

Triennial Torah Study – 2nd Year 24/12/2011

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We continue this weekend with our regular Triennial Torah reading which can be found at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

Lev 8	Jer 34-36	Prov 20	Acts 17
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Leviticus 8 (keeping Chapter 8 this week to get back on track)

Aaronic Priesthood Consecrated (Leviticus 8)

The incredible mercy of God is demonstrated in the appointment of Aaron as Israel's ecclesiastical leader. Aaron, after all, had presided over Israel's idolatry with the golden calf. Yet, now forgiven, God gives him another chance—this time to serve as God's own high priest, with Aaron's sons serving as priests under him. Indeed, the priesthood was to be perpetuated through his family from then on.

This also serves as a reminder that when God forgives, He forgives us completely. In Psalm 103:12, King David proclaims that God removes our transgressions "as far as the east is from the west." Isaiah 43:25 and Jeremiah 31:34 tell us that He remembers our sins no more. In Isaiah 1:18 God says that our sins, formerly as scarlet, "shall be white as snow." God's mercy and forgiveness toward Aaron are proof that God is equally merciful toward us, both forgiving and forgetting our sins. This is possible because, although God has perfect memory of the past, while we continue in the process of repentance and overcoming He looks on the new person within that He is forming and shaping as distinct from the sinful nature we battle (see Romans 7:17). Our old sinful self will one day be eliminated at our transformation to immortal incorruption (see 1 Corinthians 15) and only the sinless new self will remain. But thankfully, we don't have to wait until then to be considered forgiven and reckoned as sinless. When we repent, God forgives us totally right then and there.

Leviticus 8 records the consecration, or setting apart, of Aaron and His sons for their important responsibility. The entire nation came out to witness the important event. As God's prophet and chief servant on earth, Moses was the only one qualified to ordain Aaron and his sons to their offices. Aaron, as the high priest, was anointed through the pouring out of oil upon his head (Leviticus 8:12)—symbolic of a special dispensation of God's Holy Spirit (compare Acts 10:38). In ancient Israel, the high priests and kings were anointed. Interestingly, both offices looked forward to the coming of an "Anointed One"—which is the meaning of Mashiach (or Messiah) in Hebrew and Christos (or Christ) in Greek. And indeed, Yahshua Messiah now fills both of these positions, king and high priest.

Though Aaron's sons were not anointed in the same manner he was, they were, along with him, sprinkled with anointing oil and blood (Leviticus 8:30; compare 10:7). Furthermore, Aaron and his sons were all specially consecrated by the blood of a ram being applied to the right ear, right thumb and right big toe of each of them. Some have speculated that this anointing of their extremities, top to bottom, represented a total covering by the sacrificial blood. Or perhaps it meant something else. The ear often represents hearing—so perhaps their willingness to listen to and heed God's instructions was being sanctified. After all, the phrase "this is what the Lord commanded," or similar words, is stated 10 times in this chapter (verses 4, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 29, 34, 35, 36). The right thumb is the part of the right hand that allows it to function—and the right hand is often symbolic in the

Bible of a person's actions. The priest's actions had to be holy. And as for the big toe, it enables balance in walking and standing—which are often representative in Scripture of walking with God, i.e., leading a godly life, and remaining steadfast in the faith respectively. These are important qualities for God's priests—qualities we must exemplify too, as we are now God's chosen holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

We should also take note of the washing of Aaron and his sons. The Keil & Delitzsch Commentary states regarding Leviticus 8:6 that Moses “directed them to wash themselves, no doubt all over, and not merely their hands and feet. This cleansing from bodily uncleanness was a symbol of the putting away of the filth of sin; the washing of the body, therefore, was a symbol of spiritual cleansing, without which no one could draw near to God, and least of all those who were to perform the duties of reconciliation” (Vol. 1, p. 544). Many of the washing rituals of the Old Testament foreshadowed the baptism of the New Testament, and that would seem to be true in this case. Again, the New Testament Church is a holy priesthood, each individual being cleansed symbolically through washing in water when baptized—although it is actually the grace of God through “the blood of Jesus Christ” that “cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

Jeremiah 34-36

34. Chapter 34 begins with the prophet of Yehovah prophesying against the King of Judah, Zedekiah saying he will be taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and that the city of Jerusalem will be burned. However he specifically tells Zedekiah he will not die by the sword of Babylon and he will be buried and revered by his people in peace. He said these things to the King while the last two cities of Lakish and Azeqah were still under siege.

We are told that King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people: to proclaim release to them! A hint to the Sabbath year during this time of seize, that everyone was to set free his male and female slave, the Hebrew man and the Hebrew woman, no one was to keep a Judaen, his brother, enslaved. So they went free. But afterward, they changed their minds! This is reminiscent of the Pharaoh in Egypt! Yehovah reminds them of His covenant He made with their fathers when He brought them out of the house of bondage in Egypt, that each one should be set free at the end of six years, proclaiming release to them in the seventh year. They had done well in their releasing the slaves and their Hebrew brethren, but now they have hardened their hearts and turned backed and have now profaned His Name in what they have done!

What is the response of Yehovah to what they have done? “See, I am proclaiming release to you,’ declares Yehovah, ‘to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the scarcity of food! And I shall make you a horror to all reigns of the earth.” Here there is no doubt about the consequences of not keeping the Sabbath year. He then prophesies the falling, burning, and destruction of the city of Jerusalem... under His own command!

Chapter 35

The events of this chapter transpired during the reign of Jehoiakim, following the initial invasion of Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. (see verse 11). His Chaldean host was accompanied by Syrians, as the Babylonians had just taken Syria from the Egyptians (compare same verse). The invading army prompted the Rechabites to quickly relocate to Jerusalem.

The Rechabites were descended from the Kenites and hence were related to Jethro, Moses' father-in-law (see Judges 1:16; 1 Chronicles 2:55). Rechab was the father of Jehonadab (here called Jonadab), who supported Jehu in his purge of the Baal prophets from Israel (2 Kings 10:15-28).

Jeremiah brings the Rechabites—probably several of their representatives—into the temple for a test that others are to witness. “We know essentially nothing of the persons mentioned in vv. 3-4, except for Maaseiah, who was probably the father of Zephaniah the priest (cf. 21:1; 29:25; 37:3). He was in charge of the money given for the temple repair (cf. 2 Kings 12:10). Jaazaniah was probably the leader of the group. The name, not uncommon in Jeremiah's day, has been found on a seal (c. 600 B.C.) at Tell en-Nasbeh.... ‘The sons of Hanan’ (a prophet of God [or, as “man of God” could also signify, merely a faithful priest]) were probably his disciples. He appears to have been in sympathy with Jeremiah. The three leaders (cf. 52:24; 2 Kings 25:18) probably had charge of the inner and outer court of the temple and the entrance door. They ranked next to the high priest and his deputy” (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1986, note on Jeremiah 35:3-4).

Jeremiah sets wine before the Rechabites and tells them to drink (verse 5). Jonadab had apparently given strict commands to his descendants regarding the lifestyle they were to live (verses 6-10). Instead of settling down in houses or cultivating fields, they were to dwell in tents as nomads. Perhaps he was concerned over the fact that God had prophesied that once the people of Israel settled into private homes and lands that they would become forgetful of God because of their abundance (compare Deuteronomy 8). Maybe he had even seen the truth of this in the society of his day. Jonadab also commanded his descendants to avoid wine. Perhaps this was motivated by the restriction against alcohol in the Nazirite vow or dangers of abuse he may have witnessed. Interestingly, the Rechabites saw that obedience to these commands from their forefather would allow them to “live many days in the land”—which was the blessing God promised for following the Fifth Commandment in obeying one’s parents (see Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16).

In any case, Jeremiah 35 doesn’t say that God approved of the restrictions Jonadab placed on his descendants. Indeed, the Bible nowhere condemns the use of alcohol—only its abuse and drunkenness. And housing and agriculture are certainly not forbidden. The lesson here is not one of refraining from settling down or abstinence from alcohol, but a lesson in obedience for Judah. The Rechabites were prepared to obey a human progenitor who had died many generations before. How much more should Judah have been willing to obey God Himself—their divine parent—who was still alive and still instructing them?

We should note that when Jeremiah put the wine before the Rechabites in verse 5, he did not say, “The Lord says, ‘Drink wine.’” That would have overruled their past commitment. Instead, he simply placed the wine before them and told them to drink, which they refused. Indeed, God certainly knew they would refuse and had Jeremiah perform the example for just this reason.

In verses 18-19, a blessing is pronounced on the Rechabites for their faithfulness to their father’s commands. Jonadab will never lack a descendant to stand before God. This may simply mean his family line would always continue, as everyone who exists is “before God.” But it could also signify that a descendant of Jonadab would always be in God’s service (compare 15:19). “The Mishnah [Jewish oral tradition later written down] indicates that in the Second Temple period a special day was set aside for the Rechabites to bring the wood offering (Ta’an 4.5)” (Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan, editors, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 1993, “Rechabites,” p. 643). Perhaps this is just one way the Rechabites were to serve before God if standing before Him implied such service.

Baruch the Scribe; A Failed Attempt to Destroy God’s Word (Jeremiah 36:1-7; 45:1-5; 36:8-32)

At the start of the current reading, it is still the fourth year of Jehoiakim—March-April 605 B.C. to March-April 604 B.C. The Battle of Carchemish happened in the late spring of 605. Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah sometime during the summer, carrying away a number of the Tribe of Judah, including Daniel and his friends. Jehoiakim had become a Babylonian vassal. And Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon in August to assume the imperial throne, which he did on September 7. Since the events in the past several readings occurred following Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion but apparently prior to the events described in the current reading, it appears likely that the events of the current reading begin in the early part of 604 B.C.

Jeremiah is told to write everything he has prophesied from the beginning of his ministry in Josiah’s day up till now in a book or scroll (Jeremiah 36:2). “Scrolls (Heb[rew] megilla; G[ree]k biblion) were made by gluing together, side by side, separate strips of papyrus, leather, parchment or vellum and then winding the long strip around a pole, which would often have handles at both ends to facilitate transporting and reading the scroll. Papyrus, or specifically the pith of the papyrus reed, had been used as a writing surface since the early 3rd millennium b.c.e. [B.C.] It was probably a papyrus scroll, written by Baruch while Jeremiah dictated, that King Jehoiakim ordered burned (Jer. 36)” (Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, 2000, p. 1174).

The writing down of everything at this point does not mean that Jeremiah had written nothing before. Perhaps he had written many things and now dictated them into a single document—though God could have enabled him to reconstruct all he had said from memory. Jeremiah does not now personally write but instead dictates everything to Baruch the son of Neriah, a trained scribe.

While many people doubt the authenticity of the Bible, “through a most amazing combination of circumstances, it would appear that we now have two extraordinary reminders of reliability of the witness to Baruch’s presence in the time of Jeremiah.... One particular bulla [a lump of clay impressed with a seal]...bears the same name as

the scribe in the book of Jeremiah. In three lines of ancient Hebrew text, writing in the formal cursive style of the seventh century B.C., the seal reads, 'belonging to Berekhyahu, son of Neriyaahu, the scribe.' Berekhyahu is almost certainly the complete name of the shortened form Baruch, which means 'Blessed of Yahweh.' Baruch's father, likewise, in its full form is also Neriyaahu, called Neriah in the Bible.

"Now a second bulla has shown up.... The same seal that impressed the bulla just described as belonging to Baruch was used on this one, for the three registers of writing are identical.... On the back of this bulla are impressions of the papyrus fibers from the document to which it was once tied. What is remarkable about this second bulla is that the edge is embossed with a fingerprint on the edge, which is presumably that of Baruch the scribe himself. Baruch must have written and sealed the document to which it was attached" (Walter Kaiser Jr., *The Old Testament Documents; Are They Reliable and Relevant?*, 2001, pp. 158-159).

Not only does Jeremiah have Baruch write down all his words, but he informs the scribe that, because he is "confined" (verse 6)—either physically restrained as in our previous reading or, more likely as he is able to hide later, merely barred from entering the temple—Baruch must go into the temple on the next fast day and read the words.

This is a difficult assignment, considering the punishment previously heaped on Jeremiah. Turning to chapter 45, we find it one of the shortest in the Bible. But it has a vitally important message. We can all find ourselves like Baruch, sympathizing with his comment: "I am overwhelmed with trouble! Haven't I had enough pain already? And now the LORD has added more! I am weary of my own sighing and can find no rest" (verse 3, *New Living Translation*). "Baruch came from a family of achievers. His grandfather was governor of Jerusalem in Josiah's time (2 Chron. 34:8) and his brother [would later be] the staff officer in Zedekiah's court (Jer. 51:59) [and was likely already involved in government]. He [Baruch] had expected to receive some high office, but found himself the secretary of the most hated man in Judah! God told Baruch what He tells us. Be the best you can be, but don't expect to be more than you are ([Jeremiah 45] v. 5). Self-seeking ambition was hardly appropriate when the nation was facing divine judgment—or at any other time" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 1-5). Furthermore, although he couldn't see it at the time, God was with him and would protect him wherever he went (compare Matthew 6:8, 25-32; Hebrews 13:5; Joshua 1:5; Deuteronomy 31:6; Philippians 4:11).

Baruch has to wait several months before carrying out his assigned duty but the fast day finally comes. Surprisingly, it is not God's commanded fast day, the Day of Atonement in the seventh month. Apparently the people had already forsaken this command since Josiah's death, which was only five years earlier. The fast mentioned in Jeremiah 36 occurs in the ninth month of Jehoiakim's fifth year—November-December 604 B.C. (verse 9). There was no traditional fast at this time that we know of, but there is a historical context to perhaps explain the fast. In "604, Nebuchadnezzar was back again in the Hatti-territory to receive tribute from all its kings. This no doubt included Jehoiakim. At that time the march went as far south as [the Philistine city of] Askelon, which was captured in the month Kislev [the Hebrew ninth month]" (Edwin Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 1983, p. 186). The fast was probably called by the elders or priests at the urging of the people, who may have had some fears regarding Nebuchadnezzar's approach. The king, Jehoiakim, seems to have had no such fears. He was evidently secure in his position as a vassal to Babylon. In any case, with Nebuchadnezzar close at hand and the people perhaps somewhat softened by their fasting, it was a fit time to pronounce destruction on Jerusalem at the hands of Babylon.

Baruch reads aloud from the chamber of Gemariah. "Gemariah was the son of Shaphan, the scribe who read the scroll found during Josiah's reign (see 2 Kin. 22:1-20). It seems Gemariah was sympathetic toward Jeremiah, allowing the use of the room in the upper court, a room overlooking the temple courts" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Jeremiah 36:9-10). Gemariah's son Michaiah reports the gist of what Baruch was proclaiming to his father and the other national leaders at the palace (verses 11-13). Elnathan, mentioned here, was the one who, on orders from Jehoiakim, brought the prophet Urijah back from Egypt to suffer execution (see 26:22-23). He is probably the same Elnathan named in 2 Kings 24:8 as the father of Nehushta, Jehoiachin's mother and therefore Jehoiakim's wife—thus making him Jehoiakim's father-in-law. Elnathan's father Achbor "also played a role in the reading of the scroll in the days of Josiah's reform. The parallels between Josiah's reform and Jeremiah's desire for national revival were included by Baruch deliberately, to remind the people of the earlier event" (note on 36:11-13).

The leaders send for Baruch to read the scroll to them. When he does, they become alarmed and decide that the king must be informed (verse 16). But, apparently fearing what Jehoiakim's reaction might be, they tell Baruch and Jeremiah to go hide out somewhere (verse 19). Perhaps some of them actually had a change of heart—though it may have been just momentary fearfulness. We do see Elnathan beseeching the king not to destroy the scroll (verse 25).

Outrageously, however, the king does destroy it—brazenly and contemptuously. Jehoiakim would have a few columns of the scroll read, whereupon he would cut that part out and cast it into the fire in the hearth before him. This is repeated until the entire scroll is read and burned (verse 23). The king and his servants show no fear at all (verse 24). It is not clear whether his servants here include all the leaders who had previously heard the scroll's contents. It may be that they did not all go to the king but sent just a few representatives, such as Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah, who did implore the king to not burn the scroll.

In verse 26, Jehoiakim sends men out to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch. Concerning Jerahmeel, the phrase "the king's son" should probably instead be "the son of Hamelech," as in the King James Version, since Jehoiakim had no grown sons at this time—his heir Jehoiachin being a 12-year-old boy. (It is also possible that "king's son" was the title of a particular office.) Thankfully, God protected His servants from being arrested and probably murdered.

How utterly horrible all of this was. God was giving a last chance for repentance—a possibility for reform as in the days of Josiah, Jehoiakim's father, who had responded positively to Jeremiah's pronouncements and to finding the Word of God. But no, this king of Judah will not repent. Instead, he burns the words of God and seeks to kill God's messengers. His actions are outrageous beyond description.

Jeremiah pronounces judgment on the king for his vile effrontery and blasphemy. He would die in disgrace. His lineage would not continue on David's throne, as his son Jehoiachin would reign for just three months. And Jerusalem would be destroyed. The Word of God, on the other hand, which Jehoiakim had tried to destroy, would endure. God had Jeremiah and Baruch rewrite everything, with even more added to it. And we have it today, before our very eyes. As Isaiah had proclaimed under divine inspiration, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

Proverb 20

Second Part of Major Solomonic Collection Cont'd (Proverbs 20:5?21:8)

43. Various Proverbs (20:5?21:8)

"The proverbs of this section for the most part focus on the theme of discriminating between people of good character and people of evil character?. Verses 20:5 and 21:8 can be read as an envelope. The former articulates the importance of discernment in dealing with people. The latter gives the simplest, most basic guideline in character discernment: the evil are twisted, but the good are upright. By itself 21:8 seems like a pointless tautology [i.e., a needless repetition]; but when read as the conclusion to the series of proverbs begun in 20:5, it is an apt closure to the whole. Like Jesus' teaching that a tree is judged by its fruit, this text ends by saying that people can be evaluated by their conduct (Matt 7:17-19; 12:33; Luke 6:43-44). Several smaller collections are found in this larger unit?."

? "DISCERNMENT AND INTEGRITY. Type: A-B Envelope, Thematic (20:5-12). This section begins by telling how difficult it is to discern a person's inner [thoughts and] motives and ends by asserting that the ears and eyes, the means of discernment, are made by God. Thus God alone has perfect insight into human character, and he cannot be deceived" (NAC).

Verse 8 in the NKJV says that a king sitting as judge "scatters all evil with his eyes." The NIV better renders this "winnows out all evil with his eyes." Compare the first colon of verse 26: "A wise king sifts [or 'winnows,' NIV] out the wicked." The New Living Translation paraphrases verse 8 this way: "When a king judges, he carefully weighs all the evidence, distinguishing the bad from the good."

Verse 9 is a reminder that none of us are perfect, that we have all sinned and that, since we cannot cleanse our own hearts, all of us need mercy. This perspective will keep us humble in regard to our own character and is important to remember in making judgments about others.

As in 11:1, Proverbs 20:10 and verse 23 both show God's loathing of crooked weights and measures for the purpose of cheating others. There may also be a further figurative meaning here in that God hates any kind of self-serving false pretense.

? "VARIOUS PROVERBS [ON MORAL CHARACTER]. Type: Individual Proverbs (20:13-21). Individual proverbs are various moral proverbs that of themselves do not tie to any particular topic. In this context, however, they may describe aspects of character for which one should be on the alert? to determine where someone's character, be it his own or someone else's, will lead" (NAC).

Verse 13 does not mean that we should derive no enjoyment from taking a needed nap or getting a good night's sleep. Rather, loving sleep here refers to excess; sleeping too much as part of habitual laziness (compare 6:6-11). Avoiding the personal productivity necessary to making a living and properly managing one's affairs can lead to poverty. On a higher level, avoidance of spiritual responsibilities because of laziness and sleeping the day away will lead to spiritual impoverishment and even ultimate destruction if not turned around.

Regarding Proverbs 20:16, the Israelites were not to hold overnight as collateral the outer garment of a debtor who might need it to keep warm (Exodus 22:25-27)?the law prohibiting creditor's from depriving poor debtors of their belongings needed for survival. In the ironic tone of this proverb, a situation is described in which a lender had better go ahead and hold a debtor's garment where someone has foolishly "fallen into financial trouble by putting up security for a stranger; especially if he did it for an alluring woman. The message is that one should be wary of dealing with people who lack sound judgment" (New American Commentary, note on Proverbs 20:16). This proverb does not contravene the intent with which the law was given, as the law was not meant to protect foolish, impulsive venturers or schemers that might take advantage of lenders. Also the proverb says nothing about the predicament in which the loss of collateral would place the debtor in this case. All factors must be weighed in such dealings.

Verse 17 speaks of deceitful gain as initially sweet but afterward rather unpleasant and hard to swallow. "The Scriptures do not say that there is no pleasure in sinning, only that the reward doesn't last (9:17, 18)" (Nelson Study Bible, note on 20:17). Hebrews 11:25 mentions the "passing pleasures of sin." On the other hand, choosing God's way may sometimes be difficult and perhaps even unpleasant for the moment, but it yields lasting happiness in the end.

? "DEALING WITH THE KING AND WITH THE LORD. Type: Thematic (20:22-21:3). These verses concern dealings with the two arbiters of justice, namely, the king and Yahweh. Proverbs 20:22-25,27 and 21:2-3 concern Yahweh, while 20:26,28,30 concerns the king. Proverbs 21:1 draws the two together and asserts the superior power of Yahweh over the king; only 20:29 does not clearly fit in this context" (NAC).

Verse 22 says that it is not our place to get even or dole out vigilante justice. The Nelson Study Bible comments: "Because of our limited understanding and imperfection, we are not qualified to recompense evil. Instead we must commit our cause to God, whose vengeance is certain and perfectly just. God says, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay' (see Matt. 5:38, 39; Rom. 12:17, 19; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Pet. 3:9)" (note on Proverbs 20:22).

Verse 24 (like 16:9) shows that God is ultimately in control of directing what happens in a person's life. The second colon asks, "How then can a man understand his own way?" In an overall sense he can't so he must rely on God and God's instructions for wisdom and direction. "The juxtaposition of human plans and intentions with God's sovereign action in human affairs is not meant to discourage planning or activity but rather to guide it. The wise do well to seek counsel about this plan (20:18), listening instead of making rash or hurtful statements (20:19-20)" (NIV Application Commentary, note on verse 24). Of course, in our planning we must make allowance for God unexpectedly redirecting circumstances (see James 4:13-16).

Proverbs 20:25 warns against rash vows, calling to mind the costly mistake of Jephthah (see Judges 11:30-40). If we do make a vow to God, even a rash one that is, a legitimate vow that does not contradict His law in other respects; then we are duty-bound to follow through (compare also Ecclesiastes 5:1-7).

Proverbs 20:27 in the New King James Version says, "The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, /searching all the inner depths of his heart." The ending phrase here, as the NKJV margin notes, is "literally the rooms of

the belly” as either the figurative seat of human emotion or representing the inner, hidden person. The NIV here has “inmost being.” The same phrase is used in verse 30. On the opening colon of verse 27, the NIV rearranges the translation to another that is possible: “The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a man.” If this is correct, the Lord’s lamp here would connote “perhaps his eyes (cf. 5:21; 15:3?) or word (see 6:23 [Psalm 119:105]?cf. Heb 4:12-13)” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on Proverbs 20:27). On the other hand, The Bible Reader’s Companion says that the NKJV translation, as footnoted in the NIV, is the preferred rendering, so that the human spirit is God’s lamp: “The rabbis understood this to mean that God’s image so shines in the human spirit that man is set apart from the animals. It’s this reflection of God which endows us with human abilities and witnesses to His existence through each of our unique capacities” (note on verse 27). Or perhaps the meaning is simply that God is able to look into the human spirit which, though dark and mysterious to human beings, is as bright as a lamp to Elohim revealing everything about the person.

Proverbs 21:1 shows God’s sovereignty even over rulers. The river illustration is not entirely clear. Some suggest the following meaning: that just as people sometimes redirect rivers through dams and irrigation canals, so can God redirect the thoughts and actions of kings to accomplish His purposes. Of course the latter is not so difficult for God as the former is for human beings. Another possible meaning is that just as God had the power to lay out the courses of all the world’s rivers, so He is easily able to direct the course of a king.

? “THE DEVICES AND THE DECLINE OF THE WICKED. Type: Thematic (21:4-8). These five verses focus upon the losses incurred by those who live wrongfully” (NAC).

The Jewish Soncino Commentary regards the plowing of the wicked in verse 4 metaphorically as their scheming’s.

Acts 17

We pick up this week in Paul’s travels, going through Amphipolis, Apollonia, and finally to Thessalonike where there was a ‘congregation of Judah.’ A significant statement is found in v.2 where we are told “And according to his practice, Sha’ul went into them, and for three Sabbaths was reasoning with them from the Scriptures.” He was explaining how the awaited Messiah had to suffer and die and be raised from the dead from the scripture, and this is now the same Messiah being proclaimed to them. Some did believe, along with Greeks and many leading women. But those Jewish Pharisees who were envious began to incite a mob to set all the city into an uproar.

The emissaries were staying at the house of a man named Jason and the mob went to this house looking for them to bring them out to the angered people of the city of Thessalonike. They did not find them there, but dragged Jason out crying “They who have turned the world upside down have come here too...” v6. They accused Jason and the emissaries of acting contrary to the dogmas of Caesar in that they were proclaiming another sovereign – Yahshua! This did have an effect on the people of the city. So they secreted Sha’ul and Silas out by night and they proceeded to Beroia. They also went first to the congregation of the Jews there, and they received the words with eagerness, trusting but verifying with Scripture, all that Sha’ul was telling them. Because of this, they were called noble. The religious Jews from Thessalonike got word of what was happening in Beroia and went there too to stir up trouble for them there! As a result, the Bereans hurried Sha’ul away toward the sea, but Silas and Timothy stayed there. Sha’ul ended up in Athens and was greatly troubled by the city because of the rampant idolatry. He was teaching everywhere there: to the Jews and Greeks in the congregations, on the street, and in the market place too.

V 18 And some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him (Sha’ul) And some were saying, “What does this babblers wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of strange mighty ones” – Because Sha’ul was proclaiming Yahshua and Him resurrected from the dead. So they grabbed Sha’ul and brought him to the Areopagus. The Areopagus or Areios Pagos (Ancient Greek: ?????? ?????) is the “Rock of Ares”, north-west of the Acropolis, which in classical times functioned as the high Court of Appeal for criminal and civil cases[1] in Athens. Ares was supposed to have been tried here by the gods for the murder of Poseidon’s son Alirrothios. So anyone who had something “new” to say to them (as continual seekers of knowledge) was brought there so that people could hear this new thing and everyone could discuss it. In v. 21 “For all the Athenians and the strangers living there spent their leisure time in doing naught but to speak or to hear what is fresh.”

This is where Sha'ul's most wonderful proclaiming to the Athenians took place in verses 22-32. He expressed to them who is "THE UNKNOWN MIGHTY ONE" whom they did not know, His Works through time and creation of mankind, the judgment, and the resurrection. They were fascinated by these new words, but some believed and desired to know more. Among them were Dionusios and Damaris, and others with them.