

ספר תהילים מד | Tehillim / Psalms 44

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For the Glory of God

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 44:1-26*, the Psalm opens saying "For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. 44:1 O God, we have heard with our ears, Our fathers have told us The work that You did in their days, In the days of old." (NASB) How have the fathers told David what the Lord did in the days of old? He continues describing what the Lord did saying "44:2 You with Your own hand drove out the nations; Then You planted them; You afflicted the peoples, Then You spread them abroad. 44:3 For by their own sword they did not possess the land, And their own arm did not save them, But Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your presence, For You favored them." (NASB) David says the Lord brings victories (44:4), He defeats the enemy (44:5), He puts the enemy to shame (44:7), David does not trust in his sword (44:6) but trusts in the Lord and gives Him thanks forever (44:8). The Psalmist then states that the Lord has brought dishonor upon their army (44:10), He has caused them to be scattered and to turn back from their enemy (44:10), He has given them as sheep to be eaten (44:11), the people have been sold cheaply (44:12), He made them to be a reproach to the neighbors (44:13) and to become a byword among the nations (44:14). David says 44:16 *יז מקול מחרף ומגך מפני אוייב ומתקם*: Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles, Because of the presence of the enemy and the avenger. (NASB) Who is he referring to? He says even in the midst of all these things, they have not forgotten the Lord and have not dealt falsely with God's covenant (44:17). What does it mean to deal falsely with the covenant? He continues saying they have not deviated from the way of God (44:18) and have not forgotten the name of their God (44:20). The Lord knows the secret things of the heart (44:21). David says they are killed all day long for the Lord's sake (44:22). Why is their dying all day long for the sake of God? He asks the Lord if He is asleep, to raise up and help (44:23-25). David concludes his Psalm saying כז קומה עזרתך לנו ופידנו למען חסדך: asking the Lord to rise up, to help, and to redeem him for the sake of His grace (חסדך).

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהילים פרק מד א לְמַנְצֵחַ לְבָנִי-קָרֶחֶת מְשֻׁכִּיל: בָּאָלָהִים בָּאָזְנִינוּ שְׁמַעַנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בָּסְפָּרוֹ-לְנוּ פְּעַל-פְּעַלְתָּה בִּימֵיכֶם בִּימֵינוּ גָּדוּלָה: ג אָתָּה יְזָהָר גּוֹיִם הַוּרְשָׁתָה וְתַּחַטְעַם תְּרַעַע לְאַפִּים וְתַּשְׁלַחַם: ד כִּי לֹא בְּחִרְכֵּם יְרַשְׁוּ-אָרֶץ וְזֹרֻעַם לֹא- הַוּשְׁיָעָה לִמוֹ כִּי-יִמְינָה וְזֹרֻעַךְ וְאָרֶ- פְּנִיקָה כִּי רַצִּיכָם: ה אָתָּה-הָוָא מַלְכִי אָלָהִים צוֹה יְשֻׁעוֹת יַעֲקֹב: ו בְּךָ צָרַנוּ נָגַח בְּשָׁמָךְ נְבוּס קְמִינָה: ז כִּי לֹא בְּקַשְׁתִּי אֲבָטָח וְחַרְבִּי לֹא תַּשְׁׁוֹרֵ- עַנִּי: ח כִּי הַוּשְׁעַתָּנוּ מְאַרְינָנוּ וְמַשְׁ- נָאַרְנוּ הַבִּישׁוֹת: עַלְיוֹן בְּהַתָּא:	ספר טוביה פרק מד א לְשִׁבְחוֹ לְדוֹד עַל יְהוָה דָּבְנֵי קָרָה שְׁכָלָא טָבָא: ב יְהוָה אֱלֹהָה בָּאוּדָנָנוּ שְׁמַעַנָּא אֲבָהָ- תָּאָא שְׁתַּחַטְעַיָּנוּ לְנָא עֲוֹבָדָה דָּעַבְדָּתָא בִּימֵיהָ- בִּימֵיא דִּי מַלְכָמִין: ג אַנְתָּא בִּידָא דְּגַ- רַתְךָ עַמְּיָא עַמְּמִיא כְּנַעֲנָא תְּרַכְתָּא וְנַצְבָּתָנוּ לְבִתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאַרְעָהָוָן תְּבָרָתָה עַמְּיָא אוּמְיָא וְשְׁלַחְתָּנוּ וְפְסָדְתָּנוּ ד אַרְומָה לְאַגְבָּרָה רַתְּ סִיפְיָהָוָן יִרְחָתוּ אַרְעָא וְתַקְוָף אַדְרָעָהָוָן לֹא פְּרַקְתָּ לְהַזָּה אַרְומָה יִמְנָךְ וְאַדְרָעָ גְּבוּ- רַתְּ וְנַהְרָ זַיְקָרָךְ אַרְומָה כָּל זָמָן דַּעֲסִיקָוָן בָּאָוֹרְתָּא אִתְּרָעִיתָא בְּהַוָּן: ה אַנְתָּא תְּהַ- מַלְכִי אֱלֹהָה בְּיַדְנָא הַדָּא הַיָּא פְּקִידָרְפָּרָקָ- נוֹת דְּבִיתָ יַעֲקֹב: ו בְּמַיְמָרָךְ מַעֲקִינָא נָגַח בְּשָׁמָךְ נְכוֹשׁ כָּל דְּקִימִין עַלְנָא: ז אַרְומָה לְאַ- בְּקַשְׁתִּי אָנָה רְחִיזָן וְסִיפִּי לְאַתְּפָרָקָ יִתְּהָ- אַרְומָה פְּרִיקָתָנָא מַמְעִיקָנָא וְמַשְׁנָנָא אִיתְהָ- עַלְיוֹן בְּהַתָּא: 	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 44 44:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῖς νιοῖς Κορε εἰς σύνεσιν ψαλμός ὁ θεός ἐν τοῖς ὡσὶν ἡμῶν ἡκούσαμεν οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἀνήγγειλαν ἡμῖν ἔργον ὁ εἰργάσω ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέραις ἀρχαίαις 44:2 ἡ χείρ σου ἔθνη ἐξωλέθρευσεν καὶ κατεφύτευσας αὐτούς ἐκάκωσας λαοὺς καὶ ἔξεβαλες αὐτούς 44:3 οὐ γάρ ἐν τῇ ρόμφαιᾳ αὐτῶν ἐκληρονόμησαν γῆν καὶ ὁ βραχίων αὐτῶν οὐκ ἔσωσεν αὐτούς ἀλλ᾽ ἡ δεξιά σου καὶ ὁ βραχίων σου καὶ ὁ φωτισμὸς τοῦ προσώπου σου δτὶ εὐδόκησας ἐν αὐτοῖς 44:4 σὺ εἰ αὐτὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου ὁ ἐντελλόμενος τὰς σωτηρίας Ιακωβ 44:5 ἐν σοὶ τοὺς ἔχθροὺς ἡμῶν κερατιοῦμεν καὶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἔξουθενώσομεν τοὺς ἐπανιστανομένους ἡμῖν			

ט באללים הלוינו כל-הימים ושהם | לעולם נודה סלה: י אָרְזַנְחָת ותכלימנו ולא-תצא בצבאותינו: יא תשבינו אחר מני-ך ומשנינו שסו למלמו: יב תענו כצאן מאכל ובגויים עורייתנו: יג תפיכר עמק בלא-הון
וילא-רבית במחירותם: יד תשימנו חרפה לשכינינו לעג וקהלס לשביבותינו:טו תשימנו משל בגויים מנוד-ראש בלמים: טז כל-הימים כלפתינו גוגדי ובשת פנוי ססתני: יז מקול מחרף ומגדף מפנוי אויב ומתקדם: יח זאת באתנו ולא שכחנו וילא-שכחנו וילא-שכחנו בבריתך: יט לא-נסוג אחורה לבני וטט אשרינו מני ארחה: כ כי דפיכתנו במקום תנאים ותכס עליינו בצלמות: כא אם-שכחנו שם אללהינו וגפרש פנינו לאל זר: כב תעלומות לב: כג כי-עליך הרגנו כל-הימים נחשנו כצאן טבחה: כד עורה | למה תישן | אדני הקיצה אל-תזונה לנץח:כה למה פניך מסתיר תשבח עגינו ולחצינו:כו כי שחה לעפר ונפשו דבקה לאץ בטינו:כו קוממה עזרתה לנו ופדרנו למען חסכה:

ט בימי רא דיהוה אנן משבחין כל יומא
שمرק יי' נודי לעלמי עליון: י' לחוד
אשליתא אנטישתא ואספסתנא ולא תשרי
שכנתך בחילוותנה: יא אهزורתנה קדל
קדם מעיקא ומשנאנא כבשו לנו יתנה:
יב מסרטנה היך ענא למיכלא וביני
עטמיא בדרתא יתנה: יג זבנתא עמר
אגן דלא بلا ממוני ולא אסגייתא קיד
ייניא בפירוגיהון: יד שוויתנא קלנא
להיסודה לשיבבנה ממكني ותא ותור-
פיתא להזרניתנה:טו שוויתנא למת-
לא למותלא בעטמיא טילטול רישא
באומיא: טז כל יומא כייסופי לקובל
בבהת אפי' חפטני: יז מנ קלא דמה-
סח ומגדף ומתריף מן קדם בעיל דבבא
ונקים נקמתא: יח כל דא ערעת יתנה
לא אשלינך אנטישתא לך ולא שירנה
בקיקימך: יט לא נゾר פlige זהוחין לי-
בנה ואת אסתיתא איסטורנא מן תרצית
אורחתך: כ ארום אמכתנה אמאיכתנה
באתר יורי והפיתא עלנא בטולא דמור-
תא: כא אין אשלינא איתנשינה שום
אלהנה ופרישנא בצלו ידנא לטעותא
דעמין נוכראין: כב הלא אלהא יב-
שקר דא ארום הוא חכמים קדמוני גליין
טמירים לבא: כג ארום מטולתק אמד-
שותלתק איטקטולנא כל יומא אתחשבנה
בענא דמסירה לנכסא: כד איתגבר
שיי למה תהי כגבר דמיך יהוה איתער
אלהנה לא מתנסי לעלמא:כה למה
שכינת יקרך תסלך תשלי סיגופנא ודרכ-
חזקנא:כו ארום שיחא לעפרא נפשנא
רבכת לארעית גובה מעיננא קריסנא:
כז קומ סייע לנו ופרק יתנא מטול
טובך:

44: 6 οὐ γάρ ἐπὶ τῷ τόξῳ μου ἔλπιῶ καὶ ἡ ρόμφαιά μου οὐ σώσει με 44:7 ἐσωσας γάρ ήμᾶς ἐκ τῶν θλιβόντων ήμᾶς καὶ τοὺς μισοῦντας ήμᾶς κατήσχυνας 44:8 ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἐπαινεσθησόμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ ἐν τῷ ὄντι μαρτυρούμεθα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα διάγραμμα 44:9 νῦν δὲ ἀπώσω καὶ κατήσχυνας ήμᾶς καὶ οὐκ ἔξελεύσῃ ἐν ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ήμῶν 44:10 ἀπέστρεψας ήμᾶς εἰς τὰ ὄπίσω παρὰ τοὺς ἔχθροὺς ήμῶν καὶ οἱ μισοῦντες ήμᾶς διήρπαζον ἑαυτοῖς 44:11 ἔδωκας ήμᾶς ως πρόβατα βρώσεως καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν διέσπειρας ήμᾶς 44:12 ἀπέδου τὸν λαόν σου ἄνευ τιμῆς καὶ οὐκ ἦν πλῆθος ἐν τοῖς ἀλλάγμασιν αὐτῶν 44:13 ἔθο ήμᾶς ὄνειδος τοῖς γείτοσιν ήμῶν μυκτηρισμὸν καὶ καταγέλωτα τοῖς κύκλῳ ήμῶν 44:14 ἔθοι ήμᾶς εἰς παραβολὴν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν κίνησιν κεφαλῆς ἐν τοῖς λαοῖς 44:15 ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἡ ἐντροπή μου κατεναντίον μού ἔστιν καὶ ἡ αἰσχύνη τοῦ προσώπου μου ἐκάλυψεν με 44:16 ἀπὸ φωνῆς ὄνειδίζοντος καὶ παραλαλοῦντος ἀπὸ προσώπου ἔχθροῦ καὶ ἐκδιώκοντος 44:17 ταῦτα πάντα ἥλθεν ἐφ' ήμᾶς καὶ οὐκ ἐπελαθόμεθά σου καὶ οὐκ ἡδικήσαμεν ἐν διαθήκῃ σου 44:18 καὶ οὐκ ἀπέστη εἰς τὰ ὄπίσω ἡ καρδία ήμῶν καὶ ἔξεκλινας τὰς τρίβους ήμῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδοῦ σου 44:19 ὅτι ἐταπείνωσας ήμᾶς ἐν τόπῳ κακώσεως καὶ ἐπεκάλυψεν ήμᾶς σκιὰ θανάτου 44:20 εἰ ἐπελαθόμεθα τοῦ ὄντι μαρτυρούμεθα 44:21 οὐχὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐκζητήσει ταῦτα αὐτὸς γάρ γινώσκει τὰ κρύφια τῆς καρδίας 44:22 ὅτι ἔνεκα σοῦ θανατούμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐλογίσθημεν ως πρόβατα σφαγῆς 44:23 ἔξεγέρθητι ἵνα τί ὑπνοῖς κύριε ἀνάστηθι καὶ μὴ ἀπώσῃ εἰς τέλος 44:24 ἵνα τί τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀποστρέψεις ἐπιλανθάνῃ τῆς πτωχείας ήμῶν καὶ τῆς θλίψεως ήμῶν 44:25 ὅτι ἐταπεινώθη εἰς χοῦν ἡ ψυχὴ ήμῶν ἐκολλήθη εἰς γῆν ἡ γαστὴρ ήμῶν 44:26 ἀνάστα κύριε βοήθησον ήμῖν καὶ λύτρωσαι ήμᾶς ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὄντι μαρτυρούμεθα

Tehillim / Psalms 44

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. 44:1 O God, we have heard with our ears, Our fathers have told us The work that You did in their days, In the days of old. 44:2 You with Your own hand drove out the nations; Then You planted them; You afflicted the peoples, Then You spread them abroad. 44:3 For by their own sword they did not possess the land, And their own arm did not save them, But Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your presence, For You favored them. 44:4 You are my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob. 44:5 Through You we will push back our adversaries; Through Your name we will trample down those who rise up against us. 44:6 For I will not trust in my bow, Nor will my sword save me. 44:7 But You have saved us from our adversaries, And You have put to shame those who hate us. 44:8 In God we have boasted all day long, And we will give thanks to Your name forever. Selah. 44:9 Yet You have rejected us and brought us to dishonor, And do not go out with our armies. 44:10 You cause us to turn back from the adversary; And those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves. 44:11 You give us as sheep to be eaten And have scattered us among the nations. 44:12 You sell Your people cheaply, And have not profited by their sale. 44:13 You make us a reproach to our neighbors, A scoffing and a derision to those around us. (NASB)

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 44

44:1 For praise; for David, composed by the sons of Korah, good discernment. 44:2 O Lord, with our ears we have heard, our fathers have told us of the deed you did in their days, in the days of old. 44:3 You drove out the Canaanite Gentiles with your mighty hand; and you planted them, the house of Israel, in their land; you broke the peoples and sent them away. 44:4 For they did not inherit the land by the strength of their swords, and the might of their arms did not redeem them, for [it was] your right hand, and your strong arm and the light of your glorious splendor; for whenever they occupied themselves with the Torah, you were pleased with them. 44:5 You are my king, O God; at this time command the redemption of the house of Jacob. 44:6 At your command we will gore our oppressors; in your name we will subdue all who rise against us. 44:7 For I do not trust in my bow, and my sword will not redeem me. 44:8 For you have redeemed us from our oppressors and from those who hate us, you have brought shame upon them. 44:9 By the word of the Lord we sing praise all day; and your name we will confess forever and ever. 44:10 Only you have neglected [us] and put us to shame; and your presence will not abide with our forces. 44:11 You have made us turn our back in the presence of our enemies, and those who hate us have subdued us. 44:12 You have handed us over like sheep for food, and you have scattered us among the Gentiles. 44:13 You sold your people for nothing, for no money; and you did not increase property by their exchange. (EMC)

Psalmoi / Psalms 44

For the end, a Psalm for instruction, for the sons of Core. 44:1 O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, the work which thou wroughtest in their days, in the days of old. 44:2 Thine hand utterly destroyed the heathen, and thou didst plant them: thou didst afflict the nations, and cast them out. 44:3 For they inherited not the land by their own sword, and their own arm did not deliver them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou wert well pleased in them. 44:4 Thou art indeed my King and my God, who commandest deliverances for Jacob. 44:5 In thee will we push down our enemies, and in thy name will we bring to nought them that rise up against us. 44:6 For I will not trust in my bow, and my sword shall not save me. 44:7 For thou hast saved us from them that afflicted us, and hast put to shame them that hated us. 44:8 In God will we make our boast all the day, and to thy name will we give thanks for ever. Pause. 44:9 But now thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and thou wilt not go forth with our hosts. 44:10 Thou hast turned us back before our enemies; and they that hated us spoiled for themselves. 44:11 Thou madest us as sheep for meat; and thou scatteredst us among the nations. 44:12 Thou hast sold thy people without price, and there was no profit by their exchange. 44:13 Thou hast made us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision them that are round about us. (LXX)

44:14 You make us a byword among the nations, A laughing-stock among the peoples. 44:15 All day long my dishonor is before me And my humiliation has overwhelmed me, 44:16 Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles, Because of the presence of the enemy and the avenger. 44:17 All this has come upon us, but we have not forgotten You, And we have not dealt falsely with Your covenant. 44:18 Our heart has not turned back, And our steps have not deviated from Your way, 44:19 Yet You have crushed us in a place of jackals And covered us with the shadow of death. 44:20 If we had forgotten the name of our God Or extended our hands to a strange god, 44:21 Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart. 44:22 But for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. 44:23 Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever. 44:24 Why do You hide Your face And forget our affliction and our oppression? 44:25 For our soul has sunk down into the dust; Our body cleaves to the earth. 44:26 Rise up, be our help, And redeem us for the sake of Your lovingkindness. (NASB)	44:14 You have made us a disgrace to our neighbors, a mockery and scandal to our surroundings. 44:15 You have made us a proverb among the Gentiles, a shaking of the head among the nations. 44:16 All the day my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face. 44:17 From the sound of the reviler and vilifier, from the presence of the enemy and revenge-taker; 44:18 All this has come upon us, yet we have not neglected you, and we have not been false to your covenant. 44:19 We will not turn back hesitating, our hearts being proud, but you have diverted our steps from the straightness of the path. 44:20 For you have humbled us in a place of jackals, and you have covered us with the shadow of death. 44:21 If we have neglected[22] the name of our God and spread our hands in prayer to an idol of foreign nations 44:22 Truly God will search this out, for he knows the hidden things of the heart. 44:23 For on your account we are killed all the day; we are accounted as sheep handed over for slaughter. 44:24 Act mightily; why will you be like a sleeping man, O Lord? Arouse yourself, do not forever be forgetful. 44:25 Why will you remove your glorious presence, why neglect our shame and oppression? 44:26 For our soul is bent to the dust; our bowels cleave to the bottom of the pit. 44:27 Arise, help us, and redeem us, for the sake of your goodness. (EMC)	44:14 Thou hast made us a proverb among the Gentiles, a shaking of the head among the nations. 44:15 All the day my shame is before me, and the confusion of my face has covered me, 44:16 because of the voice of the slanderer and reviler; because of the enemy and avenger. 44:17 All these things are come upon us: but we have not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt unrighteously in thy covenant. 44:18 And our heart has not gone back; but thou hast turned aside our paths from thy way. 44:19 For thou hast laid us low in a place of affliction, and the shadow of death has covered us. 44:20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, and if we have spread out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search these things out? 44:21 for he knows the secrets of the heart. 44:22 For, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for slaughter. 44:23 Awake, wherefore sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, and do not cast us off for ever. 44:24 Wherefore turnest thou thy face away, and forgettest our poverty and our affliction? 44:25 For our soul has been brought down to the dust; our belly has cleaved to the earth. 44:26 Arise, O Lord, help us, and redeem us for thy name's sake.(LXX)
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א לְמִנְאָחָה לְבָנֵי-קָרְחָה מַשְׁכִּיל “For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil.” Again we see the words “for the Sons of Korah” and “Maskil” (מַשְׁכִּיל) meaning the psalm is for the “educated or learned.” The opening verse states ב 44:1 אֱלֹהִים | בְּאֶזְנֵינוּ שָׁמְעָנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ סְפִּרוֹ-לְנוּ פָּעַל-פָּעַלְתָּ בִּימֵיכֶם בִּימֵי קָדָם: “We have heard with our ears, Our fathers have told us The work that You did in their days, In the days of old” (NASB) suggesting that they have been taught what God has done in ancient days. The works of God has been made known through the educational process. This parallels the words of the Apostle Paul by what he said to the believers in the Apostolic Writings highlighting the importance of education in the following verses:

Romans 10:17

10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (KJV)

Colossians 3:16

3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

Hebrews 4:2

4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

Based upon Paul's words to the Romans, the people hearing the message is necessary for faith to come. We are to be engaged in learning about God's mercy and His great power to deliver and save from our enemies and from sin. The Psalm opening with a note to the educated or learned, the "Maskil" (מְשִׁלֵּם), highlights the importance of studying God's word to increase our faith.

א לשבחא לדוד על ידיהון דבני קראח שכלא טבא: ב יהוה אלהא באודננא שמענה אבהתנא אשטעו לנו עובדא דעתתא ביוםיהון ביוםיא די מלקדמין: 4:1 For praise; for David, composed by the sons of Korah, good discernment. 44:2 O Lord, with our ears we have heard, our fathers have told us of the deed you did in their days, in the days of old. (EMC) According to the Aramaic Targum, this psalm was composed by the sons of Korah for understanding. The Targum also speaks of hearing and how their fathers have told them what the Lord had done for them. Notice how studying the Scriptures is synonymous to being told by our fathers of the Works of the Lord. The scriptures have much to say about how God works in human history which speak specific to our situations we encounter today. Like David is saying in the psalm of knowing what the Lord has done, the Scriptural witness on understanding what God has done in the past builds our faith in what He is able to do in our future. As a result we are able to trust in Him and not forsake the way or path in which He wants us to live our lives.

ג אקה | ז'ך גזים הורשף וחתעם פרע לאחים ותשליהם: ד כי לא בחרbam ירושו-ארץ וזרעם לא-הושיעהomo כי-ימינה וזרעך ואור פניך כי רציתם: You with Your own hand drove out the nations; Then You planted them; You afflicted the peoples, Then You spread them abroad. 44:3 For by their own sword they did not possess the land, And their own arm did not save them, But Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your presence, For You favored them." (NASB) David says that the Lord drove out the nations by His hand and planted His people. He also says that by the sword they did not possess the land. If we read through the book of Joshua, we see that Israel took the land by the sword, what exactly is David speaking of saying that they did not possess the land by the sword? According to Parashat Tetzave (Shemot / Exodus 27:20-30:10) the Lord said that He would send the hornet ahead of the people into the Promised land to drive them out before them.

Shemot / Exodus 23:25-32

23:25 'But you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst. 23:26 'There shall be no one miscarrying or barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days. 23:27 'I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. 23:28 'I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you. 23:29 'I will not drive them out before you in a single year; that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 23:30 'I will drive them out before you little by little,

until you become fruitful and take possession of the land. 23:31 ‘I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River Euphrates; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you. 23:32 ‘You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods. (NASB)

The Lord said that He would send a terror ahead to cause the enemy to be in confusion and cause them to flee before them. (Note that these things would also come upon us if we forsake Him, His covenant, and His word.) He will send hornets ahead of Israel to drive out the inhabitants of the land. In fulfillment of these words, we read the following in the book of Joshua.

Joshua 24:11-14

24:11 ‘You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Gergashite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Thus I gave them into your hand. 24:12 ‘Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow. 24:13 ‘I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.’ 24:14 ‘Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. (NASB)

According to the book of Joshua, the Lord sent hornets ahead of the people and drove the kings of the Amorites from the land. In performing these deeds, the people knew the Lord was with them and within their midst. Knowing God's word (the Bible) we are able to look back on our lives and see how the Lord has been working and we can give Him praise for the works of His hands. Studying the Scriptures, we can look back on what the Lord has done in the past and we can praise Him for the work of His hands.

ג אנת את בידך גבורהך עמיך עמך נגענאי הרכתך ונצבתנון לבית ישך ראל בארעהון תברת עמיך אומיא ושלחנתנון ופסדתינון ד ארום לא בגבורה סיפיהון יריתו ארעה ואתקוף אדרעהון: 44:3 לא פרקת להון ארום ימינך ואדרע גבורהך ונהור זיו יקרך ארום כל זמן דעסיקו באוריתא איתרעתא בהון: You drove out the Canaanite Gentiles with your mighty hand; and you planted them, the house of Israel, in their land; you broke the peoples and sent them away. 44:4 For they did not inherit the land by the strength of their swords, and the might of their arms did not redeem them, for [it was] your right hand, and your strong arm and the light of your glorious splendor; for whenever they occupied themselves with the Torah, you were pleased with them. (EMC) The Targum clarifies those whom the Lord planted, the house of Israel, in their land. The Targum also states that “whenever they occupied themselves with the Torah, you were pleased with them” (כל זמן דעסיקו באוריתא איתרעתא בהון). This is consistent with the rabbis teaching in Mishnah Pirkei Avot 3:7.

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 3:7

7. Rabbi Chalafta ben Dosa of Kefar Chanania used to say: If ten men sit together and occupy themselves with the Torah, the Divine Presence rests among them as it is written (Psalm 82:1) “God has taken his place in the divine council.” And from where do we learn that this applies even to five? Because it is written (Amos 9:6) “And finds his vault upon the earth.” And how do we learn that this applies even to three? Because it is written (Psalm 82:1) “In the midst of the gods he holds judgment.” And from where can it be shown that the same applies even to two? Because it is written (Malachi 3:16) “Then those who revered the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord took note and listened.” And from where even of one? Because it is written (Exodus 20:24) “In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.”

According to the Mishnah, the idea is that if a minimum of ten men sit together and study the Scriptures (Torah) the presence of God rests among them. The Mishnah then begins to deduce the validity of the statement by reasoning whether the presence of God rests among them when there is only 5 men. The rabbis continue in their discussion to reduce the number to three, two, and one person who studies the Torah, the presence of God rests among him. This sounds to be a close parallel to Yeshua's words according to *Matthew 18*.

Matthew 18:18-22

18:18 Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. 18:19 Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 18:20 For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst. 18:21 Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ 18:22 Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. (NASB)

In *Matthew 18:18-22*, Yeshua speaks of having authority to bind and loose on earth and in heaven, anything we ask in Yeshua's name when two or three come together it will be done, when two or three come together then He is in their midst, and Peter asks how many times he is to forgive his brother's sin against him. It appears that the presence of God brings authority in His name and that the authority and power comes when we are merciful and forgiving of others. In Catholicism, these verses are utilized as proof texts for papal authority on the question of whether these Scriptures (*Matthew 18:18-19*) were given only to the apostles, or to all believers? What is the application for these Scriptures today? How do these Scriptures apply to us? Some say that this is a reference to having the authority to develop doctrine or theology. Could this also be a reference to binding up evil spirits and loosing those who have been bound up by these spirits or by illness or disease? If God's presence rests among those who gather together as the Mishnah states and as Yeshua said, wouldn't each of us also have the authority to do these things by the power and presence of God?

The Psalmist continues speaking of the Lord who brings victories (44:4), He defeats the enemy (44:5), He puts the enemy to shame (44:7), David does not trust in his sword (44:6) but trusts in the Lord and gives Him thanks forever (44:8).

Tehillim / Psalms 44:4-9

44:4 You are my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob. 44:5 Through You we will push back our adversaries; Through Your name we will trample down those who rise up against us. 44:6 For I will not trust in my bow, Nor will my sword save me. 44:7 But You have saved us from our adversaries, And You have put to shame those who hate us. 44:8 In God we have boasted all day long, And we will give thanks to Your name forever. Selah.

ה אָפָה-הוּא מִלְּפֵי אֱלֹהִים צִוָּה יִשְׁעוֹת יַעֲקֹב: ו בֶּה צְרִינוּ נְגַמֵּה קְשָׁמָה נְבוּס קְמִינָנוּ: ז כִּי לֹא בְקָשְׁתִּי אֶבְטָח וְתַרְכִּי לֹא תַזְעִינֵנִי: ח כִּי הַשְׁעַתָּנוּ מִצְרָינוּ וּמִשְׁנָאנוּ הַבִּישׁוֹת: ט בְּאֱלֹהִים הַלְּלָנוּ כָּל-הַיּוֹם וְשָׁמָךְ | לְעוֹלָם נוֹדָה סְלָה:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 44:5-9

44:5 You are my king, O God; at this time command the redemption of the house of Jacob. 44:6 At your command we will gore our oppressors; in your name we will subdue all who rise against us. 44:7 For I do not trust in my bow, and my sword will not redeem me. 44:8 For you have redeemed us from our oppressors and from those who hate us, you have brought

shame upon them. 44:9 By the word of the Lord we sing praise all day; and your name we will confess forever and ever.

ה אתה את הוא מלבי אלהא בעידנא הדא ההייא פקיד פורקנות דבית יעקב: ו במיירך מעיקנא ננכח בשמק נכמוש כל דקיימין עלנא: ז ארום לא בקשתי אנה רחץ וסיפי לא תפוק יתיה: ח ארום פריקתנא ממעיקנא ומשנאנא איתיתא עילויהון בהתא: ט במיירא דיהוה אנן משבחין כל יומא ושםך יי נודי לעלי עולם:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 44:4-8

44:4 Thou art indeed my King and my God, who commandest deliverances for Jacob. 44:5 In thee will we push down our enemies, and in thy name will we bring to nought them that rise up against us. 44:6 For I will not trust in my bow, and my sword shall not save me. 44:7 For thou hast saved us from them that afflicted us, and hast put to shame them that hated us. 44:8 In God will we make our boast all the day, and to thy name will we give thanks for ever. Pause.

44:4 σὺ εἰ αὐτὸς ὁ βασιλεύς μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου ὁ ἐντελλόμενος τὰς σωτηρίας Ιακώβ 44:5 ἐν σοὶ τοὺς ἔχθροὺς ἡμῶν κερατιοῦμεν καὶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἔξουθενώσομεν τοὺς ἐπανιστανομένους ἡμῖν 44: 6 οὐ γάρ ἐπὶ τῷ τόξῳ μου ἐλπιῶ καὶ ἡ ὥρμαφαία μου οὐ σώσει με 44:7 ἔσωσας γάρ ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῶν θλιβόντων ἡμᾶς καὶ τοὺς μισοῦντας ἡμᾶς κατήσχυνας 44:8 ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἐπαινεσθησόμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν καὶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἔξομολογησόμεθα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα διάψαλμα

The NASB translates *Tehillim / Psalms 44:4 You are my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob.* (NASB), however, the Hebrew text states, “**ה אַתָּה-הָיָה מֶלֶךְ אֶלְדִּים צִוָּה יִשְׁעוֹת יְעַקְּבָב:**” “You-He is my King, God commands salvoes for Jacob.” The Hebrew word “yeshuot” (ישועות) from the root שׁוֹשׁ (yasha) meaning “salvation, rescue, help” and is written in the feminine plural form. The Aramaic Targum states that the Lord commands the redemption of the house of Jacob (הָיָה בְּעִידָּנוּ הַדָּא הַהִיא פָּקִיד פּוֹרְקָנוֹת דְּבִיתָה יעַקְּבָב), and the Septuagint states that the Lord commands deliverances for Jacob (θεός μου ὁ ἐντελλόμενος τὰς σωτηρίας Ιακώβ). The Psalmist continues saying, **בְּךָ אָרֵינוּ נִגְחַח בְּשָׁמֶךָ נִבּוּס קָמִינוּ:** 144:5 *Through You we will push back our adversaries; Through Your name we will trample down those who rise up against us.* (NASB) How does this compare to Yeshua’s words in *Matthew 5:39-48*?

Matthew 5:39-48

5:39 ‘But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 5:40 ‘If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 5:41 ‘Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 5:42 ‘Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. 5:43 ‘You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 5:44 ‘But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 5:45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 5:46 ‘For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 5:47 ‘If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 5:48 ‘Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (NASB)

David speaks of the Lord who brings victories (44:4), through and in His name we will defeat the enemy (44:5), the Lord puts the enemy to shame (44:7), we are not to trust in the sword for our help (44:6), we are to trust in the Lord and gives Him thanks forever for what He has done (44:8). Yeshua on the other hand says do not resist an evil person, turn the other cheek, give the person your shirt or coat, give to those who want to borrow, love your enemy, pray for those who persecute you, and by doing these things, we will be sons of our Father in heaven. Yeshua goes on to say if we love those who love us what reward is there in doing that? We are told to be perfect just like our heavenly Father is perfect. How do we understand these two standards? Was David's prayer in relation to a time of war and Yeshua's statements a time of persecution? Is there a difference between war when fighting an enemy and persecution from an enemy? The Aramaic and Greek translations of the Masoretic text are in agreement that the Lord will deliver his people, in His name we will subdue all who rise against us, we do not trust in sword or bow but in the Lord God Almighty for our help, and we will praise the Lord all day because of His salvation and His great name.

Following these statements of praise and trust in the Lord, the Psalmist says that the Lord has brought dishonor upon their army (44:10), He has caused them to be scattered and to turn back from their enemy (44:10), He has given them as sheep to be eaten (44:11), the people have been sold cheaply (44:12), He made them to be a reproach to the neighbors (44:13) and to become a byword among the nations (44:14). Have you ever felt like that because of persecution of your faith?

Tehillim / Psalms 44:9-13

44:9 Yet You have rejected us and brought us to dishonor; And do not go out with our armies.
44:10 You cause us to turn back from the adversary; And those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves. 44:11 You give us as sheep to be eaten And have scattered us among the nations. 44:12 You sell Your people cheaply, And have not profited by their sale. 44:13 You make us a reproach to our neighbors, A scoffing and a derision to those around us.

י אַף-זָנָחָת וְפִכְלִימָנוּ וְלֹא-תֵצֵא בָּצָבָאֹתֵינוּ: יֵא תִשְׁיבֵנוּ אַחֲרֵ מִנִּיאָר וְמִשְׁנָאַנְיוּ שָׁסֹו לְמוֹ: יְבָתְּחַנְנוּ כִּצְאָן מְאַכֵּל וּבְגָזִים זְרִינָנוּ: יְגָתֵפֶר עַמָּה בְּלֹא-הַזָּן וְלֹא-רְבִית בְּמַחְרִיקָם: יְדָ תִשְׁיִמְנוּ חֲרָפָה לְשִׁכְנָנוּ לְעֵג וְקָלֵס לְסִבְבוֹתֵינוּ:

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 44:10-14

44:10 Only you have neglected [us] and put us to shame; and your presence will not abide with our forces. 44:11 You have made us turn our back in the presence of our enemies, and those who hate us have subdued us. 44:12 You have handed us over like sheep for food, and you have scattered us among the Gentiles. 44:13 You sold your people for nothing, for no money; and you did not increase property by their exchange 44:14 You have made us a disgrace to our neighbors, a mockery and scandal to our surroundings.

י לְחוּוד אֲשְׁלִיחָתָא אֲנַשִּׁיתָא וְאֲכִסְפָּתָנָא וְלֹא תְשִׁרֵי שְׁכָנָתָךְ בְּחִילּוּוֹתֵנוּ: יֵא אֲחֹזָרָתָנָא קָדָל קָדָם מְעִידָא וְמִשְׁנָאַנָּא כְּבָשׂוּ לְנוֹא יְתָנוּ: יְבָתְּחַנְנוּ הַזָּקָן עַנָּא לְמִיכָּלָא וּבְיִנְיָעַמְדָא בְּדַרְתָּא יְתָנוּ: יְגָתֵפֶר עַמָּךְ מְגַן דְּלָא בְּלֹא מְמוֹנָא וְלֹא אֲסְגִּיתָא קִינִיָּנָא בְּפִירּוּגִיהָוָן: יְדָ שְׁוִיתָנָא קָלָנָא לְחִיסּוּדָא לְשִׁבְבָּנָא מְמֻקְנָי וְתָא וְתוֹרְפִיתָא לְחוֹזְרִינִיתָנוּ:

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 44:9-13

44:9 But now thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and thou wilt not go forth with our

hosts. 44:10 *Thou hast turned us back before our enemies; and they that hated us spoiled for themselves.* 44:11 *Thou madest us as sheep for meat; and thou scatteredst us among the nations.* 44:12 *Thou hast sold thy people without price, and there was no profit by their exchange.* 44:13 *Thou hast made us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision them that are round about us.*

44:9 νυνὶ δὲ ἀπώσω καὶ κατήσχυνας ἡμᾶς καὶ οὐκ ἔξελεύσῃ ἐν ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ἡμῶν 44:10 ἀπέστρεψας ἡμᾶς εἰς τὰ ὄπίσω παρὰ τοὺς ἔχθροὺς ἡμῶν καὶ οἱ μισοῦντες ἡμᾶς διήρπαζον ἐαυτοῖς 44:11 ἔδωκας ἡμᾶς ως πρόβατα βρώσεως καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν διέσπειρας ἡμᾶς 44:12 ἀπέδου τὸν λαόν σου ἄνευ τιμῆς καὶ οὐκ ἦν πλῆθος ἐν τοῖς ἀλλάγμασιν αὐτῶν 44:13 ἔθο ἡμᾶς ὄνειδος τοῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν μυκτηρισμὸν καὶ καταγέλωτα τοῖς κύκλῳ ἡμῶν

There are times when we go through temptation, affliction, and discouragement just like the Psalmist is going through here in the Psalm. He may be going through a season of persecution. When we go through a time of persecution, thoughts may come to our mind that the Lord has forsaken us and cast us off. It would appear that we are being dishonored and become a scorn amidst the nations. The Psalmist however looks to the Lord for help, since even the worst of enemies have no power against Him who created the heavens and the earth. One example maybe taken from 2 *Chronicles 32:1-22*:

2 Chronicles 32:1-22

32:1 *After these acts of faithfulness Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself.* 32:2 *Now when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem,* 32:3 *he decided with his officers and his warriors to cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city, and they helped him.* 32:4 *So many people assembled and stopped up all the springs and the stream which flowed through the region, saying, ‘Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?’* 32:5 *And he took courage and rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down and erected towers on it, and built another outside wall and strengthened the Millo in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in great number.* 32:6 *He appointed military officers over the people and gathered them to him in the square at the city gate, and spoke encouragingly to them, saying,* 32:7 *‘Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him.* 32:8 *‘With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.’* And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah. 32:9 *After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem while he was besieging Lachish with all his forces with him, against Hezekiah king of Judah and against all Judah who were at Jerusalem, saying,* 32:10 *‘Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, ‘On what are you trusting that you are remaining in Jerusalem under siege?’* 32:11 *‘Is not Hezekiah misleading you to give yourselves over to die by hunger and by thirst, saying, ‘The Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria?’* 32:12 *‘Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You shall worship before one altar, and on it you shall burn incense?’* 32:13 *‘Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the lands? Were the gods of the nations of the lands able at all to deliver their land from my hand?’* 32:14 *‘Who was there among all the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed who could deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand?’* 32:15 *‘Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?’* 32:16 *His servants spoke further against the*

Lord God and against His servant Hezekiah. 32:17 He also wrote letters to insult the Lord God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, ‘As the gods of the nations of the lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand.’ 32:18 They called this out with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify them, so that they might take the city. 32:19 They spoke of the God of Jerusalem as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, the work of men’s hands. 32:20 But King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed about this and cried out to heaven. 32:21 And the Lord sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned in shame to his own land. And when he had entered the temple of his god, some of his own children killed him there with the sword. 32:22 So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria and from the hand of all others, and guided them on every side. (NASB)

According to 2 *Chronicles* 32, Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded Judah and besieged the fortified cities with the intention of destroying Judah. Here in the Scriptures it says that both King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet prayed to the Lord for help. The Lord sent a angel who destroyed the mighty warriors in the camp of the king of Assyria. The king returned home in shame and his own sons killed him with the sword. It was not by Israel’s own might that the Lord gives them supremacy over the nations. It is the Lord’s might in the midst of our weakness that He saves us from our enemies. It is in this way the Lord is glorified. The Lord is Israel’s glory and pride. In the same way, the Lord is our glory and pride. In *Tehillim / Psalms* 44:13, it says “*You make us a reproach to our neighbors*” (*Tehillim / Psalm* 42:10, *Tehillim / Psalm* 79:4, *Tehillim / Psalm* 80:6). The idea is not so much based upon the idea that He has made us to be cowards, or weak and powerless, but that the nations believe we have a weak and powerless God (2 *Kings* 18:33-35 and 2 *Kings* 19:12). The point is that the Lord is able to deliver us, we are to maintain our faith in Him, and it is for His glory that we appear to be weak and powerless. This brings us back to the teaching of Yeshua the Messiah in *Matthew* 5, Yeshua says do not resist an evil person, turn the other cheek, give the person your shirt or coat, give to those who want to borrow, love your enemy, pray for those who persecute you, and by doing these things, you will be sons of our Father in heaven. Being gracious, merciful, humble, and innocent, in the midst of the enemy appears to be weak and powerless, but this does in fact shows the power of God at work in our lives. It takes a lot of strength to be merciful to those who harm us. This also allows the Lord to bring the victory, deliverance, and salvation by His hand and not by our own hands. The message that we are seeing throughout the Scriptures is to seek the Lord for His help and deliverance with an innocent heart, and to live in righteousness and justice towards others, even towards those who are considered our enemies (those who persecute us).

David says : זֶה מָקוֹל מִחרָּף וּמַגְּדֵל מִפְּנֵי אֹוֹב וּמִתְּנוּקָם 44:16 *Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles, Because of the presence of the enemy and the avenger.* (NASB) Who is he referring to saying “*the voice of him who reproaches and reviles?*” The one that reproaches are the ungodly, the heathen, those who blaspheme the Lord. The ungodly or unrighteous person brings contemptuous expressions against the Lord God of Israel. An example from the Scriptures may be taken from *Isaiah* 37:21-32.

Isaiah 37:21-32

37:21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent word to Hezekiah, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, 37:22 this is the word that the Lord has spoken against him: ‘She has despised you and mocked you, The virgin daughter of Zion; She has shaken her head behind you, The daughter of Jerusalem! 37:23 ‘Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised your voice And haughtily lifted up your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel! 37:24 ‘Through your servants you have reproached the Lord, And you have said, ‘With my many chariots I came up to the heights of the mountains, To the remotest parts of Lebanon; And I

cut down its tall cedars and its choice cypresses. And I will go to its highest peak, its thickest forest. 37:25 ‘I dug wells and drank waters, And with the sole of my feet I dried up All the rivers of Egypt.’ 37:26 ‘Have you not heard? Long ago I did it, From ancient times I planned it. Now I have brought it to pass, That you should turn fortified cities into ruinous heaps. 37:27 ‘Therefore their inhabitants were short of strength, They were dismayed and put to shame; They were as the vegetation of the field and as the green herb, As grass on the housetops is scorched before it is grown up. 37:28 ‘But I know your sitting down And your going out and your coming in And your raging against Me. 37:29 ‘Because of your raging against Me And because your arrogance has come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back by the way which you came. 37:30 ‘Then this shall be the sign for you: you will eat this year what grows of itself, in the second year what springs from the same, and in the third year sow, reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 37:31 ‘The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. 37:32 ‘For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” (NASB)

This section of Isaiah is speaking about Sennacherib king of Assyria attacking Jerusalem and Hezekiah asking the Lord to deliver him from his enemy. The one who blasphemed (Sennacherib) reproaches were uttered against Israel and against the Lord God in heaven. We know that according to the historical account in *2 Chronicles 32:1-22*, the Lord destroyed the mighty fighting men of Sennacherib’s army and he returned home where his sons killed him. Therefore, no matter what the circumstance may be, whether we need help by deliverance from our enemies, help in healing, help even on an exam or test, we are to seek the Lord, He is able to work in our lives for His glory.

The psalmist continues saying, **כל-זאת באתנו ולא שכחנו ולא-שקרנו בבריתך:** *44:17 All this has come upon us, but we have not forgotten You, And we have not dealt falsely with Your covenant. (NASB)* He says even in the midst of all these things, they have not forgotten the Lord and have not dealt falsely (**לא-שקרנו**) with God’s covenant *(בריתך)*, *44:17*. What does it mean to deal falsely with the covenant? The Hebrew word “Shakar” (**שקר**) means “lie, fib, untruth, falsity, falsehood, invention, to tell a tale,” would this indicate that someone is making something up about God’s covenant? Making up a falsehood, to lie, or to invent something about the covenant of God? When one breaks the covenant of God, is this the result of someone inventing a lie so as to circumvent the need to obey God’s commandment? When studying the topic of the covenant and breaking the covenant, there are a wide range of expressions that describe the breaking of the covenant. For example, in *Bereshit / Genesis 17:9-14* (Parashat Lech Lecha), we read that circumcising your children is equivalent to keeping God’s covenant, while he who is not circumcised has broken the covenant. In *Shemot / Exodus 19:5* (Parashat Beshalach) we read, **ה ועַתָּה אֶם-שְׁמֹעַתְּמָעוֹ** *listening, hearing the voice of the Lord* is synonymous to obeying and keeping His covenant which is the opposite of breaking His covenant by not listening to God’s voice. In *Shemot / Exodus 31:16* (Parashat Ki Tisa), we read that the Shabbat is a perpetual covenant (**טז וְשִׁמְרוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַשְׁבָּת לְעֹשֹׂת אֶת-הַשְׁבָּת לְדֽוֹרִים בְּרִית עֹלָם**: “and the sons of Israel are to keep the Shabbat, to do the Shabbat, an everlasting covenant for their generations”). *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:14-15* (Parashat Bechukotai, **יד וְאֶם-לֹא חָשַׁמְוּ לֵי וְלֹא תַּעֲשׂُו אֶת כָּל-הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֶלְهָה: טו וְאֶם-בְּחֻקֹּתִי חֲמָסָוּ**) states that if one does not listen to all God’s commandments and statutes and abhor or loathe His judgments (**מִשְׁפָטִי**), this is equivalent to breaking His covenant. In *Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:23* (Parashat Va’etchanan), we are told that manufacturing an idol is synonymous to forgetting and breaking God’s covenant. *Devarim / Deuteronomy 17:2* (Parashat Shoftim) speaks of the transgression of the covenant by the wicked and the ungodly who engage in idolatry. The Scriptures say that one can transgress the covenant by taking of the accursed thing (*Joshua 7*) or to serving other gods (*Joshua 23:16*). We also read in *2 Kings 18:12* that forsaking God’s covenant is synonymous to transgressing all that Moshe commanded.

The Lord states, on the other hand, that He will not forsake His covenant with His people. In addition to this, the Scriptures speak of Lord's covenant as being everlasting. In *Isaiah 24:5* we read, *24:5 The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant.* (NASB) Many passages of Scripture emphasize in one way or another that God's covenant is maintained by the Lord Himself, that it is everlasting. *Isaiah 24* speaks of both the inhabitants of the land transgressing and the everlasting covenant. How can an everlasting covenant be broken? The entire chapter of *Isaiah 24* speaks of the judgment of the world because of the sin of the world which is taken as a basis for the final judgment. So when David says that they did not deal falsely with the covenant of God, he appears to be specifically referencing the fact that they have not transgressed the Torah or changed the mitzvot (*המִצְוֹת*), statutes (*חוֹק*), and judgments (*מִשְׁפָט*) to suit their needs and therefore did not break the everlasting covenant of God.

The psalmist says they have not deviated from the way of God (44:18) and have not forgotten the name of their God (44:20). This appears to be consistent with the various examples from the Torah regarding keeping and breaking the covenant. David and his men did not deviate from the way of God and they did not forget the name of their God, they continually sought the Lord for His help. How do these things we are learning about the covenant and David apply to our lives today? David says that the Lord knows the secret things of the heart (44:21). He knows the intentions of the heart, whether we are honestly and truthfully seeking Him, or whether we are simply going about life as usual without a second thought about our lives. When we think about who we are in the Messiah Yeshua, we should be on the path of choosing “*intentional*” righteousness and justice in our daily lives. Intentional living is what it means to abide in the Messiah, this is what it is all about and it is by the power of His Spirit (the Holy Spirit) that enables us to do so. Our walk before our Father in Heaven in Yeshua the Messiah demands integrity. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of God's Throne (*Tehillim / Psalms 89:14*) and therefore our lives are to be characterized as such. We are to live in complete truth and innocence before God with regard to ourselves and others.

David says they are killed all day long for the Lord's sake (44:22). What is this “*dying all day long for the sake of God*” all about? The Apostolic Writings brings this into perspective when we read, for Christ's sake we face death daily (*Romans 8:36*). Paul says that we are to die daily (*1 Corinthians 15:31*), we should count it worthy to suffer for His name sake (*Acts 5:41, 9:16*), we also suffer with Him so that we may be glorified with Him (*Romans 8:17*). The apostle Paul also says that the power of the resurrection and having fellowship with his sufferings is how we know Him (Yeshua, *Philippians 3:10*). How do we receive or use the power of the resurrection? *James 5:10* states, “*As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord*” indicating that suffering and patience was a common outcome of obeying God. The apostle Peter says that suffering is not something to be ashamed of but to glorify God in the name of Yeshua (*1 Peter 4:16*). Yeshua said in *Matthew 5:11* “*Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.*” It is because of who we are and what we stand for that we are persecuted because of our faith in Yeshua and our Father in heaven. David said in *Tehillim / Psalms 44:22*, כִּי־עָלֵיךְ הָרְגָנוּ בְּלַהֲיוֹם נָחֲשָׂנוּ כַּצְאָן טְבַחָה: 44:22 *But for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.* (NASB) The word he used here is “*horegnu*” (*הָרְגָנוּ*) meaning “*we are killed, murdered, destroyed*” all day long (*כַּצְאָן*). Is suffering the same as being killed, murdered, and destroyed all the day long?

The rabbis take a different approach to suffering. Looking at the rabbinic literature, according to the Rabbis man is responsible for the conduct of others (see the *Rachmal*, *Rabbi Moses Chaim Luzzatto, Derech Hashem and Ma'amar halkkarim*, Feldheim Publishers, Jerusalem, New York, 1998, pg 312-315), and he is liable to punishment, if he is indifferent to the wrong that is being perpetrated about him. The greater the man the greater is his responsibility. They say that he may suffer for the sins of his family which is first reached by his influence; he may also suffer for the sins of the whole community if he could hope to find a “*willing ear*” among them, and he may even suffer for the sins of the whole world if his influence extend so far, and he forbear from exerting it for good. (*Talmud Bavli Sabbath 54a*) According to the Rabbis, the possibility is given that a righteous man may suffer with justice, though he himself has never committed any transgression. This is an interesting perspective since the rabbis appear to be speaking of taking the mes-

sage of God (repentance) to his family, the community, or even the world, in the hopes of finding a “willing ear” to listen. This suffering may be the result of persecution. Under another opinion, the rabbis consider suffering of the righteous as an atonement for the sins of their contemporaries: “*When there will be neither Tabernacle nor the Holy Temple,*” Moses is said to have asked God, “*what will become of Israel?*” Whereupon God answers, “*I will take from among them the righteous man whom I shall consider as pledged for them, and will forgive all their sins*”; *the death of the perfect man, or even his suffering being looked upon as an expiation for the shortcoming of his generation.* (*Midrash Exodus Rabbah Parashat 35*) This comes from the Torah principle of the sacrifices in general, where the innocent creature must suffer for the sins of another creature. This parallels the theme of the suffering Messiah (our Savior). With this idea of suffering, Rabbi Ishmael said, “*I am the atonement for the Jews,*” which means that he took upon him all their sins to suffer for them. (see *Mishnah Negaim*, 2:1, http://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Negaim.2.1, *Shulchan Aruch* 4) The point is that suffering for righteousness sake is a common biblical theme and is consistent with the teaching of the rabbis. When Paul and Peter speak of suffering for the Messiah (Christ) and His name sake, we are not suffering to atone for sin but rather for living righteous lives, for being a testimony of truth and righteousness before others. Like it states in the *Talmud Bavli Sabbath 54a*, suffering for family, community, or the world, their sin of not listening or hearing the word of the Lord becomes persecution and reviling. We therefore suffer and are persecuted, reviled, put to death, destroyed all the day long like David is saying in his Psalm for the sake of the Lord God Almighty, His truth, and the Messiah Yeshua, His Savior. We realize that we cannot make atonement for someone else, only one who is perfect may do so and that is what Yeshua the Messiah did, He lived a perfect life and made atonement for the sins of the world. Note how his influence was so great that he is capable of suffering for the entire world, a principle that is consistent with the teachings of the rabbis (*Talmud Bavli Sabbath 54a*).

David asks the Lord if He is asleep, to raise up and help (44:23-25). Based upon a later Psalm we know that our Father in heaven does not slumber or sleep.

Tehillim / Psalms 121:1-7

121:1 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From whence shall my help come? 121:2 My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. 121:3 He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. 121:4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep. 121:5 The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade on your right hand. 121:6 The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night. 121:7 The Lord will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. 121:8 The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever. (NASB)

David concludes his Psalm saying כז קַוְמָה עֹזֶרֶת הָלֵן וּפִידֵנו לְמַעַן חִסְדֶךָ :
44:26 *Rise up, be our help, And redeem us for the sake of Your lovingkindness (NASB)* asking the Lord to rise up, to help, and to redeem him for the sake of His grace (חִסְדֶךָ). It is by the grace of God and by His empowering (by His Spirit) that we are able to overcome this world and to take His message of truth to the world.

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 44* has 2 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1 and 2. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 44, Part 1 and 2.*

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 44, Part 1 and 2

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying “*For the leader; a Psalm of the sons of Korach. Maskil, O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what work You did in their days, in the times of old (Tehillim / Psalms 44:1-2).*”
- The Petihta (פתיחתא) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, He led them by the right hand of Moshe with His glorious arm to make Himself an everlasting name (Isaiah 63:12).*”
- The mashal (parable) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the Petihta, the rabbis go on to expand upon David’s words regarding how the Lord delivered Israel from Egypt.
- The Nimshal (expansion on the parable) expands upon the mashal, the rabbis speak of how Israel was unable to offer works of their own hands, how the Lord was delivering Israel for the purpose of glorifying His name, and then go on to discuss what His glory is like.
- The Concluding phrase says “*And of this the sons of Korach were to say, Lord, You have been favorable unto Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 85:2).*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying “*For our soul is bowed down to the dust (Tehillim / Psalms 44:26).*”
- The Petihta (פתיחתא) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*According to rabbi Isaac, the Holy One blessed be He, said to Abraham, I will make your seed as the dust of the earth (Bereshit / Genesis 13:16).*”
- The mashal (parable) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the Petihta, the rabbis go on to expand upon David’s words and the making of the seed of Abraham as the dust of the earth.
- The Nimshal (expansion on the parable) expands upon the mashal, the rabbis seek the Lord for redemption because of His Mercy’s sake.
- The Concluding phrase says “*The Holy One blessed be He, said to Israel, Make your good works blossom like the lily, and I will redeem you forthwith. And what follows at once is For Him who gives victory because of lilies (Shoshannim) (Tehillim / Psalms 45:1).*”

Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying “*For the leader; a Psalm of the sons of Korach. Maskil, O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what work You did in their days, in the times of old (Tehillim / Psalms 44:1-2).*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, He led them by the right hand of Moshe with His glorious arm to make Himself an everlasting name (Isaiah 63:12).*” The rabbis quote from Isaiah 63 which speaks of the Lord leading Israel by the right hand of Moshe and by God’s glorious arm.

Isaiah 63:8-16

63:8 *For He said, ‘Surely, they are My people, Sons who will not deal falsely.’ So He became their Savior. 63:9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. 63:10 But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them. 63:11 Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses. Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them, 63:12 Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, Who divided the waters before them to make*

for Himself an everlasting name, 63:13 Who led them through the depths? Like the horse in the wilderness, they did not stumble; 63:14 As the cattle which go down into the valley, The Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So You led Your people, To make for Yourself a glorious name. 63:15 Look down from heaven and see from Your holy and glorious habitation; Where are Your zeal and Your mighty deeds? The stirrings of Your heart and Your compassion are restrained toward me. 63:16 For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us And Israel does not recognize us. You, O Lord, are our Father, Our Redeemer from of old is Your name. (NASB)

The Lord led Israel by the right hand of Moshe, according to *Isaiah 63*, the angel of His presence saved them, and that He divided the waters of the red sea for the purpose of making an everlasting name (63:12) and Isaiah says the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest and led them. Isaiah reiterates that God is making Himself an everlasting name (63:14). The work that God did in the times of old (*Tehillim / Psalms 44:1-2*), according to the description in Isaiah, these are the things the Lord did on behalf of the people to deliver them out of Egypt; by divine order Moshe lifted up his rod, and stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea divided. However, so that the glory did not go to Moshe, the Scriptures also say “*the glorious arm of the Lord.*” The midrash continues saying the following:

From this you learn that when the children of Israel went forth from Egypt, they could not offer any works of their hands whereby they might be redeemed. And so, not because of the works of their fathers, and not because of their own works, was the sea rent before them, but only that God might make himself a name in the world. (Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 1)

*מכאן אתה למד שלא היה בידי ישראל כשייצאו מצרים מעשיהם שיגלו מהם, אף לא כמעשה אבותם,
ולא במעשיהם נקרא הם בפניהם, אלא לעשות לו שם בעולם*

The rabbis speak of the Lord delivering the people and that the people did not offer any works of their hands that would have earned them redemption. They say that it was not because of the work of our fathers, but for the sole purpose of making His name great in the world. This is a very important concept because it is related to the relevance of the Torah in our lives today. How do we define the word “*Torah*” today? What is the meaning of this important word? Depending upon what background you come from (*i.e. what Christian denomination*) the answer to that question may be slightly different. The definition of the word “*Torah*” is “*Instruction*,” but most modern Christians define this word as “*law*” with a negative connotation saying “*the law is dead*,” or “*it is a burden and not easy*,” or “*there is no joy in the law of Moses*,” or something along that mode of thinking. The ability to sum up the correct definition to the word “*Torah*” may not be as important as the ability to properly contextualize the Torah in our lives because of modern day thought process in the Christian universities and churches (tradition). For example, how many of us can say that the Torah is the primary source of “*instruction*” or “*teaching*” in our lives today? If the Torah lacks relevance to us, and we do not associate it with real time events, every day parts of our lives, there will be a gap in our understanding on the intended purpose of the Torah as compared to what is actually occurring in our lives. Modern thinking has the Torah being given to Israel so they could somehow earn their way (*by the works of their hands*) into heaven. According to the Midrash, the Lord delivered Israel from bondage, not based upon what they had done, but for the purpose of making His name great and for making an everlasting name. The Torah was given to Israel after having made His name great by the working of the miracles in being delivered from Egypt. The Lord delivered Israel, He separated them, set them apart, and sanctified them making them holy. The Torah command comes following these things, and by this reasoning, the Torah command is to be obeyed because the Lord first loved us, he set us apart, he sanctified us making us holy, and the Lord then gave us instructions on how to live a holy life. This process is hinted at in Parashat Kedoshim when the Lord said “*20:7 Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. 20:8 Keep my decrees*

ז וְהַקְדִּשֶּׁתֶם וְהַיִתֶם קָדוֹשׁ וְאַתֶּחָתָנָתֶךָם: כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיכֶם: ח וְשִׁמְרֵתֶם אֶת-חֲקֹתִי וְעַשְׂתֵּתֶם אֶתֶּתֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה מֶקְדֵּשֶׁכֶם: The Apostle Paul uses this same mode of reasoning to illustrate the Lord's deliverance in the Messiah in *1 Corinthians 10* saying the following:

1 Corinthians 10:1-12

10:1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 10:2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 10:3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 10:5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. 10:6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 10:7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.’ 10:8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 10:9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10:10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 10:11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. (NASB)

In *1 Corinthians 10*, Paul speaks of passing through the water, of spiritual food and drink, and of the spiritual rock whom he calls the Messiah, and goes on to speak of those who were disobedient, who were idolaters, who grumbled, who were bitten by serpents, etc. All of these things were written (in the Torah) for our instruction. Paul warns *10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. (NASB)* The instructions we receive from the Torah is given so we do not fall, but walk upright before the Lord who has redeemed us. The Torah was given “because of who we are in the Messiah” and not “in order to.”

The Midrash continues saying that Moshe spoke to Israel that it was not because of your works that you are redeemed.

When the children of Israel were redeemed from Egypt, Moshe said, not because of your works are you redeemed, that is, only that you may give the Holy One blessed be He, the glory of having His children declare His praise among the nations. Hence, it is said, O sing unto the Lord a new song, declare His glory among the nations (Tehillim / Psalms 96:1-3). And what is His glory? That His children declare His glory among the nations. Therefore, it is said, declare His glory among the nations; (Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 1)

כשנガלו ישראל מצרים אמר משה לא במעשיכם אתם נגאלין, אלא למען הספר באוני בך (שמות י ב), ליתן שבח להקב"ה שבנוו מספרים תחולתו בין האומות, וכן הוא אומר שירו לה' שיר חדש, ספרו בגויים כבודו (*תהלים צו א ג*), ומה כבודו, שבנוו מספרים כבודו בין האומות, לכך נאמר ספרו בגויים כבודו

The midrash states that the reason Israel did not earn their redemption was so that they could declare the glory of God among the nations. This brings us to the idea that Israel would lead the nations to the Lord God Almighty. According to the prophet Isaiah, Israel would be a “*Light to the Nations*” (אור לגוים) which may express the designation of God’s kingdom of priests (*Shemot / Exodus 19:6*) as a mentor for spiritual and moral guidance to the entire world. When we live righteously we bring the light of the Torah into the world. By being honest in business, no Lashon Hara (slanderous speech), and doing what is right, the basic principle is that one becomes a role model that others will aspire to become. The nations will see our ways, and see that they are good and will want to copy some of our traits. By being a light unto the nations, we

provide the flame to those around us, who then in turn become lights to spread as well. This brings us to the idea of **דגמה** “*dugma*” or “*leading by example*.” We are to lead by example and it was by the first example of our Father in heaven who delivered us, redeemed us, and saved us in His Messiah Yeshua. This brings us back to the topic that we obey the Torah “*because of*” and not “*in order to*.”

The Midrash continues saying the following:

Therefore, it is said, declare His glory among the nations; and so too the sons of Korach said, O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us. But did not the sons of Korach themselves go out of Egypt, as is said, the Sons of Korach, Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph (Shemot / Exodus 6:24)? Then why did they say, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us? Because they prophesied concerning present generations, who say to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the universe, You did wonders for our fathers, will You not do them for us? Thus, the next verse You did a deed in the days of old (Tehillim / Psalms 44:2) means that the present generations say, what a work did You perform in bringing them forth out of Egypt and dividing the sea for them. But You have not done similarly for us. As Scripture says, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us (Tehillim / Psalms 115:1). You did it for them, but not for us. What does it profit us what You did for our fathers? When will the profit be ours? When You will work a good sign for us, as is said, Work in my behalf a sign for good (Tehillim / Psalms 86:17). You did a great work for former generations in the days of Abraham. And what was the great work? The night itself contended against them (Bereshit / Genesis 14:15). You did a great work for Abraham's children also. You did show favor unto them, but You show no favor unto us; as Scripture says, Lord, You have been favorable unto Your land, show us Your mercy, O Lord, and grant us Your salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 85:2,8). (Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 1)

The rabbis consider the words of the Torah as prophetic in the sense that the Lord did these things for their fathers and so He will do likewise for each of us at a future time. The midrash reveals the profound connection between our faith in God’s love, in His covenant for us, and our tendency toward sin. Despair over oneself because of sin can lead to shame, and shame leads to shameful actions (*Mishley / Proverbs* 13:5, 23:7). A person who abandons hope in the Lord and His love becomes a prey to the spiritual forces in this world. If he no longer believes God can give him comfort, he will turn to the more horrible forms of immortality to soothe his sense of abandonment. These are things we need to watch and guard very carefully against by remaining faithful to the Lord no matter the circumstance. The midrash continues saying the following:

For when the children of Israel went forth out of Egypt, they entered into the land, not by their own might, and got possession of it, not by their own strength, but because You with Your hand did drive out the nations (Tehillim / Psalms 44:3). Should you say it was by their own works which were good, note that Scripture says, And I said unto their children in the wilderness, walk not in the statutes of your fathers, etc (Ezekiel 20:18), and also says, I said unto them, cast you away every man the detestable things of his eyes (Ezekiel 20:7). And lest you should say it was by their swords, note that Scripture says, for they did not get the land in possession by their own sword (Tehillim / Psalms 44:4), and concludes But by Your right hand, and Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, because You were favorable unto them, for God went before them by day. You were favorable unto them, but You are not favorable unto us. (Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 1)

The midrash reiterates the fact that the children of Israel did not enter the Promised Land by their own might because the Lord drove them out. It is interesting that the midrash states, **כ כי אמר במעשיכם שהם טובים**, “*הרי נאמר ואומר אל בניהם בדבר בחוקי אבותיכם אל תלכו וגוי*” (*ייחזקאל כ יח*)

own works which were good, note that Scripture says, *And I said unto their children in the wilderness, walk not in the statutes of your fathers, etc (Ezekiel 20:18).*" The rabbis make a comment about the works of the people which were good, and how they are not to follow after the statutes of their fathers which is paralleled to the idea that the children of Israel go forth out of Egypt on their own and enter into the Promised Land on their own. The concept the midrash appears to be bringing out is that we are to trust in the Lord, His ability to save us, we also have a part in obeying Him, but our obedience is the evidence that the Lord is working in our lives, in our hearts, it is not the other way around. Take for example what the Apostle Paul says to the Galatians in *Galatians 3:1-14*.

Galatians 3:1-14

3:1 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? 3:2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 3:4 Did you suffer so many things in vain if indeed it was in vain? 3:5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3:6 Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. 3:7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 3:8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying ‘All the nations will be blessed in you.’ 3:9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.’ 3:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘The righteous man shall live by faith.’ 3:12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, ‘He who practices them shall live by them.’ 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’ 3:14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (NASB)

Paul is telling the Galatians that the Holy Spirit was not given as a result of obeying the commandment. He also says that the working of miracles was not the result of obeying the commandment. These were accomplished by faith, seeking that Yeshua would send the Holy Spirit, and seeking our Father in heaven for healing. Our lives should be characterized by our faith which is followed by an obedient life. It is this midrashic and Torah principle that Paul is speaking about here in Galatians on the order of obedience and holiness and the place of Torah in our lives. He says *3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.’* (NASB) speaking of Maaseh HaTorah (the works of the Torah) and the curse. He goes on to say *3:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘The righteous man shall live by faith.’* (NASB) emphasizing the importance of living by faith. If we live with the hope of our obedience in observing the Torah, because of our weakness, and our inability to keep Torah perfectly 100% of the time, there is no hope and there is only the curse. On the other hand, Paul says *3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’ 3:14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* (NASB) This is important because we who live by faith in Yeshua who redeemed us, do not hold onto the Torah command for our salvation, we hold onto the Lord, and the Lord empowers us to live holy lives in obedience to His commands. So, in the end, all that we do, all of who we are, in everything, the Lord makes for Himself an everlasting name because He is the one through whom we seek for justice, mercy, and forgiveness; not by the work of our own hand, but by the arm of the Lord in our lives. What Paul is saying to the Galatians is very consistent with the Midrash and with the Torah. Paul says *3:12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, ‘He who practices them shall*

live by them.’ (NASB) This is the idea of performing a mitzvah so for a purpose of getting something. This is not an act of faith because it is based upon performance. The mitzvot should not be a means for an end in order to bend the Lord’s arm to do something for us. We have to know who we are in the Messiah, and then live accordingly. An example might be good to illustrate what Paul is trying to say.

Illustration

Around the world, there are laws that are put in place for driving upon the roads and highways for safety sake. On the highway, speed limits are imposed so that everyone drives at the same speed in the hopes of minimizing accidents. When driving down the road, if one decides to disobey the law and go faster than the speed limit, the police will pull you over and give you a citation. If you are caught enough times doing so, your drivers license may be taken and you will need to go before a court of law and a judge to plead your case. Now suppose all of this happens, and you are standing before the judge. Note that the law in itself is not bad; it is the penalty for the crime, the ruling, the judgment of guilt, that needs to be accounted for. All of a sudden, the judge rules and states that someone else has paid your fines and taken the responsibility for what you have done, your crimes are forgiven and you may leave. This is what Yeshua the Messiah did redeeming us from the “curse” of the law. The “curse” is the penalty for disobedience.

Based upon this illustration, it is important to notice how these laws are imposed upon everyone for the purpose of safety and order. Note that obeying the speed limit law does not cause one to “*have the right*” to drive down the road (*i.e. a parallel to Salvation*). Everyone is given that right who has a car and drivers license (*i.e. faith in Yeshua*). In order to be good citizens, and to be good to one another, we obey the speed limit laws, and this is expected of us for all who live in this country (*i.e. the Family of God*). The point is the speed limit laws are not given as a means for an end. They are given to keep us safe and so we can be good to one another. This is the way the Torah works in our lives. If one chooses to use the mitzvot as a means for an end, then this is outside of walking by faith in seeking the Lord. Note also that if one continues to disobey the speed limit laws, eventually enough will be enough and the person will be cast into jail or out of the land, and loose their rights to drive. This may be paralleled to the “*blessings and curses*” in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 30*. These blessings and curses are valid for us even today as believers in Yeshua the Messiah. “*If we do what is right, the blessing will come, and if we live lives that are filled with sin, what do you expect to happen?*”

Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 1 cites *Ezekiel 20:18*:

Ezekiel 20:8-21

20:8 ‘But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. 20:9 ‘But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made Myself known to them by bringing them out of the land of Egypt. 20:10 ‘So I took them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 20:11 ‘I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live. 20:12 ‘Also I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. 20:13 ‘But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not walk in My statutes and they rejected My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; and My sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them in the wilderness, to annihilate them. 20:14 ‘But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, before whose sight I had

brought them out. 20:15 ‘Also I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands, 20:16 because they rejected My ordinances, and as for My statutes, they did not walk in them; they even profaned My sabbaths, for their heart continually went after their idols. 20:17 ‘Yet My eye spared them rather than destroying them, and I did not cause their annihilation in the wilderness. 20:18 ‘I said to their children in the wilderness, ‘Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers or keep their ordinances or defile yourselves with their idols. 20:19 ‘I am the Lord your God; walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and observe them. 20:20 ‘Sanctify My sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.’ 20:21 ‘But the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, nor were they careful to observe My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; they profaned My sabbaths. So I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the wilderness. (NASB)

Ezekiel is speaking of Parashat Ki Tisa (*Shemot / Exodus 30:11-34:35*) when the people sinned against the Lord with the golden calf and the Lord wanted to destroy the people and create a new nation through Moshe (*Shemot / Exodus 32:10*). These Scriptures denote that faithlessness of man and the faithfulness of the Lord. It was for His name's sake that He saved Israel and delivered them to the Promised Land. It is also important to note how the Scriptures show God's zeal for His own glory in the statement "for His name's sake." According to the Scriptures, the Lord chose His people for His glory (*Ephesians 1*), He created us for His glory (*Isaiah 43:6-7*), He rescued Israel from Egypt for His glory (*Tehillim / Psalms 106:7-8*), He defeated the Egyptian army for His glory (*Shemot / Exodus 14:4, 17-18*), He gave Israel victory in Canaan for the glory of His name (*2 Samuel 7:23*), He did not cast away His people for the glory of His name (*1 Samuel 12:20-22*), and He restored Israel from exile for the glory of His name (*Ezekiel 36:22-23*). Yeshua the Messiah sought the glory of His father in all he did (*John 7:18*), He did good works for the glory of God (*Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 2:12*), He said that if we do not seek the glory of God, faith is not possible (*John 5:44*), and He endured suffering for the glory of God (*John 12:27-28*). The ultimate plan for the Lord is to fill all the earth with the knowledge of His glory (*Habakkuk 2:14*), and according to *Revelation 21:23*, the glory of God will replace the sun. It appears, according to the Scriptures, that all things come down to the glory of God and because of this, the Lord tells His people *20:18 ‘I said to their children in the wilderness, ‘Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers or keep their ordinances or defile yourselves with their idols. 20:19 ‘I am the Lord your God; walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and observe them.* The Scriptures go on to say to make holy the Sabbath day so that we might know that He is God and to walk in His statutes, ordinances, and commandments. Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 1 concludes saying "*God said, Indeed I will be favorable unto you also. And of this the sons of Korach were to say, Lord, You have been favorable unto Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob (Tehillim / Psalms 85:2).*" The midrash concludes with the faithfulness of the Lord to bring back the captivity of Jacob from exile and this is paralleled to sons of Korach, that wicked generation of people according to Parashat Korach. Because the Lord loved us, His faithfulness should set the example for our faithfulness to be reciprocated.

Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (*דיבור המתהיל*) saying "For our soul is bowed down to the dust (*Tehillim / Psalms 44:26*)."¹ The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says "According to rabbi Isaac, the Holy One blessed be He, said to Abraham, I will make your seed as the dust of the earth (*Bereshit / Genesis 13:16*)."² The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהילים פרק מד סימן ב</p> <p>ב כי שחה לעפר נפשנו. אמר ר' יצחק אמר הקב"ה לאברהם ושמתי את זרעך כעפר הארץ (בראשית יג יז), וכתיב קום התהלך בארץ [וגו' כי לך אהננה] (שם שם בראשית י"ג יז), לך כי שחה לעפר נפשנו, ומה כתיב בתיריה, קומה עוזרתה לנו, אם בנו מעשים עשה עמו, ואם לאו עשה עמו למען שמק, שנאמר ופדן למען חסוך. אמר ר' ברכיה אוי חמי מלכיך תא דאמתילא כעפרא, צפה לישועה, אמר הקב"ה לישראל הרטיכו מעשים כושוננה ומיד אני גואל אתכם, ומה כתיב בתיריה, למנצח על שושנים.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 2</p> <p>2. For our soul is bowed down to the dust (<i>Tehillim / Psalms 44:26</i>). According to rabbi Isaac, the Holy One blessed be He, said to Abraham, I will make your seed as the dust of the earth (<i>Bereshit / Genesis 13:16</i>); and He continued, Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for unto you will I give it (<i>Bereshit / Genesis 13:17</i>); therefore Scriptures, after saying Our soul is bowed down to the dust, continues with the words Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercy's sake, that is, If we have good works, redeem us, but if we do not have good works, redeem us for Your name's sake, as is said, redeem us for Your mercy's sake (<i>Tehillim / Psalms 44:27</i>). Rabbi Berechiah said, When the kingdom of Israel is so far fallen that it is become like dust, look, as from a watch tower, for deliverance. The Holy One blessed be He, said to Israel, Make your good works blossom like the lilly, and I will redeem you forthwith. And what follows at once is For Him who gives victory because of lilies (<i>Shoshannim</i>) (<i>Tehillim / Psalms 45:1</i>).</p>
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Rabbi Isaac makes a parallel between the Lord telling Abraham that He will make his seed as the dust of the earth verses the one whose soul is bowed down to the dust because of sorrow. The midrash quotes from *Tehillim / Psalms 44:23 Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever. 44:24 Why do You hide Your face And forget our affliction and our oppression? 44:25 For our soul has sunk down into the dust; Our body cleaves to the earth. 44:26 Rise up, be our help, And redeem us for the sake of Your lovingkindness.* (NASB) The Psalmist seeks the Lord to rise up and help and redeem the people for the sake of His grace (lovingkindness). Midrash Tehillim 44, Part 2 concludes saying “*The Holy One blessed be He, said to Israel, Make your good works blossom like the lilly, and I will redeem you forthwith. And what follows at once is For Him who gives victory because of lilies (Shoshannim)* (*Tehillim / Psalms 45:1*).” Based upon the concluding phrase, the rabbis appear to be saying that one needs to do works of righteousness in order for the Lord to redeem them. Is the midrash promoting a work’s based faith and is this going contrary to all that we have been studying above? Is that what the rabbis are trying to say here? Studying the Scriptures we are taught the basic principle in both the Torah and in the Apostolic Writings, that “*if we do what is right, we will be blessed, and if we live a life of sin, bad things will happen.*” If we consider what the Scriptures say regarding our faith in Yeshua the Messiah, does faith in Yeshua only bring us blessing even if we are living a life filled with sin? The basic concept that we get out of the Psalms and from the Midrashim is that we are to seek the glory of God and His righteousness, He (the Lord and Yeshua the Messiah) set for us the example to live by and so we are to do likewise. If we are living unrepentant sinful lives, can we call upon the Lord and expect Him to redeem, deliver, or save us from our enemies? Will he even hear our prayers except that of repentance? These are very important questions in light of what the Scriptures say regarding faith and seeking the Lord.

When we think upon the word “*faith*” in the Scriptures, a more appropriate word to use is the word “*trust*” which brings with it the concept of both “*belief and action*.” The reason is if we do not trust in the Lord we would not go forth in action to serve Him. This is the Jewish view (concept, understanding) of “*faith*” which is consistent with what the Apostle Paul wrote in his epistles and letters. For example, the Jewish view of faith is that faith is active since faith includes the works of following Torah. The foundational statement of faith in Judaism is the “*Shema*,” from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4*. The word “*Shema*” (שְׁמָעָה) translated as “*Hear*” (as in “*Hear O Israel ...*”) means to listen and respond obediently. Faith and obedience are woven together. This is clearly reflected in the words of Yeshua, Paul and James. Walking in God’s Torah is a sign of having a mature and established faith, as it is described in *Shemot / Exodus 16:4, Vayikra / Leviticus 18:3-4, Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:9, Joshua 22:5, Jeremiah 44:23, Ezekiel 5:6-7, Dan-*

iel 9:10, and Micah 4:2. We are told according to the Apostle James in *James 1:23-25* to look in the perfect law (Torah) of liberty to make sure we are living correctly before God. The Apostle Paul says in *Romans 7:12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (NASB)* In previous Psalms studies, we have examined how the Tanach and the Rabbinic literature states the Torah applies also for gentiles who are following and seeking the Lord God and who were living in the Land. (see *Shemot / Exodus 12:49, Vayikra / Leviticus 19:33-34, 24:22, Bamidbar / Numbers 9:14, 15:15-16, 29*) This is consistent with the understanding that the new gentile believers will continue learning the Torah as they gather and attend synagogue (e.g. *Acts 15*). *Ephesians 2:10-12* speaks of the gentiles, who come to faith, they were not part of the commonwealth and covenant of Israel. This verse implies that these gentiles now do have a relationship to this covenant, which is based upon the Torah in the Messiah, which includes both knowing and doing it. Both Paul and James attest to this when they wrote the following:

Romans 2:13

2:13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. (NASB)

James 1:22

1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. (NASB)

The concept of “*obedience*” to the faith is spoken of in *Acts 6:7-7:1*. In the book of the Acts we read that the word of God continued to spread, and many disciples continued to be made in Jerusalem, and many of the priests were becoming “*obedient to the faith*.” According to *Acts 6:7*, Luke writes that many were coming to faith and becoming “*obedient*” (*shomer, שָׁמֵר*) . According to the Torah, as we discussed a moment ago, (see also *Parashat Ki Tavo on Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:1*) obedience is the act of “*keeping*,” “*listening*,” “*doing*,” and “*obeying*” the commands of God. In Jewish thought, the mitzvot (commandments) are not considered burdensome but are considered opportunities to express gratitude to God for the gift of life. The one who observes or keeps the commandment of the Lord guards his own life, according to Solomon that is expressed in the Hebrew phrase “*shomer mitzvah, shomer nafsho,*” (*Mishley / Proverbs 19:16*), “*he who keeps the commandment, keeps/preserves his life.*” The point of Midrash Tehillim 44 is that God is faithful and He keeps His promises and the covenant that He swore to our fathers. We on the other hand are not so faithful and at times we are very unfaithful. The Lord is calling us to repentance, to turn from our wicked ways (e.g. *the statutes of our fathers*) and to turn to His ways to begin walking in righteousness and holiness because we are called to bring glory to His name. Isn’t that a wonderful reason to obey His commands? (see *John 14:15, 23*). Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You Lord for David’s words and for the words of the rabbis that help us to understand the Bible, our lives and who we are in Yeshua the Messiah. We glorify You and give You Praise because You have always kept Your promises! Help us to be people of faith and that our lives would reflect our faithfulness to You. We ask that You would empower us by Your Spirit to walk in Your ways and to follow Yeshua the Messiah and to produce good fruit. Help us to walk and abide in Christ as the Scriptures say we are supposed to do (*John 14:15-17*). Thank You for helping us to realize that observing the Torah is not a form of salvation by our own hands but the way in which we express our love for You. Thank you for helping us

to grow in our faith and know who we are in the Messiah Yeshua. Help us to apply these truths to our lives each day. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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הַלְלוּיָה לְאֲדֹנֵנוּ מֶרְכָּזֵנוּ וְרַבִּינוּ יְשׁוּעָה מֶלֶךְ הַמֶּשְׁיחָה לְעוֹלָם וְעַד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

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