

Triennial Torah Study – 6th Year 28/03/2015



sightedmoon.com /triennial-torah-study-6-year-04042015 /

By Joseph F. Dumond

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

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

Ex 35	Jer 3-4	Prov 7	Acts 5
--------------	----------------	---------------	---------------

No Fire on the Sabbath? (Exodus 35)

Chapter 35 begins with instruction about the weekly Sabbath. God said, "You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day" (verse 3). A long-held Jewish interpretation is that it is wrong to start *any* fire on the Sabbath, such as a fire in a fireplace or just lighting a match. On the basis of this verse, some even argue that it is not permissible on the Sabbath to light a stove, turn on an oven or use any electrical device with a heating element, such as a hairdryer. Others go so far as to say that we can't start a car or even turn on a light switch on God's weekly Holy Day.

Yet the context here is important. There certainly may be a need to limit personal fire usage— as major fire maintenance can certainly become a violation of the Sabbath if a great deal of obvious work is involved (for example, moving logs and chopping them up or a major gathering of sticks, such as that in Numbers 15:32). However, this passage, occurring at the beginning of Moses' relaying of the instructions for building the tabernacle, is most likely referring to tabernacle construction. God, it appears, was telling them to not kindle *industrial* fires on the Sabbath—to melt silver or gold or forge other metals for the construction of the tabernacle. No doubt some minor smelting was done in individual homes, which was also forbidden by this proscription. Instead, all industry was to cease, even the special work of building the tabernacle, so people could give full attention to resting and worshiping God on the Sabbath as He commanded.

God has always wanted His weekly Sabbath day to be a blessing and a delight to us (Isaiah 58:13-14), not an intolerable burden as some would later make it out to be through their focus on overly restrictive rules. However, there are certainly general rules we should follow. For instance, as a general rule we must not be conducting our regular business on the Sabbath or using the Sabbath as a time to plan our regular work. Moreover, the Sabbath is not a time for sports and personal hobbies. Instead, the Sabbath is a time to focus on our relationship with God.

To learn more about God's Sabbath, [download](#) or [send for our free booklet](#) *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*.

“Return, O Backsliding Children...for I Am Married to You” (Jeremiah 34:4)

The law stated in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 that, after a divorce where one spouse then marries another, and the second marriage is terminated by divorce or death, remarriage to the original spouse is forbidden. This is comparable to Israel's situation—but not exactly the same since Israel did not actually marry other gods (indeed, the false gods Israel has pursued don't really exist). While God looked upon the idolatry of Israel and Judah as “play[ing] the harlot with many lovers,” He says He will yet take her back if she will but repent (Jeremiah 3:1).

But that is not immediately forthcoming. God remarks, “You have had a harlot's forehead [never blushing]; you refuse to be ashamed” (verse 3; compare 6:15). Continually acting against one's conscience leads to a *seared* conscience (see 1 Timothy 4:2)—repeated immorality leads to amorality. Logically, one would think that Judah would have learned some fear of God when she saw God punish the house of Israel with divorce, destruction, and captivity. But no, “treacherous Judah” sank lower than Israel! Any appearance of returning to God was done “in pretense” (3:8-11).

It is interesting to note that though God says He issued a certificate of divorce to Israel (verse 8), He still claims to be married to the Israelites in verse 14. This is because, though God put away Israel as a whole, He maintained His covenant relationship with a *remnant* of Israel—in Jeremiah's day meaning the faithful of Judah. Yet God would also consider *individuals* of the house of Israel as part of this remnant if they would repent and return to Him (same verse). In verse 12 Jeremiah is told to proclaim the message to the north. This may well have been directed to those Israelites (the Scythians) who came back into the land of the northern kingdom at this time. They are said to be “more righteous” than Judah—which makes sense when we realize that many of these Israelites (perhaps humbled from their captivity) were soon going to help Josiah purge the land of idolatry and observe his great Passover.

Yet, as explained in the highlights for chapter 2, the message was meant for *all* the families of Israel—meaning this call to repentance is likely intended primarily for the end time. In the last days, much of end-time Israel is still to be found mainly to the north of Judea—northwest that is—prior to and during their final captivity. For those physical Israelites who repent, God will take them as individuals and join them to the faithful remnant of Israel—the remnant according to grace, meaning the Assembly of God (see Romans 11:5). Yet also intended here is the return from captivity of those of the physical remnant of Israel to God at the time of Messiah's return—when, according to this and many other prophecies, they too collectively repent and become spiritual Israelites according to grace.

Israel and Judah will finally and truly return to God “in those days,” at which time the two houses will be rejoined (verse 18). Notice that Israel and Judah will “come *together* out of the land of the north” (same verse). This never happened in ancient times following the Assyrian captivity of Israel or the Babylonian captivity of Judah. It is clearly a prophecy of the end time.

Then the actual presence of Yeshua Messiah and the throne of the Lord will make the glory of Israel's history—when the Ark of the Covenant was merely a type of that throne—unimportant and unmemorable by comparison (verses 16-17). Incidentally, some have speculated that the fact of the ark not being mentioned anymore after Messiah's return is an indication that it will have had prominent mention *just prior* to His return—that it may yet be found and play some part in end-time events if it was not destroyed in ancient times (see highlights on Isaiah

17-18). Of course, even an event as stunning and incredible as finding the Ark of the Covenant would be paled into utter insignificance by the return of Yeshua Messiah in power and glory to rule all nations. At last, Israel and the world will have “shepherds according to My heart,” who will “feed the Israelites with knowledge and understanding” (verse 15). This likely had a forerunner in Jeremiah’s day—meaning Jeremiah, Zephaniah, other contemporary prophets, faithful priests and the faithful king Josiah. They provided spiritual leadership to the Israelites returning back then. Today the shepherds are God’s faithful ministers. And in the coming reign of Messiah, which is apparently the predominant reference, the shepherds will be Messiah, the glorified saints and righteous human leaders.

All Israel will then submit to God and revere Him as Father, no longer turning away from Him (verse 19). The nation will no longer respond in a mere pretense of repentance—for the return to God will be genuine (verses 22-25).

Jeremiah 4, which continues on from the end of chapter 3, begins with a play on words. God tells Israel, “If you will return [from captivity to their homeland]...return to Me [that is, in a spiritual sense—meaning repentance]” (4:1). In verse 3, the message is directed to the people of Judah—perhaps both to those of Jeremiah’s day and to people far in the future. As for God’s instruction to break up the fallow ground and not sowing among thorns, it should be noted that the reference is to “unused soil, not a regularly plowed field. Israel [including Judah] needed a new field in which to sow its seed of faithfulness, a radical departure from its ways of sin and idolatry” (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 3).

In verse 4, we see that the main purpose of circumcision is to illustrate the need for mankind to remove any hardness of heart and all barriers separating us from God. This repeats what God told the Israelites just before He first brought them in to the Promised Land (see Deuteronomy 10:16). If the people refuse to heed, the consequences will be severe.

“The Sound of the Trumpet” (Jeremiah 4:5-31)

Verse 5 of chapter 4 begins a prophecy that continues to the end of chapter 6. It is addressed here at the outset to Judah and Jerusalem. This undoubtedly referred to the Jews of Jeremiah’s day, but could also refer to future inhabitants of the land. Moreover, reference is later made to the recipients of the message being the “house of Israel” or “house of Jacob” as *well as* Judah (see 5:15, 19). Israel had been taken into captivity long before Jeremiah wrote, so that at least would seem to look to the future.

Still, the message was clearly intended for Jeremiah’s fellow countrymen. Tragically, the people do not yet heed God’s call to repentance (see 4:4). They are therefore instructed to “blow the trumpet” (verse 5), the *shofar* or ram’s horn, an “alarm of war” (verse 19)—a symbol repeated throughout Scripture. For God will bring “disaster from the north.” As explained in the highlights for chapter 1, this was the course of invasion followed by *ancient* Babylon and that will yet be followed by *end-time* Babylon.

The warning is to be raised from Dan to Ephraim (verse 15). These areas were in the northernmost and southernmost parts of the ancient northern kingdom and would have seen a northern threat coming against Judah.

God warns of “watchers” (verse 16), which could indicate advanced scouts of a coming army.

However, the term may also be translated “besiegers” (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown’s Commentary*, note on verse 16).

All this was rather unsettling to Jeremiah. He was “overwhelmed at what God was about to bring upon Jerusalem. This passage indicates the deep inner struggle Jeremiah faced in his proclamation of the divine message. Jeremiah challenged God’s dealings with His people, claiming that God had *deceived* the people with a message of peace” (note on Jeremiah 4:10). Remember that in chapter 3 God had just told Jeremiah to convey a message of Israel’s repentance and return under the reign of the Messiah. *Now* here he was delivering an ominous message of *doom*—to people he deeply cared about. God well understood Jeremiah’s compassion—and was no doubt merciful to him in his anguished remarks.

Verse 18 declares that the people have brought this on themselves. Just as in today’s world, God said the people are “experts at doing what is evil, but failures at doing what is good” (verse 22, Today’s English Version).

The prophet then sees in vision a destroyed land—employing the same language used in Scripture of the chaotic, desolate planet Earth before man’s creation (verse 23; see Genesis 1:2). It is now the result of the destruction God will bring because of the people’s sins (see verse 26). But thankfully, the land will not be *utterly* destroyed and not everyone will die (verse 27; 5:18). Yet the consequences will be severe—and, as the people are set in their sinful ways, the punishment is now inevitable (4:28).

If Zion tries to appease, distract and seduce her enemies—like a harlot with seductive clothes and makeup, offering favors—it won’t work (verse 30). Instead, she will soon experience unavoidable pain, as a woman in labor with her first child. And in the end, her lovers will become her murderers (verse 31).

Proverbs Chapter 7 (<http://www.Messiahnotes.org/commentary>)

Invitations to learn wisdom. (1-5)

The arts of seducers, with warnings against them. (6-27)

We must lay up God’s commandments safely. Not only, Keep them, and you shall live; but, Keep them as those that cannot live without them. Those that blame strict and careful walking as needless and too precise, consider not that the law is to be kept as the apple of the eye; indeed the law in the heart is the eye of the soul. Let the word of God dwell in us, and so be written where it will be always at hand to be read. Thus we shall be kept from the fatal effects of our own passions, and the snares of Satan. Let God’s word confirm our dread of sin, and resolutions against it.

Commentary on Proverbs 7:6-27

Here is an affecting example of the danger of youthful lusts. It is a history or a parable of the most instructive kind. Will any one dare to venture on temptations that lead to impurity, after Solomon has set before his eyes in so lively and plain a manner, the danger of even going near them? Then is he as the man who would dance on the edge of a lofty rock, when he has just seen another fall headlong from the same place. The misery of self-ruined sinners began in disregard to God’s blessed commands. We ought daily to pray that we may be kept from running into temptation, else we invite the enemies of our souls to spread snares for us. Ever avoid the

neighbourhood of vice. Beware of sins which are said to be pleasant sins. They are the more dangerous, because they most easily gain the heart, and close it against repentance. Do nothing till thou hast well considered the end of it. Were a man to live as long as Methuselah, and to spend all his days in the highest delights sin can offer, one hour of the anguish and tribulation that must follow, would far outweigh them.

Acts Chapter 5 (<http://www.Messiahnotes.org/commentary>)

The death of Ananias and Sapphira. (1-11) The power which accompanied the preaching of the gospel. (12-16) The apostles imprisoned, but set free by an angel. (17-25) The apostles testify to Messiah before the council. (26-33) The advice of Gamaliel, The council let the apostles go. (34-42)

The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was, that they were ambitious of being thought eminent disciples, when they were not true disciples. Hypocrites may deny themselves, may forego their worldly advantage in one instance, with a prospect of finding their account in something else. They were covetous of the wealth of the world, and distrustful of God and his providence.

They thought they might serve both God and mammon. They thought to deceive the apostles. The Spirit of God in Peter discerned the principle of unbelief reigning in the heart of Ananias. But whatever Satan might suggest, he could not have filled the heart of Ananias with this wickedness had he not been consenting. The falsehood was an attempt to deceive the Spirit of truth, who so manifestly spoke and acted by the apostles. The crime of Ananias was not his retaining part of the price of the land; he might have kept it all, had he pleased; but his endeavouring to impose upon the apostles with an awful lie, from a desire to make a vain show, joined with covetousness. But if we think to put a cheat upon God, we shall put a fatal cheat upon our own souls. How sad to see those relations who should quicken one another to that which is good, hardening one another in that which is evil! And this punishment was in reality mercy to vast numbers. It would cause strict self-examination, prayer, and dread of hypocrisy, covetousness, and vain-glory, and it should still do so. It would prevent the increase of false professors. Let us learn hence how hateful falsehood is to the God of truth, and not only shun a direct lie, but all advantages from the use of doubtful expressions, and double meaning in our speech.

The separation of hypocrites by distinguishing judgments, should make the sincere cleave closer to each other and to the gospel ministry. Whatever tends to the purity and reputation of the Assembly/Community, promotes its enlargement; but that power alone which wrought such miracles by the apostles, can rescue sinners from the power of sin and Satan, and add believers to His worshippers. Messiah will work by all his faithful servants; and every one who applies to him shall be healed.

There is no prison so dark, so strong, but God can visit his people in it, and, if he pleases, fetch them out. Recoveries from sickness, releases out of trouble, are granted, not that we may enjoy the comforts of life, but that God may be honoured with the services of our life. It is not for the preachers of the gospel to retire into corners, as long as they can have any opportunity of preaching in the great congregation. They must preach to the lowest, whose souls are as precious to Messiah as the souls of the greatest. Speak to all, for all are concerned. Speak as those who resolve to stand to it, to live and die by it. Speak all the words of this heavenly, divine life, in comparison with which the present earthly life does not deserve the name. These words of life,

which the Set Apart Spirit puts into your mouth. The words of the gospel are the words of life; words whereby we may be saved. How wretched are those who are vexed at the success of the gospel! They cannot but see that the word and power of the Almighty are against them; and they tremble for the consequences, yet they will go on.

Many will do an evil thing with daring, yet cannot bear to hear of it afterward, or to have it charged upon them. We cannot expect to be redeemed and healed by Messiah, unless we give up ourselves to be ruled by him. Faith takes the Saviour in all his offices, who came, not to save us in our sins, but to save us from our sins. Had Messiah been exalted to give dominion to Israel, the chief priests would have welcomed him. But repentance and remission of sins are blessings they neither valued nor saw their need of; therefore they, by no means, admitted his doctrine. Wherever repentance is wrought, remission is granted without fail. None are freed from the guilt and punishment of sin, but those who are freed from the power and dominion of sin; who are turned from it, and turned against it. Messiah gives repentance, by his Spirit working with the word, to awaken the conscience, to work sorrow for sin, and an effectual change in the heart and life. The giving of the Spirit of Truth, is plain evidence that it is the will of God that Messiah should be obeyed. And He will surely destroy those who will not have Him to reign over them.

The Almighty still has all hearts in his hands, and sometimes directs the prudence of the worldly wise, so as to restrain the persecutors. Common sense tells us to be cautious, while experience and observation show that the success of frauds in matters of religion has been very short. Reproach for Messiah is true preferment, as it makes us conformable to his pattern, and serviceable to his interest. They rejoiced in it. If we suffer ill for doing well, provided we suffer it well, and as we should, we ought to rejoice in that grace which enabled us so to do. The apostles did not preach themselves, but Messiah. This was the preaching that most offended the priests. But it ought to be the constant business of gospel ministers to preach Messiah: Messiah, and him crucified; Messiah, and him glorified; nothing beside this, but what has reference to it. And whatever is our station or rank in life, we should seek to make Him known, and to glorify his name.