

## Triennial Torah Study – 5<sup>th</sup> Year 09/08/2014

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By Joseph F. Dumond

We continue this weekend with our regular Triennial Torah reading which can be found at [https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon\\_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf](https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf)

<b>Gen 50</b>	<b>1 Kings 2</b>	<b>Ps 103-104</b>	<b>Luke 13 – 14:11</b>
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### Death and Burial (Genesis 49:29—50:26)

After his father's death, Joseph fulfilled Jacob's request to be buried in the same cave in which Abraham and Isaac had been entombed at the time of their deaths. Joseph, who had sworn to take care of this, did as his father had asked, along with his brothers and even the Egyptian elders and the servants of Pharaoh. Mourning the death of Jacob with Joseph as they would for Egyptian royalty illustrates the great respect the Egyptians had for Joseph, the man whom God had used to save them from famine and by whom their nation was greatly enriched.

Joseph also wished to eventually be buried in the land of his fathers. Knowing that God would later bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and back to Canaan, he made them swear to "carry up my bones from here" (verse 25). However, as a national figure in Egypt, he was first put in a coffin in Egypt rather than being buried in his homeland right away. That Joseph anticipated his burial in Egypt and the Exodus as well is clear from the obligation he bound on the descendants of Israel. Moses would make good on the oath more than 200 years later by taking Joseph's bones out of Egypt during the Exodus (Exodus 13:19). The bones remained with the children of Israel until they entered the Promised Land and were eventually buried in Shechem (Joshua 24:32).

The bones of the patriarchs being buried in the land of Canaan may well have symbolized their future inheritance of the Promised Land, itself representative of God's coming Kingdom—and indeed that is where they will awaken at the *inauguration* of God's Kingdom when Yeshua Messiah returns. Of course, regardless of where our bones might be buried, the saints of God will all be awakened at Christ's return to establish the true Promised Land, God's Kingdom, over all the earth.

### Solomon Establishes His Kingdom (1 Kings 2:13-46)

When David responded to Nathan's parable following the death of Uriah, he stated that the man in the story should have to pay fourfold for the death of the poor man's lamb (see 2 Sam 12:1-6). It is interesting to note that the Scriptures explicitly record the subsequent untimely deaths of four of David's sons: the child born of his adultery with Bathsheba, Amnon at the hand of Absalom, Absalom at the hand of Joab, and finally Adonijah by the order of Solomon.

Adonijah had been warned to watch his behavior very carefully (1:51-53). His natural birth order had given him a solid claim to the throne. He has the support of the former chief army commander and one of the two highest-ranking priests. Having Abishag would increase his claim a bit more, since the virgins of a king's harem apparently were considered part of the royal property inherited by the next king (2 Samuel 12:8). "The Greek historian Herodotus says that among the Persians a new king inherited the previous king's harem and that to possess the harem was taken as title to the throne. While no such custom is [explicitly] expressed in Scripture, Absalom's earlier public appropriation of his father's concubines did symbolize his determination to take David's throne (2 Sam. 16:21-23). Solomon rightly took Adonijah's request for Abishag, who had been David's concubine, as an indication he was still plotting rebellion" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on 1 Kings 2:13-25). Using Solomon's own mother as an unwitting accomplice in the plot to boost Adonijah's image was the last straw. Solomon is swift and decisive in dealing with his brother's transgression.

Partly because of suspected collusion (verse 22), Solomon formally deposes Abiathar, and apparently the rest of his family, from any further role in the priesthood. Zadok's appointment to replace Abiathar as priest fulfills the prophecy given long before that God would raise up a faithful priest to replace the line of Eli (verses 26-27, 35; 1 Samuel 2:35; Ezekiel 44:15).

Then Joab is executed as a suspected accomplice, which also fulfills David's directive (1 Kings 2:5-6). Shimei, not part of the immediate incident, is given a rather mild sentence to remain in Jerusalem, but under penalty of death if he leaves. After three years, though, it seems he forgets the seriousness of the penalty, or Solomon's resolve to carry it out, and he also is executed.

## "Forget Not All His Benefits" (Psalms 103-104)

**Psalm 103**, attributed in the superscription to David, is a psalm of praise for the wonderful goodness of God directed toward His people. David begins by talking with himself, demanding that his whole being "bless" the Lord (verses 1-2). This is in response to all of God's wonderful benefits—the blessings He gives us. We cannot of course bless God in kind. A "blessing" from a human being directed to God is a word of heartfelt praise or thanksgiving or an expressed wish to see all of God's purposes fulfilled, implying cheerful and committed cooperation with Him—submitting oneself fully to His will. Note that the psalm begins and ends with the same formula (verses 1, 22)—as does the next psalm (104:1, 35).

In Psalm 103:3-5, David calls attention to six personal blessings from the Lord: forgiveness, healing, redemption, lovingkindness, satisfaction and renewal. With "you" and "your" in these verses, David was still speaking to himself, but clearly these statements apply to all of God's people. That is, each of us reading or singing along with the psalm could say the same things to ourselves. A seventh blessing—relief from oppression—is listed in verse 6 as applying to "all" (thus expanding the divine blessings out to others).

At the top of his list, David thanks God that He has the power and desire to forgive the perverse crookedness of our human nature that manifests itself in various iniquities (verse 3a). Next we are told that God "heals all your diseases" (verse 3b)—just as God "forgives all your iniquities" in the previous clause. Some, realizing that godly people sometimes must suffer ongoing infirmity despite repeated prayers (as even the apostle Paul had to), think God healing "all" our diseases here does not mean that He heals every single one. Rather, they interpret these words as meaning merely that all diseases we have *that are healed* are healed by God—that is, whenever we are healed, God is the One who heals us. This is problematic, however, as it would indicate the same meaning for the previous parallel clause—that all iniquities we have *that are forgiven* are forgiven by God (thus meaning that God is the One who does whatever forgiving is done and not all of our sins are necessarily forgiven). Yet the statement about forgiveness seems more clearly to mean that God forgives every one of our sins—which indicates that the healing clause means that God heals every one of our diseases. In fact, as an inspired scriptural proclamation about God's nature, this would seem to be a divine promise. How then are we to reconcile this with faithful believers who are not healed?

First we must recognize that there are conditions that must be met for healing—just as there are for forgiveness. Forgiveness requires repentance and faith—and so does divine healing (especially in cases where the sickness or disease is a result of the afflicted person's sins). But even when these conditions are met, God is not

obligated to instantly and immediately remove affliction. Yet Psalm 103:3 would indicate that He *has* obligated Himself to heal the faithful *at some point*. He may choose to instantly intervene and heal—or, for His great and inscrutable purposes, He may decide to delay healing until much later. In fact, He may in some cases choose to delay healing until after a person has died—when, in the ultimate healing, He will return believers to life in the resurrection from the dead. In this, God still proves Himself faithful to the promise of Psalm 103. Indeed, faithful believers brought up in the resurrection will experience perfect wellness and be impervious to illness for eternity to come.

We find a further parallel in the benefit that follows. God “redeems your life from destruction” (verse 4a)—“from the pit” (NIV)—pulling us from dire circumstances and ultimately from the grave. This, of course, does not mean that we won’t suffer adversity or death. David suffered both. God’s own perfect Son, Yeshua Messiah, suffered intensely and died in His human life at a young age. So, while the promise of Psalm 103:4 is in part for our lives today—as God keeps us from various calamities throughout our lives and lets us endure others before rescuing us—the ultimate fulfillment of the verse will not come until our future resurrection in God’s Kingdom. Even so, in verse 3 God delivers us from physical ailments throughout our lives today, but He will not remove all illness from us for eternity to come until that same resurrection.

The same applies to being crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies (verse 4b). On one level, David may have been speaking to himself of God having literally crowned him as the king of Israel—along with the advantages and privileges that brought. Yet he may also have been thinking of God more generally and figuratively heaping blessings and care upon his head (compare Genesis 49:26). The word for “lovingkindness” in Psalm 103:4 is *hesed*, meaning loyal steadfast love or covenant faithfulness, while tender mercies here refers to deep compassion and parental care (compare verse 13). Being the objects of God’s grace or favor “crowns” His people above all creation. And ultimately, they will be crowned as literal kings to rule in His Kingdom (Revelation 5:10).

That God “satisfies your mouth with good things” (Psalm 103:5) includes more than providing food. “The word translated ‘mouth’ is a bit of a puzzle since it is usually translated ‘ornaments’ or ‘jewelry,’ words that hardly fit this context” (Wiersbe, *Be Exultant*, note on verses 1-6). The NIV follows the Greek Septuagint translation in rendering the word as “desires” (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, footnote on verse 5). “Some students interpret the word to mean ‘duration’ or ‘years’ (see NASB [compare NRSV]). No matter how old we become, God can satisfy the needs of our lives and the spiritual desires of our hearts” (Wiersbe, note on verses 1-6). To be *renewed like the eagle* (verse 5) pictures having the strength to soar, to keep on (compare Isaiah 40:31). Both elements of Psalm 103:5 will find ultimate fulfillment in the Kingdom of God—as will God’s righteous and just intervention for the oppressed of verse 6.

David uses the past national experience of Israel to illustrate God’s blessings on His people—particularly His forgiveness, mercy and love. This was explained to Moses and demonstrated to the Israelites in how God dealt with them (verses 7-8, 17-18; compare Exodus 34:6-7). Though the Israelites, as we all do, deserved death for sin, God nevertheless continues to work with His people. His punishments against Israel’s constant rebellion were not without end but were intended to help rehabilitate the people, not to justly destroy them (Psalm 103:9-10). God is here praised for His willingness to temper His righteous anger with His vast mercy and care for His people as His little, weak children (verses 11-14). Whereas God’s anger is brief—required only during the fleeting physical existence of man—his “mercy” or loyal love is forever and will serve to perpetuate those who honor their commitment to follow Him (verses 15-18).

God’s benefits extend to all within His dominion. “And His kingdom rules over all” (verse 19)—so that all creation (in both the spiritual and physical realms) should praise God along with David, as the psalm calls for in the threefold address: “Bless...Bless...Bless...” (verses 20-22a), followed by the final repetition of the psalm’s opening line. This also serves to introduce the praise of God for His creation in the next psalm.

Though **Psalm 104**, a meditative hymn of creation, is unattributed in the Hebrew Masoretic Text, the Greek Septuagint translation names David as the author. This may have been reasoned on the basis of the psalm’s apparent relationship with the previous psalm (103), the Masoretic superscription of which credits David. Note that David in Psalm 103 opens and closes with the exuberant self-exhortation to “Bless the LORD, O my soul!” (verses 1, 22) and that the same opening and closing is found in Psalm 104 (verses 1, 35), making it seem a continuation. There is a thematic relationship as well. Psalm 103 dwelt on God’s benefits (verse 2), while Psalm 104 deals with God’s provision through creation. Psalm 103 concluded with a call for praise of God issued to “all

His works, in all places of His dominion” (verse 22). Psalm 104 then concerns God’s works throughout His dominion in creation and “the *fruit* of [His] works” (verse 13). However, none of this is clear proof of Davidic authorship. For just as it would seem that later editors placed these psalms next to each other in the Psalter, it could also be that these editors, rather than David, copied the opening and closing of Psalm 103 over to the beginning and end of 104 to emphasize the continuity here.

In this song the psalmist follows to some degree the days of creation of Genesis 1. He starts out by describing the great God as clothed with honor, majesty and light (verses 1-2)—paralleling God’s first recorded command in commencing the creation account, “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3). God elsewhere declares that He *is* light and completely without darkness (1 John 1:5)—speaking not just of His radiant glory on the physical level but, in spiritual imagery, of His moral perfection.

Corresponding to the second day of Genesis 1, “the second creative act is ‘the firmament’ or ‘the heavens’ described here as a [curtain or] ‘tent’ [NIV] stretched out over the earth (cf. Isa 40:22). As a camper readily pitches his tent somewhere, so God without exertion prepared the earth for habitation” (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, note on Psalm 104:2). Genesis 1:6-8 says that the firmament of heaven or the sky divided waters under it from waters above it. This division of upper and lower waters appears to distinguish between water vapor in the atmosphere and liquid waters of the seas and other bodies of water on the earth’s surface. The imagery of God laying the beams of His “upper chambers” (or upstairs rooms) in the atmospheric waters (Psalm 104:3; compare verse 13) portrays Him as setting the lowest levels of the heavens, where He dwells, in the air above the earth.

Within this expanse God, in the person of Yeshua through whom God created all things (see John 1:1-3, 14; Ephesians 3:9), traveled on “clouds” and “wind” (Psalm 104:3b). These words here may connote more than atmospheric conditions, as God later led Israel in the radiant cloud of His glory and the word for “wind” here is *ruach*, translated “Spirit” in Genesis 1:2: “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Moreover, Psalm 104:4 uses the plural of *ruach* in describing the angelic hosts—“spirits.” God created these spirit beings, brilliant like stars in flaming fire, as His “angels” (meaning *messengers*) and “ministers” (meaning *servants*). Note that both these terms were used to address them in the previous psalm (103:20-21), showing a further tie between these two songs. Note also that Psalm 104:4 is quoted in Hebrews 1:7 to demonstrate the subordination of angels to Yeshua and later glorified members of God’s divine family. Continuing on the second day of Genesis 1, God next focused on the “waters under the heavens” (verse 9), gathering them into one place and uncovering the dry land. This was necessary because the land had earlier been covered by “the face of the deep” (verse 2). The cessation of this flooded condition is described in Psalm 104:5-9. Verse 6 tells us that the earth was “covered...with the deep” and that “the waters stood above the mountains”—though the mountains may have been much lower in elevation at that time, an idea we will consider further in a moment. The flooded condition of the earth was evidently a result of global calamity between the earth’s initial creation and the six days of Genesis 1, which represent a renewal or re-creation of the earth and its life (see the Bible Reading Program comments on Genesis 1).

Psalm 104:7 says that an order from God caused the waters to retreat. As translated in the NKJV and many other versions, verse 8 describes the waters going up over the mountains and flowing back down into the valleys. This translation, however, is unclear. The Revised Standard Version renders the verse this way: “The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which thou didst appoint for them.” This would imply major topographical changes as part of the reason for shifting waters. Many argue against this as a break in context—especially as the “they” in verse 9 for which God has set a boundary to prevent their returning to cover the earth is clearly the waters. However, it is possible that verse 8 is parenthetical and that the “they” in verse 9 refers back to the waters in verses 6-7.

Some see verse 9’s reference to God setting a boundary against global flood (evidently the coastlines of the world) as referring to His covenant after the Flood of Noah’s day (compare Genesis 9:11-15). However, it more naturally refers here to God’s establishments of the coastlines in Genesis 1. Note that Psalm 104:9 does *not* say, “...that they may not *ever* return to cover the earth.” Here the idea was probably “...that they could not return to cover the earth [on their own].” Later, in Genesis 9, God did state that the waters would *never again* destroy the world.

Rather than proceeding immediately to the next day in the Genesis 1 scheme, Psalm 104 next highlights the benefits of the fresh waters of the earth to the various creatures God later formed. Then the psalm moves to the third of the Genesis 1 days (verses 11-13), describing the production of grass and vegetation (Psalm 104:14).

And again, before proceeding to the next day, the psalm describes the benefits of these things to later-created man and beast. Likewise, the psalm then moves to the fourth day of Genesis 1:14-19 regarding the appointment of the sun and moon to mark times and seasons—and again explains how these things serve animals and human beings (Psalm 104:19-23). In all this, we observe a connection with Psalm 103 in the recounting of God's benefits.

The psalmist here pauses for summary and praise: "O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all" (104:24). He then resumes his reflection, proceeding to day five of Genesis 1, highlighting the creation of teeming life in the sea. This is a benefit to human beings plying ships in maritime commerce (verse 26). Leviathan (same verse) may be a literal sea monster—some have suggested a giant crocodile—but is apparently figurative in various passages of human empires or the power behind them, Satan the serpent of Genesis 3 (see the Bible Reading Program comments on Job 41). Whichever is intended, all depend on God for existence—and they will play a role in fulfilling God's purposes despite themselves.

Psalm 104:27-28 shows that all the creatures mentioned thus far (some formed as late as the sixth day of creation week) are utterly reliant on God for their existence and sustenance. If God does not provide for them and sustain them, they die (verse 29). And God does allow this to happen—sometimes on a large scale, as the calamities of Genesis 1:2 and the Flood of Noah both attest. Yet even in such circumstances, God's providence continues—for He sends forth His Spirit, creates life once again and renews the face of the earth (Psalm 104:30). This could refer to the general cycle in which, as flora and fauna die, God provides new life to replace what returns to dust. However, in the context of the rest of this psalm, this verse may be directly referring to the six days of Genesis 1 as a period of renewal and re-creation on a global scale.

Considering the summary of the six days of creation through the psalm, it may be that the theme of the song's conclusion concerns the day intended to memorialize creation—the seventh-day Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3), which also symbolizes the time of God's coming Kingdom (compare Hebrews 3-4). Note in verse 31 the desire for God's glory to endure forever and that God may rejoice in His works (both very much Sabbath themes). The Sabbath teaches us that in observing creation we must view it as subordinate to God Himself. Verse 32 reminds us that God "is so much greater than his creation that with a look or a touch he could undo it" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on verse 32). The Sabbath calls for singing, praises, meditation and glad rejoicing (compare verses 33-34).

The statement "May sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more" (verse 35) seems to be a wish rather than a curse on specific sinners. The psalmist envisions a world without the pollution of sin and wickedness. "The psalmist is not vindictive in his prayer against the wicked but longs for a world fully established and maintained by the Lord, without outside interference" (*Expositor's*, note on verse 35). This, too, is a powerful Sabbath theme as we look forward to God's Kingdom.

As previously mentioned, Psalm 104 closes just as it opens (and as 103 opens and closes): "Bless the LORD, O my soul!" There is good reason to believe that the next phrase, "Praise the LORD!," originally began the next psalm (as we will see in our next reading).

## Luke 13-14:11

The Galilaeans are frequently mentioned by Josephus as the most turbulent and seditious people, being upon all occasions ready to disturb the Roman authority. It is uncertain to what event Yeshua refers; but is probable that they were the followers of Judas Gaulonitis, who opposed paying tribute to Caesar and submitting to the Roman government. A party of them coming to Jerusalem during one of the great festivals, and presenting their oblations in the court of the temple, Pilate treacherously sent a company of soldiers, who slew them, and 'mingled their blood with their sacrifices.' This account is only "supposed" as to what these people were speaking of to Yeshua.

Notice, Yeshua **does not** comment on whether what happened was right, wrong, good, or bad. He used the incident to teach – about repentance. No one knows the hour of his/her death in this life... but we can be assured of our position in the Kingdom if we take care to realize our sin and repent or turn back to The Way. Yeshua was not going to be trapped into a political – religious discussion. He was always about His Father's business.

Next, Yeshua is teaching in the meeting place on the Sabbath. He healed a woman bent over so that she stood straight and praised Elohim. The leader of the congregation admonished the crowd not to come for healing on the Sabbath, but any of the other days of the week meant for work. For this – our Master calls this man a hypocrite! For he takes care of the animals, to loosen them and get them water on the Sabbath – but for Elohim’s people, they do not do but leave them bound.

Yeshua then tells us two parables concerning what the Reign of Elohim is like and both of them speak of how it began very small but has grown to be very large. It is now so large, that even the wicked are able to “hide” within it.

Another asked Yeshua, “Are there only a few being saved?” Yeshua answers with the well-known response, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate...” The narrow gate, many do not know, is **persecution**, it is **tribulation**. The narrow gate is a place of straights.

Yeshua again heals on the Sabbath a man with dropsy and as He tests the Pharisees He is eating with concerning healing on the Sabbath, they are unable to answer.

He then teaches about humility and the heart of those taking the seat of least importance at feasts and parties. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbles, and he who is humbling himself shall be exalted.