

Triennial Torah Study – 1st Year 12/06/2010

 sightedmoon.com/where-did-the-apostles-go-part-two/

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This week's Triennial Torah reading can be found at:

https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

Gen 13	Judges 5-6	Ps 29-30	Mat 17:22 – 18:35
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Gen 13

After Abraham had dwelt in Egypt they left and came from the south to Alon More which today is near Nabulus. It is from here that Abraham and Lot divide and go their own ways. Lot chose the plain of Jordan which at that time was like the Garden of Eden with lots of water.

In order for the flocks to grow to a size that they had to split takes time. We have recorded that Abraham left Haran in the 2023 after creation. Chapter 14 is about the invasion of the armies from the north, and that year was 2027 after creation or 1810 BC, so Abraham and Lot splitting must have been close to 2027 in order for the flocks to grow enough that they had to separate. Lot then chose to settle near the city of Sodom.

Yahovah again says to Abraham to look at all the land He is going to give to him. This is done at Alon More near Nabulus. After this Abraham leaves and goes to the Oak trees of Mamre near Hebron.

<http://www.forward.com/articles/11956/>

While perusing last week's Torah reading in my 'Etz Hayim' (Jewish Publication Society, 1985) translation, I was struck by the phrase in its opening verse (Genesis 18:1) about God appearing to Abraham by 'the terebinths of Mamre.' Although the word 'terebinth' doesn't flow easily off the tongue, it is mellifluous and sounds like it means something extremely impressive. In the Hebrew, the phrase is elonei mamrei, elonei being the genitive plural of elon. Yet when I looked elon up in my Alcalay Hebrew-English dictionary, I was told that it means oak, not terebinth. I then looked up terebinth in an English dictionary and found that it is a tree or bush in the cashew/pistachio family from which turpentine is made. (The word turpentine actually derives from terebinth.) So my question is: Is there a basis for elon meaning terebinth rather than oak? And if not, how did this mistranslation occur? And why does my Stone Chumash [Pentateuch] have neither oaks nor terebinths, but rather 'plains of Mamre'?"

If it sounds like there's a lot of confusion about where it was that God appeared to Abraham, that's because there is.

Confusion number one is between the Hebrew word *alon*, which means oak, and *elah*, which means terebinth. The word *elon* in Genesis, which has the initial vowel of *elah* and the final syllable of *alon*, looks like a hybrid of the two that allows one to choose the meaning one wishes. Yet it needs to be remembered that the Hebrew text of the Bible was originally written without vowel signs (and still is written that way in a Torah scroll), so that the original pronunciation may have been *alonei* and not *elonei*.

In any case, this is how the first translation ever made of the Bible, the second-century BCE Greek Septuagint, interpreted the word, for it gives us *pros te drui te Mamre*, that is, “by the oak of Mamre.” (Why “oak” is in the singular, I don’t know.) Yet, the next translation we know of, the first-century C.E. Aramaic version of Onkelos, a standard Jewish text to this day, has the puzzling *b’meshrei Mamre*, which can mean either “in the plains of Mamre” or “in the encampment of Mamre.” Since the verse in Genesis continues, “And he [Abraham] was sitting in the entrance to his tent [*ohel*],” perhaps Onkelos was working with a variant text that had *ohalei*, “the tents [or encampment] of,” rather than *alonei*. Although this may not seem terribly likely, I can’t think of any other explanation.

Be that as it may, when Jerome produced his fourth-century C.E. translation of the Bible into Latin, which was adopted by the Catholic church and heavily influenced all early Bible translations into European languages, he followed Onkelos by choosing — don’t ask me why — not “in the tents” but “in the plains” of Mamre (that is, in *convalle Mamre*). This was picked up by the 1611 King James Bible, which passed it on to other translations — hence Mr. Morris’s Stone Chumash. But not all English Bible translators agreed. Already in 1530, William Tyndale translated *alonei mamre* as “the oak grove of Mamre,” and many modern English Bibles have gone along with him.

As for terebinth, I don’t know who first introduced it, but it does not appear to go back very far. The earliest translation to which I have been able to trace it is the 1936 Soncino Press version of the Pentateuch by J.H. Hertz, a British rabbi.

So which is it: Plains, encampments, oaks or terebinths?

Plains and encampments, I think, can be dismissed immediately. They cannot possibly be the correct translation of *elonei mamre*.

That leaves oaks and terebinths. I’ll take oaks.

Here’s why. In the first place, while “oaks” is the oldest translation we have of *elonei*, “terebinths” is the most recent. The Septuagint rendition may represent a genuine tradition passed down from the time the book of Genesis was composed. The Soncino Press edition obviously does not.

Moreover, terebinths, whose small leaves indeed smell a bit like turpentine when crushed, may have an impressive-sounding name, but they are not very impressive in appearance. The terebinth is an evergreen shrub that rarely grows to more than 7 or 8 feet and is found all over Israel, where it is one of the most frequent plants in the hillside maquis; terebinths grow wild in

my garden and can spread like weeds if you do not keep them in check. The common Palestinian oak, on the other hand, develops into a tall, stately tree. A whole forest or grove of such trees, now seen in only a few places but less rare in Abraham's time, is an impressive sight indeed.

Would the Bible have bothered to point out that Abraham was sitting by some perfectly ordinary shrubs? And why single out "the terebinths of Mamre" when terebinths were everywhere? But if Mamre had a well-developed oak grove, that would have been a landmark worth referring to. The rudely monosyllabic oak wins this match against the mellifluous terebinth, hands down.

Judges 5-6

You will notice that here in judges just as we have shown above it is Edom and the Amalekites and Midianites who are harassing Israel.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deborah>

The accounts of Judges 4 and 5 tell the story of a battle at Kishon and Taanach whose waters lap the walls of ancient Megiddo. In alliance with Barak the king of Kadesh and some of Israel's northern tribes after the death of Joshua in the time of Shamgar the son of Anath which is located on the north slope of Mount Tabor. Jabin the king of Canaan reigned at Hazor and the commander of his army was Sisera who lived in Haroshet-ha-goyim.

In context Joshua has just finished attacking the Perizzites of Adonai-zedek at Bezek, Kirith arba, Kirathsepher, Sheshi, Ahiman and Talmi. The sons of Hobab the Kenite, father-in-law of Moses, went up with the sons of Judah into the wilderness of Negeb at the ascent of Arab and lived with the Amalakites. Judah did not take Ashkelon, Ekron or Bethel of the Hittites. Manassah did not subdue Beth Shean, Tanaach, Dor, Ibleam, or Meggido. Ephron did not drive out the Canaanites in Gezer, Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or Nahalol. Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Aphik or Rehob. Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath. The Amorites drove back the Danites into the highlands. Meanwhile, in the south, battles continued with the Edomites, the Moabites and the Philistines.

Most of the then Egyptian territory shown in the adjoining map was up in arms and there were few allies among the southern tribes who were free to come to the assistance of Deborah and Barak. Israel, which the song of Deborah and Barak numbers at 40,000 spears, was unavailable except for forces from the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, Machir, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali. The references to Kishon's waters and Tanaach waters which lap at Meggido indicate that as Deborah's forces moved down from Kadesh in the mountains, the enemy moved north, taking the southern route up to Megiddo where the battle was fought. With 900 iron-bound chariots involved on either side, it was clearly a sizable battle, likely to be historically recorded by both sides.

Going by the textual artifacts in this account, the battle took place sometime in the reign of Seti I, and may have resulted in the capture.

In Chapter six I would like you to notice that Yahovah sent an unnamed prophet to tell the people of their sin before He sent someone to deliver them. That someone was Gideon.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gideon \(Judges\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gideon_(Judges))

Gideon or Gedeon (Hebrew: גִּדְיוֹן, Modern Gid'on Tiberian Gi??ôñ), which means "Destroyer," "Mighty warrior," or "Feller (of trees)" was judge of the Hebrews.

As is the pattern throughout the book of Judges, the Israelites again turned away from God after 40 years of peace brought by Deborah's victory over Canaan and were allowed to be attacked by the neighboring Midianites and Amalekites. God chose Gideon, a young man from an otherwise unremarkable clan from the tribe of Manasseh, to free the people of Israel and to condemn their worship of idols.

Very unsure of both himself and God's command, he requested proof of God's will by two miracles, performed on consecutive nights and the exact opposite of each other: 36Then Gideon said to God, "You say that you have decided to use me to rescue Israel. 37Well, I am putting some wool on the ground where we thresh the wheat. If in the morning there is dew only on the wool but not on the ground, then I will know that you are going to use me to rescue Israel." 38That is exactly what happened. When Gideon got up early the next morning, he squeezed the wool and wrung enough dew out of it to fill a bowl with water. 39Then Gideon said to God, "Don't be angry with me; let me speak just once more. Please let me make one more test with the wool. This time let the wool be dry, and the ground be wet." 40 That night God did that very thing. The next morning the wool was dry, but the ground was wet with dew. (Judges 6:36-40, Good News Bible)

On God's instruction, Gideon destroyed the town's altar to the foreign god Baal and the symbol of the goddess Asherah beside it. He went on to send out messengers to gather together men from the tribes of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, as well as his own tribe Manasseh in order to meet an armed force of the people of Midian and the Amalek that had crossed the Jordan River and were encamped in the Valley of Jezreel.

Ps 29-30

I find this week's reading most interesting. IN Psalm 29:7 it says that That Yahovah divides the flames of fire and we have just read how Judah and the house of Israel will become flames and fire which will devour Edom which we have just read in Judges was attacking Israel at that time. In chapter 30 verse 5 we are reminded that His anger is but for a moment and this is a reminder to us for what is soon to come upon the whole house of Israel in punishment.

Mat 17:22 – 18:35

The Two-Drachma Tax

Mathew 17Verse 24: Yahshua and his disciples are in Capernaum, Peter's hometown (Mark

1:29). Some Jewish people, whose job was to collect the “two-drachma” temple tax, came to Peter and asked, “Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?” This was not a Roman tax, but a Jewish tax for the upkeep of the temple. It was based loosely on Exodus 30:11-16. So these folks were not your unpatriotic tax collectors that we usually read about who collected for the Romans; they were the very patriotic supporters of the temple who expected Israelites throughout the homeland and beyond to take part in supporting the temple service. So this question (“Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?”) was probably a test to see how supportive Yahshua would be of the temple service in Jerusalem. Rumors were already circulating that he said disloyal things about the temple.

Peter answered in verse 25, “Yes.” When he and Yahshua were in the house away from the crowd, Yahshua asked Peter (in verse 25b), “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons or from strangers?” So Yahshua is not going to let this go by without a lesson being taught.

He brings up a comparison – an analogy. There are kings on the earth who run their kingdoms with money raised from taxes. How are those taxes collected, Yahshua asked, from the king’s own children or from the rest of the citizens and inhabitants? The analogy pictures Yahovah as the king and the temple service as the running of his kingdom and makes a comparison between some people who are the sons of the king and some who are not the sons of the king.

Who Are the Sons and How Are They Free?

Peter answers Yahshua’ question in verse 26, “From strangers.” That is, kings collect taxes from the citizens and inhabitants that are not part of their family. That’s the right answer. So “Yahshua said to him, ‘Then the sons are exempt (=free).’”

So what is the point Yahshua is making? Who are the sons that are free and how are they free? Verse 27 gives us the decisive clue. Yahshua says to Peter: “However [that is, even though the sons are free] . . . take that and give it to them for you and Me.” In other words, you are free, Peter, and I am free, but we will pay the two-drachma temple tax anyway.

So the comparisons are between the kings of the earth and Yahovah and between the king’s sons and Yahshua with his disciples. Which raises a question: Who are the “strangers”? Who are the “citizens and inhabitants” that are not exempt – not free from the temple tax?

Keep in mind here: This temple tax has nothing to do with the Romans. This is a Jewish tax.

So if Yahshua makes a distinction between the sons who are free and another group who are not free, he is making a distinction within Israel – among two groups of Israelites. This is what John the Baptist did before him. It is what Paul would do after him. John the Baptist called for Israel to repent and be a part of a new, true Israel, and not to boast, “We have Abraham as our father” (Matthew 3:9), as if mere israelite descent made one a child of Yahovah. Then Paul said in Romans 9:6-8, “Not all Israel is Israel . . . It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of Yahovah.”

So the answer is that the “strangers” – the “citizens and inhabitants” who are not free are the

Israelite people who are rejecting Yahshua as the Son of Yahovah

Again in Chapter 18:18 we come across that scripture about binding and releasing which we covered last week.

In verse 19 we read 19 “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning any matter that they ask, it shall be done for them by My Father in the heavens. 20 “For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I am in their midst.”

So many people have so many unanswered prayers. We are about to find out why.

Proverb 15: 29 ???? is far from the wrong ones, But He hears the prayer of the righteous

Proverbs 28: 9 He who turns away his ear from hearing the Torah, Even his prayer is an abomination

So once again we must ask what is righteousness and how do we get it? The answer is found in Psalm 119: 172 My tongue sings of Your word, For all Your commands are righteousness.

James 4:1 Where do fightings and strivings come from among you? Do they not come from your pleasures that battle in your members? 2 You desire, and do not have. You murder, and are jealous, and are unable to obtain. You strive and fight, and you do not possess, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask evilly, in order to spend it on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with Elohim?1 Whoever therefore intends to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of Elohim.. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose? Does the Spirit which dwells in us intensely crave unto envy? 6 But He gives greater favour. Because of this He says, “Elohim resists the proud, but gives favour to the humble.”

1 John 2: 15 Do not love the world nor that which is in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 Because all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world passes away, and the lust of it, but the one doing the desire of Elohim remains forever.

1 John 2:3 And by this we know that we know Him, if we guard His commands.. 4 The one who says, “I know Him,” and does not guard His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him

1 John 3: 22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we guard His commands and do what is pleasing in His sight.

1 John 5:By this we know that we love the children of Elohim, when we love Elohim and guard His commands. 3 For this is the love for Elohim, that we guard His commands,1 and His commands are not heavy,

So we can see the reason so many do not have their prayers answered is because they do not keep the Commandments. When they do pray they ask for themselves and not for the Father’s will to be done, they ask evilly as James has said. If you keep the commandments and do not

commit spiritual adultery by being friends to the world; that is by ignoring Torah, then your prayers will be answered.

When James says we ask evilly he is saying we are asking outside the will of Yahovah.

Yahovah's grace or answer to prayer is given to the humble, those who keep Torah. Pride and arrogance comes from rejecting Torah and picking and choosing what commandment you want to keep. Most people think they are obeying the commandments until you show them that the 4th commandment to keep Holy the Sabbath is the seventh day or Saturday; it also includes the keeping the Holy Days which are found in Leviticus 23 and we are not to add any others to this. When you do add to Lev 23, this is spiritual adultery. The 4th commandment also includes keeping the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. Aviv 2009- Aviv 2010 was a Sabbatical year, how many of you kept it by not planting and storing away food for the whole year? Aviv 1995-Aviv 1996 was the 49th year Sabbatical year and Aviv 1996- Aviv 1997 was the last Jubilee year, how many of you kept these two years Holy and did not plant and stored food for three years at this time.

If you are not keeping the commandments as we have seen, then if you are not keeping all of them, you can expect your prayers will not be answer. This is also how we are to become righteous, repent of our past sins and begin to obey the commandments as shown to you in Torah.

James 5: 13 Is any of you suffering evil? Let him pray. Is anyone in good spirits? Let him sing psalms. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the assembly, and let them pray over him, having anointed him with oil in the Name of the Master. 15 And the prayer of the belief shall save the sick, and the Master shall raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he shall be forgiven. 16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, so that you are healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous one accomplishes much. 17 Eliyahu was a man with feelings like us, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain. And it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the land brought forth its fruit.

The earnest prayers of the righteous do much but the prayers of the unrighteous are an abomination. Who are you going to let pray over you? Not just anyone that comes along. A lady the other day wanted to pray over me. I told her the prayers of the unrighteous are as an abomination to Yahovah. She then cursed me and left. She was not righteous and I was not about to let someone who prays to demons pray over me.

Last scripture is how often shall we forgive our brother. Yahshua says 70 times 7 which is 490. This is the equivalent of half a millennial cycle. But this also refers to what everyone knew was the coming of the Messiah according to the prophecy of Daniel in chapter 9:24-27 about the 70 weeks. What Yahshua is saying is that we shall forgive our brother until the Messiah comes. And then He goes on to show an example of someone who would not forgive even though they had been forgiven a huge debt.

That someone is you and the debt of all your sins are forgiven and paid for by Yahovah. So if He is willing to write off your debt for your sins, then you too ought to do the same to those who have done less against you.