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Covenant Answering Service



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QUESTION: Could you supply the scriptural meaning of the words: BASTARD, ADULTERY AND INIQUITY?

ANSWER: In dealing with words and their meaning, one should bear in mind that people — whether scribes or translators — have the unhappy knack of attaching meaning to words according to prevailing schools of thought. The words “Jew” and “Gentiles” are typical examples of this. Insofar as the first of the three words submitted for consideration is concerned, one finds that commentaries are reluctant to deal with the subject of the “bastard” because, as one commentary has put it, “the word and subject could be offensive to certain people”. In other words, because some aspects of the Law are offensive to “certain people”, it appears to be thought expedient to treat either the word or the subject as though it did not exist.

The English word “bastard” as it appears in the Authorised Version, is translated from the Hebrew *Mamzêr* in the Old Testament and *nothos* in the Greek of the New Testament. The standard English Dictionary definition of this word is “(1) Born out of wedlock, (2) Mongrel, hybrid, (3) Illegiti-

mate, unauthorised, (4) Not genuine, spurious; debased.” The word “illegitimate”, in terms of its Dictionary meaning, is “not in accordance with law, unauthorised, spurious; irregular, improper; naturally or physiologically abnormal”.

The Hebrew word *mamzêr* which appears twice in the Old Testament (Deut. 23:2 and Zech 9:6), is defined by Dr. James Strong in his Concordance as an act of alienation, “a mongrel i.e. born of a Jewish father and a heathen mother — bastard”. Gesenius, in his *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, states that *mamzêr* is an unused root probably meaning “to be separated, used in a bad sense of one who is excluded from association with others”. Before commenting on this, it would serve to note that in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament scriptures, the Hebrew *mamzêr* is translated as *nothos* which is the same word translated as “bastard” in Hebrews 12:8. According to Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon*, the Athenians understood *nothos* as meaning the child of a “citizen father and an alien mother” while in terms of animals, they understood it to mean a “cross breed” and in all other senses as indicating something spurious or counterfeit.

In returning to Dr. James Strong and his definition, while the principle of the word clearly indicates a “crossing”, one finds the *phraseology* of his definition lacking in historical authority. As has been stated above, there are two occasions in the Old Testament when the word *mamzêr* is used, namely by Moses and Zechariah. How could Moses have written the word as applicable to one born “of a Jewish father and a heathen mother” when no such people as the Jews were known to Moses? Dr. Strong’s phraseology is a vindication of what has been said above namely, that people attach meanings to words according to prevailing schools of thought. Search as one may – and notwithstanding the isolated reference in 2nd Kings 16:6 – the name “Jew” was unknown and totally missing from the historical record until after *Israel’s* captivity and disappearance.

In summing up: the English “bastard” as translated from the Hebrew *mamzêr* meant one born out of an *unauthorised union* which, in terms of the Law of the LORD, meant a prohibition against marriages across racial lines.

The word “adultery” is translated from the Hebrew *nâ’aph* and the Greek *moicheia* – both words, according to all reference books, meaning “adultery”. This, of course, makes the subject somewhat ambiguous for it opens the subject to whatever interpretation a person cares to put on it. The 1875 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states that it was an illicit love affair with the charge of “adultery” being criminal when either one or both of the parties is married to someone else. The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* provides a similar definition but places it in a secondary role while in the primary sense, it means: “to debauch, to render counterfeit, corrupt, debase”. The word itself is derived from Latin sources and if one considers *adulterinus*, *adulterium* and *adultero*, it will be seen that the primary meaning as defined by the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* is correct. These Latin words mean (a) “that which has assumed the nature of something foreign, not genuine, false, counterfeit, impure”, (b) “the ingrafting of something impure and false” and (c) “to pollute, to defile, to give a foreign nature to a thing, to counterfeit”.

As there is considerable ambiguity associated with this word, one must allow the context to determine its true meaning. Because of a bias against “racism”, most people seem to read the scriptural accounts where “adultery” appears in its secondary meaning i.e. as an “illicit love affair” but when one considers the Seventh Commandment – “Thou shalt not commit adultery” – against the Sixth and Fifth Commandments, it is patently obvious that the Hebrew *nâ’aph* is intended in the primary sense. How does one “honour thy father and thy mother” – remembering of course that if each generation since Sarah did this, Israel would indeed “look unto the rock whence ye are hewn and the hole of the pit whence ye are digged” (Isa. 51:1). If Israel refrained from “adultery” in its primary sense, it would not “kill” the nation or “bastardise” it so as to make it impossible for the LORD to fulfil the Promises which were made to the Covenant seed alone.

The Tenth Commandment covers the secondary sense of the word “adultery” for among the things which Israelites were forbidden to covet was “thy neighbour’s wife”. The brevity of the Commandments does not allow for repetition thus when the Seventh Commandment prohibits “adultery”, the context indicates its meaning as in a primary sense while the Tenth Commandment could be seen in its secondary meaning.

The English word “iniquity” is translated from four different Hebrew words, three of which have the same root. They are *’avôn*, *âven*, *âvâh* and *evel*. Translated by the context, the words mean: *’avôn*, fault, mischief and perversity; *âven*, to be vain, sorrow and mischief; *âvâh*, to do amiss, to do wickedly, to do wrong; *evel*, perverseness, unjust. From this, it would appear that if a person indulged in “iniquity” it was not construed in the same light as “sin”. The English word “sin” has been translated from four Hebrew words which are: *chattâ’âh* which means: “an offence with consequences”; *shâgâh* which implies: “to stray”; *châtâ*, “to bear the blame for” and *peshâ*, which means “rebellion”. While the four Hebrew words which are translated as “iniquity” are descriptive of “wrong doing”, the consequences for this are not specifically laid down whereas in the case of the four

words translated as “sin”; one is able to see that these have prescribed consequences which are found in the punitive clauses in the Law of the LORD.

QUESTION: Most people say that when Christ came, He instituted the New Covenant and that this was a new beginning. However, are we correct in thinking that the New Covenant will only be established when His Laws are re-instituted or are both these opinions off the mark?

ANSWER: To clarify this point, one should be absolutely clear what is meant by the “New Covenant”. As with most scriptural phrases, orthodoxy and or the hundred and one denominations of the “new dispensation” appear to have their own interpretation – regardless of whether it contradicts the original statement or not. The “New Covenant” is one of the casualties in this context. The first point to be noted in this subject is that without *Israel*, there could and can be no “New Covenant”. What most people forget – and this because they limit their understanding of the LORD’S Purpose to the New Testament – is that a “new covenant” was promised *to Israel* because *Israel* had failed in its undertaking to observe “all the words which the LORD hath spoken” (Ex. 19:8). It was after all *Israel* had rebelled (Heb: *pesha*) and were in the process of paying for this in being removed into captivity, that Jeremiah was used by the LORD to engender hope within an otherwise hopeless people and it was in this context that a “new covenant” was promised. “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant *with the house of Israel*, and *with the house of Judah* . . .” (Jer. 31:31). According to this account, the promise was specifically made to the two sections of the then divided *Israel* family and significantly, *to no one else*. As though to positively identify the recipients of this new covenant, the LORD drew attention to the fact that it would not be according to the covenant that He had made with their fathers when He brought them out of the land of Egypt (see verse 32). One should of course, bear in

mind that the Jews were not in existence at that time nor, for that matter was the Christian church – how then can the church claim the “new covenant” for itself as an extension of *Israel* while at the same time according “*Judah*” status to the Jews?

In this promised “new covenant”, it should be noted that the Law of the LORD was to be written “. . . in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and (I) will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them . . .” (Jer. 31: 33,34). If Christ instituted the New Covenant and initiated a new beginning, how is it that contrary to His instruction, everyone was rushing around trying to proselytise everyone teaching their own version of the Plan of God. Today, and after almost two thousand years, does “everyone know the LORD” or is the creation of a multiplicity of “gods” on the increase? Perhaps one of the greatest indictments against the contention that the “New Covenant” was ushered in and that a “new beginning” was made is the fact that after the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Law of the LORD was repudiated and man was advised to be governed by his conscience.

Although few people appear to realise it – indeed being “New Testament Christians” it could hardly be otherwise – the prophets Isaiah and Micah clearly foretold when the “new covenant” would be operative (Isa. 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1,2). It will be noted that “the law shall forth of *Zion* and the word of the LORD from *Jerusalem*” – “*zion*” being the administrative centre while “*Jerusalem*” embraces the whole *Israel* polity currently situated in the West, East, North and South just as had been promised by the LORD. At this moment, the true *Israel* nations are anything but the inducement implied by Micah – “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob . . .” – the “new covenant” is not yet operative but surely will be in a day in the not too distant future.

QUESTION: God's statement to Abram – "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" – is very frustrating. The descendants of Abram, Isaac and Jacob were specifically told to keep themselves separate from other people – how, in this situation, could they be a blessing? Further, in Revelation 7:9 it speaks of a great multitude of all nations and kindreds who would praise the Lamb – how could this be if Israel was to retain its exclusiveness?

ANSWER: When faced with apparent contradictions in the Bible – bearing in mind the Lord's parable of the "wheat and the tares" – one should check for translator's errors which are numerous and thereafter search for scribal interpolations. In the case of this question, the fault lies in the field of mistranslation. A superficial consideration of Genesis 12:3 in relation to Deuteronomy 20:16,17 and 23:6 will immediately reveal that something is very amiss here. If all the families of the earth were to be blessed, it surely means ALL and not just some – all indicating no exceptions and yet one finds that the LORD told Israel to exterminate the entire population of the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Canaanites and the Jebusites – men, women and children. None of the families of these nations derived any blessing from Israel and yet the promise was "ALL the families of the earth". The misconception arises because the translator saw fit to transpose one word – *adamah* – which was given the same meaning as the Hebrew *erets*. *Adamah* is found to be associated with the soil, country or ground whereas *erets* is used to identify the world in the sense of the globe on which men live. A closer examination will reveal that the families who were to be blessed, were the families of the *adamah* which immediately identifies the people as those who are descended from THE Adam who, as is stated in Genesis 2:7 was formed "from the dust

of the ground (*adamah*)! Thus from this, it is patently obvious that Israel's function was aimed at the Adamic family and not all the people of the world.

In passing to the account in the Revelation, one should bear in mind that Israel was to be "sifted among all nations" (Amos 9:9) with the additional promise that "not the least grain shall fall to the earth". In Revelation 7:9 which is prefaced by the account of the "sealing" of the 144 000 OUT of all the tribes of Israel, one is directed to the English word "multitude" which appears to suggest this indicates the multiplicity of people from all races. If one considers the Greek text of the New Testament, it will be seen that there are three Greek words which have been translated either as "crowds" or "multitudes" and they are: *ochlos*, which means a crowd of the *same class or calling*; *plethos*, which means a *mixed crowd* of the same general category while *demos* indicates a heterogeneous mob, a crowd comprising all manner of different people. If the popular meaning which has been attached to Revelation 7:9 is correct, the word which should be written would be *demos* whereas in fact it is *ochlos* indicating a people of the same class or calling. This would be in keeping with the 144 000 *Israelites* who were sealed.

There is a final verification of this when one considers that one of the Elders in heaven specifically asked John whether he could identify this *ochlos* and where they came from. The Elder then explained that they were those who came out of the great Tribulation and if one considers either Jeremiah 30:5-7 or Daniel 12:1 one is confronted once again with Israel. So then the "multitude" which came *out of* every nation and kindred tribes and peoples and tongues were not a heterogeneous people but rather Israelites who, if one looks at the world today, it must be admitted are indeed scattered among all nations and who, within their own homelands, have been infiltrated by all races under the sun.
