

Triennial Torah Study – 3rd Year 07/07/2012

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

<https://sightedmoon.com/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf>

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| Num 9 | | Job 22-25 | Hebrews 10 |
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Observing the Passover (Numbers 9)

In Exodus 12 we received the original instructions for the Passover. Now, however, because some men had become defiled by coming into contact with dead bodies, thus becoming ceremonially unclean, they would have to miss the Passover. They appealed to Moses because they really didn't want to miss out entirely on this divinely commanded feast (Leviticus 23:5).

God reveals Himself in encounters like this one. He isn't the harsh, heavy-handed, unreasonable God some would make Him out to be. This event gives us a glimpse at how compassionate and understanding He actually is in making it possible for us to follow Him. He is giving and serving, not willing that any should perish, but that all mankind should ultimately be in His Kingdom. Thus, He establishes the second Passover for those who, for reasons beyond their control, miss the first Passover.

It isn't usually published on sacred calendars, so how can you tell when to keep the second Passover? There is an easy rule of thumb to use so as not to get confused. Just add four weeks and two days to the first Passover. For example, if the first Passover was on a Tuesday night the second Passover will be on a Thursday night.

Of course, we must never purposely skip the first Passover. God the Father literally gave up His Son Jesus Christ so that Christ could come to earth and die to take away our sin. Passover pictures this aspect of God's incredible plan of salvation. By God's good graces some have been called to be a part of that plan at this time. Moses explained that those who disregarded the Passover would be cut off and bear their sin. It is the same for us today. To skip, or treat the Passover lightly, is to say to our Savior, "Thanks, but no thanks." We would remain in our sin (verse 13). Let us never drift down such a dangerous spiritual path. (To better understand the significance of the Passover, see "The Passover: Why Did Jesus Christ Have to Die?," God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind, pp. 10-19.)

“Is Not Your Wickedness Great, and Your Iniquity Without End?” (Job 22)

Eliphaz now responds for the third and last time, giving a renewed rebuke and a call to repentance. He opens by asking of what benefit or pleasure it is to God whether Job is innocent (verses 1-3). The question itself seems absurd. It is true that God does not need righteous servants, but He does desire them. From other passages, we know that God delights in the righteous and that He experiences joy when people repent. Eliphaz’s questions seem to imply that God doesn’t really care one way or the other—and that Job is an arrogant fool for thinking otherwise.

Yet Eliphaz sees this as really a moot point—since he believes Job is not innocent. In verse 4, Eliphaz mocks Job: “Is it because of your fear of Him that He corrects you...?” Eliphaz sees no evidence of a right fear of God on Job’s part. Instead, to him, all the evidence points to sinfulness.

In fact, as Eliphaz sees it, since Job’s suffering is great, his sin must be great too (see verse 5). Eliphaz then launches into a list of specific charges of particular sins. Where in the world did he come up with these? Probably from reasoning backwards. First of all, Job’s ongoing insistence regarding his own righteousness before God probably made it look like he was actually convinced of his faithfulness to God, which to Eliphaz means Job must have made a pretense of religion while neglecting important areas. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary suggests: “Eliphaz felt Job had deceived himself by trusting in his ritual piety (what he had done for God) while his real sin was what he failed to do for his fellow man” (note on verses 411). And since Job’s sufferings were the worst ever seen, his sins must have been particularly severe—social oppression and neglect being perceived as very serious in a society that viewed hospitality as one of the chief human responsibilities. It appears that Eliphaz fabricated these particular charges to fit the facts as he saw them.

There was one big problem though—these were not facts at all. They were baseless, made-up lies. Job was not like this at all, as we know from the testimony of God himself at the beginning of the book.

Moreover, Eliphaz accuses Job of thinking that God is so far off as to not be able to see what Job is doing (verses 12-14). Yet while it is true that Job has lamented God’s apparent indifference to the wicked, he has also directly complained of God’s overbearing watchfulness over him to pursue him with calamity. Job certainly did not think he could hide anything from God.

Notice verses 17-18. Eliphaz denounces hypocritical wicked people for rejecting God even though God has “filled their houses with good things.” Did you catch that? Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar have been contending that God only curses the wicked—but here we see Eliphaz saying that God has blessed them with their possessions. Which is it? Eliphaz could not see the contradiction in his own beliefs.

In verses 21-30, Eliphaz gives a wonderful call to repentance—for a person “to submit; to be at peace with God (v. 21); to hear God’s word and hide it in his heart (v. 22); to return to the Almighty and forsake wickedness (v. 23); to find delight in God rather than in gold (vv. 24-26); and to pray, obey (v. 27), and become concerned about sinners (vv. 29-30)” (Expositor’s, note on verses 21-30). The big problem with this statement is that Eliphaz is making it to the wrong person. Job is innocent of the charges leveled against him. He is in no way the uncaring, wealth-obsessed miser Eliphaz has painted him as. Indeed, this man whom God called upright was just the opposite. Job will in fact repent at the end of the story, but not for any of the false accusations of Job’s friends.

In its note on verse 30, The Nelson Study Bible states: “Eliphaz’s prediction that God would deliver one who is not innocent through the purity of Job’s hands would be fulfilled ironically through Job’s prayer for the three friends [at the end of the book] (42:8-10).”

“I Would Present My Case Before Him” (Job 23-24)

Job does not answer Eliphaz’s outrageous charges. Instead, he groans and wishes he could go to God and present his case before Him. In verse 5, the phrase “I would know the words which He would answer me” means “I would like to know His answer.”

In contrast to Eliphaz’s apparent contention that God did not really care whether Job was innocent (see 22:1-3), Job is convinced that God did care and that if he could reason with God, then he would at last be delivered.

While Job cannot travel about to find God, he realizes that God, in contrast, knows exactly where to find him because God is putting him through his current trial (verses 8-10). Job’s point in verse 10 about emerging from God’s test as gold compares to similar imagery in later passages where the purification of gold and silver are used to typify trials refining God’s people (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:20; Psalm 66:10; Isaiah 48:10; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12; Revelation 3:18). However, in Job 23:10 it is not clear if Job is saying that his current trial will burn away his impurities leaving only gold, or pure character, remaining—or if he means that the test will reveal him as having had pure character all along. The latter seems more likely since, in the next two verses, he states that he has not departed from God’s commandments (indirectly refuting Eliphaz’s charges).

The precise meaning of Job 24:1 is debated. The phrase “Since times are not hidden from the Almighty” could also be rendered “Why are times not stored up [or reserved] by the Almighty?” The point of the entire verse might be: “Why does God not reserve particular times or days and make His servants aware of them?” These times could refer to God setting days for holding court or to meet with His servants in need (in conjunction with Job’s desire in chapter 23 to appear before God). Alternatively, the times could refer to set periods of judgment (to deal with the sinners Job describes in 24:2-17).

It seems that Job's concern for his own unjust suffering has sparked the thought about the broader issue that many innocent people in the world are made to suffer at the hands of sinners who themselves do not have to pay for their crimes. How is that fair?

Verses 18-25 are disputed. Note how the New King James Version has added the italicized word "should" a number of times in verses 18 and 20. Without this, the verses are statements of fact concerning the fate of the wicked, as other versions render them. Many, including the NKJV editors, do not think Job would be saying that the wicked will get theirs, as this seems not to fit in context and agrees too much with his friends' argument. However, Job could well be noting that the wicked will eventually receive punishment in the end—and is just upset that they seem to get off scot-free until then. Others see him as pronouncing a curse on the wicked here (because God doesn't seem willing to) or stating what God should do as in the NKJV. Verses 22-24 may refer to not just the wicked but all men ultimately being brought low, seeming to show that God uses His power arbitrarily.

There is so much wickedness—so much of man hurting his fellow man. Why does God let it go on? Why doesn't He bring immediate judgment? Why do the innocent have to suffer at the hands of cruel and wicked men? Why does God Himself bring terrible suffering on Job, who is innocent? This is the essence of what Job wants to understand in this passage—the case he would bring before God.

Chapter 25 (from <http://www.easyenglish.info>)

Verse 1

Bildad interrupted Job.

Bildad was not pleased to hear about the troubles of poor people (chapter 24). He knew that God is very great. So Bildad thought that God controlled everything.

Bildad also thought that people are unimportant. And he thought that people do not deserve God's help.

Verses 2-3

These verses are correct. God is powerful. He is the ruler of heaven. Everybody should respect him. He has a vast army of angels. (Angels are God's servants from heaven.) The angels obey God's commands. They oppose the devil and his servants.

Verses 4-5

Bildad repeated the ideas in Eliphaz's first speech (Job 4:17-19). Bildad was right that every person does wrong things against God (Romans 3:23). But Bildad did not say that God wants to forgive us (Romans 3:24). God forgives us when we confess our evil deeds to him. So nobody is really perfect. But Job was a good man (Job 1:1). In fact, God himself said this (Job 1:8). So we know that Job confessed his evil deeds to God (Job 31:33).

Job trusted God. And God forgave Job's errors.

Verse 6

These words are not correct. God appointed men and women to rule the animals. God made them in the 'image of God' (Genesis 1:26). This is, God wanted people to share his special character.

So Bildad did not really care about the poor people whom Job described in chapter 24. But God does care about them.

God protects people who are poor and weak (Psalm 12:5). Even the animals are special to God. But Jesus taught that people are more valuable to God than animals (Matthew 6:26). Jesus became a man like us (Hebrews 2:6-9). He did this so that people could become the children of God. And he did it so that people can become members of God's family (Hebrews 2:11-14).

Hebrews Chapter 10

The opening of Hebrews chapter 10 further confirms what has been studied in the previous weeks concerning some chapters in the Book of Hebrews, namely, that Paul is talking about the earthly and temporary priesthood (high priest) and not the covenant as so many wrongly teach. The instructions given to the High Priest concerning national atonement (along with the other slaughterings and offerings as a whole) were "pictures" given to us, to notify us of the "reality" of what was to come. These instructions for rituals were a similitude portraying later events, that when accomplished by Messiah, were true, final, and entirely Holy. The proof that these pictures that were being portrayed were not the "true reality" lie in the fact that they had to be repeated each and every year. Specifically speaking again of the Day of Atonement, and the cleansing and sacrificial duties of the High Priest. For if they were able to make perfect, they would not have had to be repeated, as Paul shares in verse 1.

"Because those who served, once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins." Verse 2. These offerings were a continual reminder of the sins, and that sins were continually needing to be cleansed year after year. Why? It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

We see this even today, in that sins are being forgiven when someone simply asks the Father for forgiveness with a contrite heart and a determination to change their ways and walk rightly before Him. No slaughterings are done and yet, sins are forgiven. All Israel knew this. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 40:6-7 "Slaughtering and meal offering You did not desire; You have opened my ears; Burnt offering and sin offering You did not ask for. Then I said, "See, I have come; In the scroll of the Book it is prescribed for me." King Solomon also testifies to this fact in 1 Kings 8:46-50:

"When they sin against You – for there is no one who does not sin – and You become enraged with them and give them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; and they shall turn back unto their heart in the land where they have been taken captive, and shall turn, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and acted crookedly, we have committed wrong,' and they shall turn back to You with all their heart and with all their being in the land of their enemies

who led them away captive, and shall pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the House which I have built for Your Name, then shall You hear in the heavens You dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You? And give them compassion before those who took them captive, and they shall have compassion on them.”

Then He said, “See, I come to do Your desire, O Elohim.” He takes away the first to establish the second. Verse 9. Yehovah took away the sacrificial ritual of animal slaughterings for the covering of sin in order to establish the reign of our new and perfect High Priest Messiah Yeshua, who’s offering was perfect and once and for all. The Perfect High Priest is Yeshua.

He is now sitting on the throne in the heavenly Temple waiting until His enemies are made His footstool (v.13). The singular offering of Himself perfected for all time those who are being set apart. The Holy Spirit is a definite witness to us of this truth. For it was written and prophesied “This is the covenant that I shall make with them after those days, giving My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I shall write them,” and, “Their sins and their lawlessness’s I shall remember no more.”

For there is no other explanation for a situation where a people would desire with their hearts, to do the Torah with joy and gladness. To choose to obey out of love and worship, an Elohim who has never been seen, but believed with the whole heart, mind, soul, and strength. This is the witness of the Holy Spirit. So Paul tells us to have boldness now, to enter in and draw near to the Holy One with the covering of the blood of Messiah Yeshua. Now each of our hearts are sprinkled and cleansed from a wicked conscience and our bodies washed with clean water (v. 22). A beautiful reflection of the offering of the red heifer.