

# 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

### **Genesis 11:10-32 The Generations from Shem to Abram**

After Noah, the Scriptures follow his son Shem. After Shem, ten generations pass before Abram is born. Through Abram/Abraham we see YHVH bring a family out of the Nations and redeem a people for Himself. Terah, the father of Abram, had two other sons named Nahor and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot, Milcah and Iscah. Haran's daughter Milcah married her uncle Nahor. Abram's wife was called Sarai, who was also Abram's sister. Terah had another wife, and Sarai was his daughter through that other marriage (Genesis 20:12).

Leaving Ur, Terah took Abram, his grandson Lot and his daughter-in-law Sarai to travel to Canaan. Along the way they stopped in Haran and settled there. It seems Terah was led by the Spirit of YHVH but did not fulfill his destination. While in Haran, Terah died, leaving Abram, Sarai and Lot to continue the journey on their own. This is where our parsha begins.

“YHVH's Presence rests upon man to the extent that man permits. If he observes YHVH'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 YHVH, the Spirit of YHVH cannot rest upon him.” (Quote from Bershit/ Genesis by ArtScroll.)

With Abraham, there began a new birth in the history of mankind - the history of faith and obedience to YHVH's Word. Abram is the beginning of Torah being birthed in man.

**Genesis 12:1** “Now YHVH 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.’”

YHVH calls Abram to take his wife Sarai and leave his father's house, the only family he had, and all he had known, and literally walk away. Such was Abram's faith in YHVH. YHVH blessed him 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 wonderful word given Abram has been fulfilled. In the Brit Chadasha/New Testament, Peter shared with the men of Israel in Acts 3:25, saying, “You are **sons of the prophets, and of the Covenant** that YHVH made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”

This blessing from YHVH was the “setting apart” and preparation of Abram for greater things to come. YHVH made a promise to Abram; in this covenant of promise was the acceptance of an identity and a huge heritage. Today, as it has been for generations, this blessing rests on those who believe in the Messiah.

### **Abraham’s Faith: Part One**

Abram obeyed YHVH’s Word and walked by faith. “Now faith is the *substance* (physical) of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen. 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 promised us, *with us in the picture*. This way we can *see* that what scripture says about us is true. Our future is bright and we do not fear if we have faith. Faith believes YHVH and the future plans He has for us by *walking 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*. Life and the fruit of the Spirit are in the Tree of Life. To walk in faith is to be finished with the sinful nature and the counterfeit life of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil which leads to death.

**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), 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), 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.”

“So Abram departed as YHVH 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).

At seventy-five Abram left his country, his family, brother and his father's house. Question: Was Lot to go with him? The Scriptures said, “Now YHVH 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.’” Scripture also says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh”. We are to leave – in the physical and spiritual sense – wrong associations and that which has unholy roots contrary to YHVH’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 bad association for Abraham and Abraham's future generations. (Genesis 12:1; 2:24).

When Abram entered the land, he traveled as far as the Oak of Moreh in Shechem. It is there YHVH "appeared" to Abram and further blessed him, saying, "To your offspring I will give this land."



The "voice" that earlier spoke the blessings to Abram now "appeared" before him, confirming again that Abram and Sarai would have descendants and be given the land as a gift. Abram humbly builds an altar for worship to the Holy One who appeared to him at Shechem. What an awesome blessing! The embodiment, flesh and voice of YHVH is Yeshua. (Genesis 12:7; John 1:14)

The altar at Shechem is a signpost within the land, even though we may not be able to see its physical remains today. Abraham's altar is a memorial that YHVH spoke His promises to Abraham and to his seed after him, this present generation included (Galatians 3:29). That is why Shechem has been such a hotly contested area in the land. As Abram walked the land, he literally confirmed YHVH's promises to him and his descendants. The land was established as an inheritance for God's chosen, and no man may take that away. This is an eternal word of truth established by YHVH for man and all nations; YHVH's promise to Abram stands firm and is for us today.

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

A famine in the land turned severe, whereupon Abram took his wife and Lot into Egypt for a season. Fearing for his own life, Abram suggested for his wife to say that she was his sister. This half-truth turned sour when Pharaoh and his household suffered serious diseases as a consequence of Abram's lack of confidence and unbelief in YHVH. YHVH looked after Sarai and set her free with an admonishment through Pharaoh to Abram for having not told him the truth in the beginning. Sarai must have been exceptionally beautiful for Pharaoh to be attracted to a sixty-five year old woman!

Abram 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 Abram's descendants, the twelve sons of Jacob, who would later be taken into Egypt and become slaves. In Exodus, when they leave Egypt after 400 years as the twelve tribes of Israel, they leave under the strong protection

of YHVH and with great wealth. These two stories are a foreshadowing of the Messiah and His life on earth, as He lived in Egypt for a season before returning back to the land. The two stories also represent our spiritual lives, when we are found scattered in the wilderness for a season, where we come to know our Messiah before being led back by Him with great power to take 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 YHVH 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 YHVH by the prophet (Hosea), saying, ‘Out of Egypt have I called my son.’”

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

### **Separation of Lot**

At this time YHVH made a distinction and separation in Abram’s life. Abram was set apart from his father’s household when the land his nephew shared with him could no longer support both clans. As a result, Lot and his herdsmen left for “richer” pastures. Abram allowed Lot to choose first where he would like to live. Lot did not inquire after YHVH for direction, nor did he seek council from Abram; he relied on his own judgment and what looked attractive to his own eyes. Lot chose unwisely, as he was drawn to the plains near the wicked city of Sodom. After leaving Ur, Lot may not have been as comfortable with the wilderness (a place of empowerment and endearment with YHVH) as Abram was, thus his choice of settlement changed his life forever.

Abram did inquire after YHVH, who directed him to look over the land YHVH was giving him. Abram lifted his eyes and looked as far to the north, south, east and west as he could see. Prophetically what Abram saw would be the returning of his descendants, all twelve tribes of Israel from the north, south, east and west, back to the land. YHVH 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.” **The land will be theirs forever.** (Genesis 13:15-16; Galatians 3:29)

Abram traveled further down the land, stopping at the Oaks of Mamre in Hebron. There he built an altar to YHVH. This was Abram’s third altar and was in the future territory of Judah. (Genesis 13:18)

During this time Lot faced trouble, as the territory he chose to dwell in came into war. The invading party carried off Lot, his whole family and all their possessions. Abram faithfully rescued him and his family, along with all his belongings. When Abram returned, the King of Sodom approached him but it was the King of Salem, Melchizedek who brought out **bread and wine**. He was the high priest of YHVH, 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.’ Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything,” which was his seed towards future generations (Genesis 14:18-20).

The presence or presenting of bread and wine symbolizes the making of a covenant or the confirming of a covenant. It is used several places in scripture between YHVH and His people, confirming His Word in their lives. One example is when YHVH confirmed the Word to the people at Mount Sinai during the Feast of Shavuot. He did so again at the Passover supper when He, 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, Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything. That tithe set in motion the priesthood of Yeshua (the order of Melchizedek) *forever*. It also set in motion the making of the mishkan/tabernacle *in the hearts of men*. The physical Tabernacle in the Wilderness was built on tithes and offerings. Tithes are a prophetic act prospering our seed and future generations. It is the universal law of sowing and reaping, and of multiplication. 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. Tithes fuel YHVH building His Tabernacle *in us* that starts with obedience to His Word; a physical giving back to YHVH what He has already provided. The objective of the commandment is a heart action to **increase us**, not **deplete us**. All through Scripture the tithe was given as a *sacred/holy portion* to YHVH. Tithing is the heart action of a king and priest; one walking in the order of Melchizedek - signs and wonders followed.

Abram knew that very act of giving linked him to eternity and all future generations who would follow his example of obedience. He activated an eternal covenant and touched a realm of the supernatural in eternity. Abram is our Father and our model. May we not despise our birthright but fully uphold it and walk in it.

Some say the tithe stopped after the Temple was destroyed. However, the *bread, wine and tithe were all given four hundred years before there was an exodus from Egypt, four hundred years before the law was given at Mount Sinai, and four hundred years before there was a Tabernacle in the Wilderness*. This reveals that the bread, wine and tithe are all eternal. That is why the tithe is sacred to YHVH. Just as Abram did before us, the next time we partake in the bread and wine, symbolizing the Covenant, may we be sure our tithe is given to YHVH, as we are all a royal priesthood in the order of Melchizedek /Yeshua. (Matthew 5:23-8:4; 1 Peter 2:9)

### **Genesis 15:17-21 God’s Covenant with Abram**

“The Word of YHVH 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 #1697), a masculine noun meaning a *physical* word. **Vision** is *mahazen* in Hebrew (Strong's #4236). This word only appears three times in the 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 # 4043) from the root word describing an enclosure, a garden, a shield, a covering and to deliver up.

As Abram did not have physical descendants yet and his next of kin was thought to be his servant, he questioned YHVH on being childless. The Presence of the Word came again to Abram saying, "**Behold, the Word of YHVH, 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."

**Who will go** is equivalent to the Hebrew word *ala* (Strong's # 5927/TWOT 1624), meaning to go up, climb, and ascend. From this Hebrew root come the words: leaf (as in the olive leaf in the beak of the dove who flew to Noah), whole burnt offering, ascent, stairway, upper roof chamber, high, most high, lifting, above, upward, what comes up, i.e. thoughts, step, stair, conduit, water course, hearing, above.

**Out of your own bowels** is derived from the Hebrew word *me'eh* (Strong's # 4578/ TWOT 1227a) meaning inward parts, bowels. The other word associated in this grouping is the Hebrew word *ma'a* that means grain of sand. *Me'eh* is used to refer to the reproductive organs, both male and female.

From the translation of these few words above we see the promise of YHVH that Abram's descendants will be as numerous as the grains of sand. But more importantly, that Abram would father his own child through *Sarai*. What we see later is that this child comes forth from Sarai's own body, as husband and wife are considered "**one flesh**". This child, Isaac, in the future will become an offering to YHVH, a foreshadowing of the Messiah, the fulfilled seed of Abraham and sign of the promise.

**Genesis 15:5-6** "Then He brought him (Abram) 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 YHVH, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." (Romans 4:3; Romans 4:18; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23)

YHVH revealed Himself to Abram as The God who brought him from Ur and gave him the land to take possession of it. Abram was concerned and asked how he could know that he *would* gain possession of it? YHVH asked Abram to bring a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a pigeon. Abram gathered these animals and proceeded to cut them in half, laying them opposite each other, for he understood YHVH was about to cut a covenant with him, and his course of action was the customary covenant-making procedure. The birds he left whole, one on either side, lying with the animals. The blood flowed down, between the cut halves as Abram waited on YHVH. As the sun set, Abram 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. YHVH 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, a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day YHVH made a Covenant with Abram 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 a contract that can be broken. A covenant stands in eternity, held by the guarantor, in this case, YHVH. He alone walked between the pieces. Even if Abram or his descendants should falter, which YHVH knew would happen, YHVH promises 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 descendants. It was given to Abraham and his descendants 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 Abraham and his descendants a people, a land and a 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 His people are only living in part of the land promised Abraham. One day it will be restored, when the descendants of Abraham return to the Covenant of YHVH.

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

Ten long years past since YHVH spoke to Abram about having a child. As the time elapsed and Abram's wife still had not conceived, she concluded that YHVH had kept her from having children.

This was the time for Sarai's faith to be tested. YHVH did not give the exact timing of this promised child, and Sarai may have based her conclusion on the age of her body. A woman's productive age is on a timeline; in Sarai's eyes her time was up. Sarai thought the only other way YHVH could possibly give them a child would be through another vessel. With that, Sarai made the grave mistake of taking things into her own hands. We've all been there! But later we see that this was all in YHVH's will. We forget that YHVH's time is different from our way of looking at things. YHVH's eternal time clock is beyond our understanding. Often we jump into action led by our own thoughts, anxieties and fears. Waiting and resting on YHVH's plan is a test that matures us. Many of us say we are waiting on YHVH, while we are busy putting our plan over top of His. We become surprised or even angry when "our" plans crumble and fall apart. We have to ask ourselves who is really in charge of our lives? Who are we really putting our trust in? The spirit is willing but the soul may still be active and governing our thoughts to make decisions for us, instead of us prevailing over our soul and waiting upon YHVH.

Sarai reasoned with Abram to take her Egyptian maidservant, Hagar, to bear the promised child of YHVH. It was Sarai who gave Hagar to Abram as a wife though YHVH had informed Abram earlier that *servants* would never bear the promised seed. Not remembering the words YHVH spoke over Sarai, Abram listened to his wife and Hagar conceived. We are now given another dimension for hasty decisions, the birthing of another nation.

During Hagar's pregnancy, the two women had negative attitudes toward one another; the aftereffect was Hagar's leaving. In her departure, the angel of YHVH found Hagar by a spring of living water in the desert and told her to return and humble herself to Sarai. The angel then spoke prophetically over her and the 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 between the two women because one was born of bondage and the other born of freedom (Genesis 16:11-14; Galatians 4:21-31).

We who believe in Yeshua are not sons of Hagar. We are not sons of a concubine but sons of Abraham and Sarah, the promised seed. Through disobedience we brought on our own bondage. Many people in the Covenant of Abraham still live as if they were in bondage even though they have been set free by the Messiah's atoning blood. Harboring wrong attitudes, judgments, poor thoughts and associations can keep us in bondage. The only barrier we have is the one we put up ourselves. May we be a people who live as the son of a free woman and not the son of a maidservant. (Galatians 3:29; 4:21- 5:1)

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

### **Genesis 17 Thirteen Years Later**

YHVH appeared to Abram saying, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my Covenant between you and me and will greatly increase your numbers." Abram fell on his face and YHVH continued...

### **Genesis 17:4-8 God's 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 17:9 Abraham's side of the Covenant**

"As for you, you shall keep My Covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations."

YHVH gave the Covenant to Abram thirteen years earlier, now YHVH was confirming that Covenant to him. If we think the Covenant is lopsided, we're right. YHVH 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 to Abraham promised him a people, a land and a blessing. This gift is for us as well as we are the physical (not merely spiritual) sons of Abraham (Galatians 3:7).

To confirm the Covenant, YHVH commanded Abram to undergo circumcision, which was the sign of those in the Covenant. From that time forward every male in the Abrahamic Covenant was to be circumcised. Babies born after this time, throughout history have been circumcised on the eighth day.

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

### **Paul and the Works of the Law:**

There were some who were improperly interpreting the law 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 kashrut/dietary laws*. These works of the law are not for the purpose of salvation but are given for the purpose of blessing. We choose (by freewill) to walk in and do them for the blessings they hold.

Many of these enthusiastic teachers were zealous new Jewish believers (who knew a *little* law, enough to make them dangerous) trying to teach new believers coming in from the nations (who knew no law) the ‘law’ 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 gift.

Redemption is about covenant relationship with the Creator of the universe. It was not a contract that can be broken or earned. 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 returning who had not walked after their circumcision/redemption. In other words those who received salvation/heavenly nature were still walking in their old sinful nature. They had access to the Tree of Life but were still eating off the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In Scripture these people are referred to as the uncircumcised or the akrobustia (Strong’s #203) one who had previously been circumcised (born again) but discarded the birthright, tossing it away by disobedience (House of Israel/Northern Kingdom). They became reckoned by the Jews as those who behaved like the uncircumcised, and thus the usage of this special term of designation

Paul was correctly interpreting the law by using Abraham as an example to clarify his teaching. Judah had been entrusted with the Torah, the very Words of YHVH. Paul was saying that the circumcised (House of Judah) and the uncircumcised/akrobustia (House of Israel) must obey “the spirit of Torah.” Both must circumcise their hearts in order to obey the spirit of Torah/Yeshua. Even though Judah had been circumcised in the flesh, this inward circumcision of the heart applied to them as much as it did to the 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 a matter of the heart first.

“Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had 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*).”

Paul said that not everyone who was born a Jew (House of Judah) or of the Nations (House of Israel) stays earthly or in their sinful flesh nature (Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil) because “the children of the flesh” (physical circumcision) must also become “the children of the promise,” leave their earthly sinful nature behind and have a heart circumcision, if they are to be counted as Abraham’s “seeds” or descendants. Paul was pointing out the difference to believers between those who are eating the fruit of life from the Tree of Life verses those still engaging the sinful nature of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Therefore, Paul stated, YHVH will call some from the Jews (House of Judah/Southern Kingdom) and others from the Nations (House of Israel). “This is the promise our *twelve tribes* are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve YHVH 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)

Physical circumcision was not an issue with Paul and it should not be with us either as Paul helps explain this through his two top missionary men Timothy and Titus. They are great examples of the *works of the law* in action: Timothy was circumcised to complete his Jewish heritage, but Titus was not circumcised as he came to faith as an Israelite (from the nations like us). Both men were correct according to the great Rabbi Saul/Paul. Both men were elders in the *ekklesia/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*. (Galatians 2:3)

**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.”

### **Genesis 17: 15-22 Sarai Becomes Sarah**

YHVH established Sarai along with Abraham in the Covenant. As Abram’s name was changed to Abraham, Sarai too received a new name, “Sarah.” Abraham and Sarah both received a portion of YHVH. The Hebrew letter H/hei represents YHVH’s Breath of Life; Abraham and Sarah were infused with the Spirit of YHVH. 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 (physical/Yeshua), and heirs according to the promise.”

At this time YHVH reestablished Sarah’s identity and confirmed that she would have a son at the same time the next year. Abraham laughed when the promise was announced to him again. He reminded YHVH that his flesh would be a hundred years old and Sarah’s body ninety! But YHVH continued, sharing his blessings for Sarah, that she would bear a son and that his name would be called Isaac, meaning “He Laughs”! YHVH confirmed that the Covenant would be passed on to Isaac, the son of the promise.

YHVH also remembered Ishmael; Ishmael would be a great nation of people and he would be the father of twelve rulers. YHVH gave Ishmael an inheritance but made it very clear that Isaac was the promised son of the Covenant and promises, 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  
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