

Triennial Torah Study – 5th Year 23/08/2014



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

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

Shemot 1-2	1 Kings 5-6	Psalms 106	Luke 16-17
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Moses “Drawn Out” (Exodus 1—2)

Here we find an attempt by a Levite family to save their son during the time of Pharaoh's edict. It's interesting to note that Yeshua—the ultimate Deliverer of whom Moses was a forerunner—also had to be hidden in Egypt when He was born, as a similar edict was issued during His infancy.

It is also wonderful to see here how God intervened during this very sobering time. Moses drifted right into the bathing area of the daughter of Pharaoh, who desired to save him and raise him as her own son. Though she recognized him as a Hebrew child, perhaps she viewed him as a gift of the gods, perhaps of the Nile god Khnum. Moreover, not only was Moses' life spared, but his real mother was paid to nurse and rear him! The name the princess gave him, *Moses*, means “Drawn Out,” as in birth. Interestingly, this was a common suffix for the names of various pharaohs of the Middle and New Kingdoms of Egypt. For instance, Thutmose or Thutmosis is Thoth-mosis, meaning “Drawn (or born) from Thoth,” the god of wisdom. Another example is Rameses or Ra-meses, meaning “Drawn (or born) from Ra” or Re, the sun god. Thus, there is reason to believe that Moses' name may have originally had a pagan prefix that he, quite understandably, did not record when he wrote the Pentateuch.

More amazing still, considering that the pharaoh's daughter recognized that Moses was a Hebrew child, it would be rather surprising if the pharaoh himself did not. Yet the pharaoh did not demand the death of the child (perhaps out of a combination of love for his daughter and a belief that the child may have been a divine gift). In fact, he allowed the boy to become a prince of Egypt. In Acts 7:22 Stephen tells us that besides the trappings of royalty, “Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.” Indeed, the first-century Jewish historian Josephus informs us that he became a great Egyptian general. But all of this changed overnight when Moses became a fugitive fleeing for his life.

Acts 7:43 tells us that Moses was 40 years old at the time of his flight from Egypt. Verse 30 reveals that he sojourned in the land of Midian for another 40 years. And he would later wander

with the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years (verse 36)—finally dying at the age of 120 (Deuteronomy 34:7). So Moses had three 40-year segments of leadership training: 1) training as a leader in Pharaoh’s court; 2) training as a shepherd in Midian; 3) training as a leader of the Israelites. From this we can deduce that a period of approximately 80 years, or two-thirds of Moses’ life, transpires in Exodus 2 alone!

Moses was trained for 40 years under Reuel, the “priest” of Midian. This term makes sense when we realize that the Midianites were descended from Abraham (Genesis 25:1-4) and that, even in Israel, the head of each family was the one who would offer sacrifices prior to the institution of the Levitical system. Moses married Reuel’s daughter Zipporah. It should be noted here that Reuel was also known as Jethro—as both names refer in Scripture to Moses’ father-in-law (Exodus 2:18; 3:1; Numbers 10:29). Author John Haley says that, according to several scholars, “Jether, or Jethro, is not a proper name, but simply a title of honor, denoting ‘excellency,’ and about equivalent to the Arabic ‘Imam’” (*Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, pp. 354-344).

Agreement with Hiram for Temple Construction (1 Kings 5; 2 Chronicles 2)

Hiram, king of Tyre, had been David’s ally, and had helped him build his palace at Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:11). Some see the words “Hiram had always loved David” (1 Kings 5:1) to simply denote their political alliance—the word for ally in a number of Old Testament passages literally meaning “lover.” But “Solomon’s note about the temple begins, ‘You know,’ suggesting that David had shared his dream of building a temple with Hiram as well, and that the two may have been [actual] friends” (*Bible Reader’s Companion*, note on 1 Kings 5:1-6). The area of modern Lebanon along the border between the two ancient kingdoms contained some of the best timber around. And Hiram has some highly skilled workers. So Solomon arranges for workmen from this Phoenician king to help cut and deliver wood for the temple, and to assist in stonecutting. Hiram offers Solomon one craftsman in particular, also named Hiram (or Hiram), the son of a man of Tyre and an Israelite woman, who will make most of the temple furnishings—as Bezalel made things for the tabernacle in the wilderness.

Solomon also drafts thousands of Israelite workers. “In addition to slave labor, Solomon relied on the *corvee* [labor exacted in lieu of taxes by public authorities] to provide workers. This practice was common in ancient times, and involved claiming a person’s labor as sort of a personal tax. By alternating shifts Solomon was able to maintain agricultural production at home, while keeping work moving on his massive construction project. Not many years ago some rural counties in the Midwest had a form of *corvee*: farmers would keep the roadsides mowed in return for reduction of local taxes” (note on verses 13-17).

Solomon Builds the Temple (1 Kings 6; 2 Chronicles 3:1-14)

The date of the beginning of the building of the temple is given as the 480th year after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, which was also the fourth year of Solomon's reign. Thanks to the painstaking work of Professor Edwin Thiele, who in 1950 worked out a likely chronology for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (showing the books of Kings to be entirely trustworthy and in harmony with the well-established Assyrian chronology), it can be reasonably ascertained that Rehoboam began his reign in or very close to 931/930 B.C. As 1 Kings 11:42 informs us that Solomon reigned 40 years, Solomon's first year, according to this chronology, was 970/969 B.C., and his fourth year (in which he began the construction of the temple) was 967/966 B.C. Based on these dates, we may conclude that the Exodus occurred in or very close to the year 1447/1446 B.C.

As regards chronology, this chapter also provides us with a way to determine whether Judah was counting the years of a king's reign using a Nisan-to-Nisan (spring-to-spring) or a Tishri-to-Tishri (autumn-to-autumn) reckoning on the Hebrew calendar. The work on the temple was begun in the second month of Solomon's fourth year (1 Kings 6:1), and completed in the eighth month of Solomon's 11th year, having been under construction seven years (1 Kings 6:38). Months are always numbered from the spring month of Nisan (first month of the sacred year), regardless of whether one is reckoning a year from Nisan to Nisan (sacred year) or Tishri to Tishri (civil year). Reckoning was also inclusive, meaning the first and last units or fractions of units in a group are included and counted as full units. If Judah had been using a Nisan-to-Nisan reckoning of regnal years, the temple would have been described as eight years in building. However, using a Tishri-to-Tishri reckoning yields the seven years of 1 Kings 6:38.

The temple sanctuary, which contained the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies, was a rectangular building measuring about 90 feet long by 30 feet wide by 45 feet high. (This and subsequent measurements assume an 18-inch cubit—although it is possible that they may have used the longer 20.5-inch royal cubit from Egypt or a larger variant, which would make these measurements bigger.) On the eastern side of the sanctuary was an enclosed porch that extended the width of the building, projected about 15 feet from it, and apparently formed a 180-foot tower (compare 2 Chronicles 3:4). Around the sanctuary building Solomon built a very curious “honeycomb” of offices or rooms. These rooms were arranged in three stories; the lowest rooms were about 7.5 feet wide, the middle story rooms were about 9 feet wide, and the upper rooms were about 10.5 feet wide. In 1 Kings 6:6, we are told that Solomon built “narrow ledges around the outside of the temple, so that the support beams would not be fastened into the walls of the temple.” This indicates that the sides of the sanctuary had a stepped appearance during construction, and the upper story offices each projected one cubit further toward the sanctuary interior than the office below. No doubt the exterior facade concealed this stepped feature once the building was completed. Within the southern side of the office complex was a “winding stairway”—either a circular or square spiral—that provided access to the second and third story offices. This honeycomb of offices would seem to bear on Christ's statement, “In My Father's house are many rooms” (John 14:2, NIV). He may have been using the temple's architecture as a visual model to His teaching (though, as we will examine when we later come

to this verse in our reading, He was also probably using another analogy of His day—that of a groom building on to his father’s house to prepare for the addition of his wife to the family).

Interestingly, 1 Kings 6 also tells us that every stone was cut and polished and prepared for its position *away from* the building site—”so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built” (verse 7). Just as the physical temple of God was built of stones finished and fitted for their place before they were brought to the mountain and assembled into a glorious building, so believers, each a living stone (1 Peter 2:5), together a spiritual temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), are being finished and fitted for their place before they will be brought together at the resurrection and assembled in glory.

God’s Promise to Solomon (1 Kings 6; 2 Chronicles 3:1-14)

During the construction of the temple, God sent word to Solomon saying, “If you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David” (1 Kings 6:12). Some mistakenly think that this puts a condition on God’s unconditional promise to David in 2 Samuel 7. It does nothing of the sort. God’s promise to David—that he would have an eternal dynasty and never lack a man to sit upon his earthly throne—is unconditional. But God did not promise this eternal dynasty would continue through *Solomon’s* line.

The unconditional promise was that one of *David’s* descendants would occupy the throne forever. God’s promise to Solomon was that *if he* remained faithful, *then his* line would occupy that throne forever. But Solomon, as we will see, did not remain faithful. Although Solomon’s line still occupies that throne in the person of the British monarch, that throne will be turned over to another of David’s descendants, Yeshua, who is a descendent of David through *Nathan* (Luke 3:31), not Solomon. This will occur at Christ’s second coming. Solomon’s ruling line will then cease. So, the unconditional promise to David will be kept, but Solomon’s dynasty will not endure forever because he failed to fulfill the condition (see also the highlights for 1 Chronicles 17 and 2 Samuel 7 on “The Davidic Covenant”).

“They Soon Forgot...For Their Sake He Remembered” (Psalm 106)

In the arrangement of the Psalter as it has come down to us, **Psalm 106** is the concluding psalm of Book IV. Yet as explained in the Bible Reading Program’s introductory comments on the Psalms, it appears that Books IV and V originally formed a single collection before a book division was placed here. Furthermore, as was mentioned in the program’s opening comments on Psalm 101, Psalms 101-110 appear to form a collection of hymns. Indeed, Psalms 105, 106 and 107 (now the first psalm of Book V) seem to be very closely related (more on this later). Of course, the location of the book division here, though seemingly artificial, must surely have been

very carefully selected. Perhaps this place was chosen so that Book V would flow right on from Book IV in theme and tone, serving to establish the continuity of the psalms.

Recall that Psalms 103 and 104 both begin and end with the same inner exhortation “Bless the LORD, O my soul.” Likewise, as noted in prior comments, it appears that Psalms 105 and 106 both begin and end with a shared doxology or praise expression: *Hallelujah* or, as translated, “Praise the LORD!” (as this expression on the last line of Psalm 104 seems more likely to open 105). Coming immediately after these opening words in Psalm 105 is the call to gratitude: “Oh, give thanks to the LORD!” (verse 1), taken along with a large section that follows (verses 1-15) from David’s psalm composed for the occasion of bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem in 1 Chronicles 16 (see verses 7-22). In Psalm 106 we find a parallel to this. Occurring right after *its* opening doxology is another call to thanksgiving taken from a later related line in the very same Davidic composition: “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy [or steadfast love] endures forever” (compare Psalm 106:1; 1 Chronicles 16:34). The *end* of Psalm 106 was essentially taken from the same song as well, as we will later consider further (compare Psalm 106:47-48; 1 Chronicles 16:35-36). For this reason we earlier read these parts of Psalm 106 (verses 1, 47-48) in conjunction with our reading of 1 Chronicles 16. Observe moreover that Psalm 107 *also* opens with David’s words “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy [or, again, steadfast love] endures forever.” (This is also powerfully expressed throughout Psalm 136.)

Many consider Psalm 106 to be a companion to 105 in various respects-including both language and theme. Psalm 106 rehearses much of the same national history covered in 105 but with an expanded perspective. Psalm 105 is a song of thanks to God for His faithfulness in remembering His promises and covenant as a benefit for His people. Psalm 106 thanks God for continuing in His faithfulness despite the rebellion of His people-repeatedly leading them to repentance and restoration. On this basis, the psalm is also a prayer to be included among the recipients of this wonderful benefit of God’s mercy and deliverance, which is here asked for yet again. Note especially verses 4-5: “Remember me, O LORD, with the favor You have toward Your people. Oh, visit me with Your salvation, that I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory with your inheritance.” Thus, Psalm 106 constitutes a continuation of the presentation of God’s benefits to His people begun in Psalm 103-the benefit here being God’s wonderful patience.

A strong contrast is drawn throughout the psalm: the sinful rebellion of the people versus the constant faithfulness of God; the people who “*soon forgot* His works” (verse 13), who “*forgot* God their Savior” (verse 21), versus the God who “*for their sake...remembered* His covenant, and relented according to the multitude of His mercies” (verse 45). In all the confession of Israel’s rebellion throughout the psalm, we must not make the mistake of seeing this as the point of the psalm. As one commentator expresses it: “The purpose of the psalm is not to condemn Israel but to extol the Lord for His longsuffering and mercy toward His people. In order to glorify God, the writer had to place God’s mercies against the dark background of Israel’s repeated disobedience” (Wiersbe, *Be Exultant*, introductory note on Psalm 106).

The particular circumstance behind the composition of the psalm is not known except that the psalmist appears to have been scattered with others of God's nation among foreigners (see especially verse 47). For this reason and a statement we will later note in verse 46, many have surmised that the psalm was written during the Babylonian captivity. Furthermore, we can see that the psalmist was familiar with Psalm 105, using it and its source material by David in 1 Chronicles 16 to write Psalm 106. (Some advocate the same author for Psalms 105, 106 and 107.)

The psalmist may have been reflecting on the amazing events described in the previous psalm, "God's wonders in the land of Ham" (105:27), for He notes that the Israelites forgot that God did "wondrous works in the land of Ham" (106:22). Remarkably, God had done these wondrous works for His people despite the fact that they had basically lost faith in Him and persisted in their failure to acknowledge Him even as He rescued them (verse 7).

Interestingly, the great act of God left out of the Exodus account in Psalm 105 is the Red Sea crossing-but this pivotal event is incorporated as a major focus in the expansion of the story in Psalm 106 (verses 7-12, 22). Verse 12 says that this episode finally led the people to then believe God's words and sing His praise-yet only, as the next verse clarifies, for a very brief period. They did not wait on God, lacking trust and patience (verse 13), and grumbled for water (see verse 14; compare Exodus 15:22-27), for food (see Exodus 16) and more specifically for meat (see Numbers 11:4-15, 31-35). Although God gave the people what they asked for, He allowed them to suffer consequences (Psalm 106:15; compare Numbers 11:33).

Psalm 106:16-18 recalls the rebellion in Numbers 16 of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and other dissenters who envied and opposed the leadership of Moses and Aaron-though Korah is not named here, perhaps for the simple reason of poetic construction. The earlier horrific episode of the golden calf at Horeb or Mount Sinai, the very site of Israel's covenant with God, is also recalled (Psalm 106:19-20; see Exodus 32). On more than one occasion God would have destroyed the people for their idolatry "had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach, to turn away His wrath" (verse 23). "The metaphor 'stood in the breach' derives from military language, signifying the bravery of a soldier who stands in the breach of the wall, willing to give his life in warding off the enemy" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verse 23). Similar imagery occurs in Ezekiel 22:30, where God finds no one to "stand in the gap" before Him on behalf of His people's land so that he should not destroy it.

The psalm next addresses the Israelites' fearful refusal to honor God in embracing and entering the Promised Land, which brought on them the penalty of their decades of wandering and death in the wilderness (Psalm 106:24-27; see Numbers 14).

The next two incidents in Psalm 106 happened near the end of Israel's wilderness years. The episode of worshipping Baal of Peor (verse 28) is found in Numbers 25, which mentions the people's involvement in Moabite and Midianite sexual rites. Psalm 106 adds the detail that the people "ate sacrifices of the dead" (verse 28b, KJV)-which horridly might mean that they ate the

dead as sacrifices, for Baal worshippers practiced cannibalism (the word cannibal deriving from *Kahna-Baal*, meaning “priest of Baal”). The idolatrous debauchery so provoked God that He sent a plague that killed 24,000 people, withdrawing it only when Aaron’s son Phinehas executed an Israelite man and Midianite woman who brazenly attempted to perform their lewd rites at God’s tabernacle. Because of Phinehas’ bold stand for the holiness of God and His people, God promised him an enduring priesthood for his descendants.

The incident at the “waters of strife” (verse 32) or “waters of Meribah” (NIV) occurred earlier (Numbers 20). Moses lost patience with the people and reacted to their rebellious grumbling “so that he spoke rashly with his lips” (verse 33). As a result of his angry outburst, Moses lost the privilege of leading the people into Canaan. This drastically contrasts with Moses’ intercessory role in verse 23. The point seems to be that they wore down even their wonderful intercessor so much that he lost patience with them and stumbled.

When the people finally entered the Promised Land, they “did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them” (verse 34). They instead embraced the lifestyle and customs of the native Canaanites (verse 35). They worshipped their idols, even sacrificing their children to the pagan deities behind them, which were actually demons (verses 36-37; compare Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17; 1 Corinthians 10:20). By these works they defiled themselves and polluted the land (verses 38-39). Therefore God’s wrath was so great that He “abhorred His own inheritance” (verse 40). Pathetically, in blending with the gentiles (that is, the other nations), the Israelites were actually submitting to the ways of peoples who hated them. God therefore gave them over wholly to these enemies (verses 41-42).

Yet God’s purpose, even in the midst of His wrath, was not to destroy His people but to bring them to repentance and rescue them. “Many times He delivered them” during the period of the Judges (verse 43), but the people always drifted away from Him (verse 44). Nevertheless, He heard their cry (verse 44), remembered His covenant (verse 45) and relented (same verse). Verse 46 further says that God made His people’s captors to take pity on them. *The Zondervan NIV Study Bible* says this “makes clear that the author’s recital includes the Babylonian captivity (see 1Ki 8:50; 2Ch 30:9; Ezr 9:9; Jer 42:12). Although there were earlier captivities of Israelite communities, no other captive group was said to have been shown pity” (note on Psalm 106:46). This, of course, assumes past Scripture as the only source of the psalmist’s information.

Finally, as previously noted, verses 47-48 are, as with the opening of the psalm, taken from David’s psalm in 1 Chronicles 16 but with some interesting differences. Observe that David in 1 Chronicles 16 tells those who hear his psalm to “say, ‘Save us, O God...’” (verse 35). Psalm 106:47 does not say to “say,” but rather simply says, evidently in response to David’s words, “Save us, O LORD our God...” David further said to say, “Gather us together, and deliver us from the Gentiles...” In David’s context of Israel as an independent nation, this would simply have been a prayer for the unity of God’s people and help against foreign enemies bent on destroying them. When applying this statement in Psalm 106:47, notice that it has been changed

to fit new circumstances: "...And *gather us from among* the Gentiles..." (emphasis added). This implies a time of captivity-again commonly assumed to mean that the psalmist and his people are captives in Babylon.

The last two lines of verse 47 and the first two lines of verse 48 are the same as in 1 Chronicles 16:35-36. Yet observe in 1 Chronicles 16:36 that the second line ends David's psalm. It is followed by this description of what happened following its performance: "And all the people said, 'Amen!' and praised the LORD" (same verse). This is transformed in Psalm 106:48 into a directive as part of the song: "And let all the people say, 'Amen!' Praise the LORD!" Thus verse 47 says what David told the people to say. And verse 48 tells people to say what the people did say in response to David's song. This ending to Psalm 106 very much seems to be an intrinsic part of the psalm rather than an editorial attachment of a doxology and amen as in other book endings within the Psalter-further strengthening the idea that there was initially no book ending here.

Luke 16

Yeshua teaches using the parable of the manager who wasted his master's possessions. The manager, not having any other skills he was willing to do, was fretful that he was going to be fired. So he went to all his master's debtors and through cutting a deal with them, only took a portion of what they owed. So that, when he was fired... they may take him into *their* houses. The master found this quite remarkable in that this manager was quite cunning when he had to be, but this manager was acting purely out for his own well-being. He was not trustworthy... not with little or much.

And again Yeshua confronts the lifestyle of the Pharisees in their love of silver and love of praises of men. He reprimands them on both issues to include their many divorces. The hearts had become so hard that as Yeshua teaches about the afterlife using their own "false" beliefs about what happens after one dies... He specifically alludes to the fact that if they do not hear Mosheh and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded even if one should rise from the dead.

Luke 17

Yeshua teaches it is a terrible thing to cause others to stumble in Him. To them who do this He gives a "woe to them" statement and says it would be better for this person to have a millstone tied around his neck and thrown into the sea.

Yeshua admonishes His taught ones to always forgive. Forgive every single time someone repents for their wrong against you... every time, without limit. His taught ones were amazed at this teaching and cried out for more belief. Yeshua remarks that only the faith of a mustard seed can move and displace trees.

Yeshua tells His taught ones, that there is no special treatment for doing what our Master asks of us, as His servants. We shall receive our reward **after** it is all over – not during. In this life there is work, humility, and service.

Yeshua heals ten leprous men and advised them to go to the priest – just as the Torah prescribes. Out of the ten men, only one returned to give Him Praise and thanks... only one. Then, Yeshua goes on to tell of the coming of the Reign of Elohim: the days will be as Noah and Lot – how all things will appear to continue on like always. Then, the Son of Adam will appear and all will see Him and they should not worry about running around to see Him for all will see Him.