

Triennial Torah Study – 5th Year 25/10/2014

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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

Ex 12	1 Kings 20	Ps 119:75-131	John 1
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Ex 12

A New Beginning!

God now gives specific instructions to the Israelites in preparation for the final plague to come upon Egypt. It was necessary to record God's Word, as His instructions were to be repeated each year. This was to be a reminder of God's powerful and miraculous intervention among His people. And it was to foreshadow the supreme sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Yeshua, who would eventually come to offer His unblemished life as the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.

On the 10th day of what God declared to be the first month of the year (12:2, the Hebrew month Abib, see 13:4, which occurred in the spring), the Israelites were to select an unblemished yearling of the sheep or goats. They were to keep it up until the 14th of the month. In the "twilight" portion of the evening that began the 14th day (literally "between the two evenings," which, though disputed, is commonly understood to mean between sundown and darkness), they were to kill the lamb or kid and prepare it according to the specific instructions God gave them. The Passover consisted of the events that took place during the course of the night and into the following morning. What exactly took place?

- The lamb was killed.
- Its blood was put on the entrances of the houses.
- The lamb was roasted.
- The Israelites ate it with solemnity and in a state of preparedness, knowing that the events of the next day would entail much organization and travel.
- The children were to be specifically taught the meaning of these events.
- None were to go out of their houses until the morning.
- At midnight, the Lord would "pass over" the homes and, with the evidence of the blood on the entrances, He would spare the firstborn males of man and animals within from death (males implied from the command in 13:12-15).
- What remained of the sacrifice was to be burned.

When morning came on the 14th, the Israelites, scattered all over the land of Goshen, faced the daunting challenge of gathering themselves and all their belongings and driving their livestock to the departure point of Rameses. For many this required a journey of more than 20 miles, which would have taken all day. We read that there were approximately 600,000 men, besides children, a mixed multitude (those who were not Israelite), and a great number of livestock. So we have possibly more than three million people besides animals that collectively organized and left from Rameses by night, under a full moon (being the beginning of the 15th day). It was certainly a night to be observed. And it began the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Incidentally, the Days of Unleavened Bread beginning “the fourteenth day of the month at evening” in 12:18 is shown by other verses such as Leviticus 23:6 to mean the *end* of 14th and thus the beginning of the 15th—as “evening” or sundown can apply to the beginning or end of a day, depending on the context (see Leviticus 23:32, where the “ninth day of the month at evening” clearly means the beginning of the 10th, verse 27). For the Feast of Unleavened Bread the Israelites were to dispose of any leavened bread or leavening agent (for them this meant yeast) and eat *unleavened* bread instead. The sobering events of the previous evening were embedded in their minds as so many people and animals died throughout the land. Of course, it was also a *joyous* time. For, finally, after their hopes had risen and fallen so many times, the promise that God had spoken to the Israelites through Moses was actually happening! Families that had only known oppression and slavery were now free!

In chapter 13, the details of the Days of Unleavened Bread are again recorded. The Bible reveals that not only was unleavened bread eaten for seven days, as a reminder of coming out of Egypt in haste, but leavening represents those things that are contrary to the way of God. Paul told the Corinthians to “keep the feast [of Unleavened Bread], not...with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). During these days, which Paul’s instructions show that God’s people are still to observe, all leavened bread and leavening agents that can be used to leaven bread—which now includes yeast, baking powder and baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)—are to be removed from the home. (“Bread” is here used to refer to anything made primarily from one or more grains and cooked, including loaf bread, crackers, pancakes, cake, pie crust, cookies, muffins, pasta, etc.) This is a reminder for us to purge our lives of spiritual leavening, the sin that so easily spreads and “puffs up” (1 Corinthians 4:6, 18-19; 5:2, 6; 8:1; 13:4).

The Firstborn Are Sanctified

God instructed the Israelites to sanctify (“set apart”—for a specific religious or spiritual purpose) the male firstborn of both man and animals. Why? Exodus 13:15 explains that it was because the firstborn of both man and beast were slain in Egypt—and the ones God spared, those of Israel, then belonged to Him. The firstborn males of clean animals were to be sacrificed to God while the firstborn males of men and unclean animals were to be redeemed (i.e., “bought back” from God). An unclean animal was to be redeemed with the sacrifice of a lamb. For man, an offering was to be given in place of a literal sacrifice. Numbers 18:16 reveals the redemption value. Through this offering the Israelites would always be reminded of the miraculous way God delivered Israel from Egypt.

1 Kings 20

Ahab and the First Syrian Campaign

Ben-Hadad of Syria here is not the same as the Syrian ruler with the same title in 1 Kings 15. Commentators and historians refer to the one here in 1 Kings 20 as Ben-Hadad II. He besieges Samaria, capital of the kingdom of Israel, and offers Ahab conditions of surrender. Ahab agrees to meet those

conditions to prevent further war. But whether the Syrian king is simply greedy, or perhaps more interested in war than spoils, he decides to increase the demands, which Ahab then says is too much.

As a demonstration to Ahab of His sovereignty and power, God sends a prophet to tell Ahab that He will grant him the victory. And, as always, God is true to His word. But the fighting is not yet over. After his success, Ahab is warned that Ben-Hadad will return in the spring.

Ahab's Life for Ben-Hadad's

As promised, the Syrians plan another attack. But they make the fatal error of concluding that God is a territorial deity, incapable of assisting the Israelites outside of a prescribed area. They arrange for this battle to take place in the area south and east of the Sea of Galilee, feeling God will be powerless there. Of course, they are profoundly mistaken. The great and omnipotent God delivers them into Ahab's hands.

But following the Syrian defeat, the servants of Ben-Hadad II attempt to get off easy by appealing to Israel's tendency to forgive and forget. While this is normally a positive and godly trait in interpersonal relationships, extending it to carnal nations reflects a naïve trust in man, and is sometimes done against God's will and to Israel's own hurt.

God sends yet another prophet to Ahab, this time with a theatrical tale reminiscent of some incidents in David's life (compare 2 Samuel 12; 14). The Living Bible paraphrases the prophet's words in 1 Kings 20:42 as: "The Lord says, 'Because you have spared the man I said must die, now you must die in his place, and your people shall perish instead of his.'" Ahab, however, does not respond as David did—but rather sulks back to his capital in anger.

Psalm 119

In the *Yod* strophe (verses 73-80) the psalmist recognizes that God as man's Maker is the One who best understands how man, His creation, is supposed to properly function—so he seeks God's direction in how to live (verse 73).

The writer desires to encourage others who revere God by maintaining hope in God's Word through his affliction and continuing in obedience (see verses 74, 79; compare verse 63). He knows that God has allowed his present affliction and that His judgments have been right (verse 75). Yet he now prays for relief and comfort, as God has promised (verse 76). This will be a powerful witness to God's people—and so will the final outcome of all this.

The poet reiterates that his enemies are proud and continues the pattern of contrasting their wrongdoing with His faithfulness: "They treated me wrongfully...but I will meditate on Your precepts" (verse 78). "They have forged a lie against me, but I will keep your precepts" (verse 69). They "have bound me...but I have not forgotten Your law" (verse 61). They "have me in derision...yet I do not turn aside from Your law" (verse 51).

He chooses to let God deal with his enemies while he finds comfort in the law, striving to be blameless, praying that they will be put to shame rather than him (verses 78, 80)—again as part of an important witness to all of God's people.

The *Kaph* stanza (verses 81-88), the last strophe of the first half of the psalm, is—like the ending stanza (verses 196-176)—dominated by prayer for God's intervention. Wearying under his trial, the psalmist searches God's Word and wonders, in the manner of a lament, "When will you comfort me?" (verses 81-82).

He feels “like a wineskin in smoke” (verse 83). “As a wineskin hanging in the smoke and heat above a fire becomes smudged and shriveled, so the psalmist bears the marks of his affliction” (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on verse 83).

The first question of verse 84, “How many are the days of Your servant?,” may mean, as the NIV renders it, “How long must your servant wait?” But it may also refer to how many days of life he has remaining in him under these circumstances. He would then be asking, “How long can I survive like this?”

“When,” he further pleads, “will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?” (same verse).

Essentially, he is asking God, “When will You deal with these people? When will You put a stop to what they’re doing to me?”

Their digging of pits for him (verse 85) is probably figurative of setting situational traps for him-evidently to the point of plotting his death (compare verse 87). He cries out for help to avert this dire threat (verse 86), once more contrasting the behavior of his persecutors with his own: “They almost made an end of me on earth, but I did not forsake Your precepts” (verse 87). Through all this he hasn’t turned his back on God’s law, but he asks renewed strength to continue keeping it (verse 88). Again, we see that continuance in obedience to the law of God requires His caring attention and help. In this we also see that doing right doesn’t come automatically, even to those who love God. We cannot succeed on our own strength; we need to reach out to God and His Word continually.

“Great Peace Have Those Who Love Your Law, and Nothing Causes Them to Stumble”

In the *Pe* stanza (verses 129-136) the psalmist begins with the wonder of God’s Word and ends with anguish over people not obeying it.

Verse 130 in the NKJV says, “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” The word translated “entrance” literally means “opening.” Some versions render it as “unfolding” (NIV, NASB, NRSV). The parallelism here shows “light” to signify understanding, as in verse 105. The idea in verse 130 might merely be that of unrolling a scroll of Scripture, or opening up a Bible today, so as to read it and gain understanding. Yet it could more figuratively signify God opening up the *meaning* of Scripture to a person’s mind. After Yeshua explained the Old Testament Scriptures to His companions on the road to Emmaus, they remarked, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32).

“Simple” in Psalm 119:130 may have the same sense as its occurrence in 16:6—meaning uncomplicated through guile, and thus straightforward and innocent. Yet it might also indicate those looked on as uneducated—here receiving a far *superior* education through God’s Word and inspiration (compare John 7:14-16; Luke 10:21; Acts 4:13; 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16).

The poet likens his desire for God’s commandments to panting with thirst (Psalm 119:131), recalling imagery used in other psalms (42:1-2; 63:1). Yeshua said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6).

John 1

Yohanan (John) opens his letter to us with proclamations about our Messiah. He is eternal. He is Creator. He is life. He is light. It appears that he purposefully hearkens us back to the beginning, to Genesis and the Creation of all things. He then introduces us to another “sent one” namely Yohanan. This is another John, the son of Zekariah who was sent by Elohim to witness of Yeshua and make His path straight. He was to call people to repentance and immerse them in cleansing waters and to witness of the coming Messiah.

He came to His own but His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of Elohim. The Word in the beginning, became flesh, and dwelled among men. This Yeshua is the eternal One who appeared to men throughout history and He exists in the bosom of the Father.

This is Who Yohanan was proclaiming to the people. The government of the Jewish people (Yehudim) sent out priest to find out who this Yohanan was and what he was doing. He was causing attention, and they needed to know why. They asked him, “who are you?” In answering them, Yohanan quotes the prophet Isaiah: “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of YHVH.’” [Isaiah 40:3]

The next day Yohanan saw Yeshua and said, “See, the Lamb of Elohim who takes away the sin of the World!” “I have seen and I have witnessed, that this is the Son of Elohim.”

And he immersed Yeshua so that all prophecy and righteousness would be fulfilled. Two of Yohanan’s disciples heard and they followed Yeshua for they believed. One of them was Andrew, the brother of Peter and he took Yeshua directly to Peter and said, “We have found The Anointed One.”

The next day Yeshua found Philip and said, “follow me,” and he did. Philip found Nehane’l and told him to come with them, that they had found ‘Him whom Mosheh wrote of in the Torah, and the prophets: Yeshua of Natsareth – the son of Yoseph.’”