

A Follow-up To *The Gospel of the Covenant* Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation

De-Hellenizing Mental Muck: Lesson 2

Abraham, the “Father” of the Hebraic Restoration

Especially during the past almost-70 years since the rebirth of Israel into a state, our Father has been restoring the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to the land of Israel as He promised them in His Word (cf. Jeremiah 16:15; Ezekiel 39:25-29). [For more on His promise, see Chapter 13 of *Restoring the Early Church; Fulfilling Biblical Prophecy—Israel and the Jewish People Today*].

At the same time, especially since 1967 when our Father restored the city of Jerusalem to Jewish control, He has also been the Prime Mover of the **“Hebraic Restoration.”** This current time period is significant. Our Lord intends to eradicate the stranglehold which Hellenism has on Christendom today.

In Lesson 1 we noted that Hebraic understanding, unlike the Hellenist approach, reveals our trust in God through our obedient action. Your faith (more accurately, your trust) can be observed by how God’s good and righteous instructions have become your recognizable way of life by His Spirit at work in and around and through you. Yet you might not be aware of how profoundly a certain spiritual forefather has influenced that way of life: the patriarch, Abraham. You, like many Gentile followers of Jesus, might be surprised by this, so let’s review some of the key points about this man.

- Abraham recognized his *intergenerational responsibility* before God to direct and instruct those in his relational realm to live according to the way they’d been taught:

“For I have chosen [Abraham], so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him” (Genesis 18:19).

- God specifically chose Abraham to *be a blessing* not only to those who were physically descended from him through Jacob/Israel, but also to all the ethnic groups who would encounter Him through his seed: *“I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you”* (Genesis 12:3).
- Through the same obedient trust that Abraham lived by, non-Jews would find themselves blessed: *“The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by trust, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you’”* (Galatians 3:8).
- Paul makes clear in Romans 4:13 that Abraham and his descendants would inherit the nations of the world through the righteousness that comes by trust. *“Therefore, the promise comes by trust [emunah], so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the trust [emunah] of Abraham. He is the father of us all”* (Romans 4:16).
- What does Scripture so often say for us today to take to heart? *‘Abraham trusted [emunah] God, and it was credited to him as righteousness’*” (Romans 4:3,9,22, et al).

Next to our Lord Jesus, Abraham is THE principal character cited in Scripture for followers of Jesus to consider as their role model of obedient trust. The entire

chapter of Romans 4 clearly explains this! God promised this one man, Abraham, an everlasting covenant which would ultimately lead to the birth of his Seed, Jesus. God promised that the *whole world* would be blessed because of Abraham.

What kind of trust did Abraham have? One that responded with *obedient action*. The gospel of blessing which was revealed to Abraham in advance announced that *by trust* Gentile and Jew alike would be justified (see Galatians 3:8). And because we who follow Jesus as Lord of our lives are the children of Abraham, our Father God demands no less trust [emunah] from us than the Patriarch had. So, is your life filled with *Abraham's trust*, or are you only a *believer*?

Consider this: The God Who created the entire universe and does everything in accordance with His own will has shown Himself to be absolutely trustworthy. The issue for you is to fully trust Him. **To trust God** means that there are specific things you **entrust to Him**, for instance: •His will, not your will; •having and relying on His guidance, not your rationalization; •living in His empowerment, not your own strength.

What examples of trust that responds with obedient action do we see in Abraham?

1. He left his comfortable life in Ur of the Chaldees and settled where God told him to.

2. Beyond the age of child-bearing Abraham and Sarah waited patiently for the promised son, Isaac.

3. Fully prepared to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac at God's command, Abraham trusted that God could raise him from the dead.

Your trust in God is evidenced by what you *entrust* to Him. That's the distinguishing factor between *activated trust* and the kind of "belief system" demons have (James 2:19).

- List things in your life that you've *entrusted* to God which others can attest to.

Ask people close to you if they agree.

A Loving Father Instructs His Children

The Hebrew word "*Torah*" is translated as "law" in most Bible versions. Yet *Torah* is more accurately understood as our gracious Father's "instruction" or "guidance." Through His commands in the Bible our heavenly Father instructs his children how to live righteously in their relationship with Him and with one another. And your trusting obedience to make His instructions your *way of life* demonstrates that you're His gratefully loving child walking in His Spirit.

However, because so many versions of the Bible have limited their translation of *Torah* to the "law", most Christians view the Older Testament with a negative attitude—as though somehow God's amazing grace is *contrary* to His instructions, His commands of how His people should live. Our Father didn't create a heavy burden for His people to grit their teeth and bear. Rather, His holy revelation of the freedom and boundaries He's given us are expressions of His wonderful love for us.

The 613 Fatherly instructions for holy living in the Older Testament and the 1,050 in the Newer Testament are His means of providing loving guidance to His children as people He has set apart in contrast to the world's self-seeking sinful ways. Why would the lost otherwise seek our Lord Jesus if His power wasn't at work in us to *live differently*?

We need to view His "instructions" with this "parental" understanding. As we make these our way of life by cooperating with the indwelling Spirit of Christ, we're showing

that we really are His children, sanctified (set apart) from the evil values and goals of the world. But if you're living according to the world's ways, you're His enemy (James 4:4).

A love-based foundation undergirds the commands and instructions God gave the Israelites so their lives might be blessed and they'd be prepared to represent Him rightly among the heathen nations. There's an explicit *intentionality* He calls for in parents as they instill His guidance in their children at every opportunity during the day. (Recall *why* God chose Abraham in Genesis 18:19!)

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands [to guide your actions] and bind them on your foreheads [to guide your thoughts]. Write them on the doorframes of your houses [to remind yourself that your home is to be holy] and on your gates [to remember that you're His wherever you go]" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Our Lord Jesus reaffirms this same love-grounded focus for His followers:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40).

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

Most of our Father's guidance in both Testaments focuses on *relationships*—both with Him and with other people. Again, our Father's loving instructions, His guidance, show us how to live *set apart from* the world's values and ways—things which *draw us away* from Him. It's for no small reason that we're warned:

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world" (1John 2:15,16).

"You adulterous people [prizing the world's ways is spiritual adultery against God!], don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

As a "stranger" here (1Peter 2:11) your value system—the character qualities that guide your life as Christ's own—must flow out of your Father's instructions for you. To call yourself a "Christian" yet constantly long for whatever satiates your sin nature is self-deceit—and as James says, that's *hatred toward God*.

In the late 1800s Charles Sheldon, in his classic book, *In His Steps*, described the Christianity of his day:

"...if our definition of being a Christian is simply the enjoyment of corporate worship; generosity with no personal sacrifice; good times surrounded by people we like and things we enjoy; living respectably; and at the same time, avoiding the world's great masses of desperate and suffering humanity because it is too much pain to bear it—surely we are a long way from following the steps of Him Who carried His cross for us."

Apperception—Knowing the Intent The Hebraic Way Of Using God's Word

Apperception isn't a word that's commonly used in Christendom. But it should be at the very heart of how you put your Father's instructions into action.

When you *apperceive* God's Fatherly guidance for how to live, **you always go back to the original understanding that He intended in His Word.** You read *from* the Word in its context, not *into* the Word according to evolving world standards. That's the only way you can fully perceive His purpose: **What action does your Father want from you now when His Spirit prompted the author to write it millennia ago?** Your *rhema* of response, the appropriate action that conforms to His will for you, emanates from the *original intent of His Word* as it would have been understood when it was first penned.

Because God's Word is unchanging in its intent, coming to agreement to put it into practice ensures that the Living Word, Jesus, is in our midst: *"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind [prohibit] on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose [permit] on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My Name, there am I with them"* (Matthew 18:18-20).

We're urged to **"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight"** (Proverbs 3:5,6). By turning to the Spirit of Christ when you apply your Father's instructions, you're diminishing the influence the world's ways may have on you through mere human rationale (1Corinthians 2:4,5).

Being apperceptive compels you to

build your way of life, your *values* and *goals*, on the foundational authority of the Bible. Over time your Father's righteous instructions increasingly become THE way you live your life. You become a clear demonstration of what Jesus would do if He were you. When people ask you *why* you do certain things or *why* you make the choices in life you do, you can cite specific Fatherly instructions you embraced. In Hebrew this is called establishing *halakhahs*, a word which comes from the root *halak*, meaning "to walk."

The earliest followers of Jesus used apperception to establish their "walk"—their way of life which was pleasing to the Father. People called them **"The Way"** (Acts 9:2;19:9,23) because others could readily discern that they lived their way of life as Jesus would live it—in *accordance with the Father's instruction*. Again remember that Abraham was chosen by God because he would *"direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD."*

You might picture apperception as "faith shoes" enabling you to walk out your Father's instructions so that your way of life in Christ pleases Him.

The Entire Bible Is Our Father's Complete Source Of Guidance

The *entirety* of both Testaments is like a 2-act play. If you have just the first act, the Older Testament, you're left hopeless with an incomplete message. If you have only the Newer Testament, you have no foundation on which to discern its fulfillment in Jesus, or the practices of His earliest followers. The two Testaments are inseparably linked. The teachings and faith practices in the Newer Testament are based on the authority of the *Older Testament*—the Hebrew Scriptures.

Numerous examples in the Newer Testament illustrate how the writers relied on apperception. Any time they referred to or cited the Older Testament as the source for their teachings, they were apperceiving. They took for granted that the reader or hearer was well aware of the context surrounding the particular verse or passage cited. Matthew, for example, apperceives the Hebrew text 55 times. In many Bible translations the apperceived Older Testament verses are noted in the footnotes.

- The real question for followers of Jesus today is this: *Why* did the writers cite God’s instructions from the Older Testament as the foundation to a Newer Testament insight if the Older Testament is unimportant? The answer? We need the Older Testament as much as they did!

Jesus relied on apperception throughout His teachings. He’d quote truth from the Older Testament, which everyone knew to be the Word of God. Then He’d APPLY that truth to the situation He was addressing. The apostle Paul praised the Bereans because they *apperceived* his teachings in light of the truth of the Hebrew Scriptures. They made sure that what Paul said agreed with God’s Word!

*“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures every day** to see if what Paul said was true” (Acts 17:11; see also 2 Timothy 3:16,17).*

Keep in mind that when Paul wrote this to his protege, the only Scripture in existence was the Older Testament:

*“**All Scripture is God-inspired and is useful** for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be **thoroughly equipped** for every*

good work” (2Timothy 3:16,17).

Do *you* want to enjoy the same relational intimacy the earliest followers of our Lord inherited from their Hebraic forefathers? If you want to walk in the intimacy and power they had, you need to *apply the Scriptures* as they did. And to do this you must APPERCEIVE the Bible as they did!

The Hebraic Restoration depends on apperception in order for us to live in *accordance with our Father’s will*. That’s why *we*, like our earliest spiritual forefathers, need to confirm any teachings to make sure they reflect the CONTINUITY of both Testaments.

Apperception will always take you back to your Father’s guidance for you in His Word. The teachings of our Lord Jesus were founded on Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). By following His pattern of apperception, you’ll guard yourself from error. Then any faith practice you establish will never let you go beyond what your Father has written (1Corinthians 4:6). That is, you won’t *revise* Scripture to suit yourself, because your heart’s desire will be to please Him.

In Matthew 16:19 and 18:16-20 Jesus gave His followers the authority for *two or three* to use His Word as the basis to establish their faith practices. When we “loose” something on earth, we discover the areas of freedom we have to love and serve others for His glory. And when we “bind” something, we refrain from whatever would cause us to sin and bring down His holy name.

Remember, “doctrine” for the first followers of Jesus was seen in their *way of life*. *Hearing and putting into practice* is what “doctrine” meant to them. Their *halakhahs*, that is, their Bible-based applications, guided their way of life. Daily

they studied and discussed *Torah* together to discern *how* their Father wanted them to live in obedient trust.

Indelibly ingrain this truth into your innermost being:

Living with Jesus as your LORD; trusting in the authority of the Bible to determine your way of life; and being confident in His promise to be with you and with one or two others when you apply your Father's instructions to your lives will always lead to you being in His will.

And practice this important truth:

God's will: nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

Further Reading: We strongly encourage you to thoughtfully and prayerfully read our brief book, *Christian Halakhahs—Loving Jesus Through the Way You Apply His Word*. Also, see *The Way of the Lord, Lesson 1: Way 1: Discussing and Applying the Word of God* (all free).