

# Triennial Torah Study – 5<sup>th</sup> Year 13/09/2014

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

<b>Ex 5</b>	<b>1 Kings 9-10</b>	<b>Ps 109</b>	<b>Luke 20</b>
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## Bricks Without Straw—But God Is Faithful (Exodus 5:1—6:27)

Sometimes situations get worse before they get better. How do we react before God when we pray? Do we ever feel that we are not only not receiving an answer but also that things seem to be getting worse? Pharaoh's response to Moses was that the Israelites were getting too much "free time" and that it was allowing them the opportunity to get distracted from their work. When the Israelites received Pharaoh's harsh response to Moses' request that they be allowed to hold a celebration to worship God, it was certainly a test for Moses. For all of the details that God had told him, God did not reveal this as being part of the plan. Part of being a good leader is the ability to "turn the other cheek." God allowed Moses to be subject to the anger and bewilderment of the Israelites. But it was all with a purpose in mind.

God wants to make certain that His people understand clearly that He IS God. So we read references to Himself such as "I AM WHO I AM" (the literal Hebrew has no definite tense—"I Be Who I Be"—denoting past, present and future). God has always existed and will always exist. Here we read of God introducing a new name that He had not revealed earlier to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. (It is used in the book of Genesis, but this is apparently because Moses, who wrote the book, was inspired by God to use it in relating the stories of the patriarchs). The newly revealed name is *Yahweh* (the exact pronunciation of which is unknown). It is essentially the name "I Be Who I Be" in the third person—that is, "He Be Who He Be"—and has been variously translated as "the Eternal," "the Ever-living" or even "the Self Existent One." (Yeshua later revealed that *He* was the one the Israelites worshiped as the great "I AM"—see John 8:58 and supplementary reading.)

God was preparing His people to understand that He was not some passing fad. The miracles that they were going to experience were a demonstration of His power and supremacy. Most biblical scholars today, if they accept that the events of the Exodus took place at all, approach it rather skeptically, claiming the plagues that came upon Egypt, for instance, were not miraculous in nature. They claim that these were merely natural phenomena exaggerated in the scriptural account. Biblical historian Eugene Merrill counters: "They [the plagues] must be understood for what they were—unique but genuinely historical outpourings of the wrath of a sovereign God who wished to show not only Egypt but his own people that he is the Lord of all of heaven and earth, one well able to redeem his people from the onerous slavery they knew under Pharaoh and to make them, by covenant, his own servant people" (*Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 1987, p. 65). The Israelites were so encompassed with the "gods" of Egypt that they needed to understand that His ultimate intervention would exceed

*anything* that man could do through sorcery, magic or false worship. Most of the plagues would be a direct attack on the “gods” of Egypt. Indeed, Jethro will afterward remark, “Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods; for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them” (Exodus 18:11).

If only mankind would simply believe God! The things of man are temporary. The things of God are eternal. So while mankind may let us down, God has been, is and will always be our loving God!

## Solomon’s Wisdom and Wealth (1 Kings 10; 2 Chronicles 9:1-28; 2 Chronicles 1:14-17)

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Here we have the famous visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon’s court. Sheba was located in what is today the southwestern corner of Saudi Arabia, roughly in the region occupied by Yemen, but also possibly occupying territory on the adjacent African coast in Ethiopia as reported in Ethiopian tradition. The ancients called the area of Yemen *Arabia Felix*, “Happy Arabia,” because of its healthful climate and its riches in gold, incense, precious stones and spices. That the Queen of Sheba would hear of Solomon is evidence of the briskness of trade between Sheba and Israel, much of which was doubtless carried on through Solomon’s southern fleet. Mention of the “ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir” (1 Kings 10:11), has been taken to indicate that the fabled land was located on Africa’s eastern coast. There *is* a phonetic similarity between Ophir and Africa. Others have speculated that it was further south—in southern Africa—while still others have identified it with India or even the Americas (in the latter case noting a similarity between the words Ophir and Pirua, the first Incan dynasty from which the country of Peru ultimately derives its name).

The vast wealth of Solomon is attributed to his far-flung trading empire. Not only did wealth pour in from the eastern desert traders, the Arabian traders and the governors of subject satellite nations, but on top of that Solomon’s annual inflow of gold bullion was 666 talents (more than 125,000 pounds, with a current value of more than U.S.\$500 million). Where did Solomon get all this gold? Ophir was a major source, but so was Tarshish, a Phoenician port in southern Spain. It was to this western port that Jonah was trying to escape when he set sail on a ship from Joppa.

This section of Scripture also notes that Solomon obtained horses and chariots from Egypt and other places. Again, this fact points to an amicable if not military alliance between Egypt and Israel, for chariots were the high-tech weaponry of the day. No doubt the alliance with Israel provided Egypt with a strong and secure ally to the north, well able to prevent incursions into Egypt from Syria and Mesopotamia. But militarizing Israel in this way was contrary to God’s will—for, as He decreed through Moses in Deuteronomy 17:16-17, Israel’s king was not to multiply horses (i.e., an army) nor wives (i.e., a harem, the tokens of alliances with foreign nations), nor silver and gold to himself. Though Solomon did all three, God was patient and gave him space to repent. The repentance, however, never came—unless the book of Ecclesiastes was written after a very late repentance, as many speculate.

## “Save With Your Right Hand”

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In **Psalm 109**, often referred to as an imprecatory (cursing) psalm of lament, David calls on God to judge and punish his wicked enemies who have attacked him with lies and hateful accusations (verses 1-4). Their fabrications are baseless, “without a cause” (verse 3), and they have betrayed David, returning, he says, “evil for good, and hatred for my love” (verse 5).

In its opening and closing, David refers to his enemies in the plural. Yet in verses 6-19, the psalm refers to a singular individual. Some take these verses to be David's quoting of his enemies regarding himself, yet it more likely seems that David is the one speaking here referring to a primary antagonist, evidently one holding an office of responsibility (see verse 8).

In very strong language, David calls on God to settle accounts (verses 6-20). *The Nelson Study Bible* states: "Here the psalm takes a decidedly negative tone. The description of the wife of the enemy becoming an impoverished widow and the children becoming beggars [verses 9-12] seems particularly harsh. However, the psalmist directs these strong requests to the Lord; he does not actually take the sword into his own hand. He may feel compelled to vent his anger in words, but the psalmist understands that vengeance itself belongs to the Lord" (note on verses 6-8).

Still, we might wonder why David would pray for calamity on innocent family members. Of course, they may not have been innocent at all. We do not know the exact circumstances here. It may be that the children mentioned were older-and that David understood them and the wife to be fully supportive of the wicked man's attacks on him. They may even have been participants in slandering him. The enemy's parents may also have been involved (see verse 14).

Moreover we should consider, as the *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* says, that "the close identity of a man with his children and of children with their parents, resulting from the tightly bonded unity of the three- or four-generation households of that ancient society, is alien to the modern reader, whose sense of self is highly individualistic.... That deep, profoundly human bond accounts [along with passed down behavior and consequences] for the ancient legal principle of 'punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation' (see Ex 20:5...)" (note on Psalm 109:12). Furthermore, since it was considered that "a man lived on in his children...the focus of judgment [when mentioning the cutting off of descendants] remains on the false accuser (see 21:10; 37:28)" (note on 109:13).

It also seems that the curses David calls for are ones his accusers have pronounced against him-that he is merely praying for their curses against him to be turned back on themselves (compare verses 17-20). The psalm thus forms an "appeal for judicial redress-that the Lord will deal with them in accordance with their malicious intent against him, matching punishment with crime" (*Zondervan*, note on verses 6-15).

Indeed, we must also remember that David was Israel's king and judge as well as an inspired prophet of God. His song here, though no doubt personally heartfelt, was more importantly a declaration of God's judgment rather than a model for us on how to pray about enemies. This is what God's law decreed concerning false accusers: "If the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, *then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother*; so you shall put away the evil from among you. And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deuteronomy 19:18-21).

As for how we are to pray about our enemies, Yeshua gave us this instruction: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you" (Luke 6:27-28). Of course, this does not preclude asking God to deal with them with "tough love" if they persist in harm-as this would ultimately be for their own good.

Demonstrating Psalm 109's prophetic aspect, the apostle Peter later cited the end of verse 8, "Let another take his office," in regard to selecting a replacement for Judas Iscariot among the

12 apostles after his betrayal of Yeshua (Acts 1:20). This does not necessarily mean that all of Psalm 109 is applicable to Judas. For instance, we have no other evidence that he had a wife and children-though it is possible that he did. The important point is that the judgment decreed on a betrayer of God's anointed king would, in an even greater sense, fit Judas. Judas betrayed Yeshua, the King of Kings, returning evil for the love that Christ had shown him.

Psalm 109:14-15 should not be understood as a prayer for removing all possibility of repentance and forgiveness for David's enemy and the enemy's family. Rather, David is asking that God not forget what they did to him so as to ensure their punishment. Yet David himself would have accepted an enemy's repentance-just as God accepted David's own repentance. Some, it should be noted, see the verses here as indicating that Judas cannot be forgiven for his sin upon repentance in the second resurrection. These verses indicate no such thing.

Finally, David describes the effect of the enemies' attacks on him (verses 22-25) foreshadowing what Yeshua Himself would experience. And he prays for God to powerfully intervene in a way that would make it clear to the enemies that God was doing so (verses 26-27). David closes with praise, confident in God's coming intervention on his behalf (verse 31) just as God will intervene for all of His people suffering such assaults and persecution from others.

## Luke 20

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In our portion in the Messianic writings we are now into the Passover week and Yeshua is teaching in the Set apart place and bringing the Good News. The chief priests, scribes, and elders begin questioning Him and testing Him. This is the beginning of the inspection of 'The Lamb'. They want to know who gave Him the authority to do what He is doing. Yeshua answers them with a question because He knew their wicked hearts. He asks them about John (Yohanan the Immerser), whether the immersion people submitted themselves to was from men or from heaven. After much discussion and weighing the benefits of anything they could answer, eventually they said they did not know.

To that, Yeshua let them know that neither would He tell them by what authority He was doing the things He did. For what would it matter? They did not believe.

Then Yeshua tells the people a parable about the man who planted a vineyard (YHWH and Israel) and then leased it to the farmers (the priests) and then went away. At a certain times, the owner sent servants (prophets) to the farmers to bring back some of the fruit of the vineyard. Each time, the farmers beat, cast out, and maltreated each of the sent servants. Until the owner sends His own son, thinking they would not do the same but in fact they did worse to Him knowing He was the heir.

What should the owner do to these farmers? "He shall come and destroy those farmers and give the vineyard to others."

They continued to try and catch Him and sent experts and lawyers to try and catch Him. Next, the attempt was in the matter of allegiance to rulership for they asked Him about paying taxes to Caesar. They were unable to catch Him and marveled at His words. Next, they sent Sadducees to ask Him about the resurrection for they did not believe in the resurrection. He again, spoke well and spoke such truth they were unable to question Him anymore and they left off from there. Yeshua then warns the people of the scribes and their ways.