

# Triennial Torah Study – 4<sup>th</sup> Year 08/03/2014



sightedmoon.com /triennial-torah-study-4<sup>th</sup>-year-04042015 /

By Joseph F. Dumond

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

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

|        |             |          |                  |
|--------|-------------|----------|------------------|
| Gen 28 | 1 Sam 12-13 | Ps 59-62 | Mark 5:35 – 6:32 |
|--------|-------------|----------|------------------|

## Jacob's Vision at Bethel (Genesis 28:6-22)

In sending Jacob away, Isaac had sternly forbidden him to marry a Canaanite woman. Overhearing this, Esau resolved to find a wife more pleasing to his father—apparently still desiring to somehow get into the good favor of his father that he might thereby receive a better blessing. So Esau took a third wife from the daughters of Ishmael. But, as Esau was to learn, there was no way for Isaac to change his mind about the blessing (Hebrews 12:17)—Isaac knew the events had been allowed by God and he had to live in submission to God's sovereign choice.

Journeying to Haran, Jacob stopped in the place called Luz, later renamed Bethel. There Jacob slept on the ground with a stone at his head (Genesis 28:11). In his sleep he dreamed, and in his dream God assured Jacob that He would be with him and return him to Canaan. The Abrahamic Covenant, moreover, was confirmed to Jacob. When Jacob awoke, he took the stone at which his head rested and anointed it, setting it up for a "pillar" or sacred stone. It appears that Jacob took this stone with him on his journeys, especially since he mentions the stone in the context of returning to Isaac (verses 20-22), apparently set it up and anointed it again in Bethel later (35:14-15), and still later, at the end of his life, he seems to have prophesied that it would be with the descendants of Joseph in the end time (49:24). If Jacob did take the stone with him, as would be likely, there would have been a physical, typical stone going with Jacob, paralleling the spiritual, antitypical Stone (i.e., God) who had promised that He would be with Jacob and not leave him (28:15).

Jacob also promised that if God would return him to his father Isaac, then God would be Jacob's God and Jacob would faithfully tithe. These statements appear perplexing, but a careful attention to the development of Jacob's character would seem to resolve the apparent difficulty. Jacob surely knew of God. Isaac had never worshiped any other but God, and he had learned this from Abraham. But it appears that Jacob, although certainly worshiping God, likely did so

mainly because he believed it to be materially advantageous. Jacob, as we've seen, had a grasping personality; he was someone who used others to further his own ends, and perhaps God was no different to him. Jacob, it appears, served God for selfish advantage. The story of Jacob will show that over time Jacob was transformed from being a manipulator into being one who sought righteousness through his actions, and finally into one who became wholly submissive to God and served God out of love and devotion. Jacob's statement that God would be his God is another way of saying that Jacob would rely on Him alone; his promise to tithe is another way of honoring God by recognizing His sovereign lordship. Thus, the promises essentially boil down to exclusive devotion to God.

In many ways, Jacob is every man. Or, to be more precise, every man is like Jacob. We all start out grasping, self-oriented, concerned with our needs. As we grow, we become less self-centered and more motivated by principle. But as we become mature, we learn to love God and act out of devotion to Him. We must learn to live with God, and along the way our character is changed, shaped and molded, going through various phases as we become more and more like God Himself. For this reason, the character development of Jacob is one of the most interesting studies of the book of Genesis.

### Samuel's Address to the People (1 Samuel 12)

---

Samuel reiterates to the people that asking for a human king was not a good thing. To reinforce his statements, he calls on God to bring about an unseasonal and sudden thunderstorm. In great fear, the people realize that God was not pleased with their demands, and they ask Samuel to intercede for them. Samuel makes it clear that whether they are ruled by a human king or not, the important thing is to obey God. A human king would not save them from God's anger if they behaved wickedly. Faithfully obeying God would bring blessings, and failure to do so would destroy the nation and its physical ruler.

Samuel's statement that he will continue to pray for Israel demonstrates his spiritual character. If he had been a man given to pettiness, he might have held a grudge against Israel for their request to have a king. But he did not. Indeed, Samuel recognizes failure to constantly pray for others as a sin against God (verse 23). We should remember this as we go about our daily lives.

### War With the Philistines (1 Samuel 13)

---

Saul creates a small standing army. The thousand under his son Jonathan's leadership (a bold and courageous fellow, as we will see further in the next chapter) attacks a garrison of the occupying Philistine forces. This incites the Philistines to gather against Israel to put down the rebellion, and Saul assembles his worried forces at Gilgal, while others in the threatened region hide themselves in the caves and thickets. As Samuel had instructed (10:8), Saul waits seven days for Samuel to arrive to make the offerings. But Samuel does not arrive right on time.

Perhaps his slight delay was a test for Saul. Whatever the case, Saul becomes impatient and, just before Samuel arrives, he presumptuously makes the offering himself. This sin of not following God's explicit instructions is enough to lose the kingdom for Saul's descendants (verse 14). But greater offenses follow.

It is interesting to consider that verse 13 says Saul's dynasty would have continued forever if he had followed God's commands—when God had earlier prophesied that the kingly line to the Messiah would come from Judah and not from Benjamin (Genesis 49:10; see 1 Chronicles 5:1-2). Yet, this would actually have been a rather simple matter. Probably, God would have had Saul's lineage merge with the Judahite lineage through intermarriage. Indeed, Saul's daughter will later marry David. But there will be no children from their marriage.

An insight into the dominance of the Philistines over the Israelites at this time is shown by the fact that no smiths were allowed to work in the land. As a result, only Saul and his son Jonathan had swords.

## Psalm 59

---

Psalm 59 is the fourth in the sequence of five Davidic miktams here. We earlier read it in the Bible Reading Program in conjunction with the event mentioned in the superscription—when Saul sent assassins to stake out David's house and kill him (see the Bible Reading Program comments on 1 Samuel 19; Psalm 59). Yet the request in verse 5 to “punish all the nations” does not appear related to that episode (see also verse 8). The Zondervan NIV Study Bible suggests: “If originally composed by David under the circumstances noted in the superscription, it must have been revised for use by one of David's royal sons [i.e., descendants] when Jerusalem was under siege by a hostile force [compare verses 6, 14] made up of troops from many nations—as when Hezekiah was besieged by the Assyrians (see 2Ki 18:19). (Some, however, ascribe it to Nehemiah; see Ne 4.)” (note on Psalm 59).

There appear to be four stanzas in the song (verses 1-5, 6-10, 11-13, 14-17). The first and third are related thematically—asking for God to punish and how to punish and each ending with *selah*. The second and fourth both begin with an identical characterization of the prowling enemy (verses 6, 14) and end with a similar refrain about God as the source of strength, defense and mercy (see verses 9b-10a, 16b-17).

The request at the end of verse 5 that God not be merciful to wicked transgressors should not be understood as a prayer that God would never grant them repentance so as to show them mercy, but that He would not leave them unpunished for their sins so long as they persisted in them.

The wicked blasphemously think they are getting away with something (see verse 7), but God will have the last laugh (verse 8). Starting with this verse, the song moves from a plea for help to assurance that God will intervene.

Verse 11 asks that the enemy not be instantly slain but scattered and abased. This was so the Israelites would not forget the punitive humbling of the enemy. Great men may fall on the battlefield and still be remembered as heroes. But if they are brought down to destitution and vagrancy, people would more readily deem them cursed. Moreover, if they were simply wiped out, people might soon forget them and what had happened to them, whereas if they were alive but shamed and disgraced, they would be around for some time as an object lesson.

Yet what are we to make of verse 13's request that the enemy be consumed in wrath till they are no more? Does this contradict verse 11? No, it is simply a matter of timing. The prayer is that the enemy would undergo a period of humiliation and scattering and only then, after the lesson had sunk in among God's people, be destroyed. And note that this is not for personal vengeance but as a witness of God's ultimate rule (verse 13)-and of His protection and care for those who trust Him (verses 9-10, 16-17).

Other scriptures explain that God will resurrect the wicked, giving those who previously lacked adequate understanding the opportunity for repentance and salvation. "The Lord is not...willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). For a more complete picture of what lies ahead in the afterlife, see our booklets *What Happens After Death?* and *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

Singing of God's mercy "in the morning" (Psalm 59:16) could mean every morning, but it seems more likely that morning here is figurative-meaning the end of this dark "day of my trouble" (same verse).

## Psalm 60

---

Psalm 60 is the last miktam in the series of five here as well as the last in the sequence of seven prayers for help against enemies at the center of Book II of the Psalter. The superscription notes that it is "for teaching."

The setting of the psalm is not entirely clear. The superscription says that David "fought against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah." This would seem to be the war described in 1 Chronicles 19, where Syrian and Mesopotamian forces assisted the Ammonites against Israel (see especially verse 6), which in the end became a long Israelite siege against the Ammonite capital of Rabbah. The parallel account of this episode is in 2 Samuel 10, though the Mesopotamian forces are not mentioned there. It was with these chapters that we earlier read Psalm 60 (see the Bible Reading Program comments on 2 Samuel 10; 1 Chronicles 19; Psalm 60; Psalm 108; Psalm 83).

However, the superscription's further note about Joab killing 12,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt (likely the desert south of the Dead Sea) seems more closely related to events in 1 Chronicles 18 and 2 Samuel 8, concerning an earlier conflict with Syria that ended with David

killing 18,000 Syrians in the Valley of Salt (2 Samuel 8:13) and Joab's brother Abishai killing 18,000 Edomites there (1 Chronicles 18:12)-Joab being over the army (verse 15).

In fact, these earlier chapters concern Israel's campaigns against and subjugation of the Philistines, the Moabites, the Syrians and the Edomites. With that in mind, consider that the enemy nations mentioned in Psalm 60 are Moab, Edom and Philistia (verses 8-9). There is no mention of Syria, Ammon or Mesopotamia-though Ammon could be indirectly indicated in stating that Gilead (the area the Israelites took from Ammon) belongs to God (verse 7). Nevertheless, considering that formerly subjugated Syria rebelled against David in the later conflict, it could well be that these other nations also rebelled at this time, given the powerful assistance of the forces of Mesopotamia (and that this could also be the setting for the international coalition of Psalm 83). Psalm 60:10 indicates that Israel initially suffered a period of defeat-the occasion for the psalm-which is new information, as such defeat is not recorded in the accounts of either of the two conflicts mentioned above.

Many question the scriptural validity of the superscriptions of the psalms, often deeming them later midrashic additions. Yet we need not ignore the superscriptions to explain apparent discrepancies. A number of possibilities exist for the current one. Perhaps Psalm 60 concerns the earlier conflict mentioned above and, though unrecorded in the account of that conflict, Mesopotamian forces were then involved as well. The differences in numbers killed in the Valley of Salt is reconcilable given that different numbers are attributed to different commanders-David, Abishai and Joab. Alternatively, Psalm 60 could exclusively concern the later conflict, meaning that Moab, Edom and Philistia revolted and that Joab conducted a new campaign against the Edomites in the Valley of Salt. A further possibility is that the superscription is referring to the later conflict occurring after Joab's return from the earlier conflict. In the overall picture, these could be viewed as two phases in the same war.

Perhaps most likely, given that neither Ammon, Syria nor Mesopotamia are mentioned in the text of Psalm 60 itself-and that Mesopotamia and Syria are solely mentioned in the superscription-is that the psalm was initially composed during the earlier conflict but then used as a rallying or marching song during the later conflict (perhaps at a point when things did not seem to be going so well). It seems highly unlikely that a forger would have read this psalm about fighting against Moab, Edom and Philistia and then written Mesopotamia and Syria into a fake title. A forger would rather have attempted to undo any confusion. Once again, what appears to be a contradiction is instead a mark of genuineness.

As mentioned, things did not seem to be going well for David's army for a time. Perhaps in the case of the later conflict it was because the nations where David had garrisoned forces were nevertheless able to stage an international rebellion. David complains to God: "You have rejected us...and burst forth upon us.... You have shown your people desperate times; you have given us wine that makes us stagger" (verses 1-3, NIV). The Israelites were reeling, wondering how this could be happening.

But David encourages his troops, confident in victory through God. The Expositor's Bible Commentary states in its note on verse 4: "The Lord has raised a 'banner' (nes; cf. Isa 5:26; 13:2; Jer 4:6 [and Exodus 17:15]) designating a place where the godly may find refuge under the protection of the Divine Warrior. The godly, those who 'fear' (cf. [Psalm] 34:7, 9) him, will find protection from the attacks of the enemy."

The section of Psalm 60 that follows the selah ending verse 4 (i.e., verses 5-12), is later reused as the latter half of Psalm 108 (verses 6-13)-the first part of Psalm 108 coming from Psalm 57:7-11.

In Psalm 60:6, the phrase "in His holiness" can also be translated "in His holy place"-probably designating Israel as the land of His sanctuary. Dividing Shechem and measuring out the Valley of Succoth represent God apportioning and parceling out the inheritance of the Promised Land to His people. "Shechem and the Valley of Succoth represent regions west and east of the Jordan River in the central parts of the land. Gilead and Manasseh are also regions east and west of the Jordan; Ephraim and Judah are regions in the north and south. The Lord was asserting His sovereignty over the entire land of Israel" (Nelson Study Bible, note on verses 6-8).

Moab being God's "washpot" (verse 8) or "washbasin" (NIV) refers to that used for washing the feet, which became rather dirty in a time of wearing sandals. The meaning? "Moab was doomed to the most abject and degrading servitude" (Barbara Bowen, *Strange Scriptures That Perplex the Western Mind: Clarified in the Light of Customs and Conditions in Bible Lands*, 1944, p. 25).

God next says He will cast His shoe over Edom (same verse). It could be that Edom is likened in this metaphor to the threshold of a house where shoes, considered dirty and defiling, were removed and left (Bowen, *Strange Scriptures*, pp. 67-68). Recall God demanding the removal of shoes in His presence (Exodus 3:5; Joshua 5:15). Yet it might refer "to the conventional symbolic act by which one claimed possession of land (cf. Ru 4:7)" (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 60:8).

The final line of verse 8 is literally "Over me, Philistia, shout in triumph" (Green's Literal Translation). Perhaps the meaning is "Over me, Philistia, [is a] shout in triumph"-meaning by God's people. Yet the Jewish Tanakh renders the verse, "Acclaim me, O Philistia!"

David further proclaims that God, who for a time seemed to have abandoned Israel, would now lead them to victory (verses 9-10). And as we face enemies today, especially those spiritual forces that seek to destroy us, let us remember, as David said in the concluding verses, that only God can help us win the battle and grant us ultimate victory.

**Lead Me to the Rock That Is Higher Than I" (Psalms 61-64)**

---

Psalms 61-64, all psalms of David according to their superscriptions, form a cluster of four royal prayers linked together by interweaving themes, especially “the common theme of strong reliance on God for deliverance in the face of great-perhaps mortal-danger” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, Psalms introduction, “Significant Arrangement of the Psalter”; and note on Psalms 61-64).

Neginah in the superscription of Psalm 61, which may be part of a postscript to Psalm 60, is probably correctly translated in the NKJV as “stringed instrument.”

Overwhelmed at his circumstances (verse 2), the details of which we are not given except that it involves some enemy (verse 3), David feels cut off from God: “From the ends of the earth I call to You” (verse 2, NIV). He seeks to be led to the “rock that is higher than I” (verse 1). By “rock” he means God Himself, as he did earlier in Psalm 18 (verses 2, 31, 46). The imagery of God as a Rock of protection occurs early in Scripture in the Song of Moses (see Deuteronomy 32:4). David uses it again in the next Psalm (62:2, 6-7) and in other psalms (71:3; 144:1). “This is a particularly apt image [of God] for David, who many times had to hide in the mountains for security (see 1 Sam. 26:1, 20)” (Nelson Study Bible, note on Psalm 18:2).

Indeed, it seems that David is now led to the Rock as he has asked-for the rest of his psalm exudes confidence in God’s protection and blessing.

David likens the shelter of God’s tabernacle to the shelter of a mother bird’s wings (verse 4). David will repeat this imagery of finding refuge under God’s wings in Psalm 63:7 (see also 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 91:4). There is probably also a figurative tie-in here to the wings or hem of a garment-symbolism employed in the book of Ruth for taking in marriage (as Christ takes His people in marriage). God’s people thus become part of His household and family-the primary idea behind abiding in His tabernacle (His dwelling) forever.

The vows David had made to God (verse 5)-his promises to remain devoted and faithful to God, to obey and serve Him-were genuine. And for that God would reward him with the heritage of all who fear and honor God’s name (same verse)-not just long life (verse 6) but eternal life in God’s presence (verse 7). The King of Israel living forever here is understood in Jewish interpretation as a prophecy of the Messiah, as it likely is, but it also applies to David himself. God’s “mercy and truth” would preserve King David as well as the future messianic King (verse 7; see also 25:10; 85:10, 15; 89:14; Proverbs 20:28; Isaiah 16:5). Consider that Yeshua Messiah came “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14; see also verse 17)-fulfilling the messianic expectation of these passages.

David closes his prayer by saying that he will use the eternity God is giving him to forever extol and obey God (Psalm 61:8). What remarkable devotion!

Jeduthun, in the superscription of Psalm 62, was, as noted in the Bible Reading Program comments on Psalm 39, one of David’s three choir leaders (1 Chronicles 15:41-42; 25:1, 6; 2

Chronicles 5:12) who was also known as a seer or prophet (35:15)-often thought to be synonymous with Ethan (1 Chronicles 6:44; 15:19), representing the Levitical family of Merari. The name Jeduthun also appears in the superscription of Psalm 77.

Psalm 62 has three stanzas (verses 1-4, 5-8, 9-12)-the first two of which begin almost the same (verses 1-2, 5-6). David here says that he will silently wait for God's deliverance and refers to God, as in the previous psalm, as his rock of protection and source of salvation. As the end of verses 2 and 6 declare, he will "not be greatly moved"-that is, "shaken" (NIV).

David's need here is urgent. Arrogant foes conspire to "cast him down from his high position" (verse 4)-to topple him from the throne-through deceit and intrigue. He asks them how long they will attack him (verse 3a). The meaning of the second part of verse 3 is not clear however. Either he is announcing to the conspirators what will befall them as in the NKJV: "You shall be slain, all of you, like a leaning wall and a tottering fence." Or he is further lamenting their attack on him, referring to himself as the vulnerable one: "Would all of you throw him down-this leaning wall, this tottering fence?" (NIV; see also NRSV; Tanakh).

In any case, David is confident of God's protection and ultimate deliverance. He gives others the advice he himself follows: to trust God at all times and pour out one's heart to Him (verse 8)-for God is an unfailing refuge. Men, no matter what their position, are inconstant and unreliable-and not the place to put one's trust (verse 9). It is futile to hope in their evil way of doing things or to trust in the wealth they pursue as a source of help in all of life's circumstances (verse 10). Real power belongs to God (verse 11)-along with mercy to those who serve Him and the means to compensate each person according to the choices they make in life (verse 12; compare Matthew 16:27).

That God has spoken once and David heard it twice (Psalm 62:11) is explained as a form of expression in Old Testament times. As The Nelson Study Bible notes on verse 11: "It is a convention of wisdom literature to use a number and then raise it by one (Prov. 30:11-33). The point here is that David has heard the message with certainty."

## Mark 5:35-6:32

---

This portion opens with a continuation of the last portion concerning the ruler's daughter who was sick and near death. Yeshua tarried in her regard to go and heal her. As He tarried, they received word that the ruler's daughter was dead. At that time, Yeshua reassured the ruler that He was not to worry and to only have faith and believe.

Yeshua then went to the ruler's house and He only allowed Peter, James, and John to go with Him. As they approached the place there was great lamenting there by the people... for the girl was dead, BUT Yeshua says, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is sleeping."



They mocked Him in this comment. He cleared the house except for His three taught ones and the girl's mother and father and He commanded her to rise and she rose up. She was twelve years old. He said not to tell what He had in fact done and to give the girl some food to eat.

After this they traveled to Galil and it was the Sabbath. Yeshua was teaching in the synagogue and people were amazed at His Wisdom and Authority and wondered about Him for His great healings as well. This was the place in which He grew up, and the people there knew Him only as the carpenter's son and because they knew Him as a child, boy, and young man... it caused them to stumble in Him and not believe. Because of this He was unable to do any miracles there except lay hands on a few and heal their sickness.

He sent His taught ones out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts, only to wear sandals, and not to wear two undergarments. They were to stay where they were invited, and in cities where they were not believed they were to leave that city and shake the dust off their sandals... and woe to that city!

They went out and proclaimed... that men should repent.

Herod the King heard of the Name of Yeshua and all He was doing in the land and thought He was perhaps John the Immerser having come back from the dead. Herod had beheaded John the Immerser against his better judgment on behalf of his wife. Her daughter had danced for the King and he promised her anything she desired. She asked her mother what it was that she should ask for and she told her, "the head of John the Baptist." She had been imbittered because John told both Herod and her that their marriage was against the Torah of Elohim.

When Yeshua and His disciples received this news that John was dead they were greatly grieved and went off by themselves to be alone from the great crowds.