

Triennial Torah Study – 2nd Year 10/09/2011

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Ex 32	Isaiah 63-65	Prov 3	Acts 2
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Ex 32

With Moses gone for almost a month and a half, the people quickly became disoriented and asked Aaron to give them another god-symbol to lead them. Interestingly, they still seem to have viewed this idol as a representation of the Eternal (verses 4-5). God, however, saw it otherwise, saying that they “worshiped it and sacrificed to it” (verse 8) rather than “to Me.” With all God had done for them, it is amazing how quickly they forgot His commands—and dismissed Moses as if he were a fraud. The apostle Paul even warns us to learn from what they did and not do the same thing (1 Corinthians 10).

Another incredible aspect of this whole affair is Aaron’s part. It seems almost stupefying that he would consent to it—and seemingly so readily. When the people approached Aaron with the suggestion to make an idol that they could worship, it was he who told them to give him their golden earrings. It was then Aaron who formed and shaped the idolatrous object. Perhaps Aaron himself had begun to wonder what had become of Moses. It is likely that he viewed the people’s “request” as an implicit threat—which it probably was—that if he didn’t go along with what they wanted, the consequences would be dire. Aaron likely feared for his own safety and that of his family if he opposed the movement underway. He should have shown more stamina and trust in God, but he went along. To top it off, rather than face up to his responsibility, he told Moses a ridiculous lie (verse 24). In any case, there was certainly a failure of leadership at a high level. This too should be a lesson for all of us. No matter who we are, no matter how much we have seen God do in our lives, we can be led astray if we aren’t constantly on guard spiritually.

Concerning the Israelites’ chosen object of idolatry, they were well acquainted with Egyptian calf worship, detailed in the discussion of the plagues. It’s not surprising that they would choose a calf as a symbol of their worship, because it was common in the Egyptian culture in which they had been immersed for many generations. Centuries later the Israelite king Jereboam would fashion similar idols (1 Kings 12:28) after being banished to Egypt (11:40), and this idolatrous worship would remain prevalent throughout most of the time of the northern kingdom of Israel. Among the Canaanites, the bull was also seen as an embodiment of Baal. Perhaps the widespread worship of oxen in paganism, as in India today, has been directly inspired by Satan, as his main face—him being a cherub—is that of an ox (compare Ezekiel 10:14; 1:7-10).

“The bull was revered throughout the ancient Near East as the symbol of fertility” (Jonathan Kirsch, *Moses: A Life*, 1998, p. 264). It may have been the fertility connection involved in this idolatrous worship that stimulated some of the Israelites to become involved in sexual “play” (verse 6). The Expositor’s Bible Commentary has this to say about verse 6: “The verb sahaq signifies drunken, immoral orgies and sexual play (‘conjugal caresses’)” (1990, Vol. 2, p. 478). In reaching this level, the unseemly episode had probably gone way beyond what Aaron had agreed to or perhaps even imagined. We read earlier that the apostle Paul compared sin to leavening (1 Corinthians 5:8). He even used an example to show that sin, like leaven, can spread to affect more and more people unless it is stopped in its tracks (verses 1-7). The incident with the golden calf seems like a classical case of allowing some leaven in and, as is the proclivity of leaven, before long the leaven had permeated insidiously. We need not necessarily think that the entire congregation of Israel had degenerated into extensive sexual immorality, but it was widespread enough that God told Moses, “Your people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves” (verse 7)—effectively disassociating Himself from the Israelites.

Though God forgave Israel’s sin—including that of Aaron—they paid a costly fee for such gross violation of God’s law. Moses told the Levites to take their swords and begin to slay the people. About 3,000 were killed (verse 28). Those who were slain may have been among the ringleaders or those who pushed things to an extreme once the partying started. Verse 35 states that God plagued the people because of the golden calf incident. This may be a reference to the slaying of the 3,000, or it may refer to an additional, unspecified punishment. The lesson that rings loud and clear from all this is that sin exacts a penalty. There is no exception to this principle.

On the front cover of the Magazine *Der Spiegel* when Europe began to come together they depicted a picture of a woman riding on a Bull. This comes from the legend of Europa. Europa was the beautiful daughter of the Phoenician king of Tyre, Agenor. Zeus, the King of the gods according to Greek mythology, saw Europa as she was gathering flowers by the sea and immediately fell in love with her. Overwhelmed by love for Europa, Zeus transformed himself into the form of a magnificent white bull and appeared in the sea shore where Europa was playing with her maidens. The great bull walked gently over to where Europa stood and knelt at her feet. The appearance and movements of the bull were so gentle that Europa spread flowers about his neck and dared to climb upon his back overcoming her natural fear of the great animal.

But suddenly, the bull rushed over the sea abducting Europa. Only then the bull revealed its true identity and took Europa to the Mediterranean island of Crete. There, Zeus cast off the shape of the white bull, and back into his human form, made Europa his lover beneath a simple cypress tree. Europa became the first queen of Crete and had by Zeus three sons: King Minos of Crete, King Rhadamanthus of the Cyclades Islands, and, according to some legends, Prince Sarpedon of Lycia. She later married the king of Crete, who adopted her sons, and she was worshiped under the name of Hellotis in Crete, where the festival Hellotia was held in her honour. At last, Zeus reproduced the shape of the white bull, used by Zeus to seduce Europa, in the stars. Even today we can recognize its shape in the constellation Taurus.

Read more: Europa, the Phoenician Princess <http://phoenicia.org/europa.html#ixzz1WuLZiutH>

You can see many images of this Woman and beast at http://www.google.ca/search?q=europa+and+the+bull&hl=en&rlz=1T4ADFA_enCA413CA415&prmd=ivns&tbn=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=mlViTuOFNYr10qGayoWXCg&ved=0CDAQsAQ&biw=1260&bih=544

We know from revelation that this woman this great apostate church rides a Beast which is symbolic of the government Nimrod began way back in the days shortly after the flood. It is that system that the Bull represents and it that Bull that was the symbol of Nimrod rebelliousness that Egypt incorporated as well as Babylon and now Europe at this the end of this age.

Rev 17:3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast covered with names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Isaiah 63-65

God is pictured as returning from battle with Edom, Bozrah (See last chapter of The Prophecies of Abraham concerning Bozrah) being the chief city of Edom. This ties in with many prophecies of Edom's destruction at Christ's return. Indeed, Obadiah states that there will be no Edomites left alive during Christ's reign (Obadiah 18). Yet, in context here, Edom seems to be used as a general representation of Israel's enemies since God mentions treading down the "peoples" (verses 3, 6). As was explained in the comments on Obadiah and Isaiah 34, there may be a connection between Edom and the future Babylon, the preeminent national foe of the end time—that is, a significant portion of Edomites may end up being part of this system.

Christ's garments are stained with blood because of the vengeance He has taken on the enemies of His people, something He has had to take care of by Himself since no one was found to help Him (verses 1-6). The winepress imagery—squeezing out the "blood" of grapes—as a figure of judgment can also be found in Joel 3:13, Lamentations 1:15, Revelation 14:17-20 and 19:15.

Then, in a moving description, Isaiah tells of the loving-kindness (Hebrew *hesed*, "covenant faithfulness" or "steadfast love") God has for His people, in spite of their depraved behavior (Isaiah 63:7). God is quoted as saying: "Surely they are My people, children who will not lie" (verse 8; see Exodus 24:7). He is pictured as trusting their honesty in remaining faithful to Him as they had promised, and He helped them in all their trials. Their rebellion grieved Him tremendously, yet God still remembers the old days fondly. And Isaiah reminds God of this in His appeal for mercy and help.

God putting "His Holy Spirit within them" in Isaiah 63:11 can also be translated as God putting "his Holy Spirit within him" (KJV and J.P. Green's Literal Translation)—that is, within Moses, who is mentioned earlier in the same verse. Indeed, this must be the case since God's Spirit was not given to the Israelites as a whole.

Israel's prayer for mercy and deliverance is continued in chapter 64. Verse 4 is quoted by Paul in describing the ignorance of those who crucified Jesus, not understanding the wisdom of God, and explaining that we, however, can understand through His Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:6-11).

In Isaiah 64:6, the people confess that their own righteousnesses—that is, their attempts to obey Him without His spiritual help and their living by what they themselves consider righteousness as opposed to true righteousness—are as worthless and repulsive as "filthy rags." Says the JFB Commentary, "lit[erally] a 'menstruous rag'" (note on verse 6). Or The Nelson Study Bible: "Garments stained during menstruation...making a woman unclean (Lev.

15:19-24; Ezek. 36:17)" (note on verse 6). Paul describes Israel's dilemma in this regard in Romans 10:1-3—and explains in the following verses that the answer they need is Christ for righteousness. That is, they need the justification that comes through His sacrifice and the ongoing obedience that comes from His living in people—as He transforms them as a potter does clay (Isaiah 64:8). (See my article on The Prophecy of Niddah at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/?page_id=706)

Isaiah is able to see, through the visions God has given him, the eventual destruction of Jerusalem, including the temple: "Our holy and beautiful temple, where our fathers praised You, is burned up with fire" (Isaiah 64:11). It was something very distressing to him, and added to his emotional turmoil.

Verse 1 begins God's answer to Isaiah's entreaty that concludes with 64:12. The Israelites seek God but don't find Him because of their rebellion against Him. Instead, God is found by others. The first two verses

of chapter 65 contain some phrases quoted by Paul in his discourse regarding the future restoration of Israel (Romans 10:20, 21). Verse 1, where God mentions “a nation that was not called by My name” is referring, according to the apostle Paul, to gentile converts grafted into Israel spiritually that God uses to provoke the natural Israelites to jealousy (Romans 10:19; see Romans 11).

The verses that follow in Isaiah 65 then refer to the rebellious people of Israel, who would not respond to God’s appeal and outstretched hands. Some of the rebellious actions of the people are described—practices of those who have forsaken God’s true religion. While some of the actions mentioned may have applied literally in Isaiah’s day, it is likely that the sins here have some application for our time. In verse 3, sacrificing in gardens could simply refer to worshiping in pagan sanctuaries, i.e. false Christian worship places. Incense is symbolic of prayers in Scripture and could here signify prayer in false worship. In verse 4, sitting among the graves and tombs could refer to vigils and candle burning still carried out in segments of modern Christendom for the dead. Or it could refer to séances and other occultism. The eating of unclean food such as pork (verse 4; 66:17) is replete throughout the nations of modern Israel today. And the “holier than thou” attitude of Isaiah 65:5 is all too common. In verse 11, the people honor Gad and Meni—the pagan deities Fortune (or Luck) and Destiny (or Fate). Consider how many rely on luck and fate even today. God pronounces His determination to punish His rebellious people.

But He will not destroy them all, throwing the good grapes out with the bad (verse 8), for His “elect” and His “servants” of Israel will inherit and dwell in the land (verse 9). Sharon (verse 10), in the west, is the coastal plain between the modern cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa. The Valley of Achor (see Joshua 7:24-26), in the east is near the plain of Jericho. Thus, the whole land is meant. Throughout this section, a contrast is made between the rebellious people and God’s “servants.”

The new heavens and new earth (verse 17) are mentioned by John in Revelation 21:1 as coming at the time the New Jerusalem descends to earth. Yet here in Isaiah 65, the time described is one in which human beings still live on the earth in the flesh (verses 21-25; see also chapter 66:22-24).

How, then, are we to understand this? It would seem that the millennial reign of Christ will experience a measure of a renewed creation—in anticipation of the ultimate new heavens and new earth that will follow man’s final judgment. Indeed, the millennial picture of peace in nature and among people (Isaiah 65:25) is repeated from Isaiah 11:6-9. And all of this will continue over into the last judgment period immediately following the 1,000 years of peace (see Revelation 20:11-15). Indeed, some see verse 20 as an indication that this time of judgment will last 100 years.

Proverbs 3

The third exhortation of the book’s prologue (3:1-35) begins with strong encouragement to obey God’s commandments (verse 1) and adopt his character of “mercy and truth” (verse 3; compare Psalm 100:5) the “grace and truth” that was also the character of Jesus Christ (John 1:14). “The command to ‘bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart’ [Proverbs 3:3; compare 6:20-21] further indicates that the character of the student is in view rather than just his behavior. Some have suggested that the binding of love to the neck means that it is here a kind of necklace that beautifies the individual. But the parallel between ‘neck’ and ‘heart’ here implies that fidelity is more than an ornament to the neck [as in 1:9]. The neck houses the throat which, in Hebrew anthropology, is the very life of the person. Love and faithfulness are to become part of the student’s heart and life” (New American Commentary, note on verses 1-4).

Verses 5-8 then give us crucial aspects of true wisdom. A person could know a lot on a human level and yet not truly “get it” in the whole scheme of things. Indeed, this characterizes the wisdom and understanding of the world in general. It is critical to not ultimately trust in oneself. Rather, we must look

first and foremost to God for proper guidance in life. We must overcome the tendency to see ourselves as the final arbiter of what is right and instead develop a proper fear of God, which is the beginning of true knowledge and wisdom. This will be to our ultimate good. While verse 8 can be understood to include mental and spiritual health, it is interesting that it speaks specifically of physical health benefits, as does 4:22.

Verses 9-10 tell us to put our money where our mouth is, so to speak. This is a real test of how much we are willing to put God first in our lives and look to Him to take care of us. How we choose to spend our money and our time tells a great deal about our character. If we do our part, God will richly bless us. This is not a promise of immediate material riches but of God providing us with all our needs. Of course, in His Kingdom we will inherit all things.

We are then told to accept correction or discipline from God in verses 11-12, a passage cited in Hebrews 12:5-6. "While the idea of punishment is certainly present (cf. Job 5:17-18 and 2 Sam 7:14), 'discipline' primarily involves teaching or training rather than punishment for wrongdoing. It is analogous to military training, in which, although the threat of punishment is present, even stern discipline is not necessarily retribution for offenses. Hardship and correction are involved, however, which are always hard to accept" (NAC, note on Proverbs 3:5-12).

Of course, God is not an uncaring drill sergeant. As these verses emphasize, discipline is "exercised in a family setting. The emotion conveyed is not anger or disgust, but love and active concern. A father disciplines his child to help her grow into a praiseworthy adult. Just so God disciplines those who trust Him to help us grow toward moral and spiritual maturity. Bible history and proverbs both demonstrate that at times punishment, a 'rod of correction' (Prov. 29:15) is the best way to show love when people will not respond to verbal guidance. The important thing to remember, as these verses emphasize, is that when God disciplines it is because of, and with a continuing attitude of, love" (Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, 1991, note on 3:11-12). Discipline here, it should be further noted, also has the sense of instruction training, as mentioned above.

In a hymn to wisdom in verses 13-18 it is stressed that wisdom is the true wealth to be sought after (compare 2:4; 8:10-11). Through taking hold of it and holding on to it, we experience "a tree of life" (3:18) which some see as merely denoting enjoyment and sustenance but which probably harkens back to the original tree of life in the sense of a way to return to paradise and escape the curse of death on mankind. True wisdom from God will indeed lead to eternal life and bliss.

Verses 19-20, appended to the hymn to wisdom, present wisdom's role in creation, anticipating a fuller exposition in 8:22-31. "The main point there and here is that whoever abandons wisdom runs against the very structure by which the world was made" (NAC, note on verses 19-20) and by which it is ruled on a cosmic level, the breaking up of the depths referring to the great Flood. "The world is both nurturing and dangerous. Yet creation itself is under the hand of God, and he governs according to wisdom. Wisdom is therefore essential for survival" (same note).

Through God we can and should avoid living in fear (verses 23-26). We are to help others when we can and not seek to harm (verses 27-30). And we are to reject the ways of oppression and foolish scorn, being instead just and humble (verses 31-35). Verse 34 is quoted in James 4:6.

The latter half of this chapter has parallels with the first half of the next chapter, as we will see.

Acts 2

What does the Bible say about speaking in tongues?

Speaking in tongues, a miracle of communication mentioned in the New Testament, has often been misunderstood and misused.

Answer:

Many have asked what the Bible says about speaking in tongues.

What many churches call “speaking in tongues” today is nothing like what the Bible records in the books of Acts and Corinthians. The miracle that occurred on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 (Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Set-apart Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them to speak. 5 Now in Yerushalayim there were dwelling Yehudim, dedicated men from every nation under the heaven. 6 And when this sound came to be, the crowd came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying to each other, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 “And how do we hear, each one in our own language in which we were born?) was one of communication—apparently both in the speaking and the hearing. The Greek word translated “tongues” is glossa and means “languages.” The miracle of speaking in tongues meant that every member of the audience could hear in his or her native tongue (language, see verses Act 2:9 “Parthians and Medes and ?ylamites, and those dwelling in Aram Naharayim, both Yehud?ah and Kappadokia, Pontos and Asia, 10 both Phrygia and Pamphulia, Mitsrayim and the parts of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Yehud?im and converts, 11 “Cretans and Arab?s, we hear them speaking in our own tongues the great deeds of Elohim.”).

Also, some in the early Church, particularly in Corinth, had the ability to speak in different languages. In that case, it seems that people were showing off their abilities, speaking every language they could, regardless of whether the people who heard them could understand. They were caught up in their vanity, having lost sight of the fact that one should always use spiritual gifts to serve others. Paul wrote chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians specifically to deal with this problem. He pointed out that the proper use of the gift of languages would be to speak the language or languages that the congregation could understand. It would be like speaking Spanish to a Spanish-speaking audience or French to a French-speaking audience.

Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth that speaking different languages was of no real value if an audience could not understand the words. He admonished them to concentrate more on understandable communication than on their linguistic abilities.

All biblical examples of speaking in tongues stand in stark contrast to the type of “speaking in tongues” done in some churches today, where the speaker utters a “language” that sounds like gibberish, not an actual human language.

In other letters, Paul and John warn Christians not to be taken in by spiritual-appearing phenomena, indicating that demon spirits sometimes imitate spiritual gifts in an attempt to confuse people (1Ti 4:1 But the Spirit distinctly says that in latter times some shall fall away from the belief, paying attention to misleading spirits, and teachings of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having been branded on their own conscience, 3 forbidding to marry, saying to abstain from foods which Elohim created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

1Jn 4:1 Beloved ones, do not believe every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of Elohim, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of Elohim: Every spirit that confesses that ?????? Messiah has come in the flesh is of Elohim, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that ?????? Messiah has come in the flesh is not of Elohim. And this is the spirit of the anti-messiah which you heard is coming, and now is already in the world.).

Again in this chapter of Acts we are told of the many who would repent. This is the first step to coming into His presence. Once we have repented of living the wrong way and of not keeping His Torah we are to be baptised. For some this is also known as Mikveh which was done on regular basis.

I again urge each of you consider being rebaptised to receive the Holy Spirit to begin to once again Keep Torah.