No one, Master.” And ????? said to her, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” 1 John 3:4-10, 1 John 5:18.

Rom 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves servants for obedience, you are servants of the one whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness? 17 But thanks to Elohim that you were servants of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became servants of righteousness. 19 I speak as a man, because of the weakness of your flesh. For even as you did present your members as servants of uncleanness, and of lawlessness resulting in lawlessness, so now present your members as servants of righteousness resulting in set-apartness. 20 For when you were servants of sin, you were free from righteousness.

1Co 15:34 Wake up to soberness, righteously, and do not sin, for some do not have the knowledge of Elohim. I speak this to your shame.

1Pe 2:24 who Himself bore our sins in His body on the timber, so that we, having died to sins, might live unto righteousness¹ – by whose stripes you were healed. Footnote: 1Rom. 6:2, 1 Peter 4:1-2.

1Pe 4:1 Therefore, since Messiah suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,¹ Footnote: 1Rom. 6:2-22, 1 Peter 2:25.² so that he no longer lives the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but according to the desire of Elohim.

1Jn 3:4 Everyone doing sin also does lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. 5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. 6 Everyone staying in Him does not sin. Everyone sinning has neither seen Him nor known Him.¹ Footnote: 1See 2:4 & 3 John v. 11. 7 Little children, let no one lead you astray. The one doing righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.¹ Footnote: 1See 2:29. 8 The one doing sin is of the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of Elohim was manifested: to destroy the works of the devil.¹ Footnote: 1See Titus 2:14. 9 Everyone having been born of Elohim does not sin, because His seed stays in him, and he is powerless to sin, because he has been born of Elohim. 10 In this the children of Elohim and the children of the devil are manifest: Everyone not doing righteousness is not of Elohim,¹ neither the one not loving his brother. Footnote: 1See 3 John v. 11.

1Jn 5:18 We know that everyone having been born of Elohim does not sin,¹ but the one having been born of Elohim guards himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.² Footnotes: 1See 3:6-9. 2See 4:4.

We are told after being forgiven for our sins to go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon us. We are now in the process of putting on righteousness. Should we stop doing so we then begin to put on unrighteousness and as we are told in Rom 1:18 For the wrath of Elohim is revealed from heaven against all wickedness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known of Elohim is manifest among them, for Elohim has manifested it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible qualities have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, both His everlasting power and Mightiness, for them to be without excuse, 21 because, although they knew Elohim, they did not esteem Him as Elohim, nor gave thanks, but became vain in their reasonings, and their undiscerning heart was darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the esteem of the incorruptible Elohim into the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds and of four-footed beasts and of reptiles. 24 Therefore Elohim gave them up to uncleanness in the lust of their hearts, to disrespect their bodies among themselves, 25 who changed the truth of Elohim into the falsehood, and worshipped and served what was created rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Am?n. 26 Because of this Elohim gave them over to degrading passions. For even their women exchanged natural relations for what is against nature, 27 and likewise, the men also, having left natural relations with woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing indecency, and receiving back the reward which was due for their straying. 28 And even as they did not think it worth- while to possess the knowledge of

Elohim, Elohim gave them over to a worthless mind, to do what is improper, 29 having been filled with all unrighteousness, whoring, wickedness, greed, evil; filled with envy, murder, fighting, deceit, evil habits; whisperers, 30 slanderers, haters of Elohim, insolent, proud, boasters, devisers of evils, disobedient to parents, 31 without discernment, covenant breakers, unloving, unforgiving, ruthless; 32 who, though they know the righteousness of Elohim, that those who practise such deserve death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practise them.

Psa 81:10 “I am your Elohim, Who brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim; Open your mouth wide, and I fill it. 11 “But My people did not listen to My voice, And Yisra’el would not submit to Me. 12 “So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels. 13 “O, if My people had listened to Me, Yisra’el would walk in My ways, 14 “I would subdue their enemies at once, And turn My hand against their adversaries! 15 “Those who hate would cringe before Him; And their time of punishment be forever. 16 “He would feed them with the finest of wheat; And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”

Gal 5:14 For the entire Torah is completed in one word, in this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” 15 And if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! 16 And I say: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not accomplish the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you desire to do.