

Midrash

By Matthew Day

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

Lamentations 3:40 KJV

For most of you, your first thought when you saw this article probably was "What does *midrash* mean?" *Midrash* is a Hebrew word that means "an investigation" according to Strong's dictionary. It comes from the root word *Darash* which means "to seek or to search or to ask."

The Jews used this word to describe talking about and debating scripture. A midrash involves everyone. Everyone can ask questions, and everyone gets a chance to share their opinion and back it up. Sometimes this can lead to a heated debate. It's all part of a midrash.

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

Acts 17:2 KJV

Here, Paul was involved in a midrash. The church that our family meets with on Saturday holds a midrash after lunch.

What is the point of a midrash? Why not just listen to someone teach? The reason is because no one knows everything. If you just listen to someone teach, you will only get one opinion. Also, how does the one teaching learn? In a midrash, everyone learns something. In a midrash, you can test your opinion. Even if you don't change your opinion, you can still learn something.

This is the purpose of this newsletter. I want it to be an email carried midrash. This is why I keep asking for you to write. When you write for this newsletter, I learn, and your opinion is represented.

As I mentioned above, a midrash often includes debate (very often). Is that a good thing or a bad thing? I believe it is a very good thing. Why? Without debate, one's learning is very limited. Anything that involves opinion has the potential to be debated. That includes all interpretation of scripture. My opinion is not necessarily correct. Your opinion is not necessarily correct. Only through some form of friendly debate can we learn what stands behind each opinion. You will even learn a lot about what stands behind your own opinion. The only time debate can be a bad thing is when it is not done with love. This can not only separate friends, but make each debater less willing to consider the other's opinion.

I believe that the midrash is one of the most effective learning tools.

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