



**LECH LECHA/GO FOR YOURSELF**  
**Bereshith/Genesis 12:1-17:27**

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**Parashat Lech Lecha** begins to zoom in on the life of **Avraham** and his descendants. Until now it seems that every story we have read has had a tragic ending. **Adam and Chavah** (Eve) sinned and were cast out of Paradise. Sibling rivalry between **Cain and Abel** brought about the first murder. **Noach** was faithful to build the ark, but fell in drunkenness. Then the tower of **Babel** and once again the earth's inhabitants began to turn their backs on their Creator...it seems we can never get away from “**each one doing what’s right in his own mind.**”

However, the Creator has a plan. He chooses one man and his descendants to be either a “**blessing**” or a “**curse**” in what will begin the restoration of humanity:

**Bereshith/Genesis 12:1** Now יהוה had said to Avram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> **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.**"

Thus, יהוה begins to set in motion a strategy to draw mankind back to righteousness, truth, justice, and salvation. Why was **Avraham** the one chosen? Scripture gives us a couple of reasons:

**Bereshith 18:19** For **I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him,** and they shall **keep the way of יהוה,** to do justice and judgment; that יהוה may bring upon Avraham that which he hath spoken of him.

**Avram**, whose name means “**exalted father**” had it in his heart to “**command his children and his household after him**” to “**keep the way of יהוה.**” He was chosen because he was a devoted “**father**” with a “**faithful heart**”:

**Nehemiah 9:7** "You are **יהוה Elohim, Who chose Avram,** and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, and gave him the name Avraham; <sup>8</sup> **You found his heart faithful** before You, and made a covenant with him To give the land of the Canaanites, The Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, And the Girgashites -- To give *it* to his descendants. You have performed Your words, For You *are* righteous.

**Avram** revealed his “**heart**” with “**obedience**” through “**faith**”:

**Hebrews 11:8** **By faith Avraham 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. <sup>9</sup> **By faith** he

dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Yitzchak and Ya'acov, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* Elohim.

In Hebrew, the word “aman” (אמן) is translated as “faith, faithful, believe, assurance, stand fast.” We find “aman” (אמן) translated as ‘believe’ in the well-known verse in **Romans**, a repeat of what is in **Bereshith**:

**Bereshith 15:6** And he believed (אמן) in יהוה, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

**Romans 4:3** For what does the Scripture say? "Avraham believed Yah, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

If you'd like to follow up with lots more insights on “faith” (אמן) from **Bereshith to Revelation**, I'd suggest reading **Brad Scott's** four part teaching on [Faith Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#).

In **Parashat Lech Lecha**, another important Hebrew word mentioned 16 times, always in connection to the “covenant” is the Hebrew word “zera” (זרע) meaning “seed, offspring, descendent.” The “seed” of **Avraham** will be the inheritors of the “covenant”:

**Bereshith 17:7** "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed (zera – זרע) after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be Elohim to you and your seed (zera – זרע) after you.

**Bereshith 15:18** On the same day יהוה made a covenant with Avram, saying: "To your seed (zera – זרע) I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates

Later, the prophet **Isaiah** makes it clear that “Israel” is the “seed of Abraham”:

**Isaiah 41:8** " But you, Israel, are My servant, Ya'acov whom I have chosen, The seed (zera – זרע) of Avraham My friend.

**Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)** points out that the word “seed” (zera – זרע) is never used as a plural. Thus, “zera” (זרע) designates the whole line of descendants as a unit, yet it is deliberately flexible enough to denote either one person who epitomizes the whole group (i.e. **Yeshua**, the Promised One), or the many persons in that whole line of natural and/or spiritual descendants. So, when we read in **Bereshith 3:15**, “Seed,” it designates at the same time the **Messiah as One** or all of those who will be **one in Him**. This “Seed” is in contrast with the **individual “seed of the serpent”** and at the same time, **all of those who are associated with him**:



**Bereshith 3:15** And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed (zera – זֵרַע) and her Seed (zera – זֵרַע); He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

With **King David**, we can also find both the singular and the plural “seed.” The singular “seed” reference is to **Messiah** and the plural references those “**descendants/seed**” (zera – זֵרַע) after him:

**2 Samuel 7:12** " When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed (zera – זֵרַע) after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

**2 Samuel 22:51** *He is* the tower of salvation for his king: and shows mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed (zera – זֵרַע) for evermore.

In the Brit Chadasha, we again read of both the plural “seed” of **Avraham** and the singular “seed.” First the singular:

**Galatians 3:16** Now to Avraham and his **Seed** were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Messiah.

And the plural “seed”:

**Galatians 3:29** And if you *are* Messiah’s, then you are Avraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

The “seed of Avraham” can describe his **physical descendants/seed** (singular or plural) or/and his **spiritual descendants/seed** – however, all contexts are linked together and cannot be understood fully without speaking of how they all fit together. From another angle, we can say we are “**one body**” with many individual “**members**”:

**Romans 12:5** so in **Messiah** we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

In **Lech Lecha** this week, we read that the “seed” (zera – זֵרַע) of **Avraham** produced two sons, **Ishmael and Yitzchak**, through two mothers – **Sarah and Hagar**. There is a very confusing midrash in **Galatians** on these **Bereshith** verses which is commonly used to speak against the **Torah**. This week I listened to a teaching by **Daniel Lancaster** on these verses as they relate to **Bereshith**. You can find the entire audio here - [Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, and Ishmael](#). Following is a summary with a few additions:

**Galatians 4:22** For it is written that **Avraham had two sons**: the one by a **bondwoman**, the other by a **freewoman**.<sup>23</sup> But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through **promise**,<sup>24</sup> which things are symbolic. For **these are the two covenants**: the **one from Mount Sinai** which gives birth to bondage, which is **Hagar** --<sup>25</sup> for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to **Jerusalem which now is**, and is in **bondage with her children** --<sup>26</sup> but the **Jerusalem above is free**, which is the mother of us **all**.

What is always important in the letters of **Rav Sha'ul** (Paul) is the context. **Sha'ul** is using this story to illustrate his argument **against** those encouraging Gentiles to undergo circumcision according to the prescribed ways of Jewish tradition in order to become Jewish. Their position is that circumcision is a must in order to merit salvation. **Sha'ul** continually fought against this. **Traditional Christian interpretation** of these verses is that there are “**two covenants**” with the following implications:

- **Mt. Sinai** – Old covenant, represented by Hagar, Torah, Jews, slaves in bondage....bad!
- **Jerusalem above** – New covenant, represented by Sarah, Gospel, Christians, freedom....good!

This thought can be illustrated by a chart I found on-line:

**Galatians 4:21–31**  
**The Allegory of Sarah and Hagar**

Hagar	Sarah
Bondwoman	Free Born
Son Ismael—after the flesh	Son Isaac—Child of Promise
Old Covenant—Law of Moses—subject to bondage of the flesh	New Covenant—Gospel—men are made free Heirs of Promise

“Those born after the flesh war against those born of the Spirit.”

Thus, one could come to the “**obvious**” conclusion of tossing out the Torah, Judaism, and the entire Old Covenant:

**Galatians 4:30** Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

This incorrect interpretation has actually been the prevailing opinion of believers in **Messiah Yeshua** since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Therefore, according to this theology, a believer in **Yeshua** who practices the **Torah**, is taking on the yoke of slavery. This may sound logical, but here is the problem....it’s wrong and it’s not what **Sha'ul** was saying! So how can we understand this? Let’s start with defining what is “**under the law**?”

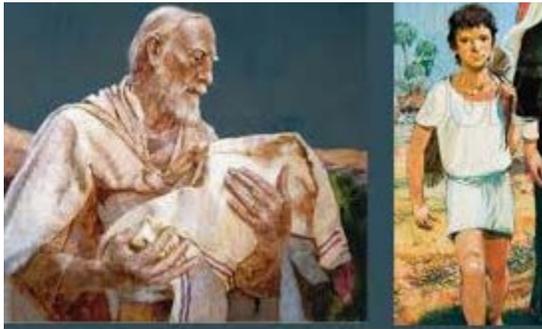
**Galatians 4:21** Tell me, you who desire to be **under the law**, do you not hear the law?

**Sha’ul** often uses this term “**under the law**” to refer to one who has become a Jewish convert by halachically undergoing ritual circumcision. Therefore, **Sha’ul’s** words in **Galatians 4** are addressed to those planning on going through this ritual conversion. So, he challenges them by reminding them that **Avraham** had two sons, one by a “**bondwoman**,” and one by a “**freewoman**.” The **Galatians** were trying to achieve the status of “**sons of Avraham**” (or the “**seed**”) through conversion to Judaism.

Therefore, understand this very important point. **Sha’ul** is not contrasting Jews and believers. He is not talking about Jews at all. He is contrasting Gentiles and Gentiles. Those non-Jews wanting to enter the family of **Avraham** (and become one with the “**Seed**”) through “**faith**” and those attempting to enter the family “**under the law**” through **Jewish conversion**.

Another look at **4:22** –

**Galatians 4:22** For it is written that **Avraham had two sons**: the one by a **bondwoman**, the other by a **freewoman**.



- The “**bondwoman’s son**” was born according to the **flesh** (by a natural, physical process)
- The “**freewoman’s son**” was born through a supernatural miracle, through a promise, which included the “**Gentiles**”: **Galatians 3:8** And the Scripture, foreseeing that יהוה would justify the **Gentiles by faith**, preached the gospel to **Avraham** beforehand, *saying*, “**In you all the nations shall be blessed.**”

**Avraham** believed in the promises and **Yitzchak** was **miraculously** born to a mother well beyond child-bearing years. **Ishmael** was **Sarah and Avraham’s** attempt at fulfilling the promise through **natural means**. Both are sons of **Avraham**, but those who depend on **circumcision of the flesh**, are analogous to **Ishmael**. **Ishmael** was **circumcised**, but he was the “**son of a bondwoman**.” There was nothing miraculous about his birth.

In the first century, a Jewish convert put themselves under the authority of the Sanhedrin in **Jerusalem**. **Sha’ul** didn’t agree. His point was if you did this, you were under the authority of “**Jerusalem which is now**,” a **physical** authority. But “**all**” were invited to be the “**seed of Avraham**,” members of “**Jerusalem above**” through a miraculous birth:

**Galatians 4:25** for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children -- <sup>26</sup> but the **Jerusalem above** is free, which is the mother of us **all**.

The following verses give more insight:

**Galatians 4:28** Now we, brethren, as Yitzchak was, are children of promise. <sup>29</sup> But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.

- **Bereshith 21:8** So the child grew and was weaned. And Avraham made a great feast on the same day that Yitzchak was weaned. <sup>9</sup> And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.

What was Sha'ul's point in saying "even so it is now?" Sha'ul was urging those who had accepted Yeshua through faith to reject the taunts of those pushing rabbinic circumcision.

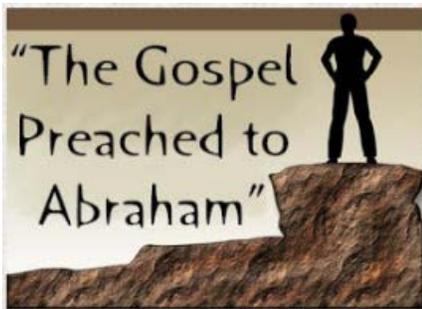
**Galatians 4:30** Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." <sup>31</sup> So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Sha'ul wanted the Galatians to see the difference between what it was to become a "legal" convert or a "miraculously born" convert into the family of Avraham. The miracle is the born-again experience which makes the individual one with the "seed" of Messiah. This is how one joins the family of Avraham and how the "nations are blessed."

**Galatians 3:29** And if you are Messiah's, then you are Avraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**Bereshith 12:3** ...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

And this is the "Gospel of Avraham!"



**Galatians 3:8** And the Scripture, foreseeing that Yah would justify the nations by faith, preached the Gospel to Avraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

Shabbat Shalom!  
Ardelle