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Gen 43	2 Sam 15-16	Ps 86-87	Luke 6
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## Owning Up and Growing Up (Genesis 42-43)

It had been 22 years now since the brothers had sold Joseph into slavery and deceived their father, Jacob. That is a very long time to maintain a lie, and it seems to have taken its toll on the sons of Israel. Things got a little rough in Egypt when Joseph accused them of being spies. The brothers were clearly shaken. Their crime against Joseph must never have been far from mind, for when Joseph demanded they bring Benjamin to Egypt as proof of their story, they immediately viewed their trouble as punishment for what they did so long ago. Reuben adds an "I told you so" since he had originally planned to save Joseph. But he, of course, had become just as responsible as the others, for he had not told their father the truth either, nor had he attempted to find and free his enslaved brother once he discovered what had happened.

The many years with unresolved guilt have matured the brothers since their earlier misdeed. Contrast the younger and older Judah for instance. In Genesis 37, it was Judah who originated the idea of selling Joseph to the Arabian traders. Now, in Genesis 43, he is willing to offer himself as collateral to protect Joseph's brother, Benjamin. Before, he did not regard his father's happiness. But now he is willing to accept blame forever rather than hurt his father again. Judah will prove the genuineness of his change and the sincerity of his promise in chapter 44.

While the brothers deal with their guilt, Joseph seems to have a number of mixed emotions. At first, he feels a little indignant at them when he recognizes that the dreams for which they hated him so long ago (37:8) have come true. Testing their attitudes, he deals rather roughly with them. But when he hears their sorrow and distress as they discuss their regret, Joseph weeps secretly. He now forgives them in his heart. Although he continues to give them a very distressing time openly, he does kind things for them behind the scenes.

## Adversity from David's Own House (2 Samuel 15:1-16:14; Psalm 3)

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Chapter 15 of 2 Samuel opens with Prince Absalom beginning to present himself as successor to the throne (verse 1). He also presents himself as one who empathizes with the plight of the people and their personal grievances. There may be a measure of truth in David being busied with affairs of state and somewhat cut off from the citizenry. Absalom may even sincerely resent this, considering David's mishandling of his own situation. Perhaps he really does believe he would do a better job of caring for the populace. Still, even if he is thinking this way, it may simply be a way to rationalize his personal ambition. He wants to be king. And, by personal charm and promises, Absalom, the premier politician, over time steals the hearts of the people from his father.

Absalom finally conspires with others to instigate a full-scale revolt. He engineers to have himself declared king in Hebron, where David was first crowned (2:1-7; 5:1-5). As we'll examine further later, Absalom is even joined by Ahithophel, "David's counselor" (15:12)—this term perhaps implying *main* counselor, such as a prime minister or chief of staff (compare 1 Chronicles 27:33-34). After David sinned with Bathsheba and Uriah, God told him through Nathan, "Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house" (2 Samuel 12:11). And indeed, his own son has now become his chief adversary—leading a national rebellion against him. David is now reaping what he sowed in his own *personal* rebellion against God (compare Galatians 6:7-8).

Informed of what is happening, David wisely flees from Jerusalem with his trusted servants, lest Absalom's armies trap them all. They head east across the Kidron Valley toward the Judean wilderness. A Levitical contingent led by Zadok and Abiathar bring the Ark of the Covenant to strengthen and encourage the king. But he sends them back to the city with it. "It was David who was going into exile, not the Lord; the symbol of God's presence with his people would remain in the place of worship for the entire community" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 15:24-26). David also believes the priests will serve well as effective spies. As for whether David will be restored to his place in Jerusalem as well, he leaves that in God's hands. When he first fled, he apparently felt God would give the city back to him, as he otherwise would probably not have left 10 concubines there to take care of the palace (verse 16). Interestingly, this decision will have incredible consequences. Indeed, as we will see, this will lead to one of the punishments God had decreed for David because of his adultery with Bathsheba.

While the priests return the ark to its place on Mount Zion, David and his company ascend the Mount of Olives, east of the city, with outward signs of mourning (compare Jeremiah 14:3; Ezekiel 24:17). Upon reaching the top, David worships God (2 Samuel 15:32), no doubt looking across the Kidron Valley to Mount Zion, where the ark and its tent sit next to his palace. He has just received the terrible news that Ahithophel has joined the rebellion—terrible because, besides being a personal betrayal that may be reflected in Psalms 55:12-14 and 41:9

(also prophetic of Christ's betrayal by Judas), Ahithophel gave brilliant counsel (2 Samuel 16:23). And as David is worshiping and beseeching God over the matter, he receives an answer to his prayers in the appearance of another of his advisers, Hushai—whom he sends to infiltrate Absalom's court and work against Ahithophel.

Moving on, just past the summit of the Mount of Olives, David's entourage runs into Ziba, the steward of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. Surprisingly, he tells the king that Mephibosheth is now expecting the kingdom to be given back to the family of Saul by virtue of what is happening in Israel. But this may actually be a lie, as we are later given a completely different report by Mephibosheth (19:24-30). Nevertheless, David is unaware of this "other side of the story." Moreover, Ziba is clearly bearing gifts for the king and his household, putting himself in mortal danger from Absalom by helping them. So the king, without inquiry, accepts Ziba at his word and grants to him all that belongs to Mephibosheth.

Continuing on a little further east, David's company arrives at Bahurim, where Shimei, a man from the same clan as Saul's family, begins following David and cursing him along the way—implying that David is a usurper guilty of overthrowing Saul and his dynasty. Though David is totally innocent of this charge, he realizes Absalom's rebellion is due to actual sin on his part. And for this reason, he accepts Shimei's railing as part of God's judgment upon him even though the man is breaking the law by cursing the king (compare Exodus 22:28).

It is evidently the next day when David composes Psalm 3, after a night's sleep (compare superscription, verse 5). It might be surprising to learn that he is able to sleep at all under such stressful conditions. Yet he recalls the previous day when he prayed to God from the Mount of Olives, looking across to His "holy hill," and how God answered him (verse 4). Reassured and trusting in God, he is able to rest secure even in this troubling time.

## **Before All Israel, Before the Sun (2 Samuel 16:15-17:29)**

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David's decision to leave 10 concubines, i.e., unofficial wives, at the palace will now be taken advantage of by his enemies. Ahithophel advises Absalom to lie with these women. *The Nelson Study Bible* notes: "In ancient times, taking over a king's harem was a recognized means of claiming the throne. When Ahithophel advised Absalom to have sexual relations with David's concubines, he knew that this would finalize the breach between Absalom and David. It was an irrevocable action. Up to this point, Absalom would have been able to back away from all that he had done and still be reconciled to his father. But once he violated the harem of David, he was set on a course of sure and final alienation from his father" (note on 16:22).

But there is more going on here.

It is clear that these events are bringing to pass the final punishment God had decreed on David through Nathan after David's sin of taking his neighbor Uriah's wife and murdering him. God had said, "I will take *your* wives before your eyes and give them to *your* neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing

before all Israel, before the sun” (12:11-12). Thus the manner in which Ahithophel counseled Absalom to go about his deed: “The tent that Absalom pitched in the sight of all Israel was probably a bridal tent. Absalom made the people of Israel fully aware that he was engaging in sexual relations with his father’s concubines. Putting the tent on the roof of the palace was an insolent act that was guaranteed to stir the populace one way or another” (note on 16:22).

Yet why would Ahithophel be the one to advise such a thing? Indeed, why has Ahithophel joined Absalom’s rebellion? And why does he now hate David so much to the point of wanting to be the one to lead the attack to actually kill him (17:1-2)? It all makes sense when we remember that Ahithophel is the grandfather of Bathsheba (compare 11:3; 23:34). And his son, her father Eliam or Ammiel, was a close companion of Uriah (compare verses 34, 39; 1 Chronicles 3:5). Author Grant Jeffrey explains, “As David’s counselor in the palace, Ahithophel must have burned with rage to know his king had betrayed his granddaughter’s honor and killed Uriah, her husband, who was a fellow soldier with his son Eliam, Bathsheba’s father. However, there was nothing he could do at the time to exact his revenge. If he had risen in anger against the king he would have lost his life. So he remained silent, keeping his thoughts of revenge secretly to himself all of the years that followed until he saw an opportunity to destroy King David. The Arabs have an expression, ‘That a man who seeks his revenge before forty years has past has moved in haste’” (*The Signature of God*, 1996, pp. 244-245). With this in mind, we can see why Ahithophel would join Absalom’s rebellion and offer to kill David personally. And we can understand why it was Ahithophel who instructed Absalom to lie with his father’s wives “in the sight of all Israel.” He was, no doubt, “attempting to get his revenge by encouraging Absalom to do the same thing to David’s wives as the king had done to his granddaughter” (p. 245).

Though Absalom follows Ahithophel’s advice concerning David’s concubines, he and his lieutenants are persuaded by Hushai to reject Ahithophel’s plan of attack. The shrewdness of Hushai’s counsel is demonstrated in his carefully worded evaluation that Ahithophel’s advice is not good “at this time” (2 Samuel 17:7). In other words, Hushai did not reject Ahithophel’s counsel outright. Instead, his criticism of merely the timing of the plan showed respect for Ahithophel’s wisdom, which may have served to deter suspicion from himself. Of course, verse 14 explains that Hushai’s success is really *God’s* doing. Remarkably, while God has been using circumstances to actually bring about Absalom’s rebellion as punishment on David—in that sense “helping” Absalom—we now see that God is determined to bring Absalom down and ultimately save David.

With his counsel rejected, Ahithophel hangs himself (verse 23). “He apparently realized that Absalom’s cause was doomed, and that when David returned he would be put to death as a disloyal subject” (*Nelson*, note on verse 23).

## Psalm 86

**Psalm 86** is a prayerful lament of David, wherein he cries out to God for mercy. This is the only psalm in Book III with David's name in the title. Certain key phrases are found in other psalms of David. "I am poor and needy" (verse 2), referring to his lowly, humbled state and need for God's saving help, is also found in Psalm 40:17 (repeated in 70:5). "To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul" (86:4) is also found in Psalm 25:1 (compare 143:8). And "Teach me Your way, O Lord" (86:11), showing his deep longing to know and follow God's laws, is also found in Psalm 27:11.

David doesn't give the specifics of his affliction but it is dire—as he perceived himself headed toward "the depths of Sheol" (verse 13), that is, the grave. And his predicament involved a proud mob of violent, godless men who sought his life (verse 14). David is troubled by his situation "all day long" (verse 3), and its remedy requires God's forgiveness (verse 5). A number of other psalms of David follow this familiar pattern.

In the NKJV translation of verse 2, David prays, "Preserve my life, for I am holy." The word translated "holy" here is not the typical Hebrew word meaning holy, *qodesh* or *kadesh*. Rather, the Hebrew word here is *hasid*, translated "godly" in Psalm 4:3: "But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is *godly*." However, the word *hasid* is closely related to the word *hesed*, used in Psalm 86 for God's mercy, lovingkindness or covenant faithfulness. In context of the rest of verse 2, David seems to be stressing his relationship to God—that he is loyal and faithful to God. The NIV translates his words as, "...for I am devoted to you." Thus, David is not saying he is worthy of saving because of some self-inherent goodness. He is instead basing His plea on the relationship He has with God—one of mutual covenant faithfulness.

"Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord," David declares in verse 8, answering the rhetorical question posed in Exodus 15:11. None of the pagan gods of the surrounding nations are even real—though real demonic spirits may pose as them (compare 1 Corinthians 10:20). That David does not believe in pagan gods is clear, for he states, "You alone are God"—appropriately spelled in English with a capital G (verse 10). He foresees the time when the nations worshipping false gods will learn about their true Creator and glorify Him (verse 9)—which we see more about in the next psalm.

Besides expressing his desire to know and follow God's teachings (verse 11), David also asks for an "undivided" heart so that he can properly fear God and sincerely praise Him (verses 11-12). And note that he is confident that he will be able to do so forevermore (verse 12) because, as he is sure, God will have delivered him from his life-threatening situation (verse 13).

The description of God's compassion and mercy in verse 15 appears drawn from God's description of Himself to Moses in Exodus 34:6.

David concludes Psalm 86 with a final plea for mercy, strengthening and deliverance (verse 16), asking for a positive sign on his behalf (verse 17)—not to help him believe, as he already does, but so that his enemies will be put to shame.

## Psalm 87

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**Psalm 87**, another Korahite psalm in the final cluster of Book III, is a song of Zion—yet a remarkably unusual one in that other nations are included in the ranks of Zion’s citizenry. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, in its introductory note on this psalm, says that it’s “difficult to postulate an original life-situation for the psalm. It may well have been associated with any of the three pilgrimage festivals, when Israel together with proselytes [from other nations] joined together in the worship of God at the temple.” While there may have been some application for that time, the psalm when composed was clearly forward-looking—prophesying of the future. Thematically, this psalm follows David’s remark in the previous psalm about all nations eventually coming to worship the true God (86:9).

“The holy mountains” of 87:1, where sits the foundation of God’s worship system and from where He will ultimately rule all nations, refers either to Israel and Judah or to the hills of Jerusalem. If the former, verse 2 narrows the focus to Zion. If the latter, verse 2 simply defines the mountains as those of Zion. “The Lord loves the gates of Zion” because they form the entrance to the temple through which His people have a relationship with Him. *The Nelson Study Bible* states that “the verb *loves* includes the idea of choice (see Deut. 6:5) as well as emotion. God chose Jerusalem, and He also has an enduring affection for the city” (note on verses 2-3).

In verse 4, the end of the phrase “I will make mention of Rahab [i.e., Egypt (see Isaiah 30:7)] and Babylon to those who know Me” could be translated as “...AS those who know Me” (note on Psalm 87:4)—or perhaps “...AS OF those who know Me.” The NIV renders verse 4 this way: “I will record Rahab [Egypt] and Babylon among those who acknowledge me—Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush [i.e., Ethiopia or perhaps all of east and southern Africa]—and will say, ‘This one was born in Zion.’” This is saying that people born in other nations, even nations that were troublesome to Israel, will be considered as “born in Zion” once they repent and worship the true God. Verse 6 affirms, “The Lord will record, when He registers the peoples: this one was born there.

This process begins with Believers today: “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...to the general assembly of the firstborn who are registered in heaven” (Hebrews 12:22)—spiritual Zion according to the New Covenant, “the Jerusalem above...which is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26). The New Testament describes the gentile nations generally as “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers of the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12). Yet those who come into God’s People have a drastically changed status— to that of

being “no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (verse 19). Through Yeshua, they become “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29).

Then, when Christ returns, these will all be spiritually born of Zion in the resurrection. As Isaiah 66:8 says: “Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children.”

Afterward, God’s holy mountain, His Kingdom, will grow from Zion to fill the entire earth—so that all nations will become part of Israel in a spiritual sense. All will be born in Zion. How marvelous is God’s plan for all people! It is a cause for singing and rejoicing (Psalm 87:7). The phrase “all my springs are in you” (same verse), or “all my fountains are in you” (NIV), calls to mind the “river whose streams shall make glad the city of God” (46:4), the life-giving river of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:1-5), the “fountain of life” (Jeremiah 2:13) and the “wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3), from which living water will be drawn with joy.

Occurring as it does near the end of Book III, which contains a number of psalms about Israel’s devastation at the hands of enemy nations (previewing the time of the great tribulation ahead), perhaps this psalm was placed here to remind God’s people to not focus on wishing ill on their enemies but to long for the day when all will be reconciled, dwelling happily together in the family of God.

## Luke 6

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In Luke chapter 6, we get a glimpse and some clues as to what year in history this was when Yeshua and His disciples were walking through the grain fields and eating the grain berries. It was a Sabbath year! How do we know? Because to do this sort of thing when the field was not yours would be theft. But not in a Sabbath year.

Also in this chapter we see several moments of contention between Yeshua and the Scribes and Pharisees particularly over the proper Sabbath observance. The Pharisees were holding to rules, regulations, and laws that were made by men – fences placed around the Torah by the Rabbis but were in fact, not the Torah of Elohim. Yeshua is proving these facts in this chapter and He straightens things out by His teaching and actions.

Beginning in verse 13, Yeshua chooses His twelve emissaries and we are given their names. Yeshua continues to heal the sick and deliver those in bondage to unclean spirits.

Next, we receive another rendition from Luke on the sermon on the Mount with some additional instruction from Yeshua. Love your neighbor as yourself, do unto others as you would have done unto you, give without expecting return, love your enemies, be kind to those who hate you. Trees are known by their fruits and what each of us bring forth indicates the condition of our hearts.

We finish chapter 6 hearing our Master's Words concerning how important it is to build our faith upon Him and His Words, but most importantly – to do them. If we are hearing and not doing, and if we are not digging deep... so deep that you hit down to the bedrock (which is Messiah), then our faith is based upon nothing and will fail during the hard times.