



TNT *Grafted In Class*

3. Father Abraham Had Many Sons

February 24, 2015

I. FROM THE READING

(Quotes from Thomas Lancaster's *Grafted In* Chapters 2-3)

A. All Peoples Blessed Through You

The Lord's promises to Abram in this initial oracle culminates with the last line: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Lancaster, 23)

The Reb Berekiah suggested that God's choice of words was meant to convey that Abram would become a great nation only after he was *remade* by God. It is as if God said to Abraham, "I will make you a great nation only after I've created you as a new creation. Then you will be fruitful and multiply." (Lancaster, 24)

Therefore in Reb Berekiah's opinion, it was the spiritual rebirth of Abram as a "new creation" that was critical to the fulfillment of the promise. (Lancaster, 25)

Just as Abram, by faith, became Abraham, a new spiritual creation, so too Gentiles by faith become new creations in Messiah. According to Paul, the Gentiles who are thus recreated by God are made into sons of Abraham. "So then, [Abraham] is the father of all who believe," Paul writes in Romans 4:11. (Lancaster, 25)

Through faith in the God of Abraham, Gentiles from many nations are remade into sons of Abraham. Through the proliferation of these Gentile believers, Abraham has become a great nation, fulfilling the words of the oracle. (Lancaster, 25)

B. Abraham's Immersion

26-The *Midrash Rabbah* goes on to make an issue out of a noun in the phrase "and you will be a *blessing*." The Hebrew word for "blessing" (*berachah*) sounds similar to the Hebrew word for "pool" (*berechah*), and so invited the sages to indulge in some wordplay. Regarding the clause "and you will be a *blessing*," the midrash says, "you will be an *immersion pool*: Just as a pool purifies the unclean in the same way you bring near to Me those who are far away." *Genesis Rabbah* 39:11. (Lancaster, 26)

Converts to Judaism pass through a "baptism" in a pool of living water. This immersion into a baptismal pool is the final ritual of conversion. Gentiles who pass through the immersion pool are symbolically reborn as Jews (or "born again" as Jews, if you prefer). (Lancaster, 26)

In Jewish law, one who immerses in the water of conversion undergoes a legal transformation. He goes down into the water a Gentile, but comes out of it as an Israelite in every regard. (Lancaster, 26)

C. Making Grafted-In Proselytes

"The souls which they had made [in Haran]...?" [Genesis 12:5] Normally we would smooth out the Hebrew by translating the word *souls* as "people" and the word *made* as "acquired." The sages, however, read the passage literally, and they objected that Abram and Sarai were not able to make souls. [proselytes] (Lancaster, 27)

The Hebrew verb (*v'nivracu*) translated as "will be blessed" is related to a Mishnaic Hebrew term (*mavrich*) that means "to intermingle, to graft." Thus one might translate the verse as "All peoples on earth will be grafted into you." (Lancaster, 28)

A responsible translator would never translate the verse to read, "All peoples on earth will be grafted into you." However the sages are seldom accused of being responsible translators. (Lancaster, 28)

Rabbi Elazar uses the passage to explain how two Gentile women came to be regarded as part of Israel and even mothers of the Davidic kings. Ruth was a Moabite. Naamah was an Ammonite. The Torah says, "No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the

LORD, even down to the tenth generation.” [Deuteronomy 23:3] How then could Ruth and Naamah [mother of Rehoboam] be mothers of the Kings of Israel? The answer is that they were no longer to be considered Moabite and Ammonite. They had been grafted into Abraham. (Lancaster, 29)

The grafting parable is Paul’s but the concept that “all peoples on earth will be grafted into you” is not his invention. Rather, it is an intentional misreading of the Hebrew. Paul and Rabbi Elazar were virtual contemporaries [and could have] shared a common source. (Lancaster, 29)

D. Seed of Abraham

God’s promise to give Abraham seed was literally fulfilled with the birth of Isaac. (Lancaster, 31)

The promise that “all peoples will be blessed through you” was made specific to say, “Through your [seed] all nations on earth will be blessed.” (Lancaster, 31)

This idea is repeated in Genesis 26:4 where God passed the blessing to Isaac, saying, “Through your [seed] all nations on earth will be blessed.” From Isaac the promise was passed to his seed Jacob, to whom God said in 28:14, “All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your [seed].” (Lancaster, 31)

In Galatians 3:16, Paul points out that the “seed of Abraham” and the seed of the patriarchs is always represented in the Hebrew by the singular form of the noun. Paul says, “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say ‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but ‘and to your seed,’ meaning one person, who is Messiah.” (Lancaster, 31)

The singular seed is the agent through which all peoples and all nations are blessed (converted). Messiah is the seed through which the Gentiles are made into new creations. He is the seed through which those far off are brought near. He is the seed into which the unclean are immersed and made clean. He is the seed by which the wild olive branches are grafted in to the family tree of Israel. (Lancaster, 31)

If we belong to Messiah (who is the seed of Abraham) then we are Abraham’s seed and the recipients of the promise of being blessed in that seed. (Lancaster, 32)

The result of the engrafting is that they became a full part of the olive tree of Israel. They are no longer Gentiles in the strict sense. In Messiah, there is neither Jew nor Greek. Instead, both the natural and legal descendants of Abraham (Jews and proselytes) and the descendants by faith (Gentile believers) comprise the broader entity of Israel. (Lancaster, 32)

E. Gentile Inclusion/Exclusion

The two versions of Asenath have striking similarities to the questions posed by many Gentile believers in messianic Judaism today. Are Gentile believers like the daughter of Dinah, lost and forgotten Israelites raised in a Gentile environment, ignorant of their own true identity as Israel. Or are Gentile believers like the daughter of the Egyptian priest, a real Gentile falling head-over-heels in love with Joseph the Israelite, forsaking pagan identity and clinging to Joseph and his God? (Lancaster, 41)

F. Application/Conclusion

1. Yeshua is the Foundational Seed
2. Remade by Him: we are a new creation
3. Baptismal waters: Obedience: those who believe and are baptized
4. Connected to a covenant people: “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded” (Matthew 28:20)
5. Forsaking our previous roots

II. THE SCRIPTURES OF ISRAEL

A. "The Law"

1. Terminology is Important: What do you think of when you think of the word, "law?" What about the words new & old?
2. It is common within Christianity to hear that the law has been "done away with"—that there is no relation of the Mosaic covenant in the life of the Believer
3. How would substituting the Hebrew word "torah" have changed our perception of "the law."

B. Torah Definitions

1. Torah does not equal law
2. Torah: comes from the Hebrew root *yara* which means "to shoot"; can extrapolate this to include "hitting the mark" like an arrow towards a target.
3. The opposite is one of several Hebrew words for sin, *hata*, which means "to miss the mark"
4. Torah meanings: "God's teachings and instruction"; torah is not law though it does contain laws
5. Torah: "The first five books of the Bible"
6. Can also mean: "The tanakh"; the covenant that God gave to Moses on Sinai; any teaching contained in the first five books,
7. *"Remember the torah of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of Yahweh. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."* Malachi 4:4-6

C. Functions of the Torah for Unbelievers

1. Reveals Sin (Romans 7:7)

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." Romans 7:7

2. Acts as a Pedagogue (Galatians 3:19-29)

19Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

20Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. 21Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. 22But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Yeshua the Messiah might be given to those who believe. 23But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24Therefore the Law has become our tutor (pedagogue) to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (pedagogue). 26For you are all sons of God through faith in Messiah Yeshua. 27For all of you who were baptized into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua. 29And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. Galatians 3:19-29

3. Reveals the Messiah (Luke 24:27)

Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He [Yeshua] explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Luke 24:27

4. Brings about God's Wrath

for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. Romans 4:15

5. Reveals What They Are Missing

4But you who held fast to Yahweh your God are alive today, every one of you. 5"See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. 6So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' 7For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is Yahweh our God whenever we call on Him? 8Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? Deuteronomy 4:4-8

6. Provides Protection and Blessing

- a. Our grandparents' generation (even if unredeemed) would blush at much of the evil that is going on today in our culture
- b. In our Judeo-Christian nation, in the past if pursuing a marriage license, you would be pushed right back to the scriptures of Leviticus 18 to delineate whether you were "eligible" for a marriage license

D. Functions of the Torah for Believers

1. Trains in righteousness through teaching, reproof, and correction.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2. Teaches the lifestyle of the redeemed

^{3:18}*So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him....⁴"Remember the torah of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. ⁵"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of Yahweh. ⁶"He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse." Malachi 3:18, 4:4-6*

3. Is a source of untold blessing (Deuteronomy 28-29)

4. Protects the redeemed

I will do this because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws." Genesis 26:5

5. Points the believer to Yeshua

Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Luke 24:44-47

E. Additional to Note

1. Difference between justification vs. sanctification

- a. When Paul is negative related to the law it is in relation to others trying to use the law as the means of salvation.
- b. When Paul is positive towards the law, it is when others are using the law as it was designed—as a tool in our sanctification process.
- c. How many little old ladies would I have to help cross the street to be "righteous" before God?

- i. Negates the whole idea of living the law perfectly in order to be saved—that was never the purpose of the torah—it was given after Abraham to a redeemed people after coming out of Egypt.
2. Avoiding stoplights: Can the redeemed avoid stop lights-not under the law
3. Laws in and of themselves don't bring bondage; it is the foundation of what those laws are built on that bring either freedom or bondage. More laws in this nation, but is still one of the freest nation on the face of the earth.
 - a. Godless governments/anti-Messiah will not be without laws, but one without torah or God's law within
4. Judaic way of thinking is primarily how do you live and not a declaration of what you believe. How you live will show what you believe

III. IS THE TORAH RELEVANT AND IMPORTANT FOR BELIEVERS?

A. Two Contradictory Perspectives

1. Redemptive Intermixing: Even with the sordid origins of some of the aspects of Christianity, it is a testimony to our God's redemptive power that He will take these mixtures and bring positive out of this—why not participate in these things while people's hearts are tender at these times and give the devil a "black eye" in bringing something redemptive out of it?
2. No Mixtures: Yahweh detests these pagan mixtures and we should refrain from participating in them.

B. Examples of Israelite Impure Mixtures

1. Aaron and the Golden Calf

3All the people took the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and molded it into the shape of a calf. When the people saw it, they exclaimed, "O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt!" 5Aaron saw how excited the people were, so he built an altar in front of the calf. Then he announced, "Tomorrow will be a festival to Yahweh!" 6The people got up early the next morning to sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings. After this, they celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry. Exodus 32:3-6

2. Israel's Intermixing

7Now this came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against Yahweh their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods 8and walked in the customs of the nations whom Yahweh had driven out before the sons of Israel, and in the customs of the kings of Israel which they had introduced.... 19Also Judah did not keep the commandments of Yahweh their God, but walked in the customs which Israel had introduced. 20Yahweh rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them out of His sight.... 32They also feared Yahweh and appointed from among themselves priests of the high places, who acted for them in the houses of the high places. 33They feared Yahweh and served their own gods according to the custom of the nations from among whom they had been carried away into exile. 34To this day they do according to the earlier customs: they do not fear Yahweh, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances or the law, or the commandments which Yahweh commanded the sons of Jacob, whom He named Israel.... 41So while these nations feared Yahweh, they also served their idols; their children likewise and their grandchildren, as their fathers did, so they do to this day. 2 Kings 17:7-8; 19-20; 32-34; 41

C. God's Admonition Against Pagan Mixtures

29"When Yahweh your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, 30beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?' 31"You shall not behave thus toward Yahweh your God, for every abominable act which Yahweh hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. 32"Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it. Deuteronomy 12:29-32

1. Questions from the World

a. Wouldn't it be easier to just preach salvation in Yeshua and not worry about all these seemingly ticky tack issues?

b. Wouldn't it be easier and less counter culture to just try to fit in and not rock the boat?

2. Go and Make Disciples: We are to teach our disciples all that Yeshua commanded and observed. As it relates to just one area of intermixing (easter), Yeshua never observed easter, painted easter eggs, enjoyed a stuffed easter bunny, or ate an easter ham or hot crossed buns during this time.

3. Obedience to God's Commandments: We are to keep the testimony of Yeshua and the commandments of God (Revelation 12:17; John 14:15)

4. Come Out of Her My People

I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues. Revelation 18:4

5. Lawlessness (not legalism) is the Problem

21"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' Matthew 7:21-23

6. A Love for the Truth (2 Thessalonians 2) We are to cultivate a love for the truth which is a bulwark against deception

7. Faithfulness Brings Rewards

17"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17-19

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berkowitz, Ariel & D'vorah. *Take Hold*. First Fruits of Zion. 1998

HaYesod (First Edition). First Fruits of Zion

Lancaster, Daniel. *Grafted In*. First Fruits of Zion. 2009