

Triennial Torah Study – 5th Year 10/01/2015

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By Joseph F. Dumond

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

Ex 24	Isaiah 34-36	Ps 140-143	John 12
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A Married People; Dining Before God (Exodus 24)

It was, no doubt, quite a task to put into writing the words that God spoke to Moses. These writings were written as a part of a book called "The Book of the Covenant," or, in other places, "The Book of the Law." Moses read God's words to the people, who agreed to do all that God had commanded—thus affirming the marriage covenant that God made with the nation of Israel (compare Jeremiah 3:14; 31:32), which was then sealed with blood. This covenant, continually broken by Israel, was eventually terminated through the very blood of Yeshua—which then initiated the *New* Covenant.

God's command in verses 1-2 of this chapter, it should be understood, are not acted on until verse 9, when Joshua, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel are allowed to go part of the way up the mountain with Moses to worship God apart from the congregation. Yet only Moses is allowed to come *close* to God—indeed, the implication of verse 11, that God did not touch any of the nobles, i.e. the elders, seems to be that he *did* touch Moses. Here, the elders apparently saw a manifestation of God in the person of the preincarnate Yeshua. It seems that they were also given a vision of the very throne of God. The sapphire is used in other scriptures to describe God's throne (Ezekiel 1:26; 10:1). Moses then goes with Joshua up into the mountain, leaving Joshua below him at some distance, and he was on the mountain with God for 40 days and 40 nights.

The Day of the Lord's Vengeance; Followed by Paradise (Isaiah 34-35)

That chapter 34 is a prophecy of the last days is clear from the reference to the heavens being dissolved and "rolled up like a scroll," a picture also presented in the heavenly signs of Revelation 6:13-14. Some see this terminology as descriptive of a mushroom cloud.

The prophecy concerns multinational devastation to occur during the Day of the Lord, focusing on God's judgment against Edom (Idumea). Other prophecies against Edom can be found in Isaiah 63:1-6, Jeremiah 49:7-22, Ezekiel 25:12-14, Ezekiel 35, Amos 1:11-12, Obadiah 1-14 and Malachi 1:2-5.

The Day of the Lord is described as the time of God's vengeance on the nations for their affliction of Zion—perhaps referring to the evil they have done to both physical Israel and spiritual Israel. And God tells us that this period of final vengeance will last for a year (Isaiah 34:8). In Revelation 6:17, the heavenly signs are said to introduce the “great day of His wrath.” Following these signs in Revelation is the blowing of seven trumpets, each heralding titanic, cataclysmic world upheaval. It appears, then, that these trumpets are blown over the course of this final “year of recompense.”

The waste and destruction that will come on the land of Edom (Isaiah 34:9-15)—with its becoming a habitation for unclean animals—seems very much to parallel what will happen to Babylon (Isaiah 13:19-22; 14:22-23; Jeremiah 50:39; 51:37), wherein the wasteland of such animals is perhaps symbolic of the prison for Satan and his demons (compare Revelation 18:2). And yet end-time Babylon is evidently to be identified with Rome. Interestingly, Jewish commentaries have traditionally identified Edom with Rome, or at least the dynasty of Rome's leaders, and with the rulers of Germany—as was noted in the Bible Reading Program comments on the book of Obadiah. The Babylonian Talmud mentions “Germamia of Edom” (Megilla 6b). Again, it is possible that there is some connection here, though, as also explained in the comments on Obadiah, it appears that Edom primarily comprises many of the Turks and Palestinians along with various other scattered Middle Eastern groups. However, we should perhaps consider the large number of Turks and other Muslim immigrants who live in Germany and other European nations today. Moreover, Turkey itself may eventually become part of the European Union, thus fusing a significant part of Edom with Babylon.

Isaiah 35 is entirely millennial—that is, descriptive of the 1,000-year reign of Yeshua and His saints (see Revelation 20:4-6)—and presents a contrasting picture to the desolation of chapter 34. The deserts will bloom as nature is transformed—miraculously healed. Human beings will also be healed by the miracle-working power of God.

Yet the healing will not only be external. The blind seeing, deaf hearing, lame leaping and mute singing (Isaiah 35:5-6), while literal, are also symbolic. Those who are spiritually blind will at last come to see and understand the knowledge of God. Those who are unwilling to hear God's message will at last listen. Those who are spiritually crippled, unable to walk in God's commandments, will at last be able to run and leap in the way of God. And those who are now silent in regard to God and His mighty works will at last praise Him and proclaim His truth.

This will be made possible by “waters bursting forth in the desert”—again literal but also spiritual, referring to the coming outpouring of the Spirit of God. The presence of God's Spirit will work great miracles, both visible change in nature and, more importantly, transformation of the inner hearts and minds of people.

What is now the narrow and difficult path of life, which only few find (Matthew 7:14), will, in the age to come, be a broad highway that everyone will be able to follow to the Kingdom of God. The highway, too, is both literal and figurative. It is the path of return for the exiles to Zion—the physical route and the spiritual way of life that God requires.

It will be a safe road (verse 9)—on which no beast is found. Again, this is a physical and spiritual promise. As we saw in Isaiah 11, the nature of animals will be changed. They will no longer be dangerous. And the political “Beast” powers of the earth will no longer be around to harm anyone.

It will be a time of tremendous joy—when “sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (35:10).

Prayer for deliverance from evil, violent enemies (Psalms 140)

We now come within the final collection of Davidic psalms (138-145) to its central sequence of five prayers in which David seeks deliverance from wicked enemies (140-144). The first of these, **Psalm 140**, is a lamenting plea for preservation from the plotting of evil, violent men and a call for divine retribution. The structure of the psalm is easy to discern. There are four stanzas (verses 1-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-11), the first three ending with “Selah” and the last followed by a two-verse conclusion (verses 12-13).

The first two stanzas set up the problem David is faced with. It is interesting to note that the same words are used for the second line in both the first and second stanzas: “Preserve me from violent men” (verses 1, 4). The violent here may intend physical brutality, but their method of attack is verbal—through deceit and slander (see verse 3; compare verses 9, 11). David experienced a number of such incidents in his life.

In the third stanza, David says he has appealed to the Lord in complete trust (verse 6-7). He knows that the One who has “covered” or shielded (NIV) his head in actual physical battles will protect him in this current “battle” (verse 7). With this confidence, he asks that God not grant success to the schemes of his enemies (verse 8). As noted in regard to the previous psalm, Yeshua’s instruction in the New Testament to bless and pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44) does not mean praying for their success in opposing and harming us.

In the fourth stanza David calls for a curse on the offenders. Whereas God covered or protected David’s head in past battles (again, see verse 7), David calls for the head of his enemies to be covered only with the evil of their own lips—that is, for their scheming and slander against him to come back on them. Indeed, this is the decreed penalty in the law for bearing false witness against another (see Deuteronomy 19:16-21). David as God’s prophet is pronouncing this judgment. In another psalm, David foretold that burning coals and fire would rain down on the wicked (Psalm 11:6), as Sodom and Gomorrah experienced (Genesis 19:24). Here that same penalty is called for (Psalm 140:10), though the sense may be figurative of a calamitous divine judgment. As David’s enemies tried to trip him up to cause him to fall into traps (verse 5), David calls for *them* to fall into deep pits “that they rise not up again” (verse 10). This too may be figurative—of being sunk into ineffectiveness. If it implies their deaths, then their not rising again would refer to them no longer being alive to cause trouble in the present world—not to them never being in a future resurrection. The next psalm likewise calls for the wicked to fall into their own nets (141:9-10).

David ends Psalm 140 in verses 12-13 on a confident note, assured that God will bring justice to the needy and afflicted and that God’s people will dwell with Him in perpetual gratitude.

Cry to be kept from wickedness and wicked schemes (Psalms 141)

Psalm 141 is the second in the sequence of five psalms of David seeking deliverance from the wicked. David also prays here that he be kept from taking part with them in their evildoings.

He begins with an urgent call for God to hear his plea (verse 1) and declares his intention to present his prayer, with hands raised toward heaven, as incense and as the evening sacrifice, desiring that God accept it as such (verse 2).

Incense was burned on the golden altar within the tabernacle—later the temple—every morning and evening to infuse the sanctuary with a sweet smell (see Exodus 30:1-10). Furthermore, frankincense was included with burnt offerings (see 30:1-10, 34-38; Leviticus 2:2)—adding fragrance to the savor of the sacrificial meat being cooked. Later in Scripture, the burning of incense is said to represent the prayers of God’s people ascending to Him (Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4).

The evening sacrifice was a regular daily burnt offering “for a sweet aroma” (Numbers 28:3-8), symbolizing, along with the morning sacrifice, regular and ongoing devotion to God. In considering the analogy, realize that “the evening sacrifice took time, it took care, it took preparation, it was extremely costly, every action in it was clearly thought out and performed in logical sequence” (George Knight, *Psalms*, comments on Psalm 141:1-10).

David’s specification of the *evening* sacrifice rather than the morning one or both may indicate that he spoke or composed this prayer in the evening—perhaps at the time of the evening sacrifice. It could even be that David routinely gave this or a like prayer as part of his reflection at the end of the day over an extended period of time—that is, it may have become his own personal evening sacrifice. It is worth noting that “both Ezra (Ezra 9) and Daniel (Dan. 9) prayed at the time of the evening offering. After the second temple was built, this psalm was read when the evening sacrifices were offered and the lamps were lit in the holy place” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Exultant: Psalms 90-150*, note on Psalm 141:1-2).

Before praying for God to deal with the wicked and to rescue him from them, David first turns to the issue of his own human proclivities, asking God to help him avoid any deviation toward wickedness in his own character. This includes safeguarding his speech (verse 3)—for control over one’s tongue through God’s help is a huge part of godly character (compare James 3). It also means not eating of the wicked’s “delicacies” (Psalm 141:4) or “dainties” (KJV). David is likely saying one of two things here. Either he does not want to get drawn into enjoying the “finer things” that come as a product of living the evil lifestyle common among the rich and powerful. Or he does not want to be someone who is welcomed as a guest among such people—dining in their homes and enjoying their hospitality.

If he starts leaning this way at all, David prays that the “righteous”—either a godly person or the righteous *One*, God—will as a kindness “strike” him (knock some sense into him) through rebuke. This will be like fine oil on the head, a gesture of rich hospitality that he *will not* refuse (verse 5)—in contrast to the fineries of the wicked that he *intends to* refuse.

The Hebrew text then becomes somewhat difficult to understand—from the end of verse 5 through verse 7. Translators have rendered this section in various ways over the centuries. The primary controversy centers on to whom these verses are referring.

Many believe the last line of verse 5 refers to the righteous—that David is praying for them “in their calamities” (KJV). However, the plural “their” more likely seems to refer back to the workers of iniquity in verse 4 (since the “righteous...him” in verse 5 is singular). And the KJV “in their calamities” is reinterpreted as “in [the face of] their evils.” This is the sense followed in most modern versions.

If that is correct, then verse 6 (which some take to refer to the sufferings of the righteous) would, as seems more likely, also refer to the wicked: “When their judges [the leaders of the wicked] are overthrown in stony places, they [the wicked] shall hear my words; for they [my words] are sweet” (KJV). The word translated “sweet” can also mean “pleasing” or “agreeable.” Some take this to mean that the general populace of the wicked will actually be willing to listen to David after their rulers fall. Others believe the meaning is that the wicked are going to be forced by the fall of their leaders to see that David’s words were “well spoken” (NIV)—whether that’s agreeable to them or not.

Moving on to verse 7, there is again scholarly disagreement. Whose bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave? David mentions “*our* bones,” though many prefer to have him say “*their* bones”—that is, those of the wicked. The NIV adds to the beginning of this statement the words “They will say” and interprets verse 7 as quoting the wicked—the description here seeming to fit the wicked rulers cast down in verse 6. Then again, others see no evidence for any quotation in verse 7 and understand David to be referring figuratively to the devastated state of himself and others of the righteous who are persecuted by the wicked (compare 143:3, 7)—giving the basis for the

stated judgment on the wicked in the previous verse (141:6) and the reason for his call for deliverance and justice in the next verses (8-10).

In these concluding verses, David turns his eyes to God, his only refuge from the intrigues of the wicked (verses 8-9). Similar to the previous psalm, he asks that the wicked be caught up in their own plotting (verse 10; compare 140:5, 9-10)—while he is set free into safety.

Cry for deliverance from stronger persecutors (Psalms 142)

Psalm 142 is a *maskil*, an instructive psalm or “contemplation” (NKJV), the third prayer in the sequence of five in which David asks for deliverance from persecutors. The occasion here, as the title notes, is “when he was in the cave.” This could refer to either of two episodes when David fled from King Saul. One was into the cave at Adullam (1 Samuel 22:1, 4), 16 miles southwest of Jerusalem, and the other was into the cave at En Gedi (24:1-22), the oasis near the Dead Sea. Another psalm is linked with the episode at En Gedi (Psalm 57). And that episode does not fit the sense of abject loneliness and abandonment described in Psalm 142. It appears far more likely that David’s time at Adullam is the subject of this psalm, as we will see. We earlier read this psalm in conjunction with the biblical account of that period (see the Bible Reading Program comments on 1 Samuel 22:1-5; Psalm 142; 1 Chronicles 12:8-18).

David desperately pours out his heart to God. As if the secret plotting against him were not enough, he now feels alone and forsaken, lamenting that there is no one at his right hand— that no one acknowledges him and no one cares about him (verse 4). *The Nelson Study Bible* comments: “With enemies on every path, David screams to God that he is defenseless. The armed soldier in ancient Israel probably would have had his spear or sword in his right hand and his shield in his left. The shield of one man would protect the right side of his neighbor. David cries that there is no one on his right side” (note on verses 3-5). *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* adds, “The ‘right’ signifies the place where one’s witness or legal counsel stood (cf. 16:8; 109:31; 110:5; 121:5)” (note on verses 3c-4).

This situation might not at first glance seem to match the details of David’s experience at Adullam, for 1 Samuel 22 says that his family gathered to him there and that a large group of malcontents soon banded together there under his leadership—a formidable force of 400 men that later surged to 600, with this base camp being referred to in 1 Chronicles 12 as a stronghold. Yet realize that David first arrived there by himself. We should therefore understand Psalm 142 as describing his feelings between the first and second sentences of 1 Samuel 22:1—before his family and others showed up, when he was all alone.

Of course, David understood that he was not *totally* alone. With no other human being to lean on, David still has Someone to turn to. He cries out to God, “You are my refuge” (Psalm 142:5; compare Psalm 46) and “my portion in the land of the living” (142:5). Thus, even in his despair as a fugitive hiding out in a cave, David still views God as His share in life, which he is still blessed to be living.

Moreover, David has faith that God will send help and abundance his way, including a support crowd (verse 7). How wonderful it is to know that this is just what happened not long after David prayed his heartfelt prayer. On top of that, he eventually became the king of Israel. And more important still, he will ultimately share possession of the universe as a divine king in God’s eternal royal family—as will all of us who continue to follow God.

Plea for deliverance from enemies (Psalms 143)

Psalm 143 is the fourth in the sequence of five psalms of David (within the collection of eight) wherein David prays for deliverance from enemies. It is classified as one of the seven penitential psalms (6; 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143). These psalms have in common an acknowledgment of sin (32:5; 38:18; 51:2-4; 130:3) and/or a reference to deserved punishment (6:1; 38:1; 102:10; 143:2).

In this psalm, David doesn't acknowledge specific sins but is clearly aware of his own failings, asking to be passed over in judgment. He knows that such judgment would find him guilty, as he, like everyone, has sinned (compare Psalm 143:2; Romans 3:10, 23). So he pleads for mercy, basing his appeal on God's faithfulness and righteousness (Psalm 143:1) in dealing with one who is His servant (verse 2; compare verses 11-12).

David further implies that he is unable to withstand judgment given his already-overwhelmed state, crushed to the depths of despair by enemy persecution that brought him seemingly near death (verses 3-4, 7). Although David is probably referring to a human enemy (verse 3) and enemies (verse 12) who have persistently hounded him, he may have in mind as well the spiritual Adversary, Satan the devil, and his demons, who are also associated with darkness and the pit (see Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 20:1-2).

David likens his yearning for God to dry ground that needs rain (verse 6). Interestingly, rain in other passages symbolizes God's Word and teachings (Isaiah 55:6-13; Deuteronomy 32:1-3), the Holy Spirit (44:3-4), righteousness (Hosea 10:12) and the coming of God (6:1, 3). David needs all of this. In desperation he cries out for God's immediate intervention. He cannot rely on his own overwhelmed and failing spirit (Psalm 143:4, 7), referring to his weakened strength of mind. He requires the help of God's good Spirit (see verse 10). He needs an understanding of how to go forward (verse 8), rescue from his enemies (verse 9), instruction in righteousness (verse 10), and relief and empowerment (verse 11).

As in the opening of the psalm (verses 1-2), David again bases his plea for help (including justice on enemies) on the fact that he is God's servant (verses 11-12)—stressing here God's *hesed*, rendered "mercy" (verse 12, NKJV) but also translatable as "loyal love" or "devotion." The point is that God has made promises of steadfast love and help to those who are His servants—even, as verse 11 implies, staking His name, His reputation, on this.

John 12

It is now six days before the Passover that year and Yeshua is in Beyth Anyah having a meal with El'azar, Miryam, and Martha and others. It was at this time that Miryam anointed Yeshua's feet with costly perfume and Judas made his infamous statement about her being wasteful

with something so costly. Many Yehudim came there to visit and see El'azar with their own eyes and they believed. Because of this the chief priests resolved to not only kill Yeshua, but El'azar too.

On the next day, the 10th day of the first month (the month of Passover), Yeshua enters the city on the colt of a donkey and because of all the miracles He had performed, all the believers greeted Him with praises and palm branches hailing Him as their King.

Even Greeks had come to see Yeshua. It is most likely these were members of the northern tribes... now called as Greeks from the north, west, and east. Once Yeshua is told of their coming, He testifies that His hour, His purpose, to be lifted up has come. He is distressed but will do the work He was sent to do. To esteem the Father is His passion and pure desire and He will do it. Once He is lifted up, He will draw all men unto Him.

Many also did not believe, no matter what was done. The Father Himself hardened their hearts so that they should not see, nor hear, nor believe. Even some rulers who did believe did not profess for they feared being put out of the assemblies and feared men more than they feared Elohim.