

Triennial Torah Study – 5th Year 06/09/2014



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

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

Ex 4	1 Kings 8	Ps 108	Luke 19
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Continuing in chapter 4, since God knows how the human mind reasons, He prepared for Moses to have authoritative credibility through certain miracles—not for Moses to be ultimately regarded but, rather, that God would be the One looked to, and Moses simply as His truly commissioned servant. You can be certain that God knows exactly how to get someone's attention. The three miracles that God had Moses perform would be a great witness to the Egyptians—and to the Israelites, who were by now quite influenced by Egyptian religion. The snake was one of the gods of Egypt. Leprosy was an incurable disease that would have any physician of the time believing in a "god" had there been a cure. Last, but not least, the Nile was also worshiped, and defiling its waters with blood would draw the attention of everyone!

But we also can begin to see the meek, self-effacing character of Moses being revealed in this chapter. The deep humility of Moses (Numbers 12:3) was surely primarily the result of his closeness to God, but it is apparent that it was also rooted in his natural personality. Even though by this time Moses, as Stephen later preached, was "mighty in words and deeds," it seems he lacked self-confidence. It's not unusual for talented and successful people to lack confidence. In this case, this weakness was turned into a strength, because self-confidence was soon replaced by great confidence in and reliance on God. However, at this point, Moses was focusing on his own perceived lack of ability, and tried to wiggle out of this overwhelming assignment.

Perhaps he was simply so in awe of God that he thought himself incapable of representing Him. Yet in consideration of God's power and who God was, Moses should not have been so presumptuous to think that God was making a mistake in choosing him—and that God couldn't utilize him as required. Although God understood Moses' personality, Moses was trying His patience by not focusing on all of the miracles and backing that God had given to Moses. And, as He was quick to point out, He was the Creator God—the very designer and maker of the human mouth. Yet, God is so merciful and understanding. Though angry with Moses for what appears to have been a lack of faith, God still gave him the assistance of his older brother Aaron. Of course, God had probably already intended some involvement by Aaron, who was to serve as Israel's high priest. But it appears that before long, Moses was talking directly with Pharaoh, rather than through Aaron (see Exodus 8:9, 26, 29).

When we come to Exodus 4:24, it is shocking to read that God sought to kill Moses! Why? Notice the account in chapter 4 of the confrontation between Moses and his wife. Part of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was the acknowledgment of that covenant through the act of circumcision. Whoever was not circumcised among the males of God's people would be "cut off," or destroyed, from among them. When we review to whom the covenant promises were made, we can see that they did not extend through the lineage

born to Abraham and Keturah. The Midianites were the descendants of Abraham and Keturah through Midian. And while Midian himself may have been circumcised, as Ishmael was, it is apparent that after the children of Keturah were sent away (Genesis 25:5), they did not continue the practice of circumcising their children. Rather, “the Midianites practiced circumcision on a groom right before his marriage instead of circumcising male infants.... Many of Israel’s neighboring peoples practiced circumcision, but none except Israel circumcised infants” (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 24).

Now let’s put together verses 24 through 26. It is apparent that God was holding Moses responsible for circumcising his son, but Moses had delegated that to his wife, Zipporah, who was objecting to doing it. She finally did it, but with reluctance and resentment, calling Moses a “bloody man.” We might wonder why only one son was at issue when Moses had *two* sons (verse 20; 18:4). One suggestion is that, “most likely, Moses had kept one of his sons uncircumcised, despite what God had commanded” (same note). Perhaps Zipporah was so upset by the circumcision of one son that she demanded her next son not be circumcised. In any event, Moses was not following God’s instructions. And this involved the very sign of the covenant people—being violated by the one who was to be the national leader. Moses’ disobedience in light of these factors made it a capital offense. So we find this brief insert—the recording of an incident that, no doubt, had a great impact on Moses.

[The Dedication of the Temple \(1 Kings 8:1-21; 2 Chronicles 5:2-6:11\)](#)

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Of all the days that ever passed upon the earth, surely the day that Solomon dedicated the temple must rank as one of the most awesome. The temple was a magnificent creation, with stunning gold, silver, bronze, jewels, marble, engraving and woodwork adorning its every feature. To be in its courts must have been a breathtaking experience!

The dedication of this extraordinary edifice—every aspect of which was masterfully designed to express and extol the magnificence of the One who dwelt within—was an occasion that called for the greatest pomp and ceremony. To the dedication Solomon invited Israel’s most important dignitaries. Two groups are specifically mentioned in 1 Kings 8:1—the “elders of Israel” *and* “the heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel.” Some have concluded that these two groups are distinct—representing the government of Israel in its national and tribal components. Those with this view see the “elders of Israel” as the members of the governing body in Israel’s *national* government, functioning, it is surmised, somewhat like a House of Lords or Senate. According to the same view, the “heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel,” apparently one from each tribe, are seen as the senior members of the individual *tribal* governments. We know for sure that Israel’s government was not an absolute monarchy. It was “constitutional”—that is, rather than the king’s word being the highest law of the land, his own powers derived from the written law of Moses as given by God, to which he was himself answerable. It also appears that Israel’s government may have been a *federal* monarchy—the word “federal” describing a system wherein separate states are united under one central authority while retaining certain regulatory powers.

The dedication of the temple occurred in the Feast of the seventh month (1 Kings 8:2, 2 Chronicles 5:3). This may seem somewhat odd, as the temple construction ceased in the *eighth* month (1 Kings 6:38). This means that the temple stood unoccupied for nearly a year before it was dedicated. Why did

Solomon choose to wait 11 months before dedicating this magnificent edifice? It may be that all of the temple furnishings were not yet complete. Of course, it may also be that everything was complete and that Solomon simply waited intentionally. The Bible doesn't spell out the reason for the delay.

Whatever the case, it is interesting that the dedication took place in the feast of the seventh month. But just which feast was this—the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles or the Eighth Day (now known to us as the Last Great Day)—all of which fall during that same month? (See Leviticus 23.) It should be noted that only one of God's annual festivals is elsewhere actually called simply the "Feast of the Lord"—i.e., the Feast of Tabernacles (see Leviticus 23:39). A seven-day festival, it was clearly *the* major feast of the seventh month. Yet 1 King 8:65-66 records that the dedication of the temple was 14 days. Strangely, however, it says that the people were sent away on the *eighth* day. As it makes no sense for this to mean the eighth day out of 14, these verses must mean that the 14th day of the dedication feast was *the* Eighth Day—that is, Tishri 22 on the Hebrew Calendar or what we now often refer to as the Last Great Day—and that the people were dismissed at the end of that day. In fact, 2 Chronicles 7:9-10 states that the people observed the dedication of the altar for seven days and the feast for seven days, finally being sent away on the 23rd day of the seventh month, which must mean the very beginning of that day at sunset (which would also be the end of the 22nd, i.e., the end of the Eighth Day). Thus, the feast of the dedication clearly began prior to the Feast of Tabernacles—with the entire period apparently being looked upon as one expanded Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the Kingdom of God and is, therefore, eminently the Kingdom Feast, looking to the future enthronement of the divine King, Yeshua, and the inauguration of the government of God on Earth. Thus, the enthronement symbolism is fitting for the enthronement of God in His temple.

In a stupendous display, "the glory of the Lord"—an awesome glowing cloud—"filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:11). "As a cloud had covered the tabernacle and God's glory had filled it when it was inaugurated (Exodus 40:34), so now a cloud filled the temple. This visible presence of God's dwelling with His people—sometimes called the 'shekinah [indwelling] glory'—gave the people assurance and incentive for obedient and holy living" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 1 Kings 8:10-11).

As for Solomon's speech, given before he passionately prays that God will always hear and respond to the prayers of His people, he recounts the promise God made to David in 2 Samuel 7, where God foretold an enduring dynasty descended from David. Solomon specifically identifies himself as the son who, as God promised, would build the temple. This speech, divinely sanctioned and preserved for all time by God in Scripture, verifies that the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7 refers to Solomon, the *immediate* son of David. It invalidates attempts to "spiritualize" the promises of 2 Samuel 7 regarding David's house—that is, mistakenly claiming they are fulfilled in Yeshua. Although Yeshua *is* building God's people, God's *spiritual* temple, nevertheless the promise made by God to David through the prophet Nathan referred to a literal and immediate son of David—and that David's dynasty would continue forever from that time. While there is likely duality in 2 Samuel 7, the *primary* and *intended* meaning of the promise to David concerns a successor son and a literal physical temple—and a literal dynasty beginning at that time that would never end.

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication (1 Kings 8:22-53; 2 Chronicles 6:12-42)

Please take note: This is the Feast of Dedication which is done the day after the Feast of Tabernacles is completed.

Solomon's prayer of dedication is interesting in many respects. In 2 Chronicles 6:12-17 Solomon brings up God's promise to David and asks for its fulfillment. This passage is used by some to declare that the promise of God to David in 2 Samuel 7 is conditional, with gainsayers noting that Solomon said, "You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, *only if* your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me" (verse 16). The *only if*, it is asserted, makes it conditional. And since David's descendants did not continue to walk in his ways, God was not bound to fulfill the promise of an enduring dynasty (except, they further assert, through Christ, David's "greater son").

But this is simply not so. This phrase—*only if*—is a Hebraism, that is, a figure of speech that cannot be literally translated into another language and still retain its meaning. In Hebrew, the phrase *only if* conveys the general meaning "but be certain that," and is intended to convey the strongest of affirmations, injunctions or prohibitions. It does not convey qualification.

Solomon's dedicatory prayer makes repeated mention of praying "toward this place," a clear intimation that the temple was to become the center of a world religion—that is, the true religion God gave was to become worldwide. In his prayer, Solomon anticipates both a worldwide dispersal of Israelites (whether through commerce, colonization or captivity) and a turning of the gentiles to the worship of God. Whether he understood the full implications of his words is unclear, but God certainly inspired him with prophetic thoughts. Specific subjects include answering prayers for forgiveness, justice, deliverance from captivity and military attack, mercy while in captivity, rain and good harvests, respite from plagues and agricultural devastation, and the prayers of the gentiles made in the temple (implying gentile converts to the true religion). In all these matters, Solomon beseeches God to hear and answer.

But Solomon does not portray God as a sort of cosmic genie, duty-bound to grant wishes upon request. Before mentioning the various kinds of things that people would pray for, Solomon soberly conditions the minds of his hearers as to exactly *who* will dwell within this magnificent temple. God is a God of kept promises given freely in grace, not because He is under compulsion to do so. And He is a God who cannot be confined to a building, no matter how magnificent it is. God dwells in heaven and is *not* man's creation! God is supreme and cannot be bound. In short, *God is sovereign*, and every petitioner must have an acute awareness of his need for God's mercy, grace and providence.

"Save With Your Right Hand"

Psalm 108 is titled a psalm of David, being a combination, with slight modifications, of parts of two other psalms of David, Psalms 57 and 60 (compare 57:7-11 with 108:1-5 and 60:5-12 with 108:6-13). As their superscriptions attest, Psalm 57 was written when David and his men hid from Saul in the cave near the desert oasis of En Gedi, and Psalm 60 was written when David fought against the forces of Mesopotamia and Syria. We earlier read Psalm 108 in the Bible Reading Program in conjunction with the account of the latter episode (see the Bible Reading Program comments on 2 Samuel 10; 1 Chronicles 19; Psalm 60; Psalm 108; Psalm 83). It would be helpful here to review the Bible Reading Program's Psalms section comments on [Psalm 57](#) and [Psalm 60](#).

The first part of Psalm 108 (verses 1-5), the part also found in Psalm 57:7-11, praises the extensiveness of God's *hesed*—His steadfast covenant love and mercy. In fact, where Psalm 57:10 said it reaches to the heavens, Psalm 108:4, slightly reworded, says it is great *above* the heavens. Based on this pervasiveness of God's covenant faithfulness, the latter part of Psalm 108 (verses 6-13), the part taken from Psalm 60:5-12, is a prayer for deliverance from and help against Israel's national enemies. While the later song could have been composed shortly after the former, so that the circumstances described still existed, it may be that the later composition was *much* later—so that circumstances were completely different yet the same general need for

God's intervention was present (evidently after a period of things not going so well). As in Psalm 60, the song is adamant in proclaiming that only through God can we attain ultimate victory.

Luke 19

We enter Luke chapter 19 with the introduction to Zakkai, a wealthy tax collector. He had heard Yeshua was coming by and he was very excited to see Him. Zakkai was a small man and he could not see over the large crowd that was travelling with the Master and so he climbed up into a tree so he could see. Yeshua, seemingly to be very aware of Zakkai, spoke out specifically to him and said, "Zakkai, hurry and come down, for I have to stay at your house today." Zakkai was excited and he spoke to Yeshua on how he gave half all his possessions to the poor and repays fourfold to those who he may have taken from falsely in taxes. At this, Yeshua said that deliverance had come to his house this day.

Now the crowd, knowing Zakkai to be a wealthy tax collector, did not like that because they considered him a sinner – but Yeshua let it be known that He came for the lost. And to explain the matter, He spoke a parable to them about the management of each and every man to manage what he is given for the Reign of Elohim. Each one must do what he can with what he has been given. As one manages this, in the same proportion, he will be rewarded upon the return of the King. It is not wise to be stingy with what one is given, even if it is just a small amount.

Then as they went on toward Jerusalem, He sent two of His taught ones to obtain the colt for him. They found it just as He said and brought it to Him. They placed their garments on the colt for Yeshua and on the ground as He rode from the Mt of Olives into the city. Hundreds were shouting and praising Elohim for all the miracles they had seen. As Yeshua rode in all were saying, "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of YHWH." The Pharisees petitioned Yeshua to make them stop. Yeshua said, "I say to you that if these shall be silent, the stones would cry out."

As Yeshua entered the city, He wept. He saw all that would come upon the people and the city for they did not know or realize the hour of their visitation and their deliverance. After entering in, He went directly to the Set apart place and saw all the merchandising in the House of Elohim. He was enraged and began driving out the merchants and turning over their tables of money and merchandise. He proclaimed, "My House is a house of prayer!"

He began teaching daily in the Set apart place and the chief priests, scribes, and leaders were seeking out just how they could destroy Him.