

Triennial Torah Study – 5th Year 02/08/2014

 sightedmoon.com/abraham-boaz-and-ruth-hidden-connections/

By Joseph F. Dumond

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

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

Gen 49 1 Kings 1 Ps 99-102 Luke 12

Death and Burial (Genesis 49:29—50:26)

After his father's death, Joseph fulfilled Jacob's request to be buried in the same cave in which Abraham and Isaac had been entombed at the time of their deaths. Joseph, who had sworn to take care of this, did as his father had asked, along with his brothers and even the Egyptian elders and the servants of Pharaoh. Mourning the death of Jacob with Joseph as they would for Egyptian royalty illustrates the great respect the Egyptians had for Joseph, the man whom God had used to save them from famine and by whom their nation was greatly enriched.

Joseph also wished to eventually be buried in the land of his fathers. Knowing that God would later bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and back to Canaan, he made them swear to "carry up my bones from here" (verse 25). However, as a national figure in Egypt, he was first put in a coffin in Egypt rather than being buried in his homeland right away. That Joseph anticipated his burial in Egypt and the Exodus as well is clear from the obligation he bound on the descendants of Israel. Moses would make good on the oath more than 200 years later by taking Joseph's bones out of Egypt during the Exodus (Exodus 13:19). The bones remained with the children of Israel until they entered the Promised Land and were eventually buried in Shechem (Joshua 24:32).

The bones of the patriarchs being buried in the land of Canaan may well have symbolized their future inheritance of the Promised Land, itself representative of God's coming Kingdom—and indeed that is where they will awaken at the *inauguration* of God's Kingdom when Yeshua Messiah returns. Of course, regardless of where our bones might be buried, the saints of God will all be awakened at Christ's return to establish the true Promised Land, God's Kingdom, over all the earth.

Adonijah Presumes Himself the Next King (1 Kings 1:1-27)

Undoubtedly, all of David's existing wives were too old themselves to provide the type of 'round-the-clock nursing care that Abishag was able to provide as David lay suffering from lack of body heat. "Using a healthy person's body warmth to care for a sick person is a medical procedure noted by the second-century Greek physician Galen and the Jewish historian Josephus" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses 1-3). Abishag was a Shunamite, making her from the town of Shunem—probably the same town, in the territory of Issachar (Joshua 19:18), at which the Philistines gathered before they attacked and killed Saul (1 Samuel 28:4). That would also be the town of the family the prophet Elisha later stayed with frequently during his ministry (2 Kings 4:8).

Seizing on this time of old-age weakness, David's son Adonijah tries to put himself forward as the next king. Adonijah was David's fourth son (see 2 Samuel 3:2-5), but his first, Amnon, and third, Absalom, were already dead. (Most commentators believe that David's second son, Chileab, died young as he is not mentioned since birth and is evidently not a factor when Absalom sets himself up as heir-apparent.)

Yet it is clear that the oldest son was not to be king in this case anyway. God through David had already chosen David's younger son Solomon as successor to the throne (1 Kings 1:13, 17, 30; 2:15; 1 Chronicles 22:9-10). And Adonijah was apparently aware of this since he deliberately avoided inviting to his sacrifice those who would support the king's designate (1 Kings 1:8, 10). Thus, Adonijah is exalting himself against God's will. But even now, late in his life, David has a hard time exercising proper discipline when it comes to his children (verse 6).

As with his older half-brother Absalom (compare 2 Samuel 14:25), who was now long dead, Adonijah was very good-looking, and he used some of Absalom's tactics to gain the kingdom (15:1). It should be noted that a casual reading of verse 6 of 1 Kings 1 might lead one to believe that the two men had the same mother, but Absalom's mother was Maacah, and Adonijah's mother was Haggith (verse 5; 2 Samuel 3:3-4).

It is probably no coincidence that Abiathar sided with Adonijah, as a way for God to work out His plan to bring to an end the priestly succession of the family of Eli (compare 1 Samuel 2:27-36). Joab, too, may have been influenced in some way by God to make this choice—to set him up for the punishment his life's record demanded

Psalm 99 is the last of the set of royal psalms beginning with Psalm 93. It appears to form a couplet with Psalm 98, as Psalm 97 does with 96. Psalms 97 and 99 both open with the same key phrase, "The LORD reigns," and they both mention the special benefits of this reign to Zion. This can refer to the physical city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants or to God's spiritual people. "Jacob" in 99:4 refers to the physical nation of Israel, wherein God has previously executed just and righteous rule and will do so again in His Kingdom—as a preview of how He will then extend His rule to all nations.

A running theme through Psalm 98 is God's holiness. Note the similar refrain at the end of verses 3, 5 and 9: "He is holy...He is holy...the LORD our God is holy." As *The Nelson Study Bible* explains: "*Holy* means to be 'distant' or 'distinct from.' This is the principle word used to describe the transcendence of God (113:4-6)" (note on Psalm 99:3). In line with this, verse 2 states that God is "high above all the peoples." Another commentator says: "The word 'holy' means 'separate, set apart, totally different.' God's nature is 'wholly other,' yet He was willing to dwell with His people and meet their needs" (Wiersbe, *Be Exultant*, note on verses 1-3). Indeed, despite how high above us God is (compare Isaiah 55:8-9), we are also told that "He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27).

In response to the majesty and power of God's reign, people on earth should *tremble* and *shake* with awe (Psalm 99:1, NIV). God dwelling "between the cherubim" (same verse) may refer to God's exalted throne in heaven—yet the significance here may be that of God coming down to the earthly model of His heavenly throne in the tabernacle or temple. Recall the two golden cherubim fashioned to cover the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:18-20). During the time of Israel's wilderness years, God met with Moses at the mercy seat: "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony" (Exodus 25:22). This would seem to parallel the later statement in Psalm 99 regarding God speaking to Moses, Aaron and Samuel "in the cloudy pillar" (verse 7), which came down into the tabernacle, evidently still in Samuel's day as it later did in Solomon's temple (see 1 Kings 8:10-11). Even so, when Christ comes in power to rule the nations, He will rule from the earthly temple in Jerusalem and the pillar of cloud and fire will be restored (Isaiah 4:5).

Worshiping at God's "footstool" in Psalm 99:5 connotes a feeling of humility. From His throne in heaven, God looks on the earth as His footstool (Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 5:35). Yet more specifically, He refers to the place of His tabernacle or temple as His footstool (Psalm 132:7; Isaiah 60:13)—and that is evidently what is meant here, given the parallel mention of God's "holy hill" (Psalm 99:9). "When the Israelites came to the temple in Jerusalem to worship, they pictured themselves as being at the feet of the Creator" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 5).

In verse 6, Moses is classed with Aaron as a priest in the sense of an intercessor between God and man. Indeed, all of the spiritually converted people of God are considered to form a priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9). The psalmist remembers that God answered the faithful men of old—Moses, Aaron and Samuel serving as examples of this (there having been many others). Although God punished their sins, He still answered them with forgiveness: "You were to them God-Who-Forgives" (verse 8).

The psalmist infers that, "since God answered the prayers of our ancestors, surely He will continue to answer the prayers of those who call upon Him" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 6). Indeed, He does so today and will do so even more dramatically when His coming reign over the earth is established. All of this again demonstrates that despite God's high and holy transcendence above our lowly earthly existence, He is intimately concerned with His people and faithfully responds to their worship and prayers.

Psalm 100 is an unattributed psalm of public thanksgiving to God that follows the set of royal psalms from 93 to 99. “Perhaps the ancient editors felt that the royal psalms demanded the response of worship provided by this psalm” (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Psalm 100). The psalm also closes the entire section of psalms beginning with Psalm 90. Psalm 100 is related to Psalm 95:1-2 and, as we will see, to 95:6-7. And its opening words in 100:1 are the same in Hebrew as the first line of Psalm 98:4, there translated, “Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.”

The full response to this call will later come when Yeshua Messiah establishes the Kingdom of God on the earth. Under His rule, everyone will experience the gladness (verse 2) of living in harmony with God. At that time singing with joy to the Lord will be natural and spontaneous. In the meantime, worshipers come before Him anticipating the future with joy—in spite of circumstances of the world.

The basis for giving thanks is that God, as our Creator, has made us. We did not make ourselves (verse 3). “For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Moreover, God guides us, cares for us and provides for us as a shepherd does his sheep (see Psalm 100:3b). The same basis for praise is laid out in Psalm 95:6-7.

We are commanded to enter into God’s presence and worship Him because He is eternally good, loving and merciful (verses 4-5). The *gates* and *courts* here picture the temple where people come through the gates into the courts to praise God as a congregation. It also symbolizes the fellowship and worship of God’s spiritual temple today, His people, as well as the great throngs of worship in the coming Kingdom.

A Royal Oath of Office; A Testimony for the Future (Psalms 101-102)

As the *Zondervan NIV Study Bible* points out, Psalms 101-110 appear to form “a collection of ten psalms located between two other groups (...Ps 90-100; 111-119) and framed by two psalms that pertain to the king (the first, the king’s vow to pattern his reign after God’s righteous rule; the last, God’s commitment to maintain the king—his anointed—and give him victories over all his enemies. This little psalter-within-the-Psalter is concentrically arranged. Inside the frame [of 101 and 110], Ps 102 and 109 are prayers of individuals in times of intense distress; [within these] Ps 103 and 108 praise the Lord for his ‘great...love’ that reaches to the heavens (103:11; 108:4); [within these] Ps 104 and 107 are complements, with 104 celebrating God’s many wise and benevolent acts in creation and 107 celebrating God’s ‘wonderful deeds’ (vv. 8, 15, 21, 24, 31) for people through his lordship over creation; and [finally within these] the remaining two are also complements, with Ps 105 reciting the history of Israel’s redemption and 106 reciting the same history as a history of Israel’s rebellion. This little psalter includes most of the forms and themes found in the rest of the psalter. Its outer frame is devoted to royal psalms and its center pair to recitals of Israel’s history with God.... As a collection it bears a distinctly redemption-history stamp and evokes recollection of all the salient elements of the O[ld] T[estament] message” (note on Psalms 101-110).

Given this apparent collection, there is the obvious problem of the book division occurring within it at Psalm 107. Recall, however, from the Bible Reading Program's introduction to Psalms that the division between Books IV and V of the Psalter appears to be an artificial late change—seemingly made primarily to create a fivefold division of the Psalms to correspond with the five books of the Law, likely to have the temple songs follow along with the Scripture reading cycle. We will note more about this matter when we come to Psalm 107 in our reading.

Psalm 101 is a royal psalm of David composed in the form a commitment. As is the case with most psalms, it is not clear whether he originally intended this as a solely personal expression or planned from the beginning for it to be used by others. In any event, when included in the Psalter its words of commitment were certainly to be proclaimed by others—these being successor rulers (as only they had the power to administer justice in the fashion proclaimed in the psalm). Thus, the psalm could have become a sort of oath of office.

David is determined to “behave wisely in a perfect way” or, as the New International Version renders this, to “be careful to lead a blameless life” (verse 2). He begins by praising God, because God's mercy (or lovingkindness) and justice motivate David to rule Israel with the same gracious care and upright fairness.

God had made known His expectations for the kings of Israel (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). The king was to write his own copy of the law and study it “all the days of his life” so that he would properly fear God, administer God's laws and treat his subjects with respect. David vows that in his “house”—his royal office and administration—he will be scrupulous in matters of justice, love and mercy (Psalm 101:2b). By leading a “blameless” life, David meant that he would live with integrity and integrate his life with God's purpose. He was not implying that he would never sin (though he would of course strive not to).

The question “Oh, when will you come to me?” (verse 2) may refer to David's need for special help from God, or it may relate to the Ark of the Covenant. As one commentator explains regarding this verse: “Once David was established on the throne in Jerusalem, he had a consuming desire to bring the ark of God back to the sanctuary so that God's throne might be near his throne. His question in verse 2, ‘When will you come to me?’ reflects this desire. The ark had been in the house of Abinidab for many years (1 Sam. 6:1-7:2) and then in the house of Obed-Edom after David's aborted attempt to relocate it (2 Sam. 6:1-11)” (Wiersbe, *Be Exultant*, introductory note on Psalm 101). There was a great lesson in the latter episode. For God's law, which David as king was to read and write his own copy of, clearly states how the ark was to be transported. God does want to “come to” us—but only on His terms.

David states that his administration will be different from how other kings in the region ruled. He says he will set “nothing wicked” or “no vile thing” (NIV)—literally, no thing of Belial (this word connoting utter worthlessness and later used as a name for Satan)—before his eyes. He may be referring to an idol or an evil practice or person—with setting this thing or person before the eyes meaning looking to it or such a person for guidance or affording it or him a place of honor and privilege in his presence. This would not happen in David's reign.

By “the deeds of faithless men” (verse 3, NIV) or “the work of those who fall away” (NKJV), David may be referring to Saul’s administration—that he will have no part with that kind of leadership. David had a consuming desire to clean things up when he took office. “When David became king, first in Hebron and then at Jerusalem, he inherited a divided land and a discouraged people whose spiritual life was at low ebb. Asaph described the situation in 78:56-72 and named David as God’s answer to Israel’s problems. Everything rises and falls with leadership, but many of King Saul’s officers were fawning flattering ‘toadies’ who were unable to work with a man like David” (same note).

In support of David’s desire for a righteous administration, he states that no one in his employ will lie, practice deceit, slander, or demonstrate a lack of respect for others—rather, going to the heart of good leadership, he will look for the faithful of the land to serve with him (verses 4-7). *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* states: “The king invites only people of integrity to ‘dwell’ with him and to serve in his presence as appointed courtiers. Only by surrounding himself with the best and most capable men who will advance the interest of God can the king rest assured that the kingdom of God is strengthened” (note on verse 6).

David closes the psalm with a vow that it would be part of his daily routine to rout evil and wickedness from the land, especially in Jerusalem—the standard would be set there in his capital city first (verse 8).

Of course, as a fallible human being, David did not always live up to his intentions. Consider that such a despicable person as his nephew Joab was high in David’s administration for the length of its duration. The commitments of this psalm will be perfectly fulfilled during the administration of David’s descendant Yeshua Messiah—which will include David himself, then resurrected and perfect, as well as all believers who remain faithful to Yeshua, who will then serve as divine kings under Him.

Psalm 102 is a lamenting prayer by an unnamed individual in severe affliction and distress—apparently during a time of *national* distress: “The title...in accordance with vv. 1-11, 23-24... designates the prayer as that of an individual. But vv. 12-22, 28 clearly indicate national involvement in the calamity. It may be that the distress suffered by the individual, while its description suggests physical illness, is the result of his sharing in a national disaster such as the exile—a suggestion supported by references to the restoration of Zion” (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 102 title). Indeed, beyond the lament, the psalm also looks forward with hope and faith to the restoration of God’s people—in an ultimate sense at the establishment of His Kingdom—making this a fitting psalm for its placement in Book IV of the Psalter, which points to the time of the coming messianic reign.

The prayer opens with a plea that God would hear the psalmist’s cry and quickly come to his aid (verses 1-2). In these two short verses he makes five requests for God’s attention: hear me; let my cry come to you; don’t hide from me; turn your ear to me; answer me quickly. The situation is simply awful. Life, its delights gone, is ebbing away. In his constant grief and despair the psalmist forgets about and doesn’t feel like eating—leading to malnutrition and emaciation (verses 3-5, 9, 11). He feels forsaken, isolated, alone, vulnerable and unable to

sleep—like some lonely bird eking out a tentative existence on its own (verses 6-7). His torment is magnified by the ranting reproach of enemies (verse 8)—perhaps referring to foreigners who have captured him and his countrymen. Where the NKJV says these enemies “swear an oath against me” (same verse), the NIV says that they “use my name as a curse.” That is, “they say, ‘May you become like that one (the one named) is’” (*Zondervan*, note on verse 8).

He sees his circumstance as God’s judgment (verse 10). And, as already noted, it seems that this refers to calamity that God has brought on the whole nation—not just this representative individual.

But things are not left in despondency and hopelessness. For there is confidence in God’s coming deliverance of His people. The ancient restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile is but a small foretaste of what is pictured here in this psalm. For the “set time” spoken of (verse 13) is the day yet future in which all nations and kings will fear God’s name and His glory (verse 15)—when God in the person of Yeshua Messiah will actually “*appear* in His glory” (verse 16) and all nations and kingdoms will gather to serve Him (verse 22). The building up of Zion (verse 16) refers to the coming restoration of Israel in the Kingdom of God—as well as the building up of spiritual Zion, God’s people to serve as the holy and perfect administration of that Kingdom. All God’s people who have suffered during all ages will have their prayers fully answered in an ultimate sense (see verse 17).

This wonderful message, the psalmist declares, would be written down for a future generation—a people yet to be created (verse 18). Given the whole context, and the verse that follows, it appears that this coming generation would also face terrible trials just as the psalmist. But given this good news—the gospel of the Kingdom—they would be able to look forward with hope in the midst of suffering and declare God’s praises (verse 18), just as in this psalm.

In verses 23-24, the psalmist remembers his immediate plight and pleads again with God to intervene and not cut his life off early—contrasting his brief existence with God’s eternal life and perspective. Yet it is in God’s eternal existence (verses 24-27) that there is hope for the future. For come what may, He and His purpose will endure. Because God continues, so would His people continue generation after generation (verse 28). This will allow the great restoration looked for in the psalm. And it will also bring, in God’s set time, the perfect restoration of the psalmist himself and of all who have placed their hope and trust throughout the ages in the Eternal God.

Luke 12

Yeshua just completed having it out with the Scribes and Pharisees of the day and chapter 12 opens with Yeshua advising and admonishing His taught ones about the leaven of the Pharisees and that all secret things will be revealed. He tells them not to fear those who can kill the body but then can do no more at all. But to fear the One who has the power to cast into Gehenna. Also, because mankind is so much more precious to Elohim than all of creation, we

need not fear any man and as we profess Yeshua Messiah before men, He also professes us before Elohim.

As someone from the crowd brought up the issue of inheritance of possessions, Yeshua began teaching concerning earthly possessions and greed for material things. Therefore, He teaches us not to worry about what we shall eat, wear, have for shelter, etc. Our Father, who loves us, knows what we need, and He will provide it even before we ask. We should concern ourselves with treasures that are heavenly and prepare and always watch for the Son of Adam and be ready, as a bride awaits a returning groom.

And the ones who have been chosen to shepherd the flock are to always care for them and feed them during the absence of the Master. If the Master delays, the manager is to remain faithful and not become cynical and begin misbehaving toward the flock. Then it seems Yeshua becomes disquieted over what He had to do – His Immersion.