



MORDEKAI'S DRASH — *TOL'DOT*

Torah: *Tol'dot* (History/generations), *B'resheet* (Genesis) 25.19-28.9
Haftorah: *Mal'akhi* (Malachi) 1.1-2.7
Suggested *Messianic Writings* reading: Romans 9.1-13

Shalom,

This parashah gives us a look at events in the adult life of *Yitz'khak* (Isaac). Yitz'khak was forty years old when he married *Rivkah* (Rebecca), and between verses 20 & 21, twenty years had lapsed. Rivkah had been childless, and Yitz'khak interceded on her behalf in prayer. She became pregnant, and from before birth the twins in her womb were at odds with each other.

When we look at the “matriarchs” of Israel – Sarah, Rivkah and Rachel – we see that even the birth of the nation of Israel was a miracle, for all three women were, in their individual lives, barren until the hand of ADONAI gifted each woman with child. We also see the grace and mercy of ADONAI in the way that each child came. In Sarah's case, a child was promised through the covenant ADONAI had cut with Avraham. When this birth did not occur within the time frame of Sarah's hopes and dreams, she apparently gave up and offered her slave-girl Hagar to Avraham as a substitute. The result of the birth of Yishmael was a blood-feud that has continued for millennia.

Two generations later, Rachel did the same for Ya'akov. Being childless, she offered her slave-girl Bilhah to Ya'akov. Two separate children were born to this union, Dan and Naftali, from which came the two tribes in Israel of the same names. Dan, as the first-born of Bilhah, was not particularly blessed by ADONAI. The bad that happened to the tribe seems to outnumber the good, and the tribe eventually succumbed to idolatry and witchcraft.

Naftali fared somewhat better, for Barak and Gideon came from this tribe. The tribe of Naftali was part of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in later history, and thus came under the Assyrian conquest. *Yeshu'yahu* (Isaiah) 9.1 relates that the land of Naftali was, “in earlier times regarded lightly, but would later on be honored”. That promise is later repeated in and fulfilled in *Mattiyahu* (Matthew) 4. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria in 729BCE. Assyrian annals uncovered by archaeologists reveal that Sargon II, the King of Assyria, recorded that he carried away 27,280 men from the Northern Kingdom into exile, primarily leadership, of an estimated population of 4-500,000. Thus, when Yeshua began His earthly ministry, *Mattiyahu* very correctly states that He settled in the land of Zebulun and Naftali, around the Galilee, for many from these tribes had remained in the area.

When Assyria carried the 27,000 captives away, they in turn brought in conquered peoples from other nations to re-settle the area. These people merged with some of the remaining Israelites to become the Samaritans we read of in the *Messianic Writings*. Because of this mixture of people groups, *Mattiyahu* 4, quoting from *Yeshu'yahu* 9, also states that Yeshua went to live in גליל הגוים *Galil HaGoyim* (Galilee of the Nations). Sometime later, in *Yokhanan* (John) 4, Yeshua spoke with a Samaritan woman, explaining that He Himself is the way to salvation, thus inferring that this offer was being offered not just to Israel, but to the *Nations*. So from the above failure of Rachel we see a prime picture of ADONAI “causing everything to work together for good... according to His purposes.”

On to another matriarch. What we see in the case of Yitz'khak and Rivkah is that Rivkah did *not* offer a slave-girl to Yitz'khak, but rather we see that Yitz'khak interceded with ADONAI on his wife's behalf, and she became pregnant. It is known that Hebraic writing in the Tanakh is not always laid out in a consecutive time-frame. The events of *B'resheet* 26 may very well have occurred prior to the birth of the twins, for that would have made it much easier for Yitz'khak to lie to Avimelekh about Rivkah being his sister. (This is not the same Avimelekh as in the similar Avrahamic situation; Avimilekh was a title for the king of the Philistines, just as Pharaoh was a title for the king of Egypt). And very possibly the battle of the twins in Rivkah's womb and the feud that has ensued ever since was because of a holy judgment upon that lie and failure to trust ADONAI. That is not actually stated, but, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (*Mishlei* / Proverbs 18.21). And yet, again working out for good, “mercy triumphs over judgment” (*Ya'akov* / James 2.13), for we know that the prayer of Yitz'khak, whatever the timing, was answered with the miracle of barrenness turning into childbirth.

Many Jewish opponents of a miraculous birth in the case of Yeshua generally fail to recognize the instances of miraculous births in the case of Israel's fathers. Without these miraculous births, Yitz'khak would not have been born to Sarah; Ya'akov would not have been born to Rivkah; and Yosef (Joseph) would not have been born to Rachel; there would not be a nation and people of Israel. One birth made such a difference; something to think about.

And in the effects of another lie being turned into good, *Le'ah* was given in marriage to Ya'akov in a deceitful manner. Yet from the union of Ya'akov and Leah came the tribe of *Y'hudah* (Judah), from which came King David, and later, the Messiah Yeshua. And of course, from Ya'akov's well-known lie to gain the blessing from Yitz'khak came the chosen nation of Israel.

Not that these are lessons teaching us to go around lying and being deceitful, expecting good to result; we are not to continue in sin so that grace will abound, because quite simply, grace will *not* abound if we continue in sin. The patriarchs and matriarchs were good and faithful people. They made mistakes – just like you and I do – but they continued on their journey with their Creator, and He honored them for that. The blessing of B'resheet 12.3 has ridden the crest of time and here at the end of days is just as valid as it was when Avraham first heard the words.

So the point is this: ADONAI has had a mysterious plan ever since the fall of man to restore mankind to redemption, to the Jew first, and then the Gentile. It could only come through a sacrifice by the Creator Himself. Sha'ul wrote much of this mystery, especially in Ephesians. Why the hidden plan of redemption is the way it is, is beyond the comprehension of the human mind alone, but when we allow it, our spirit will readily connect with this truth. That's why Sha'ul suggested praying with both the mind and the spirit. The mystery is not as complicated as the religions of man have made it out to be. He desires our faith to be in Him, and for us to grow in our trust of Him. Of course there are trials and test, and they are not enjoyable, but they are designed to strengthen us and mold us into His design of who we are to be. Our joy is not to be based on this life, but only in Him. The joy and satisfaction of being a disciple of Yeshua will far outweigh any sacrifices we might have to make.

So for anyone who is struggling, whose life may be full of difficulty and weariness, think of Yeshua, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the execution stake, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted” (Hebrews 12.2-3). He is the one who declared to each of us, “Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mattityahu 11.28-30).

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May Israel consider Yeshua, then take His yoke upon themselves and learn from Him.

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)