

# Sheepfold Gleanings

## LECH LECHA - GET YOURSELF OUT

Genesis 12:1 to 17:27

Isaiah 40:27 to 41:16

Romans 3:19 to 5:6

### The Generations from Shem to Abram

**Genesis 11:10-32** Following Noah's life-span, the scriptures trace his son Shem's lineage for ten generations leading to the life of Abraham (*Abram*). We see Yahweh choose Abraham and Sarah and how He caused them to separate themselves from their family and from the beliefs of the pagan nations (*realm of the Olam Haze*h), to become a redeemed people unto Himself (*realm of the Olam Haba*).

- ✿ Terah had four children: three sons named Abraham, Nahor and Haran, and a daughter named Sarah (*Sarai*) by a second wife.
- ✿ Haran was the father of Lot and of daughters Milcah and Iscah.
- ✿ Milcah married her uncle Nahor (Genesis 20:12).
- ✿ Abraham married his half sister Sarah

Terah took Abraham, his grandson Lot and his daughter-in-law Sarah from Ur, to travel to Canaan. Along the way they stopped in Haran and settled there. It seems Terah was led by the Spirit of Yahweh but did not fulfill his destination. While in Haran, Terah died, leaving Abraham, Sarah and Lot to continue the journey.

### The Setting Apart of a Righteous People

With Abraham, there began a new birth in the history of mankind - the history of a monotheistic faith, the worship of the *One* true God *Yahweh* and obedience to His Word. The awareness of an omniscience (infinite knowledge), omnipotence (unlimited power) and an omnipresence (present everywhere) Creator.

Abraham is the beginning of Yahweh's Torah being birthed in mankind. This is where our study begins.

“Yahweh's Presence rests upon man to the extent that man permits. If he observes Yahweh's command only so long as they do not conflict with a particular passion – be it a desire for food, lust, intellectual stimulation – then to whatever extent that weakness conflicts with his dedication to the will of Yahweh, the Spirit of Yahweh cannot rest upon him.” (Bereshit/ Genesis by ArtScroll.)

**Genesis 12:1** “Now Yahweh said to Abram, ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.’”

Yahweh calls Abraham to take his wife Sarah and leave his whole family and all he had known. Abraham obeyed, but added to Yahweh’s instruction by including his nephew Lot.

Yahweh blessed Abraham saying, “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; *and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*” (Genesis 12:2-3).

This prophetic promise imparted to Abraham, has been fulfilled. In Acts 3:25 in the New Testament/*Brit Chadasha* when Peter shared with the men of Israel, “You are sons of the prophets, and of the Covenant that Yahweh made with our fathers, saying to *Abraham, and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*”

This blessing from Yahweh was the preparation of Abram to be *set apart* from a world of commonality that was full of death and destruction (*Olam Hazeah*) and brought into the promises of an abundantly blessed future, both for his family and all mankind. Abram also received a new name - Abraham. We are Abraham’s future that he saw in his day. As it has been for generations, this blessing rests on those today who believe in the Messiah – the promised seed of Abraham.

**Galatians 3:29** “And if you *are* Christ's/*Messiah's*, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

## Abraham’s Faith: Part One

Abraham obeyed Yahweh’s Word and walked by faith. “Now faith is the *substance* (physical) of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen (*called the Olam Haba*). By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” (Hebrews 11:1, 8)

“Faith” is like having a camera that can take pictures of the future that Yahweh offers us but *with us in the picture*. In Hebrew this future is called the *Olam Haba*. This way we can *see* that what scripture says about us is true. Our future is bright and we do not fear it if we have faith. Faith trusts Yahweh and the future plans He has for us, as we can see the promises in His word and so we *choose to walk in them regardless of what we see around us on an earthly level*. To look at faith as already taken hold of our future means we must walk in a *heavenly nature/kingdom*. The fruits of the Spirit are found in the *Tree of Life*. To walk in faith is to be finished with the sinful nature and the counterfeit lifestyle of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* which leads to spiritual and / or physical death and poverty.

**Colossians 3:8-17** “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds [*the sinful nature/Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil – the Olam Hazeah*], and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him [*fruit of the Spirit/Tree of Life – the Olam Haba*], where there is neither

Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but the Messiah is all and in all. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as the Messiah forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of the Messiah dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Yeshua, Ha Mashiach, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

### To A Land That I Will Show You



“So Abram departed as Yahweh had spoken to him, and ***Lot went with him***. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.” (Genesis 12:4-5).

When he was seventy-five years old, Abraham left his country, his family, and his father's house.

Was Lot to go with him? The scriptures did *not* say, ‘Get out of your country, from *some of* your family and from your father's house.’ We are to leave – in the physical and spiritual sense – wrong associations and that which is contrary to Yahweh’s Torah, otherwise we can be led astray from the destiny He has planned for our lives. We see later that Lot will prove to be a poor association for Abraham and Abraham’s future generations. (Genesis 12:1; 2:24)

When Abraham entered the land (the future Israel), he traveled as far as the Oak of Moreh in Shechem. It is there Yahweh “appeared” to Abraham and further blessed him, saying, “To your offspring I will give this land.”

The *Word* that earlier spoke the blessings to Abraham now manifested in physical form before him, confirming again that Abraham and Sarah would have descendants and be given the land as a gift. Abraham humbly builds an altar for worship to the Holy One who appeared to him at Shechem. (Genesis 12:7; John 1:14)

The altar at Shechem is still a spiritual signpost within the land, even though we may not be able to see its physical remains today. Abraham’s altar is a memorial to the promises Yahweh spoke to Abraham and to his seed, this present generation included. That is why Shechem has been such a hotly contested area in Israel. As Abraham walked the land, he literally confirmed Yahweh’s promises to him and his descendants, he claimed and established as an inheritance for God’s people, and no man can take that away. This is an eternal word of truth established by

Yahweh for His peoples and all nations; Yahweh's promise to Abraham stands firm and is for us today. (Galatians 3:29).

Note: The picture shown above was taken during the feast of Tabernacles/Sukkot. My husband Carl and I are standing on the Mount Gerzim/Blessing looking at Mount Ebal/Curses above the town of Shechem. While on Mt. Gerzim, we met a rabbi who had erected a booth/sukkah near the summit. We found him in his sukkah under his *talet* (prayer shawl) praying for the return of Joseph's children. We introduced ourselves and had the opportunity to share with him that we *are* the people he has been praying for - Ephraim - returning from the nations, walking in the ways of Yahweh as we worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Abraham continued from Shechem toward the hill east of Bethel and pitched his tent. There he built an altar and called on the name of Yahweh. This altar again was in a very strategic location and remains so spiritually even today. These **two** altars, as the scripture says, were built in the future territory of the House of Ephraim in the Northern Kingdom, and belong to Abraham and his descendants. (Genesis 12:8).

### From Egypt I will call my Son

A famine in the land became so severe that Abraham took his wife *and Lot* into Egypt, looking for sustenance. Sarah being a beautiful woman, was at risk of being *taken by force* into an Egypt household. If she had a husband to claim her, the Egyptians would kill the husband to 'free' the wife to take ownership of her for themselves. Fearing that he would be killed by those desiring Sarah, Abraham suggested Sarah protect him by saying that she was his sister. Sarah was indeed procured into Pharaoh's household and Abraham was spared his life as her "brother." However this half-truth turned sour when Pharaoh and his household came under great plagues as a consequence of abducting Abraham's wife. A more serious consequence was the lack of confidence in Yahweh that Abraham had. Yahweh protected Sarah from harm in Pharaoh's household and set her free with an admonishment from Pharaoh to Abraham for having not told the truth in the beginning. Sarah must have been exceptionally beautiful at sixty-five years old. (Genesis 12:9-20).

### The Return

Abraham returned home a very wealthy man, as Pharaoh allowed him to keep all the possessions he had acquired while in Egypt. This was a foreshadowing of Abraham's descendants the twelve sons of Jacob/Israel, coming out of Egypt 400 years later under the strong protection of Yahweh and with great wealth. These two stories are a foreshadowing of the Messiah and His life on earth, as He also lived in Egypt for a season before returning back to the land. The two stories also represent our lives. We were found scattered in the wilderness for a season, and there we come to know our Messiah and will one day return with Him, to reclaim the land of our inheritance.

In Hebraic understanding, the land not only represents the physical land of Israel; it also represents us, His people Israel, for we are made out of the dust of the earth. Thus the portrayal is symbolic of His people claiming the covenantal inheritance declared in His Word (Genesis to

Revelation) and walking in it through obedience. For as the Hebrew people understand, the Land, the Torah and the People are all synonymous in scripture. (Genesis 12:14-20; Exodus 12:31-36; Galatians 3:17)

**Hosea 11:1** “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”

**Matthew 2:13** “And when they were departed, behold, the angel of Yahweh appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, ‘Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.’ When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of Yahweh by the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt have I called my son.’” (Hosea 11:1)

When Abraham returned to the land with Sarah through the Negev, he went back to the place where he last made an altar to Yahweh. They settled in Bethel and there called on the name of Yahweh (Genesis 13:4).

### Separation from Lot

Yahweh leads Abraham into a new season in his life, but first he needed to return to the place where he dishonored Yahweh, and there sever his association with Lot. Abraham allowed Lot to choose first where he would like to live. Lot did not inquire after Yahweh for direction, nor did he seek council from Abraham; he relied on his own personal preference and was drawn to that which attracted his eye (lust of the flesh – the *Olam Haze*). Lot chose according to his nature and was drawn to the plains near the wicked city of Sodom. Lot and his herdsmen left for what appeared to be *richer* pastures and thus his choice of settlement changed his life and his generations forever.

Abraham did inquire after Yahweh for direction and lifted his and looked as far to the north, south, east and west as he could see. Prophetically what Abraham saw would be the returning of his future generations (*the Olam Haba*), all twelve tribes of Israel from the north, south, east and west, back to the land of Israel. Yahweh blessed him again saying, “**For all the land, which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.** And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.” (Genesis 13:15-16; Galatians 3:29)

Abraham traveled further into the land, stopping at the Oaks of Mamre in Hebron. There he built an altar to Yahweh. This was Abraham’s third altar and was in the future territory of the House of Judah, the Southern Kingdom. (Genesis 13:18)

### Melchizedek - Priest of God Most High

During this time Lot faced calamity, as the territory he chose to settle in was engulfed in war. The invading army carried off Lot, his whole family and all their possessions. When Abraham heard this news, he and his men set out in pursuit of Lot and rescued him, his family and all his worldly belongings. When Abraham returned home, the King of Sodom (representing the *Olam*

*Hazeh* –common present world, constant state of decay and passing away) approached him but it was the King of Salem named Melchizedek (*representing the Olam Haba – future kingdom/resurrection life*) who brought out **bread and wine**. He was the High Priest of Yahweh, and blessed him saying, ‘Blessed is Abram of God the Most High, Maker of heaven and earth; and blessed by God the Most High Who has delivered your foes into your hand.’”

The presence of **bread and wine** symbolizes the making of a Covenant or the confirming of one. It is used several places in scripture between Yahweh and His people, confirming His Word in their lives.

- ✚ One example is when Yahweh confirmed the Word to the people at Mount Sinai during the *Feast of Shavuot*.
- ✚ He did so again at *the Passover* supper when Yeshua confirmed the renewing of the Covenant before His death. (Exodus 14:18; 24:11; Luke 22:19-22; Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 8:8-10)

After receiving the **bread and wine**, Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of all. In doing this He was saying he understood that his tithing was ‘seed’ being sown into his future and towards the promised future generations, us included, which set in motion the receiving of the blessings spoken of by Melchizedek. In Yeshua, we are the *Olam Haba* – the recipients of Abraham’s action here - the promised resurrection/return of the future generations.

The tithing also set in motion the priesthood of Yeshua in the order of Melchizedek *forever*. In addition the tithing initiated the maintenance of the tabernacle/*mishkan in the hearts of men*. Tithing is a prophetic act prospering our ‘seed’ *and future generations*. It is the universal law of sowing and reaping, and of multiplication. All these are essential if we are to uphold and honor Yeshua.

On the spiritual level, tithing, along with the keeping of His Sabbath and moedim/Feast days were all birthed in *eternity*. Acting on these elements connects the earthly realm with the heavenly realm *for generations to come*. Yahweh builds His Tabernacle **within us**, which activates through obedience to His Word including the tithing; the openhanded giving back to Yahweh what He has already provided.

The objective of the commandment for the tithing is a heart action to *increase us, not deplete us*. If we say that we believe in Yeshua but have a hard time giving the tithing, then what we are really saying is that we do *not trust* in Him to make provision for our lives. All through scripture the tithing was given as a *sacred/holy portion* to Yahweh. Tithing is the heart action of one who is called to be a king and priest – which is in the *promise* of the seed planted in all believers through Abraham’s accountability to Melchizedek. It will be the same today, for the one who chooses to walk in obedience will enter the order of Melchizedek as did Abraham – this is the Bride of Yeshua. (Genesis 14:18-20).

Some say the requirement of tithing stopped after the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. What they fail to see is that the principle and application of the **bread, wine and tithing** were all given *four hundred years before there was an exodus from Egypt; they were given four hundred*

*years before the law was given at Mount Sinai, and four hundred years before there was a tabernacle in the wilderness.*

History reveals that the **bread, wine and tithes** are all **eternal** as they symbolize an eternal Covenant. That is why the tithes are sacred to Yahweh. As Abraham did before us, the next time we partake in the bread and wine, may we be sure our tithes are given to Yahweh, as we are all called into the royal priesthood in the order of Melchizedek/Yeshua. As Abraham is our Father and our model, may we not despise our birthright but fully uphold and walk in it with great anticipation of entering the next season of our lives as Abraham did. (Matthew 5:23-8:4; 1 Peter 2:9)

## The Fourth Covenant: The Covenant with Abraham

**Genesis 15:17-21** “**The Word** of Yahweh came to Abram in a **vision**: ‘*Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.*’ ”

- ✚ **The Word** is *davar* in Hebrew (Strong’s #H1697), a masculine noun meaning a *physical* word.
- ✚ **Vision** is *mahazen* in Hebrew (Strong’s #H4236). This word only appears three times in the Old Testament/*Tanakh* and comes from the same Hebrew root word that means light, place of seeing and window (as in the Ark of Noah).
- ✚ **Shield** is *magen* in Hebrew (Strong’s # H4043) from the root word describing an enclosure, a garden, a shield, a covering and to deliver up.

As Abraham did not have physical descendants and his next of kin was thought to be his servant, he questioned Yahweh on being childless. The Presence of the Word came again to Abraham saying, “Behold, the Word of Yahweh, this one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your *own body* shall be your heir.” The literal Hebrew translation is: *but one who will go out of your own bowels* (Genesis 15:4). Whenever scripture starts with ‘*behold*’, it means *pay attention, you are about to hear a prophetic utterance. Out of your own bowels* is derived from the Hebrew word *me’eh* (Strong’s # 4578/ TWOT 1227a) meaning inward parts, bowels, reproductive organs. The other word associated in this grouping is the Hebrew word *ma’a* that means grain of sand.

From the information above we see the promise of Yahweh to Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the grains of sand. Even more importantly, was the promise that Abraham would father his own child *through Sarah*. This child, Isaac, in the future will become an offering to Yahweh, foreshadowing the Messiah, the fulfilled seed of Abraham and Sign of the Promise.

**Genesis 15:5-6** “Then He brought him [*Abraham*] outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ And he believed in Yahweh, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (Romans 4:3; Romans 4:18; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23)

Yahweh revealed Himself to Abraham as the God who brought him from Ur and gave him the land to take possession of it. Abraham was concerned and asked how he could know that he would gain possession of it?

Yahweh asked Abraham to bring a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a pigeon. Abraham gathered these animals and proceeded to cut them in half, laying them opposite each other as directed, for he understood Yahweh was about to establish a Covenant with him. The birds he left whole, one on either side, lying with the animals. The blood flowed down between the cut halves as Abraham waited on Yahweh. As the sun set, Abraham fell into a deep sleep and saw the future of his descendants, who would be strangers in another country, enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. Yahweh would judge that nation, redeeming and delivering his people by His great power, freeing them and returning them to the land with great possessions (Genesis 15:9-16; Galatians 3:16-18).

When the sun had set and it was dark, Yahweh in the appearance of a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day Yahweh made a Covenant with Abraham and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites" (Genesis 15:17-21).

A Covenant is not like a contract which can be broken. A Covenant stands in eternity, held by the guarantor, in this case Yahweh. He alone walked between the pieces. Even when Abraham or his descendants should falter, which Yahweh knew would happen, Yahweh promised to be faithful to keep *His* Covenant of promise with His people. It was and still is an unconditional Covenant, a gift that cannot be earned. Nor is it conditional upon Abraham or his descendant's behavior as it was given to Abraham and his generations forever.

**Hebrews 6:13** "For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself"

The Abrahamic Covenant promised to Abraham and his descendants: a people, a land and a great blessing. Today we are learning to walk in the way of the Covenant through a redeemed lifestyle. Today we are being drawn back to the God of Abraham and learning to come home, first in our hearts and then physically.

Today in the Nation of Israel, His people are only living in approximately one third of the land promised Abraham. One day it will all be restored, when the descendants of Abraham return to the Covenant of Yahweh.

### **Genesis 16 Hagar and Ishmael**

Ten long years passed since Yahweh spoke to Abraham about having a child. As Sarah still had not conceived, she concluded that Yahweh had kept her from having children.

This was the time for Sarah's faith to be tested. Yahweh did not give the exact timing of this promised child, and Sarah may have based her expectation on the age of her body. A woman's productive age is on a timeline and in Sarah's eyes, her child bearing time was passed. Sarah

thought the only other way Yahweh could possibly give them a child would be through another vessel. With that, Sarah made the grave mistake of taking things into her own hands by controlling and manipulating Yahweh's promise of an heir for Abraham. This mistake would lead to future generations of conflict between the children of Isaac and Hagar's descendants.

Doubt dishonors Yahweh and blinds our hearts. We often jump into action led by our own thoughts, preferences, anxieties or fears and we begin to devise our own destiny outside the one Yahweh designed for us. We can get caught in the counterfeit so much that *our* plans can look so real to us that we think they are from God, when in reality they were sown from self. We manipulate and control others to get what we want. We can become surprised or angry when *our* plans crumble and fall apart. When we take matters into our own hands we cannot translate into the *Olam Haba* Yahweh sees us in. We forget that Yahweh's timeframe is different from ours. Yahweh's time clock is eternal as He is outside of time itself. Waiting and resting on Yahweh's plan is what matures us. We have to ask ourselves if we are bowing down to serve ourselves or are we serving Yahweh's plans? The spirit is willing but the soul may still be undisciplined and causing our thoughts to make preferential decisions for us, instead of us prevailing over our soul and waiting upon Yahweh.

If Sarah was feeling pressured about this promised child she should have gone to her husband Abraham for comfort and reassurance, to listen again to the prophesy Yahweh spoke over them. Abraham on the other hand, as Sarah's husband, was to bring security to his wife. Abraham reminded her of the fact that Yahweh said a servant will never bring forth the promised seed and that indeed she will bear this promised child. Because of a lack of respect, due to Abraham's soft leadership role in their marriage, Sarah became impetuous and convinced him to take her Egyptian maidservant Hagar to bear the promised child of Yahweh. Abraham listened to his wife without weighing her words against Yahweh's promise, and Hagar conceived a son. We are now given another dimension that resulted from an ungodly hasty decision; that of the birthing of an entire people group forming many nations that bow down to a counterfeit god in preference over Yahweh Elohim.  
(Genesis 15:2-5).

### Are We Children of a Freewoman or Children of a Bondwoman? Will the Real Promised Son Please Stand Up!

During Hagar's pregnancy, she and Sarah quarreled, resulting in Hagar being ejected from the household of Abraham due to her conflicting nature. After her departure, the angel of Yahweh found Hagar weeping by a spring of water in the desert and He told her to return and humble herself to Sarah. The angel then spoke prophetically over her and her unborn son saying, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count." The covenant goes on to say that the hostility would continue because Ishmael will be born into bondage whereas the promised seed is one born of freedom (Genesis 16:11-14; Galatians 4:21-31).

Through *disobedience* we also bring about our own bondage. Many *believers* in the Abrahamic Covenant still live as slaves to their fleshly natures like Hagar. Believers, who have been set free by the Messiah's atoning blood, may still choose to live as indentured servants as they harbor bitterness, unforgiveness, judgments, resentments, criticisms and wrong associations. Those who

still walk in the immoral and unrighteous ways of the world or who still hold on to arguments, conflicts, discord and quarrels, will never enter into the promises of Abraham as those attitudes foolishly block the blessings and keep them in a dormant state. The children of a bondwoman will struggle through a life of contention that will never leave them as their lives are out of (His) order.

On the other hand, Yeshua's Bride, those who choose to be finished with a life of bondage, is not the child of a servant but are the children of a freewoman actively pursuing their future in full assurance to His Covenant Kingdom ways, eagerly looking forward to That Day which is not yet present, but living in it nevertheless. (Galatians 3:29; 4:21- 5:1)

We must be very clear; we who believe in Yeshua are *not* descendants of Hagar, although her descendants may believe in Yeshua. We are *not* sons and daughters descended from a concubine, but are sons and daughters of Abraham and Sarah, the married, covenantal chosen people whom Yahweh promised would come forth from the *promised seed*, Isaac.

Abraham was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him a son. His name was Ishmael, and he became the father of the Arab nations.

### Thirteen Years Later The Sign of the Covenant of Abraham: *Circumcision*

**In Genesis 17: 1-2** "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abraham saying, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly." Upon hearing this Abraham fell on his face and Yahweh continued to speak His side of the Covenant...

"As for Me, behold, My Covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.

- ✚ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham;
- ✚ For I have made you a father of many nations.
- ✚ I will make you exceedingly fruitful;
- ✚ And I will make nations of you,
- ✚ And kings shall come from you.
- ✚ And I will establish My Covenant between Me and you
- ✚ And your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.
- ✚ Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession;
- ✚ And I will be their God." (Genesis 17:4-8)

Abraham's side of the Covenant...

"As for you,

- ✚ You shall keep My Covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations." (Genesis 17:9)

Yahweh gave the Covenant to Abraham thirteen years earlier, now Yahweh was confirming that same Covenant to him. If we think the Covenant is lopsided, it is. Yahweh has all the weight of responsibility on His side. The Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional to Abraham and his descendants. It is a gift. Our part is to KEEP it!

The Covenant Yahweh made with Abraham promised:

- ✚ A people – an identity
- ✚ A land – the Commonwealth of Israel
- ✚ And a blessing - prosperity.

This gift to Abraham is also a gift for believers in Yeshua as we are the physical, (DNA sharing, not merely spiritual) sons of Abraham (Galatians 3:7).

Thirteen years later, *to confirm the Covenant*, Yahweh commanded Abraham to undergo circumcision, which was to be the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. From that time forward every Hebrew male was to be circumcised. With new born babies, it would be performed on the eighth day after the birth when the baby's blood had developed sufficient clotting agents.

***“My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant” (Genesis 17:13).***

### Paul and the Works of the Law

There were some newly converted Jewish believers who were improperly teaching Torah in Paul's day. They were teaching the way to salvation was through the *works of the law*.

The works of the law are:

- ✚ The Sabbath,
- ✚ Circumcision
- ✚ And dietary/ *kashrut* laws.

These principles of Yahweh were never intended for the purpose of *salvation* but are given for the purpose of receiving blessing. We choose (by free will) to walk in them in the Spirit of Yeshua, to receive the blessings they hold.

Many of these new enthusiastic Jewish believers in Yeshua (who knew a *little* Torah, enough to make them dangerous) were trying to teach new believers and returning believers (*akrobusia*) coming in from the nations (who remembered no Torah) saying this is the way to salvation. By doing this they were making people *earn their own* salvation through *works of the law* instead of receiving the salvation/redemption *Yeshua* gave us as a free gift.

Torah contains Yahweh's principles that govern the earth - a series of 613 teachings and instructions designed to bless us.

Of these, 217 principles are applicable to those who are part of Israel (in the Abrahamic covenant) living *outside* the land, in the nations. The principles only become “law” when people

trespass against them. To be outside the sanctified life, that the teaching and instruction produce, can bring about curses. (Deuteronomy 28; Deuteronomy 31:19, 26).

Redemption is about *Covenant* relationship with the Creator of the universe. It was not a *contract* that can be broken, earned or purchased. Redemption is not by works but is a gift. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

There were also many believers being grafted into Israel, who had not walked after their circumcision/redemption. In other words those who received salvation (*Olam Haba*/heavenly nature) were still walking in their old sinful nature (*Olam Haze*). They had access to the *Tree of Life* but were still eating off the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Now, they were coming under the conviction of the Holy Spirit/*Ruach HaKodesh*, which caused many to repent, return and walk in obedience back to Yeshua and His Torah principles.

In scripture these people are referred to as the uncircumcised, which gives the impression that they were “gentiles” (Definition of Gentile: one who is a pagan, confused and without God), but in actuality they were not gentile/pagans, as the Greek interpretation of the word *akrobustia* infers. Looking at the actual meaning of the word *akrobustia* (Strong’s #G203), defines a *repentant returning believer*, one who had previously been circumcised (born again) but discarded his birthright, tossing it away through disobedience to Yahweh’s lifestyle (representing the House of Israel/Northern Kingdom) but now returning to God and His Kingdom ways through repentance. A person called *akrobustia*, before returning to Israel’s Yahweh, was considered by the Jews to be as one who behaved *like* the uncircumcised pagans and derogatorily were called “gentiles.” Yes, their behavior was very much like that, BUT when a believer repents, they are **fully** restored no longer to be called a stranger, pagan or gentile.

The *akrobustia* are truly Abraham’s seed. That is why Paul gave them the special designation *akrobustia* to distinguish them as the repentant, returning *believer* versus a pagan/gentile - one who was not part of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Paul was correctly teaching and interpreting the Torah by using Abraham as an example. Judah had been entrusted to safeguard the existence of the Torah, the very Words of Yahweh. Paul was saying that the circumcised ones (House of Judah, the Jews) and the uncircumcised/*akrobustia* (House of Israel, the other eleven tribes) must obey “the Spirit of Torah.” Both must circumcise *their hearts* in order to obey the Spirit of Torah/*Yeshua*. Even though Judah was already circumcised in the flesh, the inward circumcision of the heart applied to them as much as it did to the physically uncircumcised (House of Israel/Ephraim).

The commandment to not eat from the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil* still stood. None were exempt from this fundamental truth. The Covenant was and is a matter of the heart first. (Hebrews 8:8-10).

“Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had [received] by faith while he was still *UNCIRCUMCISED*” (Romans 4:11).

**Romans 4:9-12** “Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised [*akrobustia*] also? For we say that faith was accounted to *Abraham* for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised [*akrobustia*]? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised [*akrobustia*]. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised [*akrobustia*], that he might be the father of ALL those who believe [*circumcised in the heart*], though they are uncircumcised [*in the flesh*], that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised [of flesh *akrobustia*].”

Physical circumcision was not an issue with Paul and it should not be with us either as Paul helps explain this through his two students/*talmidim* Timothy and Titus. These men are great examples of the *works of the law* in action:

- ✚ Timothy was circumcised as an adult to complete his Jewish heritage (Acts 16:1-3)/
- ✚ Titus was not circumcised after he came to faith as an Israelite (House of Ephraim/the nations) (Galatians 2:3).

Both men were correct according to the great Rabbi Saul/Paul. Both men were elders in the *ekklisia*/assembly of believers; both men were Paul’s top advisors and taught believers in all church/synagogues; but more importantly both men, one circumcised and one not, were both present at all Feast days including *the Passover*. (Acts 16:1-3; Galatians 2:3)

“This is the promise our *twelve tribes* are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve Yahweh day and night.” *The hope of ALL Israel*, all twelve tribes, the Two Houses of Israel is that of reuniting and become one in the Father’s hand. (Romans 9:24; Acts 26:7; Ezekiel 37:15-27)

**Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

## Sarai Becomes Sarah

### **Genesis 17: 15-22**

Yahweh established Sarai, along with Abraham, in the Covenant. As Abram’s name was changed to Abraham, Sarai too received the new name of “Sarah.” Abraham and Sarah both received Yahweh’s indwelling characteristics. The Hebrew letter H/hei represents Yahweh’s Breath of Life; Abraham and Sarah were infused with the Spirit of the Holy One of Israel - Yeshua. For all who partake and walk in the Covenant of Abraham, their generations inherit redemption and resurrected life leading back to the Garden (1 Peter 1:9-11).

**Galatians 3:29** “If you belong to, Messiah, then you are Abraham’s seed – [*sperma in Greek* meaning physical, not spiritual] - and heirs according to the promise.”

At this time Yahweh re-established Sarah’s identity and confirmed that she would have a son at the same time the next year. Abraham fell on his face in reverence and laughed when the promise

was announced to him again. He reminded Yahweh that his flesh would be a hundred years old and Sarah's body ninety! But Yahweh continued, sharing his blessings for Sarah, that she would bear a son and that his name would be called Isaac, meaning "He Laughs"! Yahweh confirmed that the Covenant would be passed on to **Isaac**, *the only son of the promise*.

Yahweh also remembered Ishmael: Ishmael would be a great nation of people and he would be the father of twelve rulers. Yahweh gave Ishmael an inheritance but made it very clear that only *Isaac* was the promised son of the Covenant and received the blessings attached to it, not Ishmael.

***"But the Covenant I will establish with Isaac,  
whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year"***  
(Genesis 17:15-16).

**Genesis 17:23-27** "That very day Abraham took his son Ishmael and all those born in his household or bought with money, every male in his household, and circumcised them. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised and his son Ishmael was thirteen."

*To be continued...*



Shabbat Shalom  
Julie Parker

Since its inception in 2003, *Sheepfold Gleanings* has been written under the pen name of *Carl and Julie Parker*. It will now be published under the authors name *Julie Parker*, with her husband Carl's continued support and covering.

**Note:** We are in the process of publishing the studies in soft spiral study format and soft bond format for prison ministry (an eBook format is coming!). **Genesis** is the first book in a five part series: **Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers and Deuteronomy**. Each book is part of the yearly Torah cycle starting in Genesis and is designed to be used each year for study purposes. To pre order please contact the information below.

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