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News

BAR MITZVA IN ASHDOD

It was with great pleasure that we celebrated a Bar Mitzva in Ashdod on Shabbath October 17, 2009 with our full community. It was the Shabbat Bereshit, the first Shabbat reading for the year 5770. It was on this very Shabbat that Ilya was born thirteen years ago.



At the very beginning of the service we attended Ilya's mother lighting the candles for Shabbat, then we sang beautiful Hebrew songs for about twenty minutes. It was a very good time to prepare our heart for worship. I opened the worship time with an explanation of the Bar Mitzva and why, as Yeshua's believers, we perform such a ceremony. Of course I took the example of Yeshua who was in the Temple of Jerusalem when he was twelve. Many rabbis believe that Yeshua was there for his Bar Mitzva.

We then opened the big sefer Torah (scroll of the Torah). I read a text from Gen. 1. And then Ilyah read a long text from Gen 3: 1-19. Everyone was impressed with how good the reading was. Today even some rabbis are not able to read the Torah scroll, because the graphics of the letters are not exactly the same as modern

Shabbat Noah

October 24, 2009

6 Cheshvan 5770

Hebrew graphics and the text is without any vowels.



However Ilya is a very good student, smart and clever. After this reading he gave us a "drasha" a sermon of ten minutes in Hebrew and once again we were impressed by his abilities to preach in Hebrew and to attract the attention of the audience.

After the service we were invited to refreshments prepared by his mother and some members of our community

A COMBINED EFFORT IN FLORIDA BEARS FRUITS

Ken is a Jewish man who a short time ago accepted Yeshua as his Messiah. His nurse, the lady in the orange, is an Adventist. She took him to services in south Florida where he met Alex Schlusser, leader of the Beit Tflilah V'tekvah congregation. Ken told Alex that he did not belong there because he was Jewish. Alex told him that he also was Jewish. This put Ken at ease and opened several dialogs between the two of them, helping Ken in his acceptance of Yeshua as his Messiah. Recently Ken and his nurse moved to Tampa where Ken was immersed. Ken feels very strongly about both his Judaism and his Adventism. Ken and his nurse came to the Rosh Hashanah service in St Petersburg. Several people asked me who the man sitting in the front was who was singing so joyfully and clapping his hands with so much vigor. It was Ken.

Overview

Noah

Genesis 6:9-11:32



It is ten generations since the creation of the first human. Adams descendants have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and G-d resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earths inhabitants except for the righteous Noah, his family and sufficient animals to repopulate the earth.

G-d instructs Noah to build an ark. After forty days and nights, the flood covers even the tops of the highest mountains. After 150 days the water starts to recede.

On the 17th day of the 7th month, the ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat. Noah sends out a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns.

A week later Noah again sends the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive leaf in its beak. After another seven days Noah sends the dove once more; the dove does not return. G-d tells Noah and his family to leave the ark.

Noah brings offerings to G-d from the animals which were carried in the ark for this purpose. G-d vows never again to flood the entire world and designates the rainbow as a sign of this covenant. Noah and his descendants are now permitted to slaughter and eat meat, unlike Adam.

G-d commands the Seven Universal Laws: The prohibitions against idolatry, adultery, theft, blasphemy, murder, eating meat torn from a live animal, and the obligation to set up a legal system.

The worlds climate is established as we know it today. Noah plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Ham, one of Noachs sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered. Shem and Yafet, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards. For this incident, Canaan is cursed to be a slave.

The Torah lists the offspring of Noachs three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended.

The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Babel, which results in G-d fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world. The Parsha concludes with the genealogy of Noah to Avram..

He Grieved in His Heart

According to the Midrash Bereshit Rabbah 32:7 **“And it came to pass after the seven days” (Gen 7:10)**. This teaches that G-d, gave them a time to repent. A period of seven day is in the Jewish tradition a time of mourning and since the righteous Methusaleh died just before the flood, they mourned for him. However, they did not repent.

Another interpretation about these seven days: **“And it came to pass after the seven days” Gen 7:10**. Rabbi Joshua b. Levi said: Seven days G-d, mourned for His world before bringing the Flood, the proof being the text, **“And it grieved in his heart” (Gen 6: 6)** the Hebrew word used is **“Vayit’atsev”** the exact same word used in **2Sam 19:3** for King David who grieved for his son Absalom.

Kindness and Appreciation

Noah sends out the dove the first time to see if the waters of the flood have abated. The Torah relates: **“But the dove did not find a resting place for the sole of her foot; and she returned to him (Noah) to the Ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth; and he put forth his hand and took her and brought her to him into the ark” (Genesis 8:9)**. Why does the Torah need to tell us that Noah reached out to the dove and brought her back into the ark?

Rabbi Naftoli Tzvi Yehuda Berlin points out that the dove did not fly into the ark. Since she did not return with anything in her mouth (the second time she brought back the olive branch), she thought that her master, Noah, would not let her back into the ark. Noah, however, had compassion and took her into his hands to warm her while she rested from the journey.

Rabbi Berlin teaches that we should learn from Noah’s actions that if someone returns from an errand or a mission unsuccessful due to circumstances beyond his control, we should treat

him with kindness and appreciation as if he were successful

Help Others to Become Better

The Torah states: “Noah walked with the Almighty” (Genesis 6:9). What lesson about life is the Torah teaching us through this verse? What does it mean that Noah “walked” with the Almighty?

Rabbi Obadia Sforno, a classic commentator, explains that Noah walked in the Almighty’s ways, which means to do good to others. How? The people acted corruptly and Noah tried to teach them how to improve their actions.

Rabbi Packouz says in the name of Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, “There are different levels in helping others. We find in the Rambam (Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Gifts to the Poor 10:7-14) that there are eight levels of giving tzedakah (the Hebrew word used for charity; there is no word in Hebrew for charity. Tzedakah means “justice, righteousness.”) The highest level is to help a person earn a living on his own. Why is this the highest level? When one helps a person become self-sufficient, he is helping him not just once, but for the rest of his life. Similarly, when you help someone become a better person you are not just helping him for the moment; you are helping him accomplish more his entire life.”

Not only will he do many more good deeds, but there will be a positive influence on his children and grandchildren. The more elevated a person is the more he will share his high ideals with his family. You are helping this person’s future generations! Strive to do the ultimate - help others to become better people.

He Created us with Feelings

No one in the entire Torah is introduced with such good words as is Noah. He is a “man,” he is righteous, he is pure and he walks with God. Three separate times during the account of the Flood, the Torah tells us that Noah did “exactly as God told him to do.”

And yet, who is Noah? Midway through this week’s portion we are told that he lived for 350 years after the flood (Gen 9:28), and that’s that.

He disappears into history as quickly as he came. He is not like Abraham, the first Jew, to whom the Torah devotes four weekly portions, nor certainly the Moses who is featured in the majority of the Torah.

Where did Noah go wrong? What differentiates him from a man like Abraham?

Rabbi Zev Leff says that the answer lies precisely in the phrase that Noah did “exactly as God told him.” God comes to Noah and says he is about to destroy all of humanity, and that Noah should build an ark to save himself. He doesn’t flinch. “Yes, sir. One ark coming right up.”

Notice something strange? God says He is about to destroy the world and Noah doesn’t flinch. He just goes out and builds an ark.

When Abraham is told that God is about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, he fights tooth and nail for them. God did not tell him to do so, but God didn’t need to. Abraham knew what he believed in and took initiative.

In contrast to Abraham, Noah was a “yes-man.” And God does not want yes-men. If he had wanted robots, he could quite easily have created them. But he created us as humans instead - with feelings, thoughts and ideas. God created independence for us to use, not for us to suppress. Abraham stood up for what he believed was right; Noah did not have an opinion. He just followed God.

Following God is not a bad thing. But sometimes, in fact quite often, it’s just not enough. God’s laws are a structure on which to build, not a jail in which to live

A Smile

“A smile costs nothing ... but gives much. It enriches those who receive it without making poorer those who give it. It takes but a moment. However, the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he can get along without it. And none is so poor that he can’t be made rich by it.”

DARWIN AND CATS

Maimonides had a dispute with a philosopher whether instinct or training is the decisive factor in animal behavior. To prove the efficacy of training, the philosopher taught cats to stand erect, balance trays and serve as waiters. He dressed them for the part and conducted a banquet with the cats as the waiters. Maimonides countered his proof by releasing some mice at the banquet. The cats, forgetting all their training, let the trays and dishes crash to the ground as they rushed about on all fours in pursuit of the mice.

Human beings also have their baser instincts and desires that, without training, drag them onto all fours. A human being is distinct from the animals, however, by virtue of his ability to perfect his middos so that they control his baser instincts. One who has not worked on perfecting his middos will, like the trained cat, be able to put on a show of Torah discipline for a time, but only so long as no “mice” are released in his path.

The Alter from Kelm once remarked that Darwin was able to formulate his theory of evolution only because he had never seen a real human being. Thus he could view men as no more than smarter monkeys. “Had he seen my teacher, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, who developed his character traits to a degree of perfection that fully expressed the essence of the Divine Image, he never could have entertained the possibility that human beings evolved from monkeys,” said the Alter.

Darwin’s peers were surely socially respectable people, but with regard to true character development, they remained mere trained cats, whose instinctive desires could at any moment bring them down on all fours

MITZVOT TO PLEASE G-D

In one of his travels a wealthy nobleman passed by a field and saw a peasant pitching hay. Fascinated by the peasants skill and the rhythmic motions of his arms, he offered the peasant more money than he was getting, if he would come work for him. The peasant agreed and returned with the nobleman to his estate.

He showed him into one of the rooms of the castle and told him to proceed with his masterful hay pitching technique. The peasant worked a full day and was rewarded handsomely. However, after collecting his pay he declared that he was quitting.

“I don’t understand,” said the nobleman puzzled, “Isn’t it better and easier for you to just make the motions of pitching hay than actually working outside in the cold or heat? In addition, your reward is so much greater?”

The worker replied, “I’d rather work much harder in the field even for less pay, because there, I see the fruits of my work and feel accomplished!”

The same is with Torah and mitzvot. Reward for doing nothing is meaningless. G-d gave us the Torah and mitzvot in order to accomplish them in this world and thus please our Lord in doing his will on the earth.

NOBODY HAS SHOES!

Back in the early 1950’s a large shoe consortium with stores across the United States and Canada, decided to take their business venture into the emerging continent of Africa. They sent two of their salesman to explore the prospects of business in the remote villages across the Dark Continent.

After just one week, they received a cable from the first salesman: “I am returning at once. No hope for business. Nobody here wears shoes!” They did not hear from the second salesman for four weeks. Then one day an urgent cable arrived. “Send 15,000 pairs of shoes at once! I have leased space in five locations. Will open chain of stores. This place is filled with opportunity. Nobody has shoes!”

EDITOR

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Haftara

Isaiah 54:1 - 55:5

This text of Isaiah is a beautiful text full of promises for Israel. G-d starts to describe the situation of Israel which is “a barren woman” a woman desolated, divorced but with a future. She will have many children.

“Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,” says the LORD. (Isaiah 54:1).

Israel must, as a spiritual nation extend her tents, she has to be a light for the nations and dispossessed the gods of the nations in order to help all the nations to worship the G-d of Israel “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities. (Isaiah 54:2-3)

Even though G-d was angry, upset against Israel, he will get her back and will be her husband and her G-d for ever, “Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame ... For your Maker is your husband — the LORD Almighty is his name — the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; ... The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit... “For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. (Isaiah 54:4-7)

To be sure that G-d will not revoke his covenant with Israel, he is reminding to Israel the covenant with Noah. “To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. (Isaiah 54:9).

As the covenant with Noah is still valid, the covenant with Israel is still valid and be until the end. **Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,”** says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10).

Besorat Yeshua

Mark 10:17-27

PARASHA: The parasha ask the question, of what is good, how to get eternal life, among all the generation of Noah, only Noah and his family were able to be saved. “I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation” (Genesis 7:1)

BESORAH: Yeshua was walking in the street and a man come to him with the same question, a question about “good” and a question about savaltion. “...a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17). Yeshua wants to clarify his conception of “Good” and “evil”: Yeshua says ““Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.” (Mark 10:14; 15). This man was living in Eretz Israel, he should know this truth, the Tehilim (Psalms) taught this concept that only G-d is good. It is an important idea of the Tanach (Bible) because if anyone could imagine that he is “good” enough to merit heaven and eternal life then he is wrong. If G-d saved Noah it was just a act of kindness from G-d. Salvation, eternal life is always a gift from God. Even the greatest prophets Moses and Isaiah needed to be purified by God (Isaiah 6:1-7).

Yeshua wants to encourage this young man to be a righteous, he said to him “You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’” (Mark 10:19)

What Yeshua ask is not something new, Yeshua was a Jew, living as a Jew, he knew the Mitzvot and knew that the will of G-d for humanity was to practice the universal and Noachic laws (mitwot) written on the stones by the hand of God Himself. Oh I know, many people think that only 7 laws are necessary, but I don’t agree, the 10 commandments where given to the humanity since the time of Adam, One example, the Shabbath is not listed in the noachic laws but it has been given to Adam in Genesis 2:1-3. and the Mitzva of the Shabbat is the fourth commandment: “Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.” Exodus 20:8.

