

Triennial Torah Study – 5th Year 28/02/2015



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By Joseph F. Dumond

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

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

Ex 31	Isaiah 59-62	Prov 2	Acts 1
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Tabernacle Artisans, the Sabbath and the Tablets of the Testimony (Exodus 31)

Bezalel of the tribe of Judah and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan were chosen to build the items for the tabernacle. Though naturally born with these talents—and, as a result, skilled in working with gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood, as well as in carving and embroidered work—the most important thing to notice is that, just as He did with the garment makers, God also filled them with wisdom by His Spirit to enable them to accomplish this most important responsibility.

Also in this chapter, God stresses that it is important to keep His Sabbaths (weekly and annual), as they are a sign between God and His people. It serves as a visible badge and witness to others manifesting those who serve the true God. Furthermore, verse 12 says, “It is a sign...that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.” Thus, it is a sign that regularly points us to the true God. Indeed, the weekly Sabbath memorializes creation, as stated in this passage—and creation points to the Creator, the true God. The Sabbath is a reminder that we do not worship “gods” of rocks and trees, sun moon or sky, or figments of human imagination, but the very Creator who made all these things—including the human mind. And all of God's Sabbaths reveal His plan for the salvation of all mankind. Notice that the Sabbath is given as a special covenant—a perpetual covenant—distinct from the Sinai covenant (verse 16).

Indeed, God's Sabbaths are important for us even today, as He said they would be “a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever” (verse 17). Notice: “...for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth...” (same verse). Why would this only be for the Jews alone? That wouldn't make any sense. Rather, it is clear that, as Christ said, “the Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27-28)—that is, for all mankind. What ties it all together is that all people must become part of spiritual Israel (compare Romans 11:17, 24; Galatians 3:28-29; 6:16)—and that is defined as those who obey God's law (Romans 2:25-29), which includes His Sabbath.

After God finished talking with Moses, He gave him the two stone tablets of His Ten

Commandments, which He had already written (24:12) with His very finger (31:18). Though we often think of each of these tablets as containing separate sections of the Ten

Commandments, it is possible that “all ten commandments appeared on each tablet. Middle Eastern treaties were typically written in duplicate” (Nelson Study Bible, note on 24:12). As these were “tablets of testimony,” it would seem that this would provide the testimony of “two witnesses,” a requirement of God's law for judgment to

be carried out (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). Perhaps that is even one reason the Ten Commandments are recorded twice in the Bible (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5). Still, as the front and back of the tablets were written on (Exodus 32:15), it is possible that the first four commandments, concerning duty to God, were inscribed on one side, while the last six commandments, concerning duty to man, were engraved on the other side. In that case, putting the two tablets together, with one turned over, would still yield the traditional picture.

“Your Iniquities Have Separated You From Your God” (Isaiah 58-59)

Chapter 59 is a continuation of a catalog of Israel’s national and individual sins (in addition to those already described in chapters 57-58). It is sin that cuts people off from God and leaves them groping in confusion and darkness (59:1-2). When Paul cited a string of statements from the Psalms regarding the wickedness of man (Romans 3:10-18), he also included a passage from Isaiah, taken from 59:7-8.

The New Bible Commentary: Revised states in its note on verse 15: “Perhaps the most revealing touch [of how bad things are] is the victimizing of the decent man, the only one out of step. It is a worse breakdown than that of Am[os] 5:13 [see verses 12-15]; i.e., not only public justice has warped, but public opinion with it.”

In the midst of this evil, God finds no one to intercede and “wonders” at it (see verse 16). “The Lord’s concern is even sharper than our versions suggest. Wondered should be ‘was appalled,’ as at 63:5” (New Bible Commentary, note on verse 16). So God Himself will intervene, symbolically putting on the spiritual armor Paul elaborates on in Ephesians 6:10-17 (Isaiah 59:16-17). We will see a description of this taking place in Isaiah 63:1-6, which foretells the righteous war Yeshua will make at His return (see Revelation 19:11). Paul says Israel will eventually be saved (Romans 11:26), citing Isaiah 59:20 to support his statement.

“At v. 19 they [the Israelites] are introduced as making an ample confession of their sins, and deploring their wretched state in consequence of them. On this act of humiliation a promise is given that God, in His mercy and zeal for His people, will rescue them from this miserable condition; that the Redeemer will come like a mighty Hero to deliver them; He will destroy His enemies, convert both Jews [i.e., Israelites] and Gentiles to himself, and give them a new covenant, and a law which shall never be abolished” (Adam Clarke’s Commentary, note on chap. 59).

In verse 21, the New King James Version and some other modern translations refer to God’s Spirit as a “who.” But the word should be “that,” as it is in the earlier King James Version and in the New Revised Standard Version. (To learn more on this subject, download or request our free booklet Who Is God?)

“Arise, Shine; for Your Light Has Come!” (Isaiah 60)

Chapter 60 focuses on the glory of Zion to come. It begins and ends with allusions to the light that will come—the light being God Himself, and His glory (verses 1-3, 19-20).

Several of these verses were cited by John in the book of Revelation as he described the New Jerusalem of the final age. Yet the millennial Jerusalem, prior to the New Jerusalem, will experience a limited measure of this

glory. The gates will not be shut, so that the wealth or glory and honor of the nations can be brought in (verse 11; Revelation 21:25-26). There will no longer be a need for the sun to give light, and the light of God will continue day and night (verse 19)—true of the millennial Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:7) and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:23; 22:5). And those who have afflicted the city and its people, or at least the descendants of the guilty, will come and bow down at the feet of its inhabitants (Isaiah 60:14). Several passages in this chapter and elsewhere in the Bible describe people flowing to Jerusalem and generously bringing fine gifts. God's purpose for this seems twofold—for the humbling of those who in the past have been hostile to physical and spiritual Israel, and for the building and beautification of Jerusalem and God's temple.

While the bowing down by others may occur in a limited sense toward the human Israelites of the millennial age, it will occur in a much more profound way toward the truly converted believers of this age who will be the glorified inhabitants of the Holy City. Yeshua said they will even be worshiped, showing that they will have been elevated to divine existence (Revelation 3:9; compare 19:10; 22:8-9).

The Acceptable Year of the Lord; A Married City (Isaiah 61-62)

Chapter 61 begins with “the song of the Lord's anointed. Although the term ‘the Servant of the Lord’ is absent from this song...it seems artificial to make the ‘me’ of v. 1 a new speaker” (New Bible Commentary, note on verses 1-4). Indeed, God was speaking in Isaiah 60:22. And He is still speaking in the next verse, 61:1. Yet He mentions another here as God. This makes sense only when we understand that God the Father and Yeshua are both God.

When Yeshua was visiting the synagogue of Nazareth, He read from the scroll of Isaiah (Luke 4:18-19). The passage He read was the beginning of chapter 61. This passage—concerning the proclamation of liberty, release and time of acceptance. Indeed, this ties back to the “acceptable time” of Isaiah 49. There it was referred to as the “day of salvation.” Isaiah 61:2 says, “acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God.” Isaiah 34:8 says, “the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.” Isaiah 63:4 says, “the day of vengeance...and the year of My redeemed.” A day in this usage represents a year—apparently the final year before Christ's return.

But the Day of the Lord can have a broader application. In one sense, it represents all of future eternity from the time of God's intervention. In another sense, it can even be seen to have started with the New Testament era for the believers—the forerunners in God's plan of spiritual redemption. Indeed, as mentioned in the highlights for Isaiah 49, Peter related a prophecy of the “last days” and “Day of the Lord” to the Assembly's beginning in his day (see Acts 2:14-21). Indeed, the seven-day week is thought by many to represent 7,000 years in God's plan for mankind (each day representing a thousand years, compare 2 Peter 3:8)—thus, 6,000 of man's history followed by a seventh 1,000-year period (a millennial Sabbath day, compare Hebrews 3-4). In such a plan, anything beyond the midway point—as apostolic times were—would be the “last days” (though “last days” is normally a clear reference to the period much closer to Christ's second coming).

In quoting Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4, Yeshua explained that He came in fulfillment of this prophecy. Included in what He quoted was the part about the acceptable year of the Lord—but He did not quote the next phrase regarding the day of vengeance. This perhaps indicates that, while the Day of the Lord was actually in the

future, it would have a measure of advance fulfillment for some in His day (just as Peter indicated in Acts 2 regarding another end-time prophecy)—that is, the liberty and acceptance of redemption would begin for some in Christ's day. But the vengeance-on-the-nations aspect of the Day of the Lord was not to come in any sense in His human lifetime. It was completely for the future. He would fulfill it at His return to earth in power and glory. The remainder of Isaiah 61 speaks of a future time of renewal, both physical and spiritual. God hates "robbery and iniquity" (verse 8, NIV)—"robbery for burnt offering" (NKJV) apparently being a mistranslation (see also Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary, note on verse 8, available on-line at www.biblestudytools.net). But He loves judgment and truth (same verse).

He will clothe the city in righteousness (verse 10; see also Revelation 21:2)—clothing in Scripture often representing spiritual condition. And righteousness and praise will spring forth (verse 11).

Isaiah, and by extension God, will not rest in continuing the warning until righteousness has been established (62:1-2, 6-7, 10-11). At that time Jerusalem will no longer be called "Forsaken" and "Desolate" but Hephzibah ("My Delight Is in Her") and Beulah ("Married"). Hephzibah was "the name of Hezekiah's wife [2 Kings 21:1], a type of Jerusalem, as Hezekiah was of Messiah (ch. 32:1)" (JFB Commentary, note on Isaiah 62:4).

God is seen as married to Jerusalem and its land—although it should be understood that physical Jerusalem is also symbolic of the spiritual Zion, the bride of Christ. Yet all of Israel and Judah are to eventually come into the same covenant marriage with Him—their God (see 1 Corinthians 10:4). There seems to be some confusion in the metaphor in verse 5, where Jerusalem is told, "So shall your sons marry you." The JFB Commentary explains: "Rather, changing the [vowel] points, which are of no authority in Hebrew [since they were not part of the original Hebrew text], [the phrase "your sons" should actually be translated] 'thy builder' or 'restorer,' i.e., God; for in the parallel clause, and in vs. 4, God is implied as being 'married' to her; whereas her 'sons' could hardly be said to marry their mother; and in ch. 49:18 they are said to be her bridal ornaments, not her husband" (note on 62:5). The NIV Study Bible's note on the same verse also states that "the Hebrew for 'sons' could be read as 'Builder.'" God will at last not only deliver His people, but establish them forever.

Proverbs 2 (Commentary of Matthew Henry)

Solomon, having foretold the destruction of those who are obstinate in their impiety, in this chapter applies himself to those who are willing to be taught; and, I. He shows them that, if they would diligently use the means of knowledge and grace, they should obtain of God the knowledge and grace which they seek ([v. 1-9](#)). II. He shows them of what unspeakable advantage it would be to them. 1. It would preserve them from the snares of evil men ([v. 10-15](#)) and of evil women ([v. 16-19](#)). It would direct them into, and keep them in, the way of good men ([v. 20-22](#)). So that in this chapter we are taught both how to get wisdom and how to use it when we have it, that we may neither seek it, nor receive it in vain.

Verses 1-9 Job had asked, long before this, Where shall wisdom be found? Whence cometh wisdom? ([Job. 28:12](#), [Job. 28:20](#)) and he had given this general answer ([v. 23](#)), God knoweth the place of it; but Solomon here goes further, and tells us both where we may find it and how we may get it. We are here told what means we must use that we may obtain wisdom. 1. We must closely attend to the word of God, for that is the word of wisdom, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, [v. 1](#), [v. 2](#). (1.) We must be convinced that the words of God are the fountain and standard of wisdom and understanding, and that we need not desire to be wiser than they will make us. We must incline our ear and apply our hearts to them, as to wisdom or understanding itself. Many wise things may be found in human compositions, but divine revelation, and true religion built upon it, are all wisdom.

We must, accordingly, receive the word of God with all readiness of mind, and bid it welcome, even the commandments as well as the promises, without murmuring or disputing. Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears. (3.) We must hide them with us, as we do our treasures, which we are afraid of being robbed of. We must not only receive, but retain, the word of God, and lodge it in our hearts, that it may be always ready to us. (4.) We must incline our ear to them; we must lay hold on all opportunities of hearing the word of God, and listen to it with attention and seriousness, as those that are afraid of letting it slip. (5.) We must apply our hearts to them, else inclining the ear to them will stand us in no stead.

We must be much in prayer, v. 3. We must cry after knowledge, as one that is ready to perish for hunger begs hard for bread. Faint desires will not prevail; we must be importunate, as those that know the worth of knowledge and our own want of it. We must cry, as new-born babes, after the sincere milk of the word. 1 Pt. 2:2. We must lift our voice for understanding lift it up to heaven; thence these good and perfect gifts must be expected, Jam. 1:17 ; Job. 38:34 . We must give our voice to understanding (so the word is), speak for it, vote for it, submit the tongue to the command of wisdom. We must consecrate our voice to it; having applied our heart to it, we must employ our voice in seeking for it. Solomon could write *probatum est*—a tried remedy, upon this method; he prayed for wisdom and so obtained it.

We must be willing to take pains (v. 4); we must seek it as silver, preferring it far before all the wealth of this world, and labouring in search of it as those who dig in the mines, who undergo great toil and run great hazards, with indefatigable industry and invincible constancy and resolution, in pursuit of the ore; or as those who will be rich rise up early, and sit up late, and turn every stone to get money and fill their treasures. Thus diligent must we be in the use of the means of knowledge, following on to know the Lord. II. What success we may hope for in the use of these means. Our labour shall not be in vain; for, 1. We shall know how to maintain our acquaintance and communion with God: “Thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord (v. 5), that is, thou shalt know how to worship him aright, shalt be led into the meaning and mystery of every ordinance, and be enabled to answer the end of its institution.”

Thou shalt find the knowledge of God, which is necessary to our fearing him aright. It concerns us to understand how much it is our interest to know God, and to evidence it by agreeable affections towards him and adorations of him. 2. We shall know how to conduct ourselves aright towards all men (v. 9): “Thou shalt understand, by the word of God, righteousness, and judgment, and equity, shalt learn those principles of justice, and charity, and fair dealing, which shall guide and govern thee in the whole course of thy conversation, shall make thee fit for every relation, every business, and faithful to every trust. It shall give thee not only a right notion of justice, but a disposition to practise it, and to render to all their due; for those that do not do justly do not rightly understand it.” This will lead them in every good path, for the scripture will make the man of God perfect. Note, Those have the best knowledge who know their duty, Ps. 111:10 .III. What ground we have to hope for this success in our pursuits of wisdom; we must take our encouragement herein from God only, v. 6-8. 1. God has wisdom to bestow, v. 6. The Lord not only is wise himself, but he gives wisdom, and that is more than the wisest men in the world can do, for it is God’s prerogative to open the understanding. All the wisdom that is in any creature is his gift, his free gift, and he gives it liberally (Jam. 1:5), has given it to many, and is still giving it; to him therefore let us apply for it.

He has blessed the world with a revelation of his will. Out of his mouth, by the law and the prophets, by the written word and by his ministers, both which are his mouth to the children of men, come knowledge and understanding, such a discovery of truth and good as, if we admit and receive the impressions of it, will make us truly knowing and intelligent. It is both an engagement and encouragement to search after wisdom that we have

the scriptures to search, in which we may find it if we seek it diligently. He has particularly provided that good men, who are sincerely disposed to do his will, shall have that knowledge and that understanding which are necessary for them, Jn. 7:17 . Let them seek wisdom, and they shall find it; let them ask, and it shall be given them, v. 7, v. 8.

Who those are that are thus favoured. They are the righteous, on whom the image of God is renewed, which consists in righteousness, and those who walk uprightly, who are honest in their dealings both with God and man and make conscience of doing their duty as far as they know it. They are his saints, devoted to his honour, and set apart for his service. What it is that is provided for them. Instruction. The means of wisdom are given to all, but wisdom itself, sound wisdom, is laid up for the righteous, laid up in Christ their head, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who is made of God to us wisdom. The same that is the Spirit of revelation in the word is a Spirit of wisdom in the souls of those that are sanctified, that wisdom of the prudent which is to understand his way; and it is sound wisdom, its foundations firm, its principles solid, and its products of lasting advantage. Satisfaction. Some read it, He lays up substance for the righteous, not only substantial knowledge, but substantial happiness and comfort, Prov. 8:21 . Riches are things that are not, and those that have them only fancy themselves happy; but what is laid up in the promises and in heaven for the righteous will make them truly, thoroughly, and eternally happy.

Protection. Even those who walk uprightly may be brought into danger for the trial of their faith, but God is, and will be, a buckler to them, so that nothing that happens to them shall do them any real hurt, or possess them with any terrific apprehensions; they are safe, and they shall think themselves so. Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield. It is their way, the paths of judgment in which they walk, that the Lord knows, and owns, and takes care of. Grace to persevere to the end. If we depend upon God, and seek to him for wisdom, he will uphold us in our integrity, will enable us to keep the paths of judgment, however we may be tempted to turn aside out of them; for he preserves the way of his saints, that it be not perverted, and so preserves them in it safe and blameless to his heavenly kingdom. The assurances God has given us of his grace, if duly improved, will excite and quicken our endeavours in doing our duty. Work out your salvation, for God works in you.

Verses 10-22 The scope of these verses is to show, 1. What great advantage true wisdom will be of to us; it will keep us from the paths of sin, which lead to ruin, and will therein do us a greater kindness than if it enriched us with all the wealth of the world. 2. What good use we should make of the wisdom God gives us; we must use it for our own guidance in the paths of virtue, and for the arming of us against temptations of every kind. 3. By what rules we may try ourselves whether we have this wisdom or no. This tree will be known by its fruits; if we be truly wise, it will appear by our care to avoid all evil company and evil practices. This wisdom will be of use to us.

For our preservation from evil, from the evil of sin, and, consequently, from the evil of trouble that attends it. 1. In general (v. 10, v. 11), "When wisdom has entire possession of thee, it will keep thee." And when has it an entire possession of us? When it has dominion over us. When it not only fills the head with notions, but enters into the heart and has a commanding power and influence upon that,—when it is upon the throne there, and gives law to the affections and passions,—when it enters into the heart as the leaven into the dough, to diffuse its relish there, and to change it into its own image—then it is likely to do us good. When we have delight in it, when knowledge becomes pleasant to the soul: "When thou beginnest to relish it as the most agreeable entertainment, and art subject to its rules, of choice, and with satisfaction,—when thou callest the practice of virtue, not a slavery and a task, but liberty and pleasure, and a life of serious godliness the most comfortable life a man can live in this world,—then thou wilt find the benefit of it."

Though its restraints should be in some respects unpleasant to the body, yet even those must be pleasant to the soul. When it has come to this, with us, discretion shall preserve us and keep us. God keeps the way of his saints (v. 8), by giving them discretion to keep out of harm's way, to keep themselves that the wicked one touch them not. Note, A principle of grace reigning in the heart will be a powerful preservative both against corruptions within and temptations without, Eccl. 9:16, Eccl. 9:18 .2. More particularly, wisdom will preserve us. From men of corrupt principles, atheistical profane men, who make it their business to debauch young men's judgments, and instil into their minds prejudices against religion and arguments for vice: "It will deliver thee from the way of the evil man (v. 12), and a blessed deliverance it will be, as from the very jaws of death, from the way in which he walks, and in which he would persuade thee to walk." The enemy is spoken of as one (v. 12), an evil man, but afterwards as many (v. 13); there is a club, a gang of them, that are in confederacy against religion, and join hand in hand for the support of the devil's kingdom and the interests of it.

They have a spirit of contradiction to that which is good: They speak froward things; they say all they can against religion, both to show their own enmity to it and to dissuade others from it. They are advocates for Satan; they plead for Baal, and pervert the right ways of the Lord. How peevishly will profane wits argue for sin, and with what frowardness will they carp at the word of God! Wisdom will keep us either from conversing with such men or at least from being ensnared by them. They are themselves apostates from that which is good, and such are commonly the most malicious and dangerous enemies religion has, witness Julian (v. 13): They leave the paths of uprightness, which they were trained up in and had set out in, shake off the influences of their education, and break off the thread of their hopeful beginnings, to walk in the ways of darkness, in those wicked ways which hate the light, in which men are led blindfold by ignorance and error, and which lead men into utter darkness. The ways of sin are ways of darkness, uncomfortable and unsafe; what fools are those that leave the plain, pleasant, lightsome paths of uprightness, to walk in those ways! Ps. 82:5 ; 1 Jn. 2:11 . They take a pleasure in sin, both in committing it themselves and in seeing others commit it (v. 14): They rejoice in an opportunity to do evil, and in the accomplishment and success of any wicked project. It is sport to fools to do mischief; nor is any sight more grateful to them than to see the frowardness of the wicked, to see those that are hopeful drawn into the ways of sin, and then to see them hardened and confirmed in those ways. They are pleased if they can discern that the devil's kingdom gets ground (see Rom. 1:32), such a height of impiety have they arrived at. They are resolute in sin (v. 15): Their ways are crooked, a great many windings and turnings to escape the pursuit of their convictions and break the force of them; some sly excuse, some subtle evasion or other, their deceitful hearts furnish them with, for the strengthening of their hands in their wickedness; and in the crooked mazes of that labyrinth they secure themselves from the arrests of God's word and their own consciences; for they are froward in their paths, that is, they are resolved to go on in them, whatever is said against it.

Every wise man will shun the company of such as these. From women of corrupt practices. The former lead to spiritual wickednesses, the lusts of the unsanctified mind; these lead to fleshly lusts, which defile the body, that living temple, but withal war against the soul. The adulteress is here called the strange woman, because no man that has any wisdom or goodness in him will have any acquaintance with her; she is to be shunned by every Israelite as if she were a heathen, and a stranger to that sacred commonwealth. A strange woman indeed! utterly estranged from all principles of reason, virtue, and honour. It is a great mercy to be delivered from the allurements of the adulteress, considering. How false she is. Who will have any dealings with those that are made up of treachery? She is a strange woman; for, First, She is false to him whom she entices. She speaks fair, tells him how much she admires him above any man, and what a kindness she has for him; but she flatters with her words; she has no true affection for him, nor any desire of his welfare, any more than Delilah had of Samson's. All she designs is to pick his pocket and gratify a base lust of her own.

Secondly, She is false to her husband, and violates the sacred obligation she lies under to him. He was the guide of her youth; by marrying him she chose him to be so, and submitted herself to his guidance, with a promise to attend him only, and forsake all others. But she has forsaken him, and therefore it cannot be thought that she should be faithful to anyone else; and whoever entertains her is partaker with her in her falsehood. Thirdly, She is false to God himself: She forgets the covenant of her God, the marriage-covenant (v. 17), to which God is not only a witness, but a party, for, he having instituted the ordinance, both sides vow to him to be true to each other. It is not her husband only that she sins against, but her God, who will judge whoremongers and adulterers because they despise the oath and break the covenant, Eze. 17:18 ; Mal. 2:14 . How fatal it will prove to those that fall in league with her, v. 18, v. 19. Let the sufferings of others be our warnings. Take heed of the sin of whoredom; for, First, The ruin of those who are guilty of it is certain and unavoidable, if they do not repent. It is a sin that has a direct tendency to the killing of the soul, the extinguishing of all good affections and dispositions in it, and the exposing of it to the wrath and curse of God and the sword of his justice. Those that live in forbidden pleasures are dead while they live. Let discretion preserve every man, not only from the evil woman, but from the evil house, for the house inclines to death; it is in the road that leads directly to eternal death; and her paths unto Rephaim, to the giants (so some read it), the sinners of the old world, who, living in luxury and excess of riot, were cut down out of time, and their foundation was overthrown with a flood. Our Lord Yeshua deters us from sinful pleasures with the consideration of everlasting torments which follow them. Where the worm dies not, nor is the fire quenched. See Mt. 5:28, Mt. 5:29 . Secondly, Their repentance and recovery are extremely hazardous: None, or next to none, that go unto her, return again. It is very rare that any who are caught in this snare of the devil recover themselves, so much is the heart hardened, and the mind blinded, by the deceitfulness of this sin. Having once lost their hold of the paths of life, they know not how to take hold of them again, but are perfectly besotted and bewitched with those base lusts. Many learned interpreters think that this caution against the strange woman, besides the literal sense, is to be understood figuratively, as a caution. Against idolatry, which is spiritual whoredom. Wisdom will keep thee from all familiarity with the worshippers of images, and all inclination to join with them, which had for many ages been of such pernicious consequence to Israel and proved so to Solomon himself. Against the debauching of the intellectual powers and faculties of the soul by the lusts and appetites of the body. Wisdom will keep thee from being captivated by the carnal mind, and from subjecting the spirit to the dominion of the flesh, that notorious adulteress which forsakes its guide, violates the covenant of our God, which inclines to death, and which, when it has got an undisturbed dominion, makes the case of the soul desperate.

This wisdom will be of use to guide and direct us in that which is good (v. 20): That thou mayest walk in the way of good men. We must avoid the way of the evil man, and the strange woman, in order that we may walk in good ways; we must cease to do evil, in order that we may learn to do well. Note, 1. There is a way which is peculiarly the way of good men, the way in which good men, as such, and as far as they have really been such, have always walked. 2. It will be our wisdom to walk in that way, to ask for the good old way and walk therein, Jer. 6:16 ; Heb. 6:12 Heb. 12:1 . And we must not only walk in that way awhile, but we must keep it, keep in it, and never turn aside out of it: The paths of the righteous are the paths of life, which all that are wise, having taken hold of, will keep their hold of. "That thou mayest imitate those excellent persons, the patriarchs and prophets (so bishop Patrick paraphrases it), and be preserved in the paths of those righteous men who followed after them." We must not only choose our way in general by the good examples of the saints, but must also take directions from them in the choice of our particular paths; observe the track, and go forth by the footsteps of the flock. Two reasons are here given why we should thus choose:—(1.) Because men's integrity will be their establishment, v. 21. It will be the establishment, Of their persons: The upright shall dwell in the land, peaceably and quietly, as long as they live; and their uprightness will contribute to it, as it settles their minds, guides their counsels, gains them the good-will of their neighbours, and entitles them to God's special favour. Of their

families: The perfect, in their posterity, shall remain in it. They shall dwell and remain forever in the heavenly Canaan, of which the earthly one was but a type.

Because men's iniquity will be their destruction, v. 22. See what becomes of the wicked, who choose the way of the evil man; they shall be cut off, not only from heaven hereafter and all hopes of that, but from the earth now, on which they set their affections, and in which they lay up their treasure. They think to take root in it, but they and their families shall be rooted out of it, in judgment to them, but in mercy to the earth. There is a day coming which shall leave them neither root nor branch, Mal. 4:1. Let that wisdom then enter into our hearts, and be pleasant to our souls, which will keep us out of a way that will end thus.

Acts 1 (from Biblecentre.org by FB Hole)

BY ITS OPENING words the Acts of the Apostles is linked in the clearest way with the Gospel of Luke. The same Theophilus is addressed, and in the first chapter the story is resumed just at the point where the Gospel left off, save that a few extra details are given of the Lord's words after His resurrection, and the account of His ascension is repeated in a somewhat different setting. The Gospel leads up to His resurrection and ascension. The Acts starts from those glorious facts and develops their consequences.

In the first verse Luke describes his Gospel as a "treatise . . . of all that Yeshua began both to do and teach." The word "began" is worthy of note. It infers that Yeshua has not ceased to do and teach by reason of His going on high beyond the sight of men. The Acts tells us what Yeshua proceeded to do, by shedding forth the Holy Spirit from the Father, so that by Him He might act through the Apostles and others. In the same way we discover by reading the epistles what He proceeded to teach through the Apostles in due season. Before He was taken up He gave necessary instructions to the Apostles, and that, "through the Holy Ghost," though as yet the Spirit was not given to them. In his Gospel Luke had presented the Lord to us as the perfect Man, ever acting in the power of the Spirit, and in that same light we see Him here.

For the space of forty days He manifested Himself as the One living beyond the power of death, and thus abundant proof was furnished of His resurrection. During these contacts with His disciples He spoke to them of things concerning the kingdom of God, and directed them to await in Jerusalem the coming of the Spirit. John, who baptized with water, had pointed to Him as the Immerser with the Set Apart Spirit, and that baptism was to reach them in a few days.

The Lord had been speaking of the kingdom of God; their minds however still ran on the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. In this they were like the two going to Emmaus, though now they knew that He was risen. Their question gave to the Lord the opportunity of indicating what was to be the programme for the beginning, and we see again just what we saw in Luke 24; the Centre of the programme is the Messiah. The coming of the Spirit would mean power, and that the apostles should be "witnesses unto Me"-witnesses to Christ unto the utmost bounds of the earth. The four circles of witness, mentioned at the end of verse 8, supply us with one way of dividing up the book. We begin with the witness in Jerusalem, and until the end of Acts 7 we are occupied with that city and Judaea. Then in chapter 8 comes Samaria. In Acts 9 the man to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles is called; and in Acts 13 the mission to the uttermost parts begins.

There appears to be a contradiction between verse 7, and what Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians

5: 1 and 2. But there the point is that they knew well what was going to transpire as regards God's dealing with the earth: here that we may not know when, since that is a matter reserved by the Father for Himself alone. Our business is to render true and diligent witness to Moshiach. What that witness will effect is not plainly stated until we reach Acts 15: 14.

Having said these things Yeshua was taken up and a cloud-doubtless the cloud of Luke 9: 34 hid Him from their eyes. Two heavenly messengers however stood by their side to supplement

His declaration of a few moments before. Their mission was to be witnesses to the ascended Christ; but their hope was to be His return just as He went. His going was not something figurative, shadowy, mystical, but actual and literal. His coming will be actual and literal in like manner.

Ten days had to pass before the coming of the Spirit, and the rest of the chapter tells us how those days of waiting were occupied. The number of avowed disciples in Jerusalem was about one hundred and twenty, and prayer and supplication filled their time. There could be no witness until the Spirit was given, but they could take and maintain the safe place of utter dependence upon God.

And further, they could refer to the Scriptures and apply them to the existing situation, inasmuch as the Lord had opened their minds to understand, as recorded in Luke 24. It is remarkable that Peter should have been the one to take the initiative in this matter, seeing he himself had so sadly sinned only about six weeks before. Still it shows that the Lord had thoroughly effected his restoration. It was the office of apostleship that was in question, as also verse 25 of our chapter shows. Verses 18 and 19 are evidently not the words of Peter, but a parenthesis in which Luke gives us further details of the fearful end of Judas.

An essential feature of apostleship was first-hand knowledge of the risen Saviour. The apostle must be able to testify of Him as having personally seen Him in His risen estate: hence Paul's third question in 1 Corinthians 9: 1. Paul saw Him, not during the forty days but later in the full blaze of His glory. However, from the outset there must be the twelve apostolic witnesses, and Matthias was chosen. They had recourse to the Old Testament practice of casting lots:

guidance, such as we read of in Acts 13: 2, could not be known until the Set Apart had been given.