

# Triennial Torah Study – 5<sup>th</sup> Year 17/01/2015

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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](https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf)

Ex 25	Isaiah 37-39	Ps 144-145	John 13
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## Plans for the Tabernacle Interior (Exodus 25)

Now we read of plans for the construction of the tabernacle, where God said He would dwell on earth with the Israelites. Notice some points that one may otherwise quickly read over.

Certain offerings were given by the Israelites. Only the offerings that were given willingly were to be accepted. God does not want us to give of necessity or with a begrudging attitude, but cheerfully and thankfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).

The Ark of the Testimony, elsewhere called the Ark of the Covenant, would contain the two tablets of the Ten Commandments-indeed, they were apparently the only items that were actually *in* the Ark (see 1 Kings 8:9). While Hebrews 9:4 does seem to say that the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded were in the Ark, it has been speculated that there was perhaps some kind of satchel attached to the side of the Ark containing these items. (Some have suggested that the pot and rod were originally in the Ark and then removed. But it seems unlikely that someone would have lifted the Ark's lid and trifled with its contents-except perhaps for the one period in which it was taken by the Philistines and then peered into by the men of Beth Shemesh, 1 Samuel 6:19. However, God supernaturally made sure of the Ark's return from Philistia and struck the men of Beth Shemesh for merely looking inside the Ark. He mentions nothing about them taking any items from inside-and why would He not have ensured their return also.

Beside the Ark was placed the Book of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 31:26). All the items mentioned are "testimonies"-as if witnesses providing evidentiary testimony in court-of God's miraculous intervention for the children of Israel. Placed on top of the ark was the mercy seat, another "testimony" of God's everlasting mercy, which represented His very throne.

God also gave understanding of the appearance of the cherubim, part of the angelic realm created in service to God. Embroidered patterns of cherubim were also woven into the curtains of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:1). The artistic representations of these wondrous creatures, which are described in greater detail in the book of Ezekiel, were the only "images" of heavenly beings permitted in God's worship system. They were,

of course, not to be worshiped. And it is clear that there was no image of God in all of the tabernacle accoutrements-as was so common in pagan temples.

The showbread, constituting 12 loaves for all the tribes of Israel, is itself described more fully in Leviticus 24:5-9. Its name derives from its symbolic placement before the face of God. Other translations render it “bread of presence” or “bread of the Presence.” That is, it was in the presence of God, just as the nation of Israel was-since God’s presence was among *them*.

The last verse of the chapter informs us that Moses was not only told how to make the implements, but he actually “saw” a heavenly pattern for them. Indeed, the book of Hebrews assures us that the tabernacle and the items within it were “copies of the things in the heavens” (see 8:5; 9:11, 23-24).

## **Isaiah 37-39**

### Chapter 37

We may observe here, 1. That the best way to baffle the malicious designs of our enemies against us is to be driven by them to God and to our duty and so to fetch meat out of the eater. Rabshakeh intended to frighten Hezekiah from the Lord, but it proves that he frightens him to the Lord. The wind, instead of forcing the traveller’s coat from him, makes him wrap it the closer about him. The more Rabshakeh reproaches God the more Hezekiah studies to honour him, by rending his clothes for the dishonour done to him and attending in his sanctuary to know his mind. 2. That it well becomes great men to desire the prayers of good men and good ministers. Hezekiah sent messengers, and honourable ones, those of the first rank, to Isaiah, to desire his prayers, remembering how much his prophecies of late had plainly looked towards the events of the present day, in dependence upon which, it is probable, he doubted not but that the issue would be comfortable, yet he would have it to be so in answer to prayer: *This is a day of trouble*, therefore let it be a day of prayer.

3. When we are most at a plunge we should be most earnest in prayer: Now that the *children are brought to the birth*, but *there is not strength to bring forth*, now let prayer come, and help at a dead lift. When pains are most strong let prayers be most lively; and, when we meet with the greatest difficulties, then is a time to stir up not ourselves only, but others also, to take hold on God. Prayer is the midwife of mercy, that helps to bring it forth.
4. It is an encouragement to pray though we have but some hopes of mercy (Isa. 37:4): *It may be the Lord thy God will hear; who knows but he will return and repent?* The *it may be* of the prospect of the haven of blessings should quicken us with double diligence to ply the oar of prayer.
5. When there is a remnant left, and but a remnant, it concerns us to lift up a prayer for that remnant, Isa. 37:4. The prayer that reaches heaven must be lifted up by a strong faith, earnest desires, and a direct intention to the glory of God, all which should be quickened when we come to the last stake.
6. Those that have made God their enemy we have no reason to be afraid of, for they are marked for ruin; and, though they may hiss, they cannot hurt. Rabshakeh has blasphemed God, and therefore let not Hezekiah be afraid of him, Isa. 37:6. He has made God a party to the cause by his invectives, and therefore judgment will certainly be given against him. God will certainly plead his own cause.
7. Sinners’ fears are but prefaces to their falls. He shall *hear the rumour* of the slaughter of his army, which shall oblige him to retire to his own land, and there he shall be slain, Isa. 37:7. The terrors that pursue him shall bring him at last to the *king of terrors*, Job 18:11, 14. The curses that come upon sinners shall overtake them

## **Chapter 38**

We may hence observe, among others, these good lessons:—1. That neither men’s greatness nor their goodness will exempt them from the arrests of sickness and death. Hezekiah, a mighty potentate on earth and a mighty favourite of Heaven, is struck with a disease, which, without a miracle, will certainly be mortal; and this in the midst of his days, his comforts, and usefulness. *Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is*

*sick*. It should seem, this sickness seized him when he was in the midst of his triumphs over the ruined army of the Assyrians, to teach us always to rejoice with trembling. 2. It concerns us to prepare when we see death approaching: “*Set thy house in order*, and thy heart especially; put both thy affections and thy affairs into the best posture thou canst, that, when thy Lord comes, thou mayest be found of him in peace with God, with thy own conscience, and with all men, and mayest have nothing else to do but to die.” Our being ready for death will make it come never the sooner, but much the easier: and those that are fit to die are most fit to live. 3. Isa. any afflicted with sickness? *Let him pray*, Jas. 5:13. Prayer is a salve for every sore, personal or public. When Hezekiah was distressed by his enemies he prayed; now that he was sick he prayed. Whither should the child go, when any thing ails him, but to his Father? Afflictions are sent to bring us to our Bibles and to our knees.

When Hezekiah was in health he *went up to the house of the Lord* to pray, for that was then the house of prayer. When he was sick in bed *he turned his face towards the wall*, probably towards the temple, which was a type of Christ, to whom we must look by faith in every prayer. 4. The testimony of our consciences for us that by the grace of God we have lived a good life, and have walked closely and humbly with God, will be a great support and comfort to us when we come to look death in the face. And though we may not depend upon it as our righteousness, by which to be justified before God, yet we may humbly plead it as an evidence of our interest in the righteousness of the Mediator.

Hezekiah does not demand a reward from God for his good services, but modestly begs that God would remember, not how he had reformed the kingdom, taken away the high places, cleansed the temple, and revived neglected ordinances, but, which was *better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices*, how he had approved himself to God with a single eye and an honest heart, not only in these eminent performances, but in an even regular course of holy living: *I have walked before thee in truth* and sincerity, *and with a perfect*, that is, an upright, *heart*; for uprightness is our gospel perfection. 5. God has a gracious ear open to the prayers of his afflicted people. The same prophet that was sent to Hezekiah with warning to prepare for death is sent to him with a promise that he shall not only recover, but be restored to a confirmed state of health and live fifteen years yet. As Jerusalem was distressed, so Hezekiah was diseased, that God might have the glory of the deliverance of both, and that prayer too might have the honour of being instrumental in the deliverance. When we pray in our sickness, though God send not to us such an answer as he here sent to Hezekiah, yet, if by his Spirit he bids us be of good cheer, assures us that our sins are forgiven us, that his grace shall be sufficient for us, and that, whether we live or die, we shall be his, we have no reason to say that we pray in vain.

God answers us if he *strengthens us with strength in our souls*, though not with bodily strength, Ps. 138:3. 6. A good man cannot take much comfort in his own health and prosperity unless withal he see the welfare and prosperity. Therefore God, knowing what lay near Hezekiah’s heart, promised him not only that he should live, but that he should *see the good of Jerusalem all the days of his life* (Ps. 128:5), otherwise he cannot live comfortably. Jerusalem, which is now delivered, shall still be defended from the Assyrians, who perhaps threatened to rally again and renew the attack. Thus does God graciously provide to make Hezekiah upon all accounts easy. 7. God is *willing to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel*, that they may have an unshaken faith in it, and therewith a strong consolation. God had given Hezekiah repeated assurances of his favour; and yet, as if all were thought too little, that he might expect from him uncommon favours, a sign is given him, an uncommon sign. None that we know of having had an absolute promise of living a certain number of years to come, as Hezekiah had, God thought fit to confirm this unprecedented favour with a miracle. The sign was the going back of the shadow upon the sun-dial. The sun is a faithful measurer of time, and *rejoices as a strong man to run a race*; but he that set that clock a going can set it back when he pleases, and make it to return; for the Father of all lights is the director of them.

## Chapter 39

Hence we may learn these lessons:—1. That humanity and common civility teach us to rejoice with our friends and neighbours when they rejoice, and to congratulate them on their deliverances, and particularly their recoveries from sickness. The king of Babylon, having heard that Hezekiah had been sick, and had recovered, sent to compliment him upon the occasion. If believers be unneighbourly, heathens will shame them. 2. It becomes us to give honour to those whom our God puts honour upon. The sun was the Babylonians' god; and when they understood that it was with a respect to Hezekiah that the sun, to their great surprise, went back ten degrees, on such a day, they thought themselves obliged to do Hezekiah all the honour they could. Will all people thus walk in the name of their God, and shall not we?

3. Those that do not value good men for their goodness may yet be brought to pay them great respect by other inducements, and for the sake of their secular interests. The king of Babylon made his court to Hezekiah, not because he was pious, but because he was prosperous, as the Philistines coveted an alliance with Isaac because they saw the Lord was with him, Gen. 26:28. The king of Babylon was an enemy to the king of Assyria, and therefore was fond of Hezekiah, because the Assyrians were so much weakened by the power of his God. 4. It is a hard matter to keep the spirit low in the midst of great advancements. Hezekiah is an instance of it: he was a wise and good man, but, when one miracle after another was wrought in his favour, he found it hard to keep his heart from being lifted up, nay, a little thing then drew him into the snare of pride. Blessed Paul himself needed a thorn in the flesh, to keep him from being *lifted up with the abundance of revelations*. 5. We have need to watch over our own spirits when we are showing our friends our possessions, what we have done and what we have got, that we be not proud of them, as if our might or our merit had purchased and procured us this wealth.

When we look upon our enjoyments, and have occasion to speak of them, it must be with humble acknowledgments of our own unworthiness and thankful acknowledgments of God's goodness, with a just value for the achievements of others and with an expectation of losses and changes, not dreaming that our mountain stands so strong but that it may soon be moved. 6. It is a great weakness for good men to value themselves much upon the civil respects that are paid them (yea, though there be something particular and uncommon in them) by the children of this world, and to be fond of their acquaintance. What a poor thing was it for Hezekiah, whom God has so dignified, to be thus over proud of the respect paid him by a heathen prince as if that added any thing to him! We ought to return the courtesies of such with interest, but not to be proud of them. 7. We must expect to be called to an account for the workings of our pride, though they are secret, and in such instances as we thought there was no harm in; and therefore we ought to call ourselves to an account for them; and when we have had company with us that have paid us respect, and been pleased with their entertainment, and commended every thing, we ought to be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy lest our hearts have been lifted up. As far as we see cause to suspect that this sly and subtle sin of pride has insinuated itself into our breasts, and mingled itself with our conversation, let us be ashamed of it, and, as Hezekiah here, ingenuously confess it and take shame to ourselves for it.

## Prayer for rescue from deceitful foreigners (Psalms 144)

**Psalm 144** is the last in the sequence here of five psalms of David seeking rescue from foes, in this case referring to treacherous foreign enemies in a time of war or the threat of war. It contains a number of similarities with David's great victory song found in 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18. As the victory song evidently came late in David's life, after all his foes were subdued, and Psalm 144 was written while David still needed deliverance from foreign enemies, it would appear that the victory song borrowed elements from Psalm 144 rather than the other way around. In fact, there is more in the specific wording of both songs to confirm this, as we will see.

Psalm 144 opens with David praising God as his “Rock” (verse 1a), the word here also meaning “strength,” which could mean a stronghold or fortress. The same word appears at the beginning of Psalm 18 as “strength” (verse 1), but it is paired in the next verse with another word meaning “rock” (verse 2; compare 2 Samuel 22:2). Note also the references to God as “fortress” and “high tower” (Psalm 144:2; compare 18:2; 2 Samuel 22:2-3).

In Psalm 144:2 David refers to God as He “who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle” (144:1b). Compare the victory song: “He teaches my hands to make war” (Psalm 18:34; 2 Samuel 22:35). Thus David credits God for making him a successful warrior-king. *The Nelson Study Bible* suggests: “It is also possible that this psalm was used in the training of the army (as was Ps. 149). Warfare in ancient Israel was tied closely to the worship of God. Deliverance from the enemy was not just a task for tough soldiers, it was a matter of active piety” (introductory note on Psalm 144). As God’s earthly kingdom at that time, Israel and its human ruler battled foreign enemies at God’s command. Believers today, who wait for God’s future Kingdom, do not have this responsibility and therefore do not participate in physical warfare (compare John 18:36). Of course, God does teach us to fight spiritual battles against our spiritual enemies. Verse 3 of Psalm 144, asking what is man (the Hebrew here connoting *mortal* man) that God should care for him, is nearly the same as Psalm 8:4. Actually, David evidently took this wording, as found in both psalms, from Job 7:17-18. In fact, the previous clause of that passage, “For my days are but a breath” (verse 16), is echoed in the next words of Psalm 144: “Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow” (verse 4). “The Hebrew word translated ‘breath’ [here and in Job 7:16] is *habel*, the name of one of Adam’s sons (Abel), and the word translated ‘vanity’ thirty-eight times in Ecclesiastes. (See also 39:4-6, 22; 62:9; 78:33, 94:11.) The ‘shadow’ image is found in 102:11, 109:23, Job 8:9 and 14:2, and Ecclesiastes 6:12 and 8:13” (Wiersbe, *Be Exultant*, note on Psalm 144:1-4).

This presentation of the frailty of human existence sets up David’s plea for God’s powerful intervention. The imagery of the bowing down of the heavens, the flashing forth of lightning bolts as arrows and the rescue from great waters representative of foreign adversaries (verses 5-7) is all found in the victory song as well (compare 18:9, 14, 16-17; 2 Samuel 22:10, 15, 17-18). However, Psalm 144 asks for these things to happen, while the victory song shows them as already accomplished. Thus, the victory song is essentially praise and thanks for God answering the plea of Psalm 144—further demonstrating the order in which these psalms were composed.

Verse 8 and the recapitulation of the plea for deliverance in verse 11 seem to imply that the foreign enemies are violating some treaty or other agreement they had made with Israel .

David, anticipating deliverance and victory, says he will sing a new song to God (verse 9; compare 33:2-3; 40:3). This could refer to singing an old song with renewed joy and zeal. Yet in this case it may well refer to the composition of a completely new song—the best fit seeming to be the victory song of Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22. In the context of this new song is the reference to God as “the One who gives salvation to kings, who delivers David His servant from the deadly sword” (Psalm 144:10). Considering that the names of the psalmists are rarely included in the lyrics of the psalms, compare the victory song: “Great deliverance He gives to His king, and shows mercy to His anointed, to David and his descendants forevermore” (18:50; compare 2 Samuel 22:51).

Praying for God’s deliverance in faith, David can foresee strong, healthy children, prosperity, peace and contentment for God’s nation (Psalm 144:12-15). Such happiness, as verse 15 makes clear, is the reward of the people of God—both in this age and, in an ultimate sense, in the age to come.

It would be beneficial to read Psalm 18 or 2 Samuel 22 following Psalm 144 to see the intervention of God in answering David’s prayer.

## Praise for God's greatness and grace (Psalms 145)

**Psalm 145**, the last of the final collection of eight Davidic psalms (138-145), is a grand hymn of praise for God the Great King and His majestic reign and gracious acts-including the deliverance of His people. It serves as the closing frame of the five prayers of David seeking rescue from wicked enemies (140-144)-perhaps placed here as grateful and worshipful praise in collective response to God's intervention in all these past situations and His faithfulness to continue intervening (compare 145:18-20). The hymn also serves to transition to the final five untitled psalms of *Hallelujah* ("Praise the LORD") that close the book of Psalms (146-150). This psalm is specifically titled a "praise" or *tehillah* (derived from *hallel*)-the only psalm so titled. From the plural form of this word, *tehillim*, has come the traditional Hebrew name for the book of Psalms- *Sefer Tehillim* or "Book of Praises."

David composed Psalm 145 in the form of an alphabetic acrostic, with each succeeding verse beginning with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet-with the exception, according to the Masoretic Text, of the letter *nun*. A number of modern versions, based on other texts, include an additional verse corresponding to this letter after verse 13 (though not numbered as a separate verse). However, this does not appear to be justified. As *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* comments: "This psalm is written alphabetically, as is observed on the title of it; but the letter 'nun' is here wanting.... Nor is the order always strictly observed in alphabetical psalms; in the thirty-seventh psalm the letter 'ain' is wanting, and three [letters] in the twenty-fifth psalm. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, supply this defect here, by inserting these words, 'the Lord is faithful in all his words, and holy in all his works,' as if they were begun with the word *Nman*, but they seem to be taken from Ps 145:17, with a little alteration" (note on verse 13).

David begins his hymn of praise with a powerful declaration that he will *extol* (exalt or lift up), *bless* and *praise* God every day forever and ever (verses 1-2)-demonstrating an understanding that he himself will live forever to render this worship. He then states the theme of his psalm: "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable" (verse 3; compare Romans 11:33). David can compose praise from uncountable manifestations of God's greatness: His nature, His creation, His plan of salvation, His dealings with mankind.

In verses 4-12 David mentions a number of ways that praise for God will be promulgated. He starts by declaring that praise for God's awesome works will resound from one generation to the next (verse 4). This is accomplished as stories of God's great acts are taught to succeeding generations. The passing on of such knowledge is primarily the responsibility of parents (compare Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:7).

Another means of transmitting this knowledge is through the recording of God's acts for posterity, as was done in the Scriptures. In fact, observe next in Psalm 145 the back and forth of "I will meditate" (verse 5) and "Men shall speak" (verse 6a), "I will declare" (verse 6b) and "They shall utter" (verse 7). Modern Bible versions often eliminate these shifts, but they are clearly present in the Hebrew. Perhaps the idea here is that David is declaring God's praises in this and other psalms-which others in later generations will sing and talk about.

David then inserts here God's revelation of Himself through His character, essentially repeating God's description of Himself to Moses as gracious, compassionate, full of mercy or loving devotion, slow to anger, and good (verses 8-9; compare Exodus 34:6-7). Similar wording may also be found in other psalms (e.g., 86:5, 15; 111:4; 112:4).

In the next verse (Psalm 145:10a), David says that all of God's works will praise Him, echoing Psalm 19:1-3, where the evidence of God's creative handiwork in the heavens "declares" God's glory.

And a further method of the transmission of God's praise is through the speaking of His saints-His sanctified people-whose task it is to proclaim His Kingdom and mighty acts to the sons of men, the people of this world (verses 10a-12). This is primarily accomplished today, as the New Testament makes clear, through the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom. Yet in an ultimate sense, this may picture the saints, when resurrected and glorified as kings and priests in God's future Kingdom, teaching the gospel to all nations.

Verse 13, it should be noted, stresses the eternal nature of God's Kingdom and dominion. We should realize that Scripture presents God's Kingdom in three ways. In the first two senses it is a present reality. God is particularly the King of His people-both ancient Israel and spiritual Israel, today. Moreover, God is of course always and ever the King of the universe-Sovereign over all His created realm. Yet for the time being, God permits resistance to His rule. And this brings us to the third, future sense of God's Kingdom. When Yeshua returns, He will set up God's Kingdom over all nations, enforcing its laws throughout the world and leading everyone to accept God's sovereignty or be removed. All these senses of God's reign appear in the remainder of the psalm.

Verses 14-16 illustrate God's compassion and goodness as, through His sovereign rule, He helps the needy and provides sustenance for all living things. Note that the word "gracious" in verse 8 is translated from *hannun*, meaning stooping in kindness to help (Strong's No. 2587, from 2603). In verse 17 the word translated "gracious" is *hasid* (Strong's No. 2623)-an adjective form of *hesed* (No. 2617), meaning loyal love or devotion. Indeed, in verses 17-20 we see God's loyal love to His devoted people. He will answer their prayers and save them.

While the deliverance and preservation of God's people in these verses happens today, the ultimate fulfillment of this passage will come with the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth in the future, when the wicked who refuse to come under God's loving authority will be destroyed (verse 20) and David's praise will be part of a vast chorus of all people praising God for all time (verse 21).

## John 13

The supper has ended for Yeshua and His disciples. Yeshua knows who it is that has been chosen to betray Him. Yeshua, knowing that His time is near, rises from the table and removes His garments to begin a new teaching. He washes the feet of His disciples – teaching that to serve is to be like and follow Him. To be greatest is to be the least. No servant is greater than his master and no emissary is greater than the One who sends him.

After the washing of the feet, Yeshua again speaks of His betrayal and that not all of them are clean. He dips His bread into the oil and hands the piece to Judas for him to go and what he does, do it quickly.

Yeshua knows now that all has been put into motion for His eventual handing over and crucifixion. He knows the Father will be esteemed along with the Son. He commands His followers to love one another, as He has loved them. He tells them where He is going they are unable to follow and they are sad and confused. Peter states that he will go to the death for Yeshua, but Yeshua, knowing how weak the flesh is... tells Peter that he will deny even knowing Yeshua three times.