

Triennial Torah Study – 4th Year 19/10/2013

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

Gen 6	Josh 15	Ps 10-12	Mat 9
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Sons of God, Daughters of Men, and Giants (Genesis 6)

Some have taught that Genesis 6 describes fallen angels interbreeding with human women to produce half-demon giants. But there is a more rational explanation.

Halley's Bible Handbook states that "the 'sons of God' (6:2) are thought to have been either fallen angels or leaders in Sethite families who intermarried with the godless descendants of Cain" (24th ed., p. 72). The first possibility offered here is not really a possibility at all, even though angels are referred to as "sons of God" in Job 38:7 because God is their "Father" through creation. Angels are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:7), not fleshly creatures. They neither marry nor sexually reproduce (compare Luke 20:34-36). Also, this explanation would violate the principle made clear in Genesis 1 that each kind reproduces only "according to its kind." Furthermore, the risen Yeshua explained that "fallen angels," or demons, are not able to manifest themselves materially like He and the righteous angels can (Luke 24:39; compare verses 40-43; Genesis 18:1-8, 16; 19:1). Rather, we see demons in Scripture only possessing individuals or appearing as ghostly apparitions.

The second explanation in Halley's is far more reasonable and better fits the context of the passage. Genesis 4 gives the story of Cain and Abel and follows with the genealogical descent from Cain. Genesis 5 is called "the book of the genealogy of Adam" (verse 1). It starts with God's creation of Adam and how Adam's line continued through Seth. As with the angels, Adam was a "son of God" by creation (compare Luke 3:38)-though even more so since Adam was made in God's image (Genesis 1:26; 5:1-3). Of this family line through Seth it is stated, "Then men began to call on the name of the Lord"-which could also be rendered "called after the name of the Lord." Then, in the next chapter, Genesis 6, we see "the sons of God" (men of Seth's godly line in this explanation) intermarrying with "the daughters of men" (women of Cain's ungodly line).

There is even a third possibility, in which "sons of God" should be translated "sons of the gods," as the Hebrew word *elohim* here, plural in form, can sometimes refer to false gods instead of the true God. In this explanation, wicked men referred to as sons of the gods (either pagan worshipers or perhaps men claiming to be demigods themselves) forcibly "took" innocent women as wives-an example perhaps of the evil conduct of the day.

In any event, human beings were clearly the problem here-not angels. God says, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever" (verse 3) and "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth" (verse 7). Thus, the giants mentioned must have been human also-descendants of Adam and Eve (compare Acts 17:26). These very tall people were destroyed in the Flood. But there would be more like them following the Flood, who were descended, just as everyone else in the post-Flood world, from Noah-again, not angels (compare Deuteronomy 2:20-21; 3:11). Consider Goliath, whom David slew. He was more than nine feet tall (1 Samuel 17:4). But he was still just a man (verses 24-25, 33)-not some human-demonic hybrid.

The Antediluvian World (Genesis 6)

The antediluvian world should be a subject of interest to all believers living in the end times, for Yeshua explicitly connected end-time conditions with those just before the Flood (Matthew 24:38).

Genesis 6 presents a picture of the pre-Flood world as being awash in violence, which was the natural consequence of the human heart being wholly motivated by evil purposes. As verse 5 says, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." All of man's motivating dispositions were dominated by evil. Man's continual intention was the pursuit of ungodly purposes. "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he," the Proverbs tell us (23:7). And Jesus was equally clear: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" (Matthew 15:19). Yet Yeshua also tells us that despite the appalling evils and evident social degeneracy, the people of Noah's time just continued with their normal daily living, "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," seemingly oblivious to the miserable state of their world. But that is what sin does—it progressively desensitizes one to the ungodly conditions around him.

In many respects, our modern, frantic, pulsating 21st-century world is in or approaching the same condition as the ancient world of Noah. Stop and consider our societies. Violence and depravity are everywhere—and considered highly profitable and entertaining. For example our sports and popular entertainment are filled with strife, brutality, assault and murder. The news of the day chronicles endless crime. The streets of our cities are avenues of bloodshed and thievery. Sex and sensuality are not only ever-present but literally pushed in our faces as our cultural icons engage in and promote open eroticism and perverse "alternative" lifestyles, while semi-nude women are used to hawk everything from cars to health care. Unmarried couples living together are common, and about half of all American marriages are destined for divorce. Despite the "liberation" promised by the sexual revolution, violence against women and poverty for households headed by single women stand at an all-time high. Children are abused and exploited on a scale that is truly shocking. As conditions worsen, more and more of the signs that Yeshua said would mark the last days are becoming apparent.

Judah Receives Its Inheritance, and Caleb Conquers Hebron (Joshua 15)

Partly as a result of the land Caleb chose for himself (verse 13), the inheritance of the tribe of Judah is assigned to be the southern part of the Canaanite territory. This was essentially the territory south of Jericho and Jerusalem, which had been the land conquered primarily in chapter 10. It is the land Judah continued to hold following the division of the monarchy in the days of Rehoboam nearly 500 years later.

Caleb finishes conquering his territory and ridding it of the giants (verse 14). In the process, he takes Debir, a city that had originally been taken by Joshua (10:38-39) but had evidently fallen back into the hands of the Canaanites. He receives some assistance from his nephew Othniel (verse 17), who will later serve as the first judge following the death of Joshua (Judges 3:7-11). Much of this story is repeated in Judges 1:10-15. While the city of Hebron itself is given to the priests (Joshua 21:9-13), and serves as a city of refuge, the fields and suburbs are given to Caleb.

Psalms 10

Psalms 10. Continuing with the theme of God's righteous judgment, especially the last two verses of Psalm 9, the psalmist (probably still David) asks why God does not immediately act in the face of evil (10:1). Things often seem to be going so well for the wicked (verse 5).

To strengthen his plea for God to take righteous action, the psalmist describes his enemies' disregard for God. The wicked man says, "Nothing will shake me; I'll always be happy and never have trouble.... God has forgotten; He covers His face and never sees.... He won't call me to account" (verses 6, 11, 13, NIV). Emboldened by such reckless thinking, the wicked man persecutes the poor, murders the innocent, crushes the helpless and curses God. He plots, boasts, lies and deceives (verses 2-13). The psalm summarizes, "In all his thoughts there is no room for God" (verse 4, NIV).

Wickedness does not escape God's notice, however—and He will justly punish (verse 14). God will call for an accounting: the wicked will no longer terrorize the earth (verses 16, 18). The reference to the nations perishing in verse 16 ties back to Psalm 9. When Christ returns to rule the earth, He will put an end to wickedness and establish true justice (10:15-18).

“Help, Lord, for the Godly Man Ceases!” (Psalms 11-14)

David composed Psalm 11 when others around him (the “you” in verse 1 is plural) were counseling him to flee from encroaching enemies. The NKJV closes the quote of the counselors at the end of verse 1, but it makes more sense to close the quote at the end of verse 3, as the NIV does. It is not clear whether the threat of enemies secretly shooting with arrows in verse 2 is literal or figurative (see 64:3-4), though the advice of flight would seem to imply mortal danger.

The advisers see no alternative to a hiding out in the hills because they believe “the foundations are destroyed” (verse 3). The Expositor’s Bible Commentary says: “The word ‘foundations’ (shathoth) occurs only here with this meaning.... The ‘foundations’ appear to be a metaphor for the order of society (75:3 {NIV, ‘pillars’}; 82:5; Ezek 30:4): the ‘established institutions, the social and civil order of the community’.... This order has been established by the Lord at creation and is being maintained.... [Yet to the advisers it now appears that] God’s justice and law are being replaced by human autonomy and its resultant anarchy” (note on Psalm 11:1-3).

David counters that the foundations are not destroyed because the Lord Himself is the true foundation. God may be testing the righteous at this time (verse 5), but He is in charge and sees what is going on (verse 4). David knows that “God is alive and at work in His holy temple [not the one in Jerusalem that was yet to be built but the one in heaven, as made clear by verse 4]; that He is hearing prayer, forgiving sins, welcoming home sinners, waiting for people to flee or to take refuge in Him, and not away in the mountains; that God is ruling His world from on high, noticing and testing every little detail of human life” (George Knight, Psalms, OT Daily Bible Study Series, 1982, comments on 11:1-7).

God hating the wicked and lovers of violence in verse 5 refers to His ultimate rejection of them (see the Bible Reading Program comments on 5:5). The phrase “the portion of their cup” (11:6) refers to “their lot” (NIV; see 16:5). The cup for the wicked is one of punishment (see 75:8; compare Jeremiah 25:15-29). It is shown in Psalm 11:6 to contain fire, brimstone (sulfur) and burning wind—images we later see in John the Baptist’s warning of God’s “winnowing fan” and “unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:12) as well as the book of Revelation’s prophecy of the future “lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (21:8). The unrepentant will be completely burned up in this fire, not tormented forever (see our free booklet *Heaven & Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?*).

Yet God faithfully loves the righteous and will in His righteous justice ultimately preserve them. The concluding phrase “His countenance beholds the upright” (Psalm 11:7) could also be rendered in reverse, “Upright men will see his face” (NIV), implying free access to God’s throne.

In the superscription of Psalm 12, the word sheminith, as in Psalm 6, is likely properly translated in the NKJV as “eight-stringed harp.” As to substance, David in Psalm 12 laments the perversion of language he witnesses everywhere, with people using words to hurt each other. Conversation is filled with lies, flattery, deception, boasting, idle words (verses 2-4). “Everyone lies to his neighbor” (verse 2, NIV). The wicked say whatever promotes their own interests (verse 4). “We’ll talk our way to the top, we’ll out talk the simple; no one can stop us” (Knight, Psalms, comments on 12:1-8). Christ warned his followers to be careful about what they say: “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37).

God doesn’t speak meaningless, idle words. He backs up what He says. Therefore, when God states that He will rise up on behalf of the oppressed and provide a safe refuge (Psalm 12:5), the oppressed can confidently count on His help. “In contrast to the idle words of the wicked (vv. 1-4), the words of God are altogether trustworthy. The eternal and steadfast nature of the Lord Himself stands behind His words” (Nelson Study Bible, note on verses 5-7). The words of God here can denote the whole of Scripture. The comparison of refining silver demonstrates how carefully chosen His words are. That they are purified seven times demonstrates how complete and perfect they are. It may also hint at numerous patterns of seven, signifying completeness and perfection, within the Bible.

The psalm ends in verse 8 with the sobering reminder that though God will be faithful to His promises in taking care of His people, we still in the meantime must be on guard against the reality of living in an evil world.

Matthew 9

Matthew Chapter 9 is an important section, whose main lesson is largely overlooked. Here we find the “definition” of what the “Gospel message” is. Contrary to what some teach, the “Gospel message” is not the “death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah.” It can’t be that, as we have Yeshua Himself, “preaching the Gospel” in this chapter – and He is still alive. Add to that the fact that His disciples also preach the Gospel while He is alive, and that in Hebrews 4:2 we are told the Gospel was preached to the children of Israel with Moses in the wilderness. Just what is “the Gospel message” then?

9:1 “Son of Man”

In this context, “son of Man” is a Messianic term found in the Tanakh and numerous Hebrew sources including: Daniel 7:13 – I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

9:11 ... Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? 9:12 ... They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 9:13 ... go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice

This is an important section. Here, a group of Pharisees is critical of Yeshua for associating with those whom they consider to be sinners. Yeshua responds by gives these Pharisees a direct command to go “learn something.” Later, in Matthew 12:7, we see Yeshua will criticize them again, for not doing as He told them to do here.

Yeshua’s instruction to them is a quote from the prophet Isaiah. The context in Isaiah’s original message and that of Yeshua’s is similar. In each case you had people “going through the motions” of the instructions God gave in His Torah. What Yeshua is telling these Pharisees is that their reliance on performing God’s commands, although absolutely part of their faith, was secondary to what God wants first — a trusting relationship with Him. In no way does this mean the Torah is not to be followed. Rather, the message here is that, just as faith without works is dead (James, chapters 1 and 2), the same goes for works without faith.

This is the message God has given his chosen people throughout the Bible:

Isaiah 64:6 – But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Romans 2:28-29 – For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Hebrews 4:2 – For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

If these Pharisees had gone back to learn what Isaiah was talking about, they would have seen that they were just as much in “need of a physician” as these other people were. One could say that their “legalistic view” of the Torah made them more in need of Yeshua than the people they were criticizing.

It is evident to most that these Pharisees were outwardly performing the commandments of God but lacked the humility and trust God desired. This caused them to not recognize Yeshua for who He was. They made themselves “blind.”

It should be noted however, that there is a “flip side” to this situation that is prevalent today. Anyone claiming to “believe in the Messiah,” but who rejects the Torah as God’s instruction, (i.e., “we’re not under the Law”) is no better off than these Pharisees. You cannot separate the “Torah in the flesh” from the Torah of Scripture. Yeshua said so (Matthew 5:17-21, 7:21-29), Paul said so (Romans 2:13, 3:31) and James said so (James, chapters 1 and 2). John goes so far as to have said that if you claim to know God but don’t obey His commandments (His Torah), you are a liar and the truth is not in you (1 John 2:3-4).

Of course this message goes against the overwhelming consensus today — just as it did in Yeshua and Isaiah’s times.

9:14 the disciples of John

We know from Scripture that John the Baptist was raised in the Wilderness area and had a following of his own (Matthew chapters 3 and 11, Acts 18:25; 19:3). Discoveries in the Dead Sea Scrolls have shown a very Messianic-oriented community in the Wilderness, dating from about 100 BCE to 135 CE. These people included Essenes, a community that formed their own system of sacrifices, due to corruption of Sadducees.

9:14 ... Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not??9:17 ... new cloth unto an old garment ... new wine into old bottles

Yeshua's statement of not placing new wine in old bottles (wineskins) is one of many Scripture verses often taken out of context to support some group's latest (non-Hebrew) doctrine. The proper interpretation of verse 17 would seem to be in relation to verse 14, as it is part of Yeshua's answer to the question posed to Him by John's followers about why His disciples were not fasting.

Fasting was part of following the Torah and Yeshua certainly never broke the commandments. Nor would we expect His immediate followers to do so, yet they seem to be at this time. Yeshua replies to this question using three consecutive and related images:

- You don't fast when the bridegroom is still with you – only later.
- You don't put a new piece of cloth on an old garment
- You don't put new wine in an old wineskin

There is a teaching in the Talmud that compares an experienced Torah teacher to a wineskin and his knowledgeable teaching to "old wine."

Yeshua's teachings were "old" as they were from God (John 7:16), and therefore He is the old wineskin with old wine.

The connection between these items can now be seen as follows:

new piece of cloth = new wine = fasting

old garment = old wineskin = Messiah still present

With these three examples, Yeshua is simply stating that there is a proper time and place for everything and this does not abrogate the Torah. The time while He (Elohim in the flesh) was walking among man, was a time for enjoyment (old wine) and not fasting. (1)

A similar situation occurs in chapter 12, when his disciples are again accused of breaking Torah (by their picking and eating ears of corn). As we will see, Yeshua will counter their argument in a similar fashion as He did in this chapter. There He cites examples from the Tanakh showing how the Torah allows (in fact commands) for certain actions under specific circumstances.

9:20 ... "If I may but touch his garment"9:25 ... and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

A difficult question can be asked at this point. Did Yeshua become ritually unclean by either the woman touching His garment or by Him touching the dead girl? (If she was indeed dead!) Or was he not made unclean (by anything) because of his Deity? This is a very deep issue and one that merits further study.

9:30 See that no man know it

Why did Yeshua "play down" who He was? One thought is that He didn't want the masses taking up arms against Rome, as many had the false idea that this would be a role of the Messiah.

In addition to this idea, looking back at the Hebrew Tanakh, we find the following:

Isaiah 6:8-13 – Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

Yeshua's actions are in accordance to what God told the prophet Isaiah. The people in Isaiah's time, just as in Yeshua's time, had strayed from God. As such, it was not for those who were haughty and arrogant to understand who He truly was. Those of a humble and contrite heart would receive the message however. As we will see later in this study, Yeshua makes a similar statement regarding His parables, which He says were not for all to understand.

9:35 ... preaching the gospel of the kingdom

As previously mentioned, many today believe the "gospel message" is the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah. This creates a conflict when faced with verses such as this one, or Hebrews 4:2, or other places

where the disciples are preaching “the gospel” before Yeshua has died. To counter this, it is taught that the “gospel of the kingdom” is not the same as the “gospel of the Messiah’s death, burial and resurrection.” Scripture doesn’t offer support for such a teaching however.

An alternative explanation is that there is one gospel message and it has never changed. It was indeed given to the Hebrews in Moses’ time and preached by Yeshua Himself and his apostles. This “gospel” was “pictured” in the commandments regarding the Yovel Year, also called “Jubilees,” where every 50 years, debts were forgiven and properties returned to their original owners. The Yovel Year has heavy Messianic significance in Jewish literature. The prophet Isaiah (chapter 61) makes the connection between the elements of the Yovel year commandment and their ultimate fulfillment by the Messiah.

Just as the Yovel year brought freedom to captives, forgiveness of debts and a restoration of things to their original order, the Messianic kingdom will bring freedom, forgiveness and a restoration of the name of God, Israel and creation – complete and everlasting physical and spiritual healing (Revelation 21 and 22).

The “death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah” is not the Gospel. Rather, it is God’s personal “signet” on Yeshua confirming that He was/is the one bringing in what is called the “Jubilee release” — the “good news” or “gospel” from God. This will all come fully into place when the New Covenant is established in the Millennium.

9:36 ... as sheep having no shepherd

The shepherds of the people were the priesthood. Just as in the days of Malachi, they had become corrupted, leaving the people without Godly leadership. But as the prophet foretold, the true Shepherd, God’s Messiah, would one day come:

Malachi 3:1 – Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

The book of Malachi closes with a reminder that God does not change. It also makes it clear that the end times and arrival of the Messiah are linked to the keeping of the Torah:

Malachi 4:1-6 – For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.