

# Triennial Torah Study – 2<sup>nd</sup> Year 26/11/2011

sightedmoon.com /triennial-torah-study-2-year-04042015 /

By Joseph F. Dumond

We now return to our 3 1/2 year Torah studies which you can follow at

[https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon\\_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf](https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf)

Lev 4	Jer 24-25	Prov 16	Acts 10-12
-------	-----------	---------	------------

## Leviticus 4

### Sin Offerings (Leviticus 4)

As we've already seen, "in the Burnt-offering and other sweet-savour offerings, the offerer came as a worshipper, to give in his offering, which represented himself, something sweet and pleasant to [the Eternal]. In the Sin and Trespass-offerings, which were not of a sweet savour, the offerer came as a convicted sinner, to receive in his offering, which represented himself, the judgment due to his sin or trespass.... In the one case the offering was accepted to shew that the offerer was accepted of the Yehovah; and the total consumption of the offering on the altar shewed God's acceptance of, and satisfaction in, the offerer. In the other case the offering was cast out, and burnt, not on God's table, the altar, but in the wilderness without the camp; to shew that the offerer in his offering endures the judgment of God, and is cast out of His presence as accursed.... And yet the Sin-offering needed to be 'without blemish,' as much as the Burnt-offering.... A part indeed, 'the fat,' was burnt on the altar, to shew that the offering, though made a sin-bearer, was in itself perfect.... 'The fat,' as we have already seen in the other offerings, represents the general health and energy of the whole body. Its being burnt to God was the appointed proof that the victim offered for sin was yet in itself acceptable" (Jukes, pp. 142-143, 146, 165).

There were different regulations for the sin offering depending on who the offerer was. If the sin being atoned for was that of the entire congregation or the priesthood, the blood of a sacrificial bull was to be brought inside the Holy Place and sprinkled on the altar of incense. This was not necessary in the case of a civil ruler or common person. One guilty individual would not necessarily upset the entire spiritual life of the nation. But sin among all the people or the priests would. And, thus, the incense altar, which represented the prayers of God's people ascending up to His throne and therefore their contact with Him, had to itself be purified of the taint of sin. It should also be recognized that when the sacrifice was not for themselves, the priests were to eat part of it. They were, thus, satisfied when the demands of divine judgment were met and the spiritual life of the nation preserved. But when a priest was atoning for his own sin, the whole animal was to be burnt outside the camp—for no one was allowed to profit from his own sin.

Special sin offerings for priest and congregation were sacrificed on the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16:11-19, 27). The only differences were that on Atonement the animal for the whole congregation was

specified as a goat (goats being used as a sin offering for the congregation in other special circumstances as well) and, on that one day only, the blood was taken beyond the altar of incense into the Most Holy Place.

Clearly Messiah Yahshua fulfilled the sin offering by dying in our place. But there is a sense in which this offering is also fulfilled in us—in a secondary way. Jukes explains: “God forbid I should be mistaken upon this point, as though I thought that the saint could atone for himself or others.... Still, there is a sense and measure in which the Sin-offering has its counterpart in us, as bearing on our self-sacrifice: there is a sense in which the Christian may bear sin, and suffer its judgment in his mortal flesh.... Christ’s death in the flesh for sin is made our example: we too must also, yea therefore, die with Him.... The saint, as having been judged in the person of Christ, and knowing that for him Christ has borne the cross, follows on by that cross to judge and mortify all that he finds in himself still contrary to his Lord. The flesh in him is contrary to that Holy One [compare Romans 7:18, 23]: the flesh in him therefore must die.... God’s truth is, that so far from ‘the flesh’ or ‘old man’ being saved from death by the cross, it is by it devoted to death and to be crucified [Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20]; and that Christ’s death, instead of being a kind of indulgence for sin, or a reprieve of the life of the flesh, the life of the old man, is to His members the seal that their flesh must die, and that sin with its lusts and affections must be mortified [Colossians 3:5]” (pp. 204-206).

## **Jeremiah 24**

We pick up in our Jeremiah portion with a vision, given to the prophet of Yehovah by Yehovah Himself. This vision was given to Jeremiah after the initial exile of the people of Jerusalem along with Jeconiah, the son of King Jehoiakim, and all the heads of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths. The vision was of two baskets of figs sitting before the Throne of Yehovah. One basket was full of ripe figs, like the figs of the first ripe, and the other basket was full of spoiled figs that were so spoiled they could not be eaten.

Yehovah interprets the vision for Jeremiah (and us): v.5 “like these good figs, so do I acknowledge the exiles of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans (Babylon).” He prophecies that their end will be good and they would have the support of their God with them in the future. He will keep His Eye on them, bring them back, plant them, and build them. He will give them a heart to know Him and they will turn back to Him.

But, v. 8 “And as for the spoiled figs that could not be eaten because they are so spoiled, I do give up Zedekiah, his heads, the rest of Jerusalem who dwell in the land of Egypt.” This is the Zedekiah who King Nebuchadnezzar put in place to reign in Jerusalem after King Jeconiah was exiled. There were still some poor and rural communities in Judea, 10,000 were taken into exile from Jerusalem. Zedekiah did not return right-ruling, did not take care of the widow, orphan, keep the seventh year release. He continued walking and ruling contrary to Yehovah. Therefore God says v. 9-10 “I shall make them a horror to all the reigns of the earth, for evil, to be a reproach and a byword, a mockery and a curse, in all the places to which I drive them. [now comes the Lev. 26 curses] “And I shall send the sword, the scarcity of food, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.”

## **Seventy Years; Judgment on the Nations (Jeremiah 25)**

This chapter of Jeremiah was written either just before or just after Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah—following the battle of Carchemish—and made Jehoiakim swear allegiance to him. Since mention is made of the “first year of Nebuchadnezzar,” it seems most likely to refer to the period following his accession to the throne of Babylon in September of 605 B.C.—which occurred just after the invasion of Judah. If so, then Nebuchadnezzar basically came and went. It does not appear that he wrought any real damage on Judah at this time. Most likely, with Egypt in retreat, Jehoiakim switched allegiances rather quickly—giving up the temple treasures and prisoners mentioned in Daniel 1 without any resistance.

Yet Jeremiah views what has transpired as a turning point—the beginning of the fulfillment of what he has proclaimed at God’s behest for 23 years, in conjunction with other prophets, since the beginning of his ministry (see Jeremiah 25:3). At that earlier time, he had proclaimed that destruction would come on Judah from “the north...all the families of the north” (1:14-15). Now, he makes it clear that this refers to the Babylonian forces under Nebuchadnezzar (25:8-9).

Verses 11-14, relating to the “seventy years,” have been a source of confusion to many. It seems to say that Babylon would fall in 70 years, and that this would be the same period as Judah’s desolation. Jeremiah later writes to captives, telling them that God would cause them to return to the Promised Land “after seventy years are completed at Babylon” (29:10). According to 2 Chronicles 36:20-23, the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. began the 70 years of desolation in fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy. Daniel and Zechariah apparently understood it this way too (Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 1:12).

So where is the difficulty? Jeremiah gave his prophecy around the time that the initial deportation of Judah (such as Daniel) occurred, in 605 B.C. But ancient Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia in 539 B.C., just 66 years later. And in that first year of Cyrus, he issues a decree allowing Judah to return to the Promised Land—again in fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy (Ezra 1:1). Nothing significant appears to have happened in 535 B.C., 70 years after Jeremiah gave this prophecy. Furthermore, it seems strange that punishment was supposedly to come on Babylon in 535 B.C. when the Babylonian Empire ended four years earlier, in 539 B.C.

How, then, do we resolve this? We must realize that Jeremiah was foretelling two distinct things, each lasting 70 years but not necessarily the same 70 years. They are linked together because the accomplishment of the one is necessary for the fulfillment of the other. Jeremiah 25:11 mentions: 1) the desolation of Judah; and 2) the duration of the Babylonian Empire. Verses 8-10 describe the first element. Verse 11 is the transitional verse, which includes both elements. And verses 12-14 amplify the second element, explaining that Babylon will be destroyed at the end of its imperial reign.

How long did the Babylonian Empire last? While the last pockets of Assyrian resistance were eliminated in the 605 Battle of Carchemish, the Assyrian Empire really came to an end with the fall of Haran to Babylonian-led forces in 609 (this was the defeat of the army that had fled Nineveh at its fall three years earlier in 612). Starting in 609, Babylon turned from battling the Assyrians themselves to subduing all the former Assyrian territories, beginning with the land of Armenia. Thus, the Babylonian Empire began in 609 B.C. It then lasted 70 years, until the conquest of Cyrus in 539 B.C. So this 70-year period had already begun when Jeremiah prophesied. Notice that he didn’t say otherwise.

The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, including the temple of God, and took the bulk of the population captive in 586 B.C. This accomplished its desolation, which Jeremiah foretold. As mentioned, the fall of Babylon to Cyrus in 539 enabled the return of the people of Judah to the Promised Land. But the repopulation of the land took place over time. It is significant to note that 70 years from 586 B.C. brings us to 516 B.C., the time the temple reconstruction begun under Zerubbabel was completed. The mirth and gladness of verse 10—repeated from 7:34 and 16:9—found greatest expression during the annual festivals, which were observed in the presence of the temple. Thus, the restoration of the temple brought an end to the 70-year desolation Jeremiah prophesied. (See also Jeremiah 33:10-11, where the return of the voice of joy and gladness, and of bride and bridegroom, is associated with bringing “the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD.”)

Moving on in chapter 25, notice the reference in verse 13 to prophecies against the nations recorded in the book of Jeremiah. It may simply refer to what follows beginning in verse 15. But it could also refer to chapters 46-51. Jamieson, Fausset & Brown’s Commentary notes regarding 25:13: “It follows from this,

that the prophecies against foreign nations (chs. 46-51) must have been already written. Hence LXX [the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures] inserts here those prophecies. But if they had followed immediately (vs. 13), there would have been no propriety in the observation in the verse. The very wording of the reference shows that they existed in some other part of the book, and not in the immediate context. It was in this very year, the fourth year of Jehoiakim (ch. 36:1, 2), that Jeremiah was directed to write in a regular book for the first time all that he had prophesied against Judah and foreign 'nations' from the beginning of his ministry. Probably, at a subsequent time, when he completed the whole work, including chs. 46-51, Jeremiah himself inserted the clause, 'all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.' The prophecies in question may have been repeated, as others in Jeremiah, more than once; so in the original smaller collection they may have stood in an earlier position; and in the fuller subsequent collection, in their later and present position."

Starting in Jeremiah 25:15 and continuing to the end of the chapter, God pronounces judgment on the nations. Notice that He begins with Jerusalem and Judah—"put first: for 'judgment begins at the house of God'; they being most guilty whose religious privileges are greatest (I Pet. 4:17 [compare Ezekiel 9:6])" (JFB Commentary, note on Jeremiah 25:18). Yet in fairness, judgment is brought on all nations (see especially verse 29).

In verse 26, the name Sheshach refers to Babylon (see Jeremiah 51:41). Various explanations have been given for it. One is that it was written according to a code wherein the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is expressed by the last, etc., so that the word Sheshach would exactly correspond to Babel. However, it seems unnecessary to conceal the word Babel here since the word Babylon is given in close context in both places. Others translate the word as meaning "Bronze-Gated" or "House of a Prince." And there are still other explanations (see JFB, note on 25:26; Alfred Jones, "Sheshach," Jones' Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names, 1997). Perhaps the most likely meaning is "thy fine linen" (The KJV Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon, Strong No. 8347, on-line at bible.crosswalk.com/Lexicons/ Hebrew). This would seem to tie in with the description of end-time Babylon in Revelation 18:16: "that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls."

The prophecy of judgment on the nations in Jeremiah 25 applied in part to what happened in ancient times. All of those mentioned in verses 17-25 fell to Babylon. Then, as in verse 26, Babylon fell after them. But this scenario will be repeated in the last days. Indeed, it is clear from verses 31-33 that a final fulfillment of this prophecy will come in the end time, when a large percentage of mankind will be destroyed during the Day of the Lord (compare Isaiah 66:16).

## **Proverb 16**

While Proverbs 15:28 shows the importance of studying how to answer, 16:1 balances this with the fact that human preparation has its limitations. Having done what we can, we must rely on God to enable us to always say what we need to. And He will help us in what we need to say in critical situations (compare Mark 13:11; Luke 21:12-15).

Proverbs 16:2 shows that human beings are prone to self-deception when it comes to our own motives. "The interaction of the two lines in this proverb suggest that Yahweh is better able to discern our motivations than we are, hence the need for wisdom and instruction in standards outside ourselves" (NIV Application Commentary, note on verse 2).

Verse 4, the central verse noted above, has seemed to some to say that God has created the wicked to destroy them. The point, rather, is that God has made all to fulfill His purposes and that even those who choose wickedness do not thwart His plan but fit within His purposes, in their case meeting the judgment

He has already determined. Of course, God did predetermine that some would meet with destruction in this life (see Romans 9:14-24)?but this does not mean they are ultimately lost. (For a full discussion of this matter, see the article "Predestination: Are You Just a Pawn?," The Good News, May-June 2003, pp. 8-9, 26, online at [www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn46/predestination.htm](http://www.gnmagazine.org/issues/gn46/predestination.htm)).

Proverbs 16:5 uses some of the same wording as 11:20-21.

Proverbs 16:7, which tells us that God causes the enemies of the righteous to be at peace with them, conveys a general principle. Scripture gives us some examples (see Genesis 20:15; 26:27ff; 33:4; 2 Chronicles 14:6-7; 17:10). A measure of peace allows God's people to live their lives in service to Him, to their families and to each other. Of course, there are often times when God allows enemies to be actively antagonistic against His people. The proverb must be considered as applying over the long haul of life?and it will find ultimate fulfillment in the age to come.

Second Part of Main Collection Mostly Synonymous (Proverbs 16:9?17:1)

Continuing in Solomon's core collection (10:1?22:16), we may observe that the second part (16:1?22:16) is made up mostly of synonymous proverbs.

33. Three Collections (16:9?17:1)

"TYPE: A-B ENVELOPE SERIES....[These] proverbs are in a three-fold A-B envelope series, as follows: "The verses marked 'A' (16:9,20,33) all concern divine providence over human affairs. The issue in these verses is wisdom in the decision-making process. Whether one makes detailed plans or resorts to casting lots, events and circumstances are all in God's control. As such the wise are cautious but above all put their faith in God and not in human plans.... The verses marked 'B' (16:19,32; 17:1) all imply that a peaceable attitude makes the position that is apparently lower or less aggressive preferable to one of power. All are 'better' sayings. Set in context with the 'A' sayings, these texts imply that success is not necessarily to be measured by the size of one's bank account. The intervening verses in texts I and II do not correspond to one another (unlike 15:1?16:8), but several discrete groups...are apparent in these collections. Collection III has no intervening verses at all" (NAC).

Verses 10-15 "concern righteousness in government and are organized as a thematic collection. Also the catchword 'king' occurs in every verse except 11, which nevertheless plainly deals with justice in government" (note on verses 10-15).

Expositor's notes on verse 10: "This first one teaches that kings must speak righteously in their official capacities.... The first part states that when the king speaks officially, it is as if it were 'an oracle' [NIV]. The word *qesem* is used throughout the Bible in the negative sense of 'divination' [as the NKJV renders it here]; here it seems merely to mean his words from an oracular sentence, as if he speaks for God (see Num 22:7; 23:23...). The effect of this is that his mouth 'should not betray'...justice."

Regarding Proverbs 16:11, mentioned above as the only proverb in verses 10-15 that doesn't include the word "king," Soncino notes: "This verse is misunderstood by the modern expositors who hold it to refer to honest weights and measures [as in 11:1]. If so interpreted, it is out of place and has no connection with the group which deals with the subject of a king's obligations, and preference should be given to the Jewish commentaries which related the verse to the Divine origin of justice. [The phrase] a just balance and scales [is] an unlikely translation, since *tsedek* [righteous or fair] would have been used instead of *mishpat* [judgment] if the meaning were just balance (cf. Lev. [19:]36). The correct rendering is: 'the balance and scales of justice are the Lord's,' i.e. they are not something arbitrary which each king can manufacture to suit his convenience. They are fixed by God and delivered into the kings keeping to administer fairly.... [Regarding] weights of the bag...the weights to be used on the scales, like the scales themselves, are made by God; the king may not provide his own" (note on Proverbs 16:11).

The “latter rain” in verse 15 refers to the spring rain in Israel. “The spring rain was essential for the full development of barley and wheat; it was therefore a sign of good things to come. Cf. the ‘dew’ of 19:12” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on 16:15).

Verse 18 shows that pride and arrogance are short-lived. This should be an encouragement in the face of the apparent prosperity of the proud. But it is also meant as a warning to us against self-exaltation (compare 1 Corinthians 10:12).

Verse 21 says that “sweetness of the lips increases learning.” The sweetness here corresponds to verse 24: “Pleasant words are like a honeycomb...” The point of verse 21 is that the wise will carefully choose appealing language in teaching others so as to promote learning (see also verse 23).

Verse 25 repeats 14:12. We can’t just go by what seems right. We must listen to what God has to say. Here “following the proverbs on teaching, this saying also states our need for an external reference point by which we set our course” (NIV Application Commentary, note on 16:25).

“Verses 27-30 describe the man who has evil schemes and are another thematic unity. Verses 27-29 concern the evil machinations of the scoundrel, the perverse man, and the violent man, and v. 30 is a conclusion or commentary on those three descriptions. The winking eye and pursed lips of v. 30 may be taken either as signals among conspirators or as a general statement of shiftiness in the facial mannerisms of scheming people” (New American Commentary, note on verses 27-30) or possibly “as friendly but deceptive signs; perhaps they are a form of the enticement mentioned in verse 29” (NIV Application Commentary, note on verse 30).

In verse 32, mastering the self, such as in controlling one’s temper, is a far greater achievement than external conquest.

The “lot” of verse 33 is thought by some to refer to the use of the Urim and Thummim by the high priest. Yet it probably refers to the casting of lots in a more general sense, with appeal made to God to determine the outcome. The Zondervan NIV Study Bible comments: “Here the lot may have been several pebbles held in the fold of a garment and then drawn out or shaken to the ground. It was commonly used to make decisions” (note on verse 33). Jesus’ disciples used the casting of lots to make an important decision prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:26).

## **Acts 10-12**

Our study in Acts this week picks up just following what many would call “the spreading of the Good News” throughout the earth, with Paul initially persecuting the believers so that they dispersed for safety. Then we learned Paul was supernaturally changed when he met Messiah on the road to Damascus and the Good News spread even further in the Middle East and surrounding areas of Jerusalem and Judea among the Tribe of Judah. Now, in this portion of Acts, we have record of The Holy One Himself, telling His disciples, that the Good News is for all people, and we start with Peter’s dream and Cornelius – an Italian (gentile).

Cornelius was a captain of what was called the Italian Regiment (10:1) and he lived in Caesarea. Here is what is written about Cornelius “dedicated, and fearing Elohim with all his household, doing many kind deeds to the people, and praying to Elohim always.” We could compare this Cornelius to the King of Israel we just read about above in Jeremiah 24—How did each of these men “treat other people?” Because of Cornelius’ actions, Yahshua visited him in a vision and told him to send men to Yapho and send for a man named Peter (one of the disciples).

Meanwhile at Yapho, Yehovah was given Peter a dream. He saw heaven opened and a certain vessel like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to earth. In the sheet were all kinds of beasts, wild, creeping, and birds too. Peter was told by Yehovah "Rise up, Peter, slay and eat." (10:13) Peter thinks this is about food as says "No Master! I have never eaten what is common or unclean." Then Peter is told that what God has cleansed, he is not to consider unclean. This happened three times, and Peter came to and still did not understand what the vision meant. Directly following, the men sent by Cornelius came and inquired of Peter. Peter is told not to worry and to go with these men, that they were sent by God and to "rise up, and go" (10:20).

Peter houses the men of Cornelius and the next day returns with them to Caesarea where Cornelius is waiting for them with all his household (for many had gathered there). Soon we learn that Peter in fact did figure out the meaning of his dream when he says in v28 "You know that a Jewish man is not allowed to associate with, or go to one of another race. But Elohim has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." And even more so we learn the meaning of the vision in v 34-35 "Truly I see that Elohim shows no partiality, but in every nation, he who fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." So we see CLEARLY here that Peter's vision had nothing to do with changing the Torah of clean and unclean foods, as is preached in the church of modern Christianity.

Peter proceeds to witness to Cornelius and his family, all that happened concerning Yahshua and how He is the risen Messiah, chosen by Elohim to be Judge of the living and the dead and believers in Him may receive forgiveness of sins. Then the Spirit fell upon all of the them, the Jews and the Gentiles present and they all praised Elohim in tongues. Peter and the Jewish men with him were all amazed and saw there is no partiality between Jew and Gentile and commanded that Cornelius and his family should be immersed in the Name of Yahshua Messiah (10:48).

Chapter 11. The Jewish congregation of believers heard of this in Jerusalem and began contending with Peter. The issue: "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" (v 3) So we see here that the issue is how to commune together when one is called clean and one is called unclean. This is one of the "walls of partition" that we hear about in Scripture between Jews and Gentiles. So Peter recounts his vision, all that had happened, and how the Set-apart Spirit fell upon the Gentiles just as it has fell upon the Jews on the day of Pentecost! He says then he recalled the words of Yahshua when He said (11:16) "Yohanan indeed immersed in water, but you shall be immersed in the Set-apart Spirit." Having heard this (the Jewish men there) they said v.18 "Then Elohim has indeed also given to the gentiles repentance to life." And the Good News spread throughout Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch, and Cyrene. Even some of the Hellenists believed. We are told the Barnabus went to Tarsos to seek Paul (v25) and they taught in the assemblies of Antioch for a year. The taught ones in Antioch were called "Messianites." (v.26) Some prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch and one named Hagab came and prophesied of a famine coming all over the world. So the assemblies of Antioch sent relief to those in Judea.

Chapter 12. This chapter begins with Herod beginning to persecute believers. He begins by murdering James, the brother of John and the unbelieving Jews were pleased with this and so Herod proceeded to imprison Peter. This was done in the season of UnLeavened Bread and Passover. While Peter was in prison, the assemblies prayed for him mightily and the Power of God through His Messenger performed a supernatural prison escape for Peter! Peter proclaims as he walked out of the prison (v. 11) "Now I truly know that ??? has sent His messenger, and delivered me from the hand of Herod and all the people of Judah were anticipating." We are also told of 'an appointed time' when Herod put on his robe and addressed the people and how the people declared "The voice of a mighty one and not of a man!" (v22) From these words, Herod made no correction – therefore God smote him there with worms and he died for he did not give esteem to God.