



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

https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

Gen 19	Judges 14-15	Ps 38-40	Mat 24
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The Sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)

Sodom has clearly been a corrupting influence upon Lot and his family. In order to save his unknown guests, Lot offers to bring his unmarried daughters out to the threatening mob. Of course, it is possible that this was a ploy to give his guests a chance to escape.

Nevertheless, even drawing such attention to his daughters put them at grave risk. Either way, it is clear that Lot was not putting his trust in God. Of interest, it may be noticed that Lot apparently had at least two other daughters who were married (verse 14). Yet being under the authority of their scoffing husbands, they do not escape the city's destruction.

As for the utter depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as the other cities of the plain, it was fully confirmed by the visit of the two angels. When confronted with the phrase "Sodom and Gomorrah," most identify their sin as being homosexuality. But that was not their only grievous sin. In Ezekiel 16 God says that their sins included "pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; [and] neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me" (verses 49-50). Considering Abraham's example of humility and diligence in care of the visitors he received in Genesis 18, we can see from Ezekiel's condemnation that Sodom and Gomorrah had transgressed the basic boundaries of morality and social custom. Their entire lifestyle was one of self-exaltation and indulgence, indifference to others and social injustice.

Consider for a moment our modern societies. Never have we been wealthier, more secure in our daily needs, with so vast an array of leisure options. But, at the same time, we are plagued with poverty, homelessness, corrupt politicians, unjust laws, courts more concerned with procedure and the rights of criminals than with justice, and social systems and customs that violate God's instructions. Surprising as it may sound, even many churches' popular religious practices are nothing more than a recycling of ancient pagan customs God repeatedly condemns in the Scriptures. While God desires for mankind to repent—to humbly turn to Him and begin living His way of life—it will be

necessary that He “come down” again in judgment for that to occur on a broad scale. Yet God is slow to anger and abundant in mercy—and for that we should be truly thankful.

Samson’s Marriage (Judges 14)

Samson’s life as a deliverer for Israel stands in sharp contrast to the other deliverers God raised up for Israel. Despite such promising beginnings, Samson showed himself susceptible to being foolishly enticed by the world. God did not want the Israelites intermarrying with pagan gentiles, but Samson took a Philistine woman as his first wife. Also, Samson, as a Nazirite, should have avoided any uncleanness, but he took the honey from the carcass of the lion, which would have rendered the honey unclean (compare Leviticus 11:24-38). In short, Samson was a hardheaded man, but God would use that as a means of provoking the Philistines and delivering Israel.

The marriage of Samson, and the trickery that attended it, also shows that Samson was easily manipulated by the object of his desire. Neither his first, unnamed, wife, nor the woman Delilah would prove to be loving, faithful wives—but, rather, willing tools in the hands of the Philistine oppressors. Moreover, Samson seemed to be generally blind to their deceptions.

These kind of strange personal characteristics in a deliverer of Israel seem to be contradictory to the purposes of God. But in the case of Samson, God intended to use just such a man to seek an occasion against the Philistines (14:4). God can use the most unlikely of instruments to accomplish His purposes, even the very weaknesses and sins of men. If this is so with the weaknesses of God’s servants, how much more when His servants purge themselves of sin and weakness and become truly holy and spiritually strong! Let us all strive to be just such excellent tools in the hands of our awesome God.

Foxes and Firebrands and the Jawbone of an Ass (Judges 15)

The shenanigans at Samson’s marriage, and the giving of his wife to another, provoked him into taking vengeance on the Philistine oppressors. He wrought havoc on their harvest. To do this, he trapped foxes—or jackals, as the Hebrew can also be translated (which seems more likely as jackals, unlike the more solitary foxes, traveled in packs, making it easier to catch them in greater numbers). He then tied torches—“firebrands” as the King James Version has it—between the tails of pairs of these jackals or foxes before releasing them into fields of grain, vineyards and olive groves. One can imagine the panic-stricken animals, unable to run in a straight line, zigzagging all over the fields, setting them on fire wherever they ran, thus burning whole crops. Samson became a wanted man, and it was his own people who turned him over to the Philistines.

Another element in the Christlike symbolism of Samson’s life: Samson is turned over to the Philistine oppressors by Israelites of the tribe of Judah; Christ is turned over to the Roman oppressors by Israelites of the tribe of Judah.

Samson then slew a thousand Philistine men with the jawbone of a donkey. His utterance in verse 16 after slaying the Philistines is poetic, as the New King James Version indicates. However, the translation into English does not do justice to the Hebrew play on words. The Moffatt Translation is perhaps better: “With the jawbone of an ass I have piled them in a mass.” At least Samson realizes that the strength and power he had to perform this incredible feat came from God. “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant,” he acknowledges (verse 18). He even calls on God to further deliver Him from thirst, which God does.

All this is building to a grand climax as God continues to seek an occasion to deal with the Philistines.

“O LORD.... Remove Your Plague From Me” (Psalms 38-39)

Psalm 38 begins a group of four related psalms that closes Book I (i.e., Psalms 38-41). These four psalms are linked by central themes. All are confessions of sin in the midst of troubles— the troubles in at least three of these being serious illness and enemies (while the other, Psalm 40, concerns enemies rising during a time of distress, which could also be related to a time of illness).

As the sicknesses in these psalms are a result of sin on David’s part, it is possible that they are all one and the same sickness resulting from the same sin. It could be, as suggested in the Bible Reading Program comments on Psalm 6, that the plague David suffers is the one he prayed to come on him in place of the populace after he sinned in the numbering of Israel (see 2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21). However, the Bible does not actually say whether or not David was then afflicted. The sicknesses in these psalms could well concern another time. The betrayal in Psalm 41 may hint at the time of national rebellion under Absalom with the assistance of David’s friend and counselor Ahithophel (if deep depression contributed to David becoming physically ill at that time, though the Bible does not tell us).

The NIV translation of Psalm 38’s superscription refers to the psalm as a “petition.” The King James and New King James give the more literal rendering of this verbal phrase (which is also found in the superscription of Psalm 70) as “To bring to remembrance.” Though God knows our needs, He nevertheless expects us to remind Him of them in prayer—perhaps to remind ourselves of our need for Him and His help.

David confesses his sin, which he labels foolishness, and asks for relief from God’s heavy hand. God chastens him because of His sin (verses 3, 5). Sickness is not always due to a person’s sins (see Job 1-2; John 9:1-3). But sometimes it is, as the numerous instances of God sending plague as punishment attests. Proverbs 3:11-12 explains that God’s chastening is done out of love—just as a father disciplines his son. The book of Hebrews quotes these verses (12:5-6) and goes on to comment further, explaining how it all works toward a positive outcome (verses 7-11).

The ordeal leaves David weak from festering sores (verse 5) and inflammation (verse 7). He is depressed by guilt (verse 4) and a lack of peace (verse 8). In verse 10, David speaks of his failing

strength and the light having gone out of his eyes. We saw similar expressions in 6:7 and 13:3. In its note on 6:7, the Zondervan NIV Study Bible says: “In the vivid language of the O[ld] T[estament] the eyes are dimmed by failing strength (see 38:10; 1Sa 14:27, 29...Jer 14:6), by grief (often associated with affliction: 31:9; 88:9; Job 17:7; La 2:11) and by longings unsatisfied or hope deferred (see 69:3; 119:82, 123; Dt 28:32; Isa 38:14).” This idiom has passed over into English. We sometimes speak of the light, spark or sparkle having left someone’s eye—meaning the person has no further sense of joy in living.

Friends and family won’t come near David in his illness (verse 11). Enemies conspire against him (verse 12). Isolated and absorbed in his suffering, he has no way to know what’s going on and no one to talk to—like a deaf and mute person (verses 13-14). His silence may also be part of a conscious effort to avoid saying something rash or foolish to or before others and thereby sinning further, as he says in the next psalm (39:1-2).

But David hopes in God to hear and answer His prayer (38:15). His silence is only before other people. To God He pours out His heart, confessing his sin and pleading with God to deliver him soon (verses 15-22). Indeed, if the other sickness psalms concern this period, then David had much to say to God as He composed these prayerful hymns.

The middle of the superscription of Psalm 39, which may be part of a postscript to the previous psalm, says “To Jeduthun,” referring to “one of David’s three choir leaders (1Ch 16:41-42; 25:1, 6; 2Ch 5:12; called his ‘seer’ in 2Ch 35:15). Jeduthun is probably also Ethan of 1Ch 6:44 [and] 15:19; if so, he represented the family of Merari, even as Asaph did the family of Gershon and Heman the family of Kohath, the three sons of Levi (see 1Ch 6:16, 33, 39, 43-44)” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 39 title). The end of the superscription, “A Psalm of David,” no doubt goes with Psalm 39.

In this prayer David is “deeply troubled by the fragility of human life. He is reminded of this by the present illness through which God is rebuking him (vv. 10-11) for his ‘transgression’ (v. 8)” (note on Psalm 39).

As the psalm opens, we see that David has made a determination to not speak aloud, presumably of his anguish, lest this make its way to his or God’s enemies. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary notes on verse 2 that he “fears that he may be misunderstood or that he may speak irreverently and give occasion to the enemy. For the sake of God, he vowed to be silent in his suffering.” Yet verses 8-9 make it appear that David did not want to admit to detractors that his sickness was a result of God punishing him for sin. So the sin he was now guarding against could have been that of defending his reputation against criticism that might have been just (if not coming from hypocrites). Whatever the reasoning, it may help to explain his silence in the previous psalm, especially if it concerns the same illness (see Psalm 38:13-14).

At last, David says that he had to vent his anguish and frustration (verse 3). But it seems that he does the venting to God (verse 4). He begins by basically asking, “Okay, when am I going to die? How much time do I have left?” (as it seemed this could be the end)—and complaining that human life is fleeting, like the few inches of a handbreadth in length and a wisp of vapor in substance (verses 4-6, 11). All that people did seemed so pointless (verse 6). This is the theme running through the book of Ecclesiastes.

Still, David hopes in and prays for God’s healing (verses 7, 10, 12-13). He notes that he has lived not as one tied to this world but as a “stranger” or “alien” (a foreigner to this evil world) and a “sojourner” (a traveler or passing guest). And this has not been on his own but rather, as he says to God, “with You” (verse 12). The book of Hebrews says that God’s saints “all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland...a better, that is, a heavenly country” (Hebrew 11:13-16; compare 1 Peter 2:11-12). So in saying what he did, David was not only reminding God of his relationship with Him, but he was also expressing his hope in God’s Kingdom. If it was time for him to die, he trusted in His future with God.

Yet David is not resigned to death. He still prays that God will remove His gaze so that he may regain strength and not die (Psalm 39:13). This does not mean, as some commentators suggest, that David is praying for God to leave him alone. For on his own David could never recover. Rather, we should understand the terminology in light of Psalm 80:16, which says that God’s people perish at the rebuke of His countenance. The idea is that when He gazes on them in anger, they wither and are consumed. So Psalm 80 repeatedly asks that God would cause His face to shine—to smile favorably. David is likewise pleading for God to turn away His angry gaze of judgment—and, as stated in verse 7, he is hopeful that God will.

“I Am Poor and Needy; Yet the LORD Thinks Upon Me” (Psalms 40-41)

In its note on Psalms 40-41, the Zondervan NIV Study Bible states: “Book I of the Psalter closes with two psalms containing ‘Blessed is the man who’ statements (40:4; 41:1), thus balancing the two psalms with which the book begins (1:1; 2:12). In this way, the whole of Book I is framed by declarations of the blessedness of those who ‘delight in the law of the LORD’ (1:2), who ‘take refuge in him’ (2:12), who ‘do not look to the proud’ but make the Lord their ‘trust’ (40:4) and who have ‘regard for the weak’ (41:1)—a concise instruction in godliness.”

Some Bible commentators have proposed that Psalm 40 itself is actually two separate psalms combined into one—a conclusion deriving from the fact that verses 1-10 praise and thank God for deliverance He has brought while verses 11-17 lament and plead with Him for deliverance that has not yet come. Moreover, most of this latter section (verses 13-17) is substantively identical to Psalm 70. Yet we may recall that Psalm 27 was also a combination of thanksgiving and lament. As in that

psalm, the idea here may be recalling God's past deliverance to muster confidence that He will deliver David from his present circumstances. Zondervan states in its introductory note on Psalm 40: "The prayer begins with praise of God for his past mercies (vv. 1-5...) and a testimony to the king's own faithfulness to the Lord (vv. 6-10...). These form the grounds for his present appeal for help (vv. 11-17...)."

Psalm 70 is probably best explained as a borrowing of part of the lyrics of the appeal section of Psalm 40 to stand on their own as a different song—or at least a special rendition. (The tune was probably different since the words have been altered somewhat.)

As we will see, David's words in Psalm 40 foreshadowed the circumstances of the Messiah, Yeshua Messiah, as the book of Hebrews quotes Psalm 40:6-8 as referring to Him.

In verse 1, "the Hebrew translated I waited patiently is literally 'waiting I waited'" (Nelson Study Bible, note on verse 1). Though time was moving on and no rescue seemed forthcoming, David still trusted. He would not give up hope in God's deliverance. And his confidence was well placed—for God did deliver him.

The "horrible pit" of verse 2 could represent death. The Expositor's Bible Commentary states: "The 'pit' is a frequent synonym of Sheol, the grave (88:3; Prov.1:12; Isa.14:15). In the 'pit' people are powerless (88:4), held down by the slime and mud (40:2)" (note on Psalm 88). Yet here in Psalm 40 it may simply represent a seemingly inescapable situation into which he was sinking lower and lower (compare 69:2)—as contrasted with him then being lifted from the mud and set upon a rock (40:2). Perhaps a double metaphor is intended. Yeshua may have been alluding in part to this verse when He spoke of establishing His Household on a rock (i.e., Himself) so that the gates of Hades (the grave) would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). And given the messianic prophecy of this psalm, we may also see in all these verses Yeshua thinking of times God the Father had previously delivered Him as He prayed to God while enduring His final trial.

David next states that God "has put a new song in my mouth" (Psalm 40:3a). God may have inspired him to compose an entirely new psalm. Or David may have meant that God gave him a sense of renewed wonder and appreciation accompanied with renewed energy and joy (see the Bible Reading Program comments on 33:3). And from David's praise and rejoicing, many would realize what God had done and would be led to place their trust in Him (40:3b)—the key to blessing and happiness (verse 4).

David declares that no one can understand the enormity of God's works or of His thinking (verse 5). How many thoughts He has. How He organizes His thoughts. What He thinks about each of us. "The things You planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare" (verse 5, NIV; compare 139:17-18). God does reveal some of His thoughts and

intents concerning His people—and they are wonderful: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you...thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

David then mentions his understanding of what God is really looking for from people. It was not the physical sacrifices of the sacrificial system but a desire to follow His way—a desire David himself had (Psalm 40:6-8). The words here, describing various offerings in the sacrificial system generally, may have followed his presentation of a ritual offering. Verse 6 should not be understood to mean that there was no actual requirement for physical sacrifices. There certainly was at that time—but only as part of a desire to obey God. What God required was

not the sacrifices and offerings in and of themselves—but a heart of obedience from which sacrifices and offerings would naturally flow as God so determined. David surely remembered the story of Samuel correcting Saul for failing to grasp what God thinks is important: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams” (1 Samuel 15:22; compare also Psalm 51:16-17; Jeremiah 7:22-23). We will see more about this in going through Psalms 50 and 51.

David recognizes in Psalm 40 that rather than just a token physical offering, what God really wants is the devotion of David’s entire self. So David offers himself as an offering (compare Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 8:5). He says, “Behold I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me” (Psalm 40:7). What was David talking about? It concerned having God’s law written in his heart (verse 8). Perhaps he realized that the Torah (the Law) and indeed all of Scripture was written for him personally, just as it is for all of us—to describe the character that he and all of us must have. But in David’s case there may have been more to it. As the Lord’s anointed king, David had to write out on a scroll his own personal copy of the Book of the Law, keeping it with him and reading it all his days, internalizing it and living by it for the sake of himself, his kingdom and his family (Deuteronomy 17:18-20). So David expressed his continuing commitment to fulfill all of it.

Of course, the One who completely and absolutely fulfills all of Scripture’s requirements, including the sacrifices and the ultimate role of Anointed King—who presented Himself before God as the very quintessence of all offerings—is Yeshua Messiah. And in the book of Hebrews we see Psalm 40:6-8 quoted as the words of Yeshua (Hebrews 10:1-10)—as they in fact were, David having been inspired by Him—and are told that the entire sacrificial system pointed to Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. Yeshua lived His life wholly dedicated to God and then offered Himself as the true atoning sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. Psalm 40 is thus a messianic psalm—making the rest of it likely applicable to Yeshua as well.

It should be noted that the second line of verse 6 as translated from the Hebrew Masoretic Text, “My ears you have opened [or ‘dug’ or ‘pierced’]” (to hear and accept God’s law, it would seem), is not quoted this way in the New Testament. Rather, the same translation found in the Greek Septuagint is given: “But a body You have prepared for me” (see Hebrews 10:5)—that is, to offer up to God. In a

footnote on Psalm 40:6, Expositor's says that the Septuagint rendering "represents a paraphrastic interpretation of a difficult Hebrew phrase" (that is, it paraphrases what seems to be the point here based on surrounding clauses). Even if not technically accurate (though it could be), the Septuagint rendering used in the New Testament is true and is certainly implied in context—that God wanted not animal bodies but David's own body presented as an offering for serving God's purposes (and, in ultimate fulfillment, that the body of Yeshua Messiah was to be the consummation of sacrificial offering—in both life and death).

David goes on in Psalm 40 to remind God of what he has done since being saved from death.

"O LORD, you Yourself know..." he says at the end of verse 9. And what had he done?

Besides determining to continue in obedience to God, as we saw in verses 6-8, we further read that he saw the need to spread the word about God and His deliverance. David was the king of Israel and a prophet. He had a great responsibility to teach His people. "I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly" (verse 9a). That is, he hadn't kept it to himself but had proclaimed it to the throngs at the temple gathered for worship.

Interestingly, the phrase "proclaimed the good news" is found in the New Testament as "preached the gospel"—and Yeshua Messiah, prophesied in this psalm, certainly did that (as did those He commissioned with the same task). Note that David uses the phrase "good news of righteousness." Expositor's notes on verses 9-10: "The Lord's righteousness (sedeq) is expressed in any act ordered on behalf of his people's welfare and the execution of his kingdom purposes. By his righteous acts they are delivered, prosper, and enjoy the benefits of the covenant relationship.... Righteousness in this sense is synonymous with 'salvation' in the broadest sense. The nature of God's righteous acts is explicated by the other perfections. He is faithful to his covenant people, in accordance with his promises (33:4), resulting in the 'salvation' of his people."

David further stated how he declared God's faithfulness and salvation and hadn't concealed the truth from anyone (40:10). We should realize that one important way David proclaimed all this is through these very psalms we are studying. He composed them to be performed publicly—so the people could learn from them, learn to sing them and join in. And again, we should further consider that the One who inspired not just Psalm 40 but all the psalms was the living Word of God, who later became Yeshua Messiah.

In the remaining verses (11-17), David makes his present appeal, seeing his troubles as the result of his sins (verse 12) and enemies who want to destroy him (verses 13-15). Though it is not specifically stated, it could be that his present crisis is serious illness, as in the other three psalms of Book I's concluding group of four—his weakened state and isolation giving opportunity to his enemies to rise up.

Yeshua Messiah, we realize, committed no sins—but He took the sins of the whole world onto Himself when He was crucified. In that light, it is interesting in verse 12 that David does not ask for

forgiveness (as Christ did not need to). David merely speaks of his iniquities overwhelming him. Perhaps David had already repented but still saw what was happening as the consequences of his sins. Yet when applied to Christ, this would mean that the sins of others (including David's)—now committed to Christ as the sin-bearer—were bringing on Him the horrible consequences He had to face at the end of His human life. And of course Yeshua had to face taunting enemies just as David had to (verses 13-15).

In verse 16 David declares that even in the midst of troubles, those who love God and His salvation should “say continually, ‘The LORD be magnified!’” This gives further explanation to the first part of the psalm and argues in favor of Psalm 40 being one psalm.

David closes in verse 17 with a final appeal. The reference to himself as “poor” is not meant materially (see also 34:6; 41:1). The sense here is of being lowly and oppressed—of being “weak” instead of powerful (see 41:1, NIV). David is speaking of his condition of humility and abasement (and perhaps poor health)—and, as he also says here, his grave need for help. The help he needs can come only from God, and he prays that God will intervene quickly—as Yeshua must have prayed during His final ordeal (and as all of us should pray during our trials today).

Matthew 24

3 ... Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many

It is important to place this verse (as with all the “New Testament”) back into its Hebrew context. Yeshua is saying that many will come in His name. The final “anti-Messiah” will not come in opposition to Yeshua, but will be a counterfeit who will deceive almost everyone (i.e., verse 24 below).

A legitimate question to ask here is; How will this person be able to pull this off? After all, aren't there countless books, movies and web sites available today warning people about him (calling him the “Antichrist”), and describing everything that is going to happen in the last days?

In fact, a Christian book on the end-times/Antichrist, “The Mark,” by Tim Laheye, was the number one book on the New York Time bestseller list in the month of December 2000. This was not a religious book list. It was the secular hardcover list — so it would seem more than just Christians who are buying this.

As people everywhere are seemingly becoming “well aware” about what is coming, then one must ask; Where is the deception forecast by Yeshua? Also, where is the “lack of faith” to be found throughout the world, as prophesied by Him? (Luke 18:8) After all, doesn't over one-third of the planet declare themselves to be His followers?

Some people explain this problem by forecasting a great “rapture” of Christians and those “left behind” will believe some far-fetched reason responsible for this (i.e., UFOs), or have their memories “erased” somehow. This would then explain the great “lack of faith,” prophesied.

The problem with these end-time scenarios is that they all come from a Torah-less base. By “Torah-less,” we mean a faith that is not in continuation with that which God established prior to Yeshua’s arrival (as He did not do away with this faith, i.e., Matthew 5:17-21, Romans 3:31). This includes any “faith” that may even include certain elements of Torah (as any counterfeit faith will).

A more difficult question to ponder is this; Are all the supposed “disciples of the Messiah” in the world today following the Torah-preaching Yeshua of the Hebrew Scriptures? Or is their view of the Messiah one that tells them that “they are not under the law (Torah)?”

This subject will be discussed in detail in our Revelation study over the spring and summer of 2001. See also [Not Subject to the Law of God?](#) in the YashaNet library.

6-8 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

The Messiah cannot be separated from the Torah, nor from His Name.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

When people come to a faith in Yeshua, based in Torah, some of their worst enemies may be their friends and family — including those who think that they are the ones with the “truth” and that the Torah-observant person is even doing Satan’s will (by supposedly bringing them into the “bondage of law”).

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Iniquity may be considered the same as sin, which is defined according to one standard — God’s Torah:

1 John 3:4 – Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law [Torah]: for sin is the transgression of the law [Torah].

Torah is what we are to use as our criteria to know if we are following God:

James 1:25 – But whoso looketh into the perfect law [Torah] of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work [Torah], this man shall be blessed in his deed.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Yeshua places a stipulation, that we are to endure. The idea of some “guaranteed salvation” based on simply “what you believe” is foreign to the Hebrew Scriptures.

Paul did not even make such a claim for himself:

Philippians 3:11-14 – If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Messiah Yeshua. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Messiah Yeshua.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Yeshua makes it clear that the gospel message does not reach the ends of the earth until the very last days before He returns. This is the Torah-based Gospel that He and the original community of believers preached.

The false Messiah, being a man of “lawlessness” (2 Thessalonians 2:3), and his followers, will preach a Torah-less “gospel” in the name of “God.”

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

There was a previous fulfillment to this verse about two centuries before Yeshua spoke these words. Antiochus IV Epiphanies became king of the Syrian-Greeks who ruled over Israel. He commanded the Jews to do away with Torah and accept the Greek culture and religion. He bore down ruthlessly on his Jewish subjects and defiled the temple, placing a Hellenistic priest in charge and sacrificing pigs on the altar. This led to a successful revolt under Judah Macabee, the rededication of the Temple and the Feast of Chanukah, which we see Yeshua Himself celebrating in John 10:22.

Yeshua’s words forecast yet another one that will come in opposition to Torah.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

God has promised to reunite all of Israel — the “lost tribes” of the northern Kingdom under Ephraim with the southern Kingdom under Judah. These are the elect along with those gentiles who join them.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Those whose faith is grounded in Torah will be less likely to be deceived as Torah is God's truth. Any concept of "faith" independent of God's Torah is a lie. God will allow those rejecting this truth to be deceived:

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 – And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

"Unrighteousness" is defined solely by God's Torah.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

How can a star fall from heaven? As this is not possible, it gives us a clue that this verse might contain a deeper meaning. (Also, if the sun was darkened, all life would cease to exist, and this does not happen at this time either.)

Although there may be some literal physical fulfillment of these things, Yeshua is very much speaking in metaphorical terms. These hidden aspects of the last days will be addressed in our Revelation study.

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The term "tribes of the earth," is an incorrect translation. Yeshua is speaking of a fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy. The correct translation is tribes of "the land," (of Israel):

Zechariah 12:10-12 – And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The “gathering of the elect” is a fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy (above). God will regather all of Israel to their Messiah and to the land of Israel. The “trumpet” is representative of the Shofar, which is found throughout Hebrew literature that is concerned with Messiah and the “end times.”

This trumpet blast could very well be the “last trump” prophesied by Paul in two of his letters:

1 Corinthians 15:52 – Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 – For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

A common Jewish belief was that all people would die before God instituted His Kingdom and the World to Come (Olam Haba). Paul states that this is not the case, that some would enter the Kingdom of God without dying first.

The reference to His gathering His elect, “from one end of heaven to the other,” in verse 31, is likely a reference to the dead raised incorruptible (in 1 Corinthians 15:52) and the dead in Messiah (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Our Revelation study will explore all of these themes in greater detail.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

This study will not enter the long time debate over what Yeshua meant by “generation.” Suffice it to say, He is speaking of a chain of events (the “footsteps of Messiah), that once they begin, will not stop until He comes.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

We know that evil permeated the earth to such a degree in Noah’s time, that God intervened by killing all but a handful of people. Again, at the end of days, there will be widespread destruction.

This “days of Noah” will be dealt with in detail in our Revelation study. (Revelation shows a great deal of demonic activity in the last days.)

Jude 1:14-16 – And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all

their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken ...

The terminology here (one shall be taken), is the same used for Jewish nuptial language in John 14:1-3. Contrary to some popular modern theologies, the "marriage in heaven" between Messiah and His people comes after the time of Tribulation on earth, and makes up the first seven years of the Millennial Sabbath:

Revelation 19:1-9 – And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

This marriage involves more than the Lord and His righteous ones, as Scripture tells us that New Jerusalem, which is "our Mother" (Galatians 4:26) is the bride (Revelation 21:2).