

Triennial Torah Study – 4th Year 27/04/2013

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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

Deut 15	1 Chron 16		Col 3-4
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Duet 15

The New King James Version does not provide the best translation of verse 4, as it could be read to say that the law regarding the year of release would sometimes not be in effect because of periods when no one was poor. Perhaps it should read, "...that there be no poor among you," meaning this law would help prevent extreme poverty by preventing debts being exacted from those unable to fully repay them. The Living Bible translates the verse as, "No one will become poor because of this"—indicating that the year of release would not impoverish lenders. And the Revised Standard Version renders verses 4-5 this way: "But there will be no poor among you...if only you will obey the voice of the Lord your God...."

Although there should have been no poverty within the nation of Israel, since God promised to bless everyone among His people (Deuteronomy 15:4)—which will be the case throughout the whole world during the future millennial reign of Christ (Micah 4:4)—God's promise to the Israelites was conditional upon their obedience (Deuteronomy 15:5). And since He knew the kind of people they would be (compare 5:29), He also knew that there would be poverty (15:11; compare Matthew 26:11). Therefore, He devised a system to deal with the poor in a merciful and compassionate way unlike any social system known in this world today.

At the end of every seven years, a total release of all debts had to be granted (Deuteronomy 15:1). If there is any modern parallel at all, it is that of declaring bankruptcy—except that, in ancient Israel, the seven-year release was mandatory, and it did not matter whether creditor or debtor wanted such a release or not. Further, this procedure also required that a poor Hebrew person, who had "sold" himself to his creditor to pay off his debts, had to be released as well. But more than that, since the poor Hebrew servant had diligently worked for his master, he was to be given a generous bonus on his departure (verses 12-15, 18) to enable him to make a new start. The servant was permitted, however, to continue working for his master if he so wished (verses 16-17), yet without being subject to a continued obligation for repayment of prior debts. In all of this, especially in recalling Israel's deliverance from Egypt, God stresses that His way is the way of liberation and freedom.

1 Chronicles 16

The festivities surrounding the ark being brought to Jerusalem continue. In 1 Chronicles 16, David gives certain of the Levites the responsibility of offering to God thanks and praise on a continual basis before the

ark of the Lord. The appointments in the previous chapter concerned the immediate task of moving the ark to Jerusalem, but the ones here are more permanent in nature though involving some of the same people (compare 15:1-24; 16:5-6). This continual offering of praise is reminiscent of the apostle John's vision in the book of Revelation, wherein angelic choirs are seen offering continual praise before the throne of God in heaven.

Appointed chief of this ongoing special music is Asaph, leader of the Gershonite Levites (1 Chronicles 6:39, 43). Asaph and his sons will serve mainly as singers (25:1-2; 2 Chronicles 20:14) and composers, as the superscriptions of their psalms attest (see Psalm 50; 73-83).

Verses 8-36 of 1 Chronicles 16 constitute a song written by David offering thanks and praise to God, which David gives to Asaph to be performed on this occasion. In it we are all admonished to: a) give thanks to God for all that He has done for Israel and for mankind; b) declare these things to all; c) tell of His glory; d) fear Him; and e) give back to Him of the abundance He has given us. These things should be reflected in the lives of those who trust in Him.

The lyrics of the first part of David's psalm (verses 8-22) are repeated in the first part of Psalm 105 (verses 1-15). Again we are admonished to continually seek God. Christ tells us in Matthew 7:7 that if we do, we will find Him. Perhaps the key idea of the psalm is found in the word "remember" (1 Chronicles 16:12; Psalm 105:5). We are to remember God's goodness to His people. Yet even if the people forget, God does not. "He remembers His covenant forever" (Psalm 105:8)—that is, the very basis for His special relationship with His people. We will read the remainder of Psalm 105 tomorrow.

The lyrics of the second part of David's psalm of 1 Chronicles 16 are repeated in Psalm 96. Again, we are to praise God, to sing of Him, to proclaim Him to others, and to worship Him in our lives and with our offerings. In verse 11-12 (or 1 Chronicles 16:31-33), trees and other inanimate elements of creation are pictured as rejoicing at the Lord's coming to judge the earth. This personification is a literary device; it does not mean that trees actually have thinking minds and emotions. The point is that creation will only be restored to its intended condition when humanity in general is brought back in line with the laws of God. This will commence with the return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the saints (compare Revelation 11:18; Romans 8:19-22). Psalm 96 adds the additional point that Christ "shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth" (verse 13).

The concluding lyrics of David's psalm of thanks in 1 Chronicles 16 (verses 34-36) are repeated in Psalm 106 (verses 1, 47-48). Verse 1 (1 Chronicles 16:34) is another call to give thanks to God for all He has done. On this occasion of unifying Israel under one king and one worship system, David asks God to truly gather the people together and to deliver them from the power of the gentile nations around them (verse 35; compare Psalm 106:47). The spiritual parallel with those in God's Church today should be obvious. The final verse (1 Chronicles 16:36) will later be used as the concluding verse of book 4 of the Psalms (Psalm 106:48). The later verse tells the people of God to say Amen, or "So be it," as they actually do in 1 Chronicles 16:36.