



TNT *Grafted In Class*
5. Linking Two Shavuots
March 17, 2015

I. FROM THE READING

(Quotes from Thomas Lancaster's *Grafted In* Chapters 7 & 8)

Chapter 7: The Flock of Israel (John 10)

A. Yeshua's Mission to the Sheep of Israel

The lost sheep of Israel that Yeshua sought were clearly not Gentiles or even to be found among the Gentiles. pg. 81
When Yeshua says things like, "Do not go among the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of Israel," and when He says things such as "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel," we Gentile followers of Yeshua are left feeling a little bit insecure. pg. 81

While it is true that the Master focused on His expressed intent to seek and save the lost sheep of Israel, he was often confronted with Gentiles vying for His attention. Ultimately, He always met the Gentile's request. pg. 81

B. Gentiles at the Feast

Matthew's version of the story (of the centurion) continues with Yeshua saying, "I say to you that many will come from the east and the west and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:11-12) pg. 83

The feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a well-known fixture in Jewish eschatology. However, in that eschatology, it is always Israel seated at the table with the patriarchs, while the Gentiles are described as the wicked. They are envisioned outside of paradise, hungry and in torment. In Yeshua's version of the story, the criterion for sitting at the table is faith, not ethnicity. pg. 83

Being seated at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not second-class citizenship. The master regarding gentiles as legitimate citizens in the kingdom of heaven, seated at the table of the righteous, even seated with the patriarchs! To be seated with the fathers, one must be part of the family. pg. 83

From his perspective, there is no cause for a Gentile inferiority complex. The Gentiles of faith will sit at the table of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the table of Israel—together with Israel. pg. 84

Because he foresaw the Gentile inclusion in Israel that was coming, He was all the more passionate for the sinners and tax collectors among his own people lest they be sent from the table, thrown outside the kingdom and into outer darkness. pg. 84

C. One Flock With One Shepherd

In John 10:16, he introduces sheep from another flock. He says, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." pg. 84

In the John passage, the sheep being gathered and joined it to the already existing flock under one shepherd are Gentiles. Notice that they are not of the flock of Israel. They are "not of this sheep pen." Sheep that are not part of the Flock of Israel and not from the sheep pen (the land) of Israel are gentiles. pg. 84

Notice that the master does not say, "there shall be two flocks." And it is the Gentiles who are joined to the flock of Israel, not vice versa. Again, the master does not assign Gentiles second-place status, nor does he separate them from Israelites. They are all to be with in one flock, with one shepherd. pg. 85

D. Commissioned to Disciple the Nations

At the completion of his ministry and just prior to his ascension, He lifted the ban on teaching the gospel to Gentiles. He told his disciples, "Go and make disciples of all nations (Gentiles), immersing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I've commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20) pg. 85

The commandment to immerse the Nations evokes the traditional conversion ritual. As we have learned in previous chapters, when a Gentile wants to convert to Judaism, he must pass through a ritual immersion. Subsequent to his immersion, He is regarded as an Israelite in every respect, and he is required to live a life obedient to the laws of Torah. Yeshua takes the same model and adopts it for his purposes. pg. 86

There is a conversion implied here. It is not a legal conversion whereby one is legally transformed from a Gentile into a Jew, but a no less stunning conversion takes place as we enter the flock of the good Shepherd. pg. 86
“Teaching them to obey everything I’ve commanded you.” Those are His words and His only instructions for us non-Jews. We are to obey everything that He commanded His disciples because we are to be disciples too. Our immersion into Yeshua is a conversion of sorts. It does not make us Jewish, but it does make us disciples. pg. 86
One of the things that the Master commanded his disciples to do was to keep the commandments of Torah. We Gentile disciples would do well to obey his command. We need look no further for an explanation of our desire to walk according to Torah. We need seek no other justification for keeping Sabbath or the festivals or the kosher laws or any of the commands of Torah. We are disciples of Yeshua just as Peter, Andrew, James, and John were. Discipleship implies imitation. It is our job as disciples to imitate Messiah, and part of the imitation of Messiah is following the Torah. pg. 86

Chapter 8: Voices in the Thunder (Exodus 19, Acts 2)

E. Israel: Betrothed to God

If Gentiles are made joint heirs with Israel, does this not make the Gentiles also chosen? pg. 89

The LORD had declared to Israel, “I will take you for my people, and I will be your God.” (Exodus 6:7) The expression “you will be my people and I will be your God” is close to a legal formula from the sphere of marriage. In marriages of the ancient Near East, the groom declared, “you will be my wife and I will be your husband.” In a sense, it is as if God declared his intention to marry the people of Israel. pg. 89

Moses, in his role as liaison between God and the people, is sometimes described as the “friend of the bridegroom.” (Compare John 3:29-30) in ancient Jewish wedding custom, the friend of the bridegroom was the intermediary between the couple. It was the friend’s job to present the bride to the groom. Moses filled this role by leading the people to Mount Sinai and conducting the negotiations between God and Israel. pg. 89

The giving of the law at Mount Sinai’s describing Jewish literature as a betrothal and wedding. Within the midrash there are several short parables to develop this theme. They all follow the same basic construction: a princess (Israel) is captured by bandits (Egypt). A King (God) happens along, sees the princess in distress, and rescues her. He then takes her to His palace (Mount Sinai) and asks her to marry him. In one passage, Mount Sinai is compared to a wedding canopy. In another, the two stone tablets are referred to as the wedding contract. pg. 90

God posed the question in Exodus 19:4-6 and Israel said yes. pg. 90

In the ancient Near East, the betrothal of a woman was a formal affair. It entailed written contract agreements in which the terms and conditions were stated. pg. 90

A covenant is an agreement specifying terms and conditions incumbent upon both parties. A covenant is the definition of a relationship between two parties. pg. 91

In Exodus 19, God asked Israel to enter into a covenant relationship with Him. For His part, He offered to make Israel His “treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.” He offered to make them into the people of God. For Israel’s part of the deal, her responsibility was to “hear God’s voice” and keep the terms of His covenant. His covenant is the Torah. Israel’s acceptance of the terms and conditions of the Torah qualified her as the people of God. pg. 91

Within the church, we Christians often refer to ourselves as the bride. However, the Torah and all the Scriptures depict Israel as the promised bride. Can there be two brides? Is God a polygamist? pg. 91

To our modern and pluralistic sensibilities, the idea of the singular people of God seems narrow and ethnocentric. Why would God choose one people above all others? Why are the Jewish people the chosen people?

Theologians call this seemingly unfair conundrum the “scandal of particularity.” Call it what we will, the Bible is clear on this point. Out of all the peoples on the earth, out of all the nations, God has entered into covenant with only one people, only one nation. That nation is Israel. pg. 92

If Gentiles want to be a part of the people of God, we have to leave our people and join ourselves to Israel. pg. 92

If the Gentiles want to be saved, he must join the covenant God has made with Israel. The same way Israel entered the covenant by agreeing to hear God’s voice. pg. 92

F. Thunder & Lightning?

The Hebrew text of Exodus 20:18 does not actually use the word *thunder*. Instead of thunder, the word *kolot* is employed. *Kolot* is the plural form of the Hebrew *kol*. *Kol* means “voice.” So the Torah literally says, “And all the people saw the voices.” pg. 93

In Hebrew, “hearing someone’s voice” is idiomatic for obedience. pg. 93

What is His voice? It is the commandments of the Torah, the terms and conditions of His marriage covenant with her. pg. 93

The revelation of God at Mount Sinai commenced with voices, presumably thunder, accompanied by lightning, and the loud voice of the shofar-trumpet. pg. 94

All the people heard the voice of God as He spoke the Ten Commandments. It was an unprecedented and not-to-be-repeated moment in the history of the universe. An entire nation literally heard the voice of God speaking. pg. 94

In *Midrash Rabbah*, Rabbi Yochanan: The Torah says, “And all the people saw the voices.” Note that it does not say “the voice,” but “the voices”; wherefore Rabbi Yochanan said that God’s voice, as it was uttered, split up into seventy voices, in seventy languages, so that all the nations should understand. (*Shemot Rabbah* 5:9) pg. 94

In the world of rabbinic thought and literature, all of humanity is divided into 70 descendants of Noah’s sons in Genesis 10. Talmudic literature frequently speaks of the “seventy nations,” meaning all nations. pg. 94

G. The Universality of the Torah: the Torah for the Nations

Rabbi Yochanan is telling us that as God spoke the words of Torah at Mount Sinai, His voice spoke simultaneously in all the languages of the world. Why? So that all mankind might hear and receive the Torah in their own language. The Torah is meant to have universal appeal. It is an open invitation to all mankind. The Torah is offered to anyone who will “hear God’s voice and keep His covenant.” Anyone can be part of the marriage. Anyone can join the bride. pg. 94

There is a deep universalism implied here that seems to contradict the particularity of Israel’s divine selection. pg. 94

The legend of the Torah in 70 languages appears again at Mount Ebal. In Deuteronomy 27, Moses commanded Israel to erect an altar on Mount Ebal as part of a covenant renewal ceremony. pg. 94

In Joshua 8, the children of Israel arrived at Shechem and built the altar on Mount Ebal as Moses commanded them. In the Mishnah, we read that the Israelites wrote out the whole Torah in 70 languages on the altar. (*m.Sotah* 7:5) pg. 96

When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, the Greek Bible was called the “Seventy” (Septuagint, LXX). Again, the image is of the Torah going forth in all tongues. pg. 96

Anyone who responds to God’s invitation to covenant relationship is welcome to join the peculiar people and take a place among the kingdom of priests. pg. 96

At the end of the narrative in Exodus 19 & 20), we read, “And all the people saw the voices and the torches.” pg. 96

We would normally smooth out the Hebrew of verse 18 by translating the word saw as “heard” and by translating the word torches as “lightning.” Thus we can paraphrase, “And all the people heard the thunder and saw the lightning.” The sages, however, read the passage literally without our glosses. pg. 96

In Deuteronomy, Moses retold the story of hearing God’s voice at Sinai. In ten different passages, he reminded Israel that they heard God’s voice speak to them “from out of the fire.” Repeatedly he said, “You all heard the voice speaking from out of the fire.” pg. 97

Rabbi Ishmael imagined God’s voice at Mount Sinai to be like a sledgehammer breaking up large stones. With each successive blow a multitude of fiery sparks are scattered in every direction. pg. 97

According to that interpretation, the voice of God at Mount Sinai not only split into 70 voices speaking 70 different tongues, but those voices were like hot sparks flying forth from a hammer’s blows on stone. All the people really did see the voice of God, and torches too, because the voice of God appeared to them like hot, burning torches. As God spoke, the words took shape as torches of fire. pg. 97

H. A Second Jewish Shavuot

Another ancient Jewish tradition about the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai has to do with the timing of the event. Judaism regards the festival of Shavuot (Pentecost) to the anniversary of the day on which God spoke at Sinai. pg. 98

The Feast of Shavuot in Jewish tradition, is also the anniversary of the day when God's voice spoke in all languages of the world and was visible as torches of fire that came "to every Jew individually." pg. 98

In Acts 2, Peter and the other disciples were gathered to celebrate this wedding anniversary (Shavuot) when the Holy Spirit fell upon them in the form of tongues of fire. Torches of fire came to rest on each individual disciple. As a literary device and as a genuine supernatural phenomenon, the miracle is an allusion to the legend of God's fiery voice at Mount Sinai. IN addition, subsequent to receiving this fiery spirit, the disciples found themselves proclaiming the gospel in every language. It is a literal fulfillment of the psalm later quoted by Rabbi Yochanan: "The LORD announced the word, and great was the company of those who proclaimed it." (Psalm 68:11) pg. 98

The miracles, signs and wonders that came upon [the disciples] in Acts 2 carried deep significance. The tongues of fire and the speaking in every tongue were both direct allusions to the Mount Sinai wedding experience and the receiving of the Torah. God was underscoring the inseparable relationship between His Holy Spirit and His holy Torah. pg. 99

Luke is careful to point out that those assembled there that day were all Jewish. He prefaces his description of the event by saying, "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." (Acts 2:5) pg. 99

Undoubtedly there were also Gentiles present, God-fearers and the like, but they were not part of the story, nor were they included in Peter's address to "all Israel." In Acts 2, Peter had not yet even considered the possibility of Gentile participation outside of a legal conversion to Judaism. pg. 99

I. Gentile Inclusion

It is important for Luke to show us that the gospel is received only by Jews, because he is setting us up for the central conflict of the book of Acts: the controversy over the Gentile inclusion in the kingdom. pg. 99

Not until Acts 10 are Gentile believers formally introduced into the mix. pg. 100

"The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues." (Acts 10:45-46) pg. 101

Just as the Jewish believers had spoken the gospel in all the languages of the nations at Shavuot, now the Gentiles in Cornelius's house were experiencing the same miracle. The voice of God was speaking in various languages to them and through them. They had not gone through a legal conversion ritual. They were still Gentiles. pg. 101

Confident in the definitive sign of the 70 languages, Peter cried out, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." (Acts 10:47) pg. 101

For Gentiles making a legal conversion into Judaism according to the traditionally prescribed ritual, immersion is supposed to follow circumcision. Circumcision is the sign of entering the covenant. Immersion is a symbolic death and rebirth. pg. 101

The term "born again" originally referred to this symbolic rebirth as a Jew. (b. *Yevamot* 47b-48b) pg. 101

In the case of Cornelius and his household, Peter took the almost unprecedented step of forgoing circumcision. I say "almost unprecedented" because there is a minority opinion in the Talmud that states one who is immersed, though not circumcised, is still regarded as an Israelite. pg. 101

For Peter, the evidence of the miraculous voices in every language was compelling enough. He needed no further convincing of the covenantal status of the Gentile believers. pg. 102

"Chosen people," "royal priesthood," "holy nation," and "people belonging to God" are all titles of Israel. They are the very roles God offered to Israel at Mount Sinai if only she would "hear his voice and keep His covenant." (1 Peter 2:9) pg. 103

As Gentile believers, we find our position in Israel spelled out here. We are no longer to be regarded as merely Gentiles. We are part of the people of God. pg. 103

1 Peter 2:10 says, "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Peter borrowed these words from the prophet Hosea. pg. 103

Hosea told them of a day of repentance, a day when they would return to him. He said, “Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’” (Hosea 1:10) pg. 103

As Peter wrote to his former Gentiles, he was transmitting the voice of God from Mount Sinai as it was split into the 70 languages of the nations. pg. 104

II. THE EXODUS REDEMPTIVE STORY

A. It's a New Beginning

1. *Beginning of Months*: Says that it is the beginning of months for us (Exodus 12:2)

B. Power of Covenant

1. *God's Mark*: Observing Passover depicts God's mark (Exodus 13:9)

9And it (Passover) shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of Yahweh may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand Yahweh brought you out of Egypt.

10Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year. Exodus 13:9-10

- a. Devil's mark (Rev. 13:16, 14:9; 20:4)
2. *Threshold Covenant* (Taken from H. Clay Trumbull's *The Threshold Covenant*)
 - a. a host would pour blood of animal on the threshold, and the visitor would step over and find protection in the house (more prestigious the guest, more costly the animal sacrificed). There would be a basin in the threshold to store the blood
 - b. A king would visit the land; if for the king, would put blood on the doorposts.
 - i. This practice would be used if a king was trying to extend his territory
 - ii. He would send messengers through the land; they would go in to those houses where the blood was shed to work out final covenantal details
 - iii. For those who didn't have the blood on the doorposts, the king would send in the army
 - iv. Later custom to make it clearer was that the host would dip their hand (later a bush) into the blood and “paint” the blood on the doorpost
 - c. Two Hebrew words:
 - i. Abar: pass by or pass over
 - ii. Pesach: to step across a threshold where blood has been poured out—and have fellowship with those people
 - d. Passover was God coming in covenant with Israel and skipping over the Egyptians. (Exodus 12:11)

C. Married to God: The overarching metaphor for all the festivals is that of a wedding where God is marrying His people (Isaiah 62:5)

D. Focus on Yeshua (Not on Your sins)

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the First day you shall remove leaven from your houses. Exodus 12:15

E. Descriptors of the Day

1. *Yahweh's Passover*: God says that it is His day (Leviticus 23:5)

5In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is Yahweh's Passover. Leviticus 23:5

2. *Scriptural Descriptions*: Exodus 12 & 13; Leviticus 23:4-22; Numbers 9; Deuteronomy 16

F. Overview of the Original Story

1. *Betrothal*: Israel was God's treasured possession (endearing term in the Hebrew)"am segullah"; Exodus 19:5; Deut 26:18

2. *God's Four Promises* (Exodus 6:6-7)

6Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Exodus 6:6-7

- a. *I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians*
 - b. *I will deliver you from their bondage*
 - c. *I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments*
 - d. *I will take you for My people, and I will be your God*
3. Israel's Adultery: Golden calf incident
- a. Aaron was so deluded that he called the people to a mixture of a festival to Yahweh after making the calf: Exodus 32:5—"tomorrow will be a festival to Yahweh"
 - b. Moses ground the golden calf into a powder and made the people drink it (Exodus 32:20)
 - c. The Levites then responded to Moses' call to covenant faithfulness and commanded them to go throughout the camp killing the offenders Ex. 32:27-28—Levites killed 3000
 - d. Moses' command for the people to drink the gold-powdered water was similar to the ritual to determine if a woman was adulterous in Numbers 5:12-31: If the woman was guilty her abdomen swelled. Some commentators have speculated that those "most guilty" had a visible sign of that guilt which allowed the Levites to know specifically who they were to kill.
 - e. *39They defiled themselves by their evil deeds, and their love of idols was adultery in Yahweh's sight. 40That is why Yahweh's anger burned against his people, and he abhorred his own special possession.* Psalm 106:39-40
4. God's Divorce of Israel (Jeremiah 3:8)
5. Israel's Promised New Covenant & Remarriage to Israel
- 31"Behold, days are coming," declares Yahweh, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares Yahweh. 33"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares Yahweh, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares Yahweh, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34*

G. Replay of Exodus: Overview of the Gospel Story

- 1. Yeshua as the Lamb of God (John 1:29)
- 2. The Last Supper (seder meal)
- 3. Communion: Yeshua and the third cup (Cup of Redemption) & tied into the wedding metaphor where Yeshua used betrothal language with His disciples to make a "marriage proposal" to them

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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