

# Reading God's Law and Commandments in the Seventh Year

(Copyright ©1truth1law.com 2012)

In Deuteronomy 31: 9-13, Moses commanded the Levitical priesthood to read the Book of the Law (cf. Dt. 30:10) during the Feast of Tabernacles every seventh year during the Sabbatical cycle. This Sabbatical cycle would end on the forty-ninth year at Atonement (cf. Lev. 25:8-17), and would be followed by the year of Jubilee, or fiftieth year. Today, there are some religious groups who attempt to keep this reading of the law on what they believe is the seventh year based on calculations they claim to be accurate. Upon closer examination, it should become apparent that reading the law on the seventh year is something that the nation of Israel did based on specific instructions that may not be applicable today.

Ancient Israel was a nation that had made a covenant with Almighty God (cf. Ex. 19:8) and when they were gathered at Mt. Sinai, approximately fifty days following their exodus from Egyptian slavery, they began hearing God's law and commandments progressively through Moses. As a nation under God, they were to follow His instructions under the guidance of a family that was given the responsibility to administer His law and commandments. This family was from the tribe of Levi and Moses was their first leader. In a sense, this family acted as a schoolmaster administering the animal sacrifices in a prescribed manner that would help a people without God's Holy Spirit to understand basic principles of decent conduct (cf. Gal. 3:24-25),

Yet the Lord has not given you (the majority of the nation of Israel) a heart to perceive (understand or know) and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day (Dt. 29:4; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is in this setting that God gave specific instructions to the priesthood of Levi, and they alone had the responsibility of educating God's chosen nation (cf. Nu. 3:9-13, 40-51; 4:1-49; 8:5-26). This nation was not Jewish as only one of the tribes (Judah) could be regarded as being Jewish, and this was the tribe into which Jesus Christ would later be born. Therefore, the instructions given to ancient Israel included twelve families that had descended from Abraham,

So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. <sup>10</sup>And Moses commanded them (sons of Levi), saying: 'At the end of every seven years at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, <sup>11</sup>when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses, you (sons of Levi) shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing' (Dt. 31:9-11; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So the reading of the law was commanded to be done by the sons of Levi and no one else. It is interesting to note that many of the groups that claim they are keeping this aspect of God's law also claim they have the right of the Levitical priesthood to collect God's tithe when in fact the Levitical system ended in 70 CE and the tithe is now administered by those of the Melchizedek priesthood, all of whom are kings and priests (cf. 1Pet. 2:5, 9). Therefore, each member of this royal priesthood has an individual responsibility to manage and administer their tithe in a manner that serves to teach God's way of life to others (cf. 1Cor. 3:16; 2Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22),

Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? <sup>12</sup>For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law (Heb. 7:11-12).

The Levitical priesthood was commanded to gather the entire nation in order to read the law to them,

Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, <sup>13</sup>and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess (Dt. 31:12-13).

So the reading of the law was to be done every seventh year by the Levitical priesthood, and the entire nation was to be present during the eight day Feast of Tabernacles to hear it. From other scriptures it is clear that God's festivals have not changed and are still in effect today (see the study: God's Holy Days). However the Levitical priesthood has changed, Israel no longer exists as a united and extended family of twelve tribes comprising one nation, and although some claim they know when the seventh year begins and ends there is no absolute proof that their calculations are correct, despite claims to the contrary. By enforcing the reading of the law on the seventh year, those in leadership positions continue to control the laity because their members have to gather wherever the leadership dictates. However, Jesus Christ does not condone this form of control and manipulation (cf. Mt. 20:25-26; Lk. 22:25-26; Rev. 2:6, 15).

The purpose for reading of the law every seven years was to make sure that God's nation had access to this understanding and could receive specific instruction that would help them remember and follow God's law more perfectly. It was a quick overview that would take place over an eight day period. Each member of the nation did not have access to a copy of the Bible as people do today. Instead, they relied on the Levitical priesthood to read from God's law and commandments each Sabbath, New Moon, Holy Day, and seventh year during the Feast of Tabernacles. It was also meant as a reminder every seven years of the agreement the nation made with God when they met with His representative (the Angel of God) at Mount Sinai,

This day the Lord your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>17</sup>Today you have proclaimed the Lord to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice (through the Angel of God). <sup>18</sup>Also today the Lord has proclaimed you (nation of Israel – all twelve families) to be His special people, just as He has promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, <sup>19</sup>and that He will set you high above all nations which he has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy (consecrated) people to the Lord your God, just as He has spoken (Dt. 26:16-19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As God's nation today is not based on ethnicity or race, and as it is a spiritual household that has ready access to the written word of God (cf. Eph. 2:19-22), everyone in this spiritual house should be reading God's law daily and not relying on hearing it only once

every seven years. Some read the next scripture and understand it only in a physical sense, but when compared to other related texts it should become apparent that Christ was speaking from an entirely spiritual perspective,

Give us this day our daily bread (Mt. 6:11).

But he (Christ) answered and said, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Mt. 4:4; Ed. note in parenthesis).

By combining these two scriptures, Christ is emphasizing that it is just as important to partake of God's word daily as it is to eat food. When the study of God's word is neglected it is no different than going without physical food; in both instances an individual will eventually die. Based on this truth, it should be apparent that each member of the Body of Christ has a responsibility to study God's word regularly,

Be diligent (study) to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2Tim. 2:15; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Also, God's law and commandments are to be written in our inward parts if we are a member of His spiritual nation,

My son, keep my words and treasure my commands within you. <sup>2</sup>Keep my commands and live, and keep my law as the apple of your eye. <sup>3</sup>Bind them on your fingers (constantly remember them); write them on the tablet of your heart (have a deep inward desire to obey them) (Pro. 7:1-3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide (slip) (Pro. 37:31; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In fact, every member of the spiritual nation of Israel made a covenant agreement when they repented of sin, were baptized, and received God's Holy Spirit. An integral part of this agreement involves continued obedience to God's law and commandments (Rom. 6:1-2, 11-13, 15-16), and in return God promises to provide His Holy Spirit to each repentant individual as long as they continue to obey Him (cf. Ac. 5:32),

Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – <sup>32</sup>not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days (in the future), says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts (inward parts); and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (spiritual Israel) (Jer. 31:31-33; Ed. notes in parentheses).

This prophecy has not been fulfilled yet, even though many people have repented and received God's Holy Spirit. Neither has the reading of the law on the seventh year been fulfilled. However when Christ returns to rule this planet, the fulfillment of reading the law on the seventh year will commence. It is during the millennial rule of Jesus Christ that the law of God will be taught and understood progressively (cf. Ps. 2:1-12; Isa. 2:2-4).

Just as the seventh day of the week pictures a rest from regular work activities and an opportunity to spend time learning more about God and His way of living; so the millennial rule of Christ will usher in a period of time when mankind will learn more about God and His law. In the fourth chapter of Hebrews this millennial rest is compared to the seventh day of the week,

For He (Almighty God) has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works';<sup>5</sup> and again in this place 'They (the majority of ancient Israel) shall not enter My rest.'<sup>6</sup> Since therefore it remains that some must enter it (first resurrection and the millennium that follows; cf. Rev. 20:4-6), and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience (most of ancient Israel),<sup>7</sup> again He designates a certain day, saying in (through) David, 'Today,' after such a long time, as it has been said: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.'<sup>8</sup> For if Joshua had given them rest (ancient Israel when they entered the Promised Land), then He would not afterward have spoken of another day (period of time).<sup>9</sup> There remains therefore a rest (Gr. Sabbatismo – Sabbath rest) for the people of God (those who enter the millennial rule of Christ) (Heb. 4:4-9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is during this period that more and more people will begin to correctly understand who God is and what He expects from His people. The following prophecy foretells this event,

No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me (whereas very few do today), from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity (cf. 1Jn. 3:4), and their sin I will remember no more (Jer. 31:34; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The reading of the law on the seventh year had a very different purpose for the ancient nation of Israel as it was meant to remind them of the covenant agreement they made with Almighty God after they left Egypt, and it was an opportunity to review the terms of that agreement which included discussing any areas that they were not clear about. Today, God's servants make a covenant agreement with Almighty God when they repent of sin, are baptized, and receive the promise of God's Holy Spirit. Once this has occurred, God's law is being written in their inward parts and they should be studying it regularly; not waiting for a reminder and review every seventh year (cf. Mt. 4:4; 6:11). Those who understand the spiritual application of the reading of the law, know that it pictures a time when Jesus Christ will return to usher in a millennial period of peace on earth that will be the direct result of his Father's law and commandments being read, understood, and followed. At that time, everyone will learn what it means to "know the Lord."

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

To protect the integrity of this document and prevent alteration and misapplication of its contents in whole or in part, this document is protected under copyright law.

Copyright: This document may be freely copied and distributed provided it is copied without alteration, addition, deletion, or charges, and includes the name of the publisher and this copyright. Quotations may be taken from this document provided the name of the publisher is cited.

All Rights Reserved

(Copyright ©1truth1law.com 2012)