

*Beriyth* – Relationship

The Covenant...

Yahweh’s relationship with Abram began with these words: **“Indeed** (*wa*), **Yahuweh spoke** (*amar* – communicated) **with** (*el*) **‘Abram** (*Abram* – from *ab* – father, and *ruwm* – to rise up and to be held in high esteem): **‘Walk out of** (*halak min* – proceed away from, come out of, and journey from) **your country** (*atah erets* – your land, place, realm and world in a regional sense) **and away from** (*min*) **your relatives** (*atah moledeth* – your kin and family, your birthplace and origins) **and away from** (*min*) **your father’s** (*ab*) **house** (*bayith* – home and household), **to God’s** (*el* – into the Mighty One’s) **realm** (*erets* – land, place, and country) **which by relationship** (*asher*) **I will show you and provide** (*ra’ah* – allow you to see, inspect, consider, and find delight in).” (Genesis 12:1)

“Yahweh communicated with Abram.” God, the source of existence and life, talked with a man named father. Beyond the confirmation that God exists and that He is interested in man, one has to be sitting on the edge of their seat in anticipation of what He was going to say, to ask for. We are at the precipice of knowing the answer to the secondmost important question in the universe. The first has already been answered: does God exist? The second is: what does He want?

Yahweh wanted Abram to leave his world, his place, his people, and his family and come to God’s place, family, and people. We are talking about choice and separation—two of the most important, albeit related, concepts in Scripture. It is the question Yahweh calls on all of us to answer. It is the reason we were created with freewill. Love requires choice. Are you going to cling to and adore the things of man—your house, land, and nation, its traditions, politics, and religions—or are you willing to leave them to be set apart unto God, choosing to become part of His family. In whose world do you choose to live?

You'll notice that Yahuweh introduced Himself by name. That is significant because it is what one does when they are interested in forming a personal relationship. Abram was on a first name basis with Yahweh, as should we.

Central to understanding this passage is that Abram's name is based on '*ab*, the first and most important word in the Hebrew lexicon. It means "father." This name, as is the case with all of Yahuweh's monikers, provides us with a word picture, a metaphor which serves to frame the central issue of this conversation. The Covenant is about establishing a father-centric family, one "which will be raised up" to live with our Heavenly Father, eternally abiding with the one we are "to hold in high esteem." Said another way, Yahweh has lots of titles (God, Creator, Savior, Messiyah, and King of Kings), but the one He covets most is Father. God wants to adopt us, care for us, be actively engaged in our lives and grow with us. In fact, the need for a father and mother, and their unique roles in perpetuating, nurturing, protecting, and enjoying life, were designed into human nature, so that we would be better able to relate to Yahweh's purpose.

The importance of '*ab*/father is the reason Yahshua suggested that we should begin our conversations with God by saying: "Our Father, who exists in heaven, set apart is your name..." Simply stated, the whole of Scripture is about creating a familial relationship with God as our Heavenly Father.

This passage tells us that the Covenant was initiated with words. '*Amar* suggests that Abram was talking with Yahuweh and that God answered him. This "conversational" aspect of the Covenant will continue with each successive meeting. Further, "walking" with God is the only behavior which trumps communication when it comes to the Covenant. Yahweh not only wants us upright and moving, He wants us to journey with Him to the Promised Land. And more than that, He wants us to walk away from the things of man—especially human traditions, politics, and religions.

The Hebrew word *min*, meaning "out of and away from" is used three times in this verse. That means that Yahuweh wants His people *separated* from the realm of deceptive, destructive, desolate, and damning dogmas—the very things He sought to obliterate in the deluge. To be with Him, we must first come out of *moledeth*: "the dire circumstances associated with the place we were born." We, like Abram, must come out of Babylon—the most powerful, political, and religious community on earth.

In Revelation, still speaking of the "**Whore of Babylon,**" which is a metaphor for man's demonic politicized religious schemes, Yahshua says: "**Come out of her My people so that you do not participate in her sins, and so that you do not receive her plagues.**" (Revelation 18:4) Every religion on earth, and most especially Roman Catholicism, is based upon Mystery Babylon. In fact, almost

every tapping, ritual, ceremony, and holiday in Catholicism is rooted in Babylonian paganism. And since other Christian religions deviate only slightly from Roman Catholicism, they too are plagued.

Ur of the Chaldees, the town in which Abram lived, was under Babylon's dominion. Its people prostrated themselves to Satan in the guise of the sun, moon, earth, and stars. Ba'al, the sungod, was Lord, Sin, the national lunar deity, was worshiped as divine, and Ishtar, a mother-earth goddess, was revered as the Mother of God. Easter began here. And Allah wasn't the first false god to be revered in this part of the world under the symbol of a crescent moon.

But it is worse than that. The notions of controlling people through religion, of bowing down, of worship, of fearing, of gathering on Sunday, of calling God Lord, of the Madonna and Child, of praying to saints, of infant baptism, of holy water, of Lent, of Easter, of celebrating the nativity, and even the graven image of the cross, are all direct derivatives of the Babylonian religion Yahweh was calling Abram, and through him, us, from. Today that means we must leave the Church and the religion of Christianity, as they are polluted by this Whore.

The word for "house" used in the Genesis 12:1 passage, and throughout Scripture, is telling. *Bayith* (בַּיִת or *byth*), meaning "home," and *beriyth* (בְּרִית or *bryth*), meaning "covenant relationship," differ only in the addition of an "r." They are related concepts. The relationship is familial. The Covenant is all about building a home based upon marriage, upon father, mother, and children, upon husband and wife. The purpose of the *beriyth*/covenant is for us to live in Yahuweh's *bayith*/home, adopted into His family.

While I'm not an expert on such things, the Hebrew letter *Beth* is said to mean "house." The letter *Resh* means "head." The consonant-vowel *Yod* is "hand," representing "power and authority." And the *Tau* means "mark." Thus the *BRYT*/Covenant is the house of Yahweh. He is the head of the family. Those who bear His mark, His name, are invited to live there. And we arrive by way of His outstretched hand, His power and authority. We cannot get there on our own volition.

There is very little consensus among translators on how to render '*asher* in this verse or any other. It is one of my favorite Hebrew words because it is the term which motivated me to stop trusting human traditions, and to start relying exclusively on the Spirit and the Word. What I discovered along the way is that by using '*asher*, which denotes relationship, Yahuweh was associating Himself with Abram and also with the place to where He was leading him. God was saying that the purpose of asking Abram to come out of Babylon was to form a relationship. Being '*asher*/linked to God, connects us to the Promised Land—to eternity in Yahweh's home.

Our Heavenly Father went on to say: **“I will make of you** (*‘asah ‘atah* – fashion and accomplish, perform and produce through you) **a great, mighty, powerful, and abundant, even affluent** (*gadawl* – important and enabled, empowered and distinguished, majestic and honored, high in magnitude and extent, and exceedingly wealthy) **nation of people** (*gowy* – population of Gentiles). **I will kneel down and adore you** (*barak* – go down, greet, and bless you).” (Genesis 12:2)

God was going to do all the work. Abram would simply be a willing implement. It is the way Yahweh has elected to interact with humankind—even up until this day. He first calls us, introduces Himself, and then makes His request known. We have the option of saying yes or no. We can even negotiate the terms and conditions of the deployment. Then, if we agree to serve, Yahweh accomplishes His mission through us, even in spite of us. The words you are reading now are the product of such an engagement.

There is one glaring exception to Yahweh’s propensity to work through ordinary men. Yahweh Himself, saved us. It was the one job He did not delegate or even fulfill through an ordinary human implement. The Messiyah Yahshua was and is the diminished human manifestation of Yah. Yahshua is Yahweh reducing Himself inside a three dimensional human vessel, becoming corporeal, in a desire to facilitate an eternal spiritual relationship.

One of the most interesting words in this opening passage is *gadawl*. It is from *gadal*, meaning “to nurture and grow, to become important and great, to promote and do powerful and praiseworthy things, to be magnified.” As mortal humans we are rather limited, very fragile, even weak. Life is short and we are small. Yet time is eternal and the universe is big—as is God. So to live with Him, God magnifies us, making us ever more like Him. This in turn enables us to explore and enjoy the vastness of His creation.

There are two extraordinarily significant concepts hinted at here. First, the purpose of the covenant relationship is to grow with God. And that means God grows in addition to us. If you think about it, it’s the only rational reason for us to exist.

I realize that this is a very difficult concept for most people to fathom. Most want God to be all-knowing and omnipresent. Yet both of these ideas are inconsistent with Scripture and reason. While God can be most anywhere He wants to be and can know most everything He wants to know, Yahweh specifically tells us that He can no longer see or recall our sins once we are adorned with His Garment of Light. And God cannot exist in the Abyss, the place of separation, by definition.

These things being known, since the purpose of familial relationships is to grow together, it's evident that God wants to grow with us. If nothing else, our interactions with Him are enjoyable, adding pleasurable experiences to His existence, just as children augment our lives, making them better.

The second profound thought is that the purpose of the Covenant is to magnify humankind. When we are accepted into Yahweh's home, He empowers us, increasing our dimensions and energy which in turn makes us more like Him.

Continuing to peruse Yahweh's terminology, *barak* lies at the heart of the single most misunderstood concept in the Covenant specifically, and in Scripture as a whole. It means "to kneel down." *Barak* says that rather than us getting down on our knees to worship God, Yahweh knelt down in love to bless and benefit us. Yahshua is Yahweh on His knees. The message is: God bent down for us so that we could stand with Him. That is the majesty of this story. It's the purpose for which we were created—the central theme of God's Word. The moment you grasp the full implication of God bowing down before us so that we could stand with Him, you'll *yada* Yahweh.

Let me state this as clearly as words allow: God does not want to be worshiped. He does not want His family to bow down before Him. *Barak*, kneeling down, is how God enables us to stand. It is the process He uses to bring us into His presence so that He can magnify us. This is His end of this bargain.

In this initial invitation into the *beriyth* Covenant, the association has been defined. God asks us to consider Him as our father, which is why He presents Himself getting down on His knees to hold our hand, to look us in the eyes, and to share the comforting words with His children.

Yahweh's words have already shattered many illusions, and we are just beginning. Normally, when referring to Yahuwdym, to the Children of Yisra'el, to the folks we call "Jews," Yahweh uses *'am*, which means "family" in addition to "people." Yet in Genesis 12:2, He selected *gowy*, which refers to "Gentiles," those who by definition are not "Jews" racially. And while I've rendered *gowy* "people and nations," this is overly kind. *Gowy* are usually heathens, foreigners and pagans. It's not a flattering term.

The reason that this is significant is that the Covenant established with Abram was designed to magnify all people, not just Jews. God has always been concerned about saving lost sheep. And who needs saving more than heathens? Further, in a more limited sense, Abram would go on to father far more *Gowyim* than Yahuwdym. Ishmael, in particular, is noteworthy, because according to the wannabe prophet Muhammad, he was patriarch of Islam. Knowing that he would claim as much, Yahweh had this to say of Ishmael and his offspring, today's Jihadists:

**“He shall be a wild ass of a man. His hand will be against everyone and everyone’s hand will be against him. And he will live in the presence of howling jackals** (*‘oah* — wild desert killers who scream, fiery companions who inflict woe, countrymen who are enraged acting like yelping hyenas, relatives who are despondent, and brothers who inflict injury).” (Genesis 16:12)

The consequence of living outside the family of Yahweh, is hinted at within the etymological roots of the term. *Gowy* is the base of *gewiya*, meaning “dead body, carcass, and corpse.” As history would unfold, relatively few of Abram’s descendants would be magnified. They would remain corpses, just as before the Covenant, and outside the Covenant, we were all walking dead.

Continuing the conversation, Yahweh confirmed that by way of Abram’s name (“the father who uplifts”), that He would cause us to become more than what we are without Him: **“I will nurture and magnify through** (*gadal* – nourish and rear, cause to grow and lift up, empower and do great things by way of) **your name** (*shem* – your designation, your mark and renown). **You shall exist as** (*hayah*) **the voice of excellence, as the vow which promotes prosperity and peace, as the oath which blesses** (*barakah* – the source of something sought after and obtained, as the formula for relationship, as the manifestation of the gift of the One who kneels down in adoration and who brings enjoyment and goodness).” (Genesis 12:2) The “oath which blesses” is the Covenant.

Since Abram’s *shem*, or “personal and proper name” defines Yahweh’s role as the “father who lifts up,” we discover that by kneeling down, God nurtures and magnifies us. He nourishes and rears us. He lifts us up and empowers us. Abram was a beneficiary of these things, and through this Covenant, so are we.

While Abraham’s name was made great, that was insignificant to God and to the man. By way of example, there is no such thing as an “Abrahamic religion.” Abram had a relationship with Yahweh—nothing more, nothing less. The man served as an example and as a conduit. That is how he became a “blessing.” Abram was the embodiment of the voice and vow of God. In this regard, Islam’s allegation that the Qur’an is somehow the “religion of Abraham” is utterly absurd, and is one of thousands of examples of how the religion proves itself false by contradicting the very Scripture it upon which it bases its validity.

The next verse is among many which are poorly rendered. In it, *qalal* and *‘arar* are both rendered “curse” in all English bible translations. By so doing, the message is lost. That said, the positive message at the beginning of the passage is clear and direct: **“I will kneel down and adore, blessing** (*barak*) **those who bless and adore you...**” This is Yahweh’s promise, His vow, His plan of salvation. Those who adore the Covenant made with Abram, those who accept Yahweh as their Father, those who love God, will be blessed and adored in return. Over the

next 1,500 pages, Yahweh will flesh out this message, presenting it to us in every way imaginable, showing us every wondrous facet.

But, it isn't all good news. There is another option, another choice, and therefore a different consequence. For love to exist, poor choices must exist.

Yet, before we examine the alternative, you should know that this passage is not extant in the Qumran scrolls so I cannot be certain as to whether *galal* or *'arar*, represents the choice versus the consequence. Therefore, I am going to present the passage both ways. At issue is how the pronouns are applied to the verbs.

Although I doubt it, God could be saying: **"...and he who recedes from you, slights and diminishes you, disdains and despises you, trivializes you, holding you in low esteem (*qalal* – trifles with you, shows no regard for you, and demeans you, he who views you with contempt, considering you of little account, superficially viewing you as insignificant), I will invoke a curse upon with the intent to harm him (*'arar* – vow to injure him, bring misfortune upon him)."** (Genesis 12:3) That isn't consistent with the rest of the message, so I don't think it's accurate.

More likely: **"...and I will recede from, slight, trifle with, and diminish (*qalal* – view as worthless and insignificant, trivialize, and show no regard for, despise and disdain, treat with contempt, hold in low esteem, nullify, omit, reduce, decrease, diminish, and terminate) him who curses you (*'arar* – invokes harm or injures you; threatens, entraps, binds, punishes, and oppresses you by way of a religious vow)."** (Genesis 12:3) Those who curse the Covenant and people associated with it, invoking harm on them, will find God receding from them, having no regard for them.

I love the contrast and surprise in these verses. The comparison is between *gadal*, that which "promotes growth, nourishes, magnifies, and empowers," and *qalal*, the inverse of those things—the disdain for and diminishment of" people. Life is about growing. That which does not grow, dies. Even Yahweh lives to grow and grows to live. It is one of the many reasons He created man and envisioned the Covenant relationship. We are entertaining to Him. To our Heavenly Father we are a source of great joy and satisfaction, just as our children are to us.

Like most dads, I have grown tremendously through the experiences and discussions I have shared with my sons. The same is true with God. To think that God cannot grow is to limit Him. Something that does not grow is by definition finite. And to miss the connection between growth and all living things is to miss the promise of the Covenant.

The surprise in this verse is hidden beneath the errant translation of *qalal* and of the misidentification of cause and effect. Properly rendered, the passage reveals one of the least understood and yet most important concepts in Yahweh's Word. The consequence of choosing not to love God is to be diminished to nothingness. It is to have one's soul seen as worthless and insignificant.

God did not say that He was going to "curse" those who don't love Him, His Covenant, or His people. He did not say that He was going to roast all who don't adore Him and His chosen in hell. He simply said that if you don't value Him, He won't value you. The souls of those who die without accepting Yahuweh's "source of blessings, His Covenant gift, the One who kneels down in adoration and promotes life and growth" will be *qalal*—"to be nullified and reduced to nothingness." It will be as if they were never born. It isn't that God despises them; it's that He doesn't know them.

There are three choices and three destinations for human souls presented in Scripture. The souls who adore Yahweh and who accept Yahshua's gift as manifest in the Covenant will live forever in God's home as members of His family. Those who make no choice, those who have little regard for God, those who dismiss His Covenant, those who never leave the fallen state of the place of their birth (its traditions, politics, and religions), will simply cease to exist. When they die, their souls will be diminished, dissipated into nothingness.

That is not to say that there is no place of perpetual anguish. There is. And one earns this fate by leading souls away from Yahuweh and His Covenant. Those who lift up and carry forth the doctrines of deception and death (religion and politics) will suffer the same fate as the demonic spirit they serve. They know much of what Yahweh has revealed in His Word, and yet they have chosen to not only act in opposition to it, but they have also drawn others away from God in the process. Yahweh tells us that this is an unforgivable sin.

This teaching is repeated hundreds of times in Scripture, with each passage showing a different aspect of the same reality. So, while we have been introduced to the subject here, I don't expect you to agree with my conclusions at this stage, but only to be prepared for and open to what Yahweh will have to say about the various fates which await souls, and what one must do to earn them.

That said, I want you to confront an uncomfortable concept. A god who would say, "Love me or I'm going to torture you forever" would not only engender fear, rather than love; he would be sadistic. The religious notion that every soul goes either to heaven or to hell is either wrong, or the religious portrait of god is wrong.

Still speaking to Abram, Yahweh, the Father of the Covenant, promises: **"And through you all (*kol*) the families and classes of people (*mishpachah* – nations**

and races) **of the earth** (*'adamah* – those who are of the same substance as 'Adam) **shall be adored and blessed** (*barak* – enjoy the benefit of Me kneeling down in adoration).” (Genesis 12:3) The only one who knelt down, adored, and blessed *everyone* on earth, regardless of race or nation, was Yahshua—Yah-Saves. Yahweh was announcing the arrival and mission of the Messiyah.

Upon hearing these words, Abram left his ancestral homeland, Ur, the ancient capital of Sumer, the first civilization on earth, the realm of the Babylonians and Assyrians. He traveled north, according to Scripture, along the River Euphrates. With his wife, father, and nephew, he eventually left the safety of the great waterway and turned west, crossing today's Syria and entering the most important place on earth—the Promised Land. The route he took, and the places he visited, have all been confirmed by archeologists. Yahweh's Word is grounded.

**“So Abram went as Yahweh had asked him...”** (Genesis 12:4) In the Promised Land, Abram formed a covenant relationship with God and became Abraham. His people would be called Yahuwdaym—those who belong to Yah. And thus began the longest running and most important drama in human history.

It all started because Abram accepted Yahweh's invitation. He listened to God and then engaged. By walking with God, Abram advanced the work and mission of Yahweh. Many souls were added to our Heavenly Father's eternal family as a direct result of Abram's willingness to listen to Yahweh's voice and respond.

The same thing happens today, albeit in a more modest way. In the midst of my secular life, engaged in the modern-day version of Babylon, Yahweh spoke to me, asking if I were willing to expose and condemn Islam—Satan's most overt religion. God's voice resonated from within, emanating from the Spirit who resides within me. I told Yahuweh that I was willing, so long as He agreed to accomplish the mission with me. I would not walk or work alone, something He did not require of me or of Abram. And like Abram, by being faithful to the calling and by completing the initial request, I was given a promotion. Today I serve God in a far more enjoyable undertaking—that of witnessing to His Word.

In this regard, the fourth verse goes on to say that Abram was “seventy-five” when he came out of the influence of Babylon. It is never too late to serve.

There is a prophetic confirmation we should consider which is relevant to Yahweh's admonition. Ponder the plight of the nations who disregarded these words and who invoked harm on the Jews. They are the Canaanites, the Philistines, the Phoenicians, the Hittites, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans, and then Arabian and Ottoman Muslims. Only two of these nations exist today and they are powerless and impoverished. Moreover, in the past century, the Chosen People were ravaged by the Germans—the losers of the last two world wars. They are despised by the French and by the

Russians—Germany’s victim twice over and the loser of the cold war. And let us not forget the Middle Eastern Islamic nations. Fifty-one of the fifty-two most hellish places to live on earth, the least free, least civil, least prosperous, and most violent, are controlled by Islam—a religion born of anti-Semitism.

When Yahweh makes a promise, he keeps it.

\* \* \*

Abram’s second of seven meetings with the Creator occurred in the place we call Israel. **“Then Yahuweh appeared to** (*ra’ah ‘el* – became visible to and was beheld by) **‘Abram. He said** (*‘amar* – promised), **‘To your seed** (*zera’* – offspring and descendants, family and race) **I give** (*natan* – bestow, grant, devote, ascribe, assign, and entrust) **this land** (*‘erets* – ground, country, place, region, and realm). **So he built** (*banah* – constructed and established) **an altar** (*mizbeh* – place for expressing appreciation) **there to Yahuweh who had appeared** (*ra’ah* – revealed Himself) **to him.**” (Genesis 12:7)

One of the many things God gave to Abraham and his descendants was the strip of land we call Israel. Since He created it, it was His to give. All other claims to this land, and that would include the so-called “Palestinians,” are without merit. And while I understand that one of Abraham’s sons was Ishmael, Yahweh was most diligent in specifying the heirs to whom the Covenant and gifts applied.

In the next verse, we learn that Abram moved to the mountains which served as the “House of God,” a synonym for the *Beriyth*/Covenant. Today, Bethel is just below what has become Jerusalem. Yahweh’s city sits among the mountains of Zion, Olives, and Moriah. **“From** (*min*) **there** (*sam*) **he moved to** (*‘ataq* – proceeded and advanced to) **the eternal** (*qedem* – ancient or eastern) **mountain** (*har*), **toward** (*la* – among and near) **the House of God** (*bayith ‘el* – home and family, household of the Mighty One), **and stretched out** (*natah* – spread out and extended, pitched) **his tent** (*‘ohel* – portable dwelling and home) **between the eternal** (*qedem*) **waters** (*yam*) **and ruin** (*‘ay* – desolation and destruction). **And there he built an altar to Yahuweh and called out** (*qara’* – summoned and proclaimed, said and read aloud) **Yahuweh’s personal and proper name** (*shem*).” (Genesis 12:8) *Yarushalem* means: “the foundation and source which protects, nourishes, renews, and saves.” It is the divide between living waters of the sea on one side and the lifeless desolation of the desert on the other.

God wants us to pitch our tent next to His. He wants to camp out together—literally. That is why “Camping Out”/Sukah represents the culmination of the seven Miqra’ey/Called-Out Assemblies. And like any other camping trip, His

version of fun is hanging together, telling stories, sharing ideas, exploring the world around us, and reveling in each others company. We'll break bread together, sip some good wine (He's been known to make it), enjoy the warmth and light of a roaring fire, and ponder the majesty of life and the universe. God wants to spend quality time apart from work, relaxed, just hanging out, shooting the breeze.

Yahweh's Miqra' of Sukah, meaning "Shelters" but most often rendered "Tabernacles," is based exclusively on this premise. It is a celebratory feast in which Yahweh and man are predicted to pitch tents together and camp out for one-thousand years beginning on the Sabbath of the Miqra' of Tabernacles in 2033—6000 years after the fall of Adam.

'*Ohel mo'ed* was the name Yahweh gave to His Tabernacle during the Exodus. '*Ohel* is from '*ahal*, meaning "to be clear, to shine, and to reflect light." When we pitch our tent alongside God's home, we become part of His family. In fact, we become His tabernacle. As a result, we radiate His light, becoming a beacon of clarity in a confused and dark world.

Incidentally, if Abram had lived under the dominion of rabbis in the first century CE when Yahshua came to this place, he would have been put to death for saying Yahuweh's name after making the alter. By the first century, the life-giving covenant relationship, and camping out together, had deteriorated to become a stifling and deadly religion under the auspices of men. And while they no longer have the power to kill people for violating their papal edits, the Roman Catholic Church has also officially banned the use of Yahweh's name.

\* \* \*

The third meeting between Yahuweh and Abram also began with a conversation. The man who had shared words with God, and who had walked with God, had proven himself worthy of continuing to serve as Yahweh's implement. So after the patriarch's successful journey from Ur to Haran and then to the Promised Land, after his visit with a pharaoh in Egypt, after his return to Canaan and separation from Lot, after his rescue of Lot from Chedorlaomer, and after Melchizedek's blessing, we hear: "**After** ('*achar* – following and pertaining to) **these** ('*el-leh*) **words** (*dabarym* – conversations and matters involving communication; messages and news), **the Word** (*dabar*) **of Yahuweh** (יהוה, YHWH) **came to exist with** (*hayah 'el*) '**Abram** ('*abram* – father who uplifts) **in the form of a visual and illuminating revelation** (*machazeh* – as a celebration of enlightening communication which can be beheld and visualized;

as a window or aperture constructed for the purpose of flooding an area with light), **saying** (*'amar* – promising and answering, claiming and avowing), **'Do not be awed** (*yare' 'al* – do not be frightened or intimidated) **'Abram. I am** (*'anokiy*) **your defender and shield** (*magen* – your refuge, the one who covers and surrounds you, protecting you, shielding and delivering you). **I am your reward** (*sakar* – payment for passage, generous father and doorkeeper) **who will make many increase and grow great** (*rabah* – multiply and thrive, becoming greater than they are) **in power and strength** (*ma'od* – exceedingly abundant with regard to energy and force, capacity and ability).” (Genesis 15:1)

Of the 2,500 times *dabar* is found in the Old Covenant, it is used as a noun (as in *word*) 1,400 times, and as a verb (as in *spoke*) 1,100 times. More amazing than the frequency, is the diversity. There are more than 120 different English words required to convey the full meaning of *dabar*. Some are synonyms, many are not. The only common denominator is that they all convey a sense of “communication,” because that is the essence of the Covenant.

Another wonderful word in Genesis 15:1 is *machezeh*, meaning “light and window,” the “facility of sight,” and a “vision which reveals and enlightens.” God is light and His words provide a portal through which we can see Him. Scripture enlightens us, revealing God’s nature and plan. *Machezeh* is from *chazah*, providing an even clearer picture of the purpose of the visit. It conveys: “to see and to perceive, to look upon, behold, experience, and understand,” as well as “to prophesy and provide witness to that which has been revealed.” These are some of the many ways according to the passage that God made His Word known to Abram.

A little further down in the verse we find *magen*, meaning “defender.” The same consonants which comprise it can be vocalized *megen*, and thereby express “favor, gift, and present.” Salvation is a gift of God; His protection is an unearned favor. This gift is *sakar*—the payment Yahshua offered as a ransom, the recompense He rendered, the fare He paid, the service He provided. It is why He alone is the Father’s Doorkeeper. The path to paradise goes through Him.

Chatting with God for the third time had to be exciting, and the promises were grand, **“But 'Abram said** (*'amar*) **to Yahuweh, the father and head of the family** (*'eden* – the upright pillar of the tabernacle), **'What am I to be given** (*mah natan*)? **I walk** (*halak* – journey) **childless** (*'aryry* – without a son or daughter) **and the heir to my household is 'Eli'ezer of Dameseq.**” (Genesis 15:2) (Rather than disrupt this conversation with an analysis of *'eden*, instead of the Masoretic *'adonay*, we’ll table it until the next meeting between God and Abram.) And while it’s not particularly insightful, 'Eli'ezer is from *'el* and *'ezer*, meaning the “one who helps God.” He was one of Abram’s associates who had hailed from Damascus.

“**Abram said** (*amar*), **‘But** (*hineh*), **you have given me no seed or offspring** (*zera’*), **no son** (*ben*), **no family** (*beiyth*), **and no heir** (*yaras*).” (Genesis 15:3) But besides that, it’s been fun chatting with you.

“**Now behold** (*wa hineh*), **’Yahweh replied** (*dabar*) **to him. ‘I’m saying that this man shall not be your heir. On the contrary** (*iyim* – as a concession) **your** (*atah*) **brand** (*kiy* – mark and identity, nature), **your blessed relation** (*asher*) **shall come forth** (*yatsa’* – be delivered and be produced as) **a source of life** (*me’iyim* – a gusher of liquid which springs forth) **from** (*min* – out of) **you** (*atah*), **and he will be your heir** (*yaras*).” (Genesis 15:4) There was a child on the way, but that was just the beginning. “**And He took him outside and said, ‘Look at** (*nabat* – gaze upon and observe) **the heavens** (*samayim* – sky, universe, and stars) **and count the number of** (*sapar* – take a census of the) **stars** (*kobab*) **if** (*im*) **you are able to grasp** (*yakol* – capable of recognizing) **the quantity** (*sapar* – number and count). **’He promised, ‘This will be** (*hayah*) **your seed** (*zera’* – offspring and descendants, extended family).” (Genesis 15:5)

Abram was childless and homeless and God was telling him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars which could be seen and counted—in other words, he’d go from none to millions. Whether you count Abraham’s direct descendants (the children of the covenant), or the beneficiaries of the covenant (Yahweh’s adopted children), this number is in the millions.

“**And he considered and determined** (*hasab* – thought, reasoned, judged, and regarded) **Yahuweh to be reliable and trustworthy** (*aman* – dependable), **just and right** (*tsadaqah* – a truthful, vindicating savior).” (Genesis 15:6) Abram did what we are encouraged to do—trust Yahweh.

So God responded...“**Then He affirmed to him, ‘I am** (*aniy*) **Yahuweh who for the purpose of a blessed and joyous relationship** (*asher*) **asked you to come out** (*yasa’*) **of ‘Ur** (*ur* – meaning: the burning heap in the region of the rising sun, a.k.a., Satan’s realm) **of the Kasdym** (*kasdym* – meaning: land of sages, fortune tellers, magicians, and astrologers, a.k.a., Babylon) **to give you this land** (*erets* – region, place, and realm) **as an inheritance.**” (Genesis 15:7)

Ur was the capital city of Sumer, the world’s oldest known civilization—the birthplace of language, politics, and religion. At the time of this discussion, it was part of Babylon, the ancient world’s most resolutely religious, and most power hungry and brutal society. Its rituals and traditions dominate the trappings and ceremonies in all of the world’s religions today. The city itself was at the mouth of the Euphrates River, and on what we call the Persian Gulf, in today’s Iraq.

To confirm that Yahweh considered the Kasdym, transliterated “Chaldeans” to be part of Babylon, in Ezekiel 12:13, we read that “Babylon is the land of the *Kasdym*”—of sages, fortune tellers, magicians, and astrologers.

Yahweh's first and last request as it pertains to the Covenant is to leave Babylon. It is in both Genesis and Revelation. Upon His return we read: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." And while Babylon finally succumbing in the waning days of the Tribulation is great news, it means that the legacy of Babylon—its religious, political, academic, militaristic, and economic systems—must still be in play today. And so they are; they can still be found in today's most prevalent and powerful religious political, academic, militaristic, and economic institutions.

Like any one of us, Abram looked to God for some verification: **"So he said, 'Yahuweh, father and upright one ('eden – the pillar and head of the family), how am I to know (yada' – be made aware of and understand, recognize and confirm) that I am an heir?'"** (Genesis 15:8) The answer Yahweh provided was complex, and I'm not sure I even understand it. But what's important, is that Yahweh provided Abram with an answer he understood.

Here is what happened: **"He said to him, 'Obtain a heifer (eglah – adolescent female cow) three (shalowsh – third in a series, and probably meaning a three-year-old cow), a female goat ('ez), three years old (shalowsh), a ram ('ayil – a male sheep or lamb), three years old, a dove (towr) and a young bird (gozal).'"**

**"He obtained them all. He cut them in two (batar – divided them) in the middle (tavek) and he offered both halves (bethet – parts and pieces), shouting out (rea') issuing a summons, inviting a special guest (qara'ysh), calling out an invitation with a thunderous voice. The birds were not cut in half."** (Genesis 15:9-10)

There was going to be a feast in his honor, so Abram invited the most important individual in his life: Yahweh. In this listing, the ram, as a sacrificial male lamb, represented the Messiyah. The dove represented the Set-Apart Spirit. And the *gozal* was selected to demonstrate the Spirit's purpose, which is to cover and care for Her young. The only other use of the term was in Deuteronomy 32:11, where God painted a word picture of His maternal nature.

While cutting the heifer, goat (representative of sin), and ram might seem gruesome to us, the purpose was three-fold. First, God wants us to know that sin and separation are serious, and that they lead to death. Second, the Covenant is all about choice—choosing with whom you want to associate. And third, God likes to party. If you are going to have a feast, some animals are going to be sacrificed.

**"When birds of prey descended upon the carcasses, 'Abram drove them away."** Literally, he "dispersed them by blowing and stirring the air, causing a wind." (Genesis 15:11) **"As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon 'Abram. And behold, a great (gadolah – powerful and forceful, massively energetic) dreaded ('emah – terror ridden and fearful) darkness (hasekah –**

absence of light which causes distress) **came down around him.**” (Genesis 15:12) I can only assume that Satan paid Abram a visit and tried one last time to seduce him to the dark side.

It’s possible that the heifer represented Satan in this illustration. The Adversary is routinely called a seductress, known as the “Whore of Babylon,” especially when the fallen spirit is depicted competing for human souls. And, the image of a bull became one of Satan’s most universal images. This is due to its animalistic power, but mostly attributable to the fact the sun crosses the constellation of Taurus the Bull on the Vernal Equinox, known as Easter, the most revered day on pagan religious calendars.

But, it wasn’t to be, so...**“Yahweh said to ‘Abram, ‘Know and be known** (*yada*’ – recognize and be recognized). **Be aware of and acknowledge** (*yada*’) **that your seed** (*zar’aka* – offspring and descendants) **will exist as aliens** (*ger* – strangers and foreigners, temporary inhabitants lacking political status and rights) **in a land** (*‘erets* – country) **which isn’t theirs, reduced to servitude** (*‘abad* – laborers) **there, and they will be afflicted** (*‘anah* – suffer and be humbled, oppressed and mistreated) **for four-hundred years.**” (Genesis 15:13) In order to tangibly demonstrate Yahweh’s plan of salvation, and for every aspect of the arrangement to be fulfilled on schedule, Abram’s seed would be scattered in a rather inhospitable clime for a while—a long while. This was required because the benefit brought by Abraham’s seed was to rescue people from human bondage and servitude—the derivative of religious and political indoctrination and oppression. Also, notice in this time of testing that the period was to be a multiple of forty. God is consistent for many reasons, one of which is so we simple-minded people could know Him, understand His plan, and figure out His prophetic timeline.

While we are on this subject, you should be aware that during the past twenty years, archeologists have found overwhelming evidence attesting to the fulfillment of this prophecy and to the witness of the Exodus which followed. You will find some of this evidence toward the end of the “*Matsah* – Unleavened Bread” chapter.

Continuing His prediction, Yahweh told Abraham: **“But that Gentile nation** (*goyw*) **which will reduce them to servitude** [that being Egypt], **I will judge** (*dyn* – execute judgment). **And afterward, they** [Abraham’s descendants] **shall come out** (*yasa*’) **with important possessions.**” (Genesis 15:14) Abram’s descendants would play a central role in a living enactment of the Miqra’ey, which in turn would serve as the foundation of Yahweh’s plan of salvation.

While the Chosen People left Egypt with valuable material possessions, their most important possession was that they were saved—God’s way. Equally

valuable, they were now not only camping out with Yah, they were on the cusp of receiving the Torah—the most important document in the universe. And of course, forty years later, the descendants of Abraham would inherit the Promised Land—symbolic of living in our Heavenly Father’s home.

Speaking of the Covenant, Abram would receive the benefit for which it was designed—a perfect relationship with our Heavenly Father. **“As for you, you shall go to your Father (*‘ab*) in peace, satisfied in the covenant, blessed, safe and saved (*salowm* – on friendly terms, restored, renewed, and rewarded, benefiting from restitution). You shall be buried prosperous (*towb* – beautiful and good), gray-headed in old age (*sebah*).”** (Genesis 15:15) In this passage, Yahweh has inferred that the reason a man named “father who elevates” was asked to form a Covenant with Yahweh and join God in the Promised Land, was because our Heavenly Father wanted to be Abraham’s Father, saving and satisfying him, keeping him safe and blessing him, renewing and rewarding him for a very long time. It was and it remains the purpose of the Covenant.

The next line is important too, as it speaks to the violence attributed to God in the Old Covenant. **“And they [the Yisra’elites] shall return (*suwb* – come back and be restored) home here in the fourth generation (*dowr rabi’i*) because indeed the iniquity, perversity, and depravity (*‘awon* – wickedness and wrongdoing, liability and guilt) of the ‘Amoriy (*‘amory* – soothsayers and word smiths, transliterated Amorites) is not yet (*lo’ ‘ad*) finished or complete (*salem*).”** (Genesis 15:16) By using *salem* after *lo’ ‘ad*, God was saying that the Amorites were “not currently beyond salvation.” He is inferring, that a time will come when they will be, however, and that is the lesson we need to learn. There comes a time when cultures become so perverse and destructive morally, sexually, religiously, politically, militaristically, economically, academically, communally, and socially that there is no longer any hope for anyone—including children. The Amorites were approaching this time, and so are we.

Understanding this sad reality is essential to knowing why Yahweh endorsed the annihilation of a handful of Amorite towns at the conclusion of the Exodus. By the time these people were killed, they were beyond hope. Their culture had become so perverse and depraved, there was no chance that anyone was going to choose right over wrong, God over the Adversary. These societies had been so poisoned with human edicts that individuals living within them no longer even had the capacity to see the truth, much less understand it or embrace it. In this regard, the Amorite culture was very similar to those cultivated by Roman Catholics, Muslims, and Socialist Secular Humanists.

While there is no hint of violence in this passage, Yahweh’s description of the Amorite culture 400 years hence, provides the justification for their annihilation. God recognizes what modern man rejects. Tolerating evil is being intolerant of

good. Displaying mercy toward the wicked is merciless. Perversity and depravity, wickedness and wrongdoing, which rise above individual guilt to societal liability, are the product of religious and political schemes. These dogmas thrive in the minds and hearts of men and women. To eradicate them, the doctrines must be exposed and condemned and their hosts must be rendered incapable of infecting others.

At issue here is that this society's 'awon/depravity reached the point that it was "complete and full." This "beyond hope" and "beyond salvation" condition would be tested by Abraham himself regarding Sodom, when God said it would be spared if just ten upright people could be found there.

There is something else that I don't want you to miss. By comparing the opening of this passage to the thirteenth verse, we find that Yahweh has quantified a "generation" as being 100 years. That is important because Yahshua says that the generation which witnesses world war, the holocaust, worldwide outbreaks of terrorism, global climate change (manifest through increased storms, famine, and pestilence), and the return of Jews to Israel will be the same generation which witnesses His return. In that these things began in the 1930s and '40s, this monumental event cannot be far away.

This, the third meeting between Yahweh and Abraham, concluded with: **"When the sun had gone down, and it was twilight, behold, a portable stove and smoker ('asan tannuwr – fire pot for cooking, a smoker-oven for roasting) and an illuminated torch of fire (lappid 'es – portable source of light) passed through ('abar) between the two halves (gezer)."** (Genesis 15:17) It was time to party so God brought the barbeque and the torches.

And since partying with man was the purpose of the Covenant, even the purpose of creation: **"On that day, Yahweh cut the Covenant Relationship (beriyth – relational agreement) with 'Abram."** (Genesis 15:18) The Hebrew word translated "cut" above is *karat*. It is used in this case the way two business associates might "cut a deal." God chose it for two reasons. First, the purpose of the Covenant was to separate God's Chosen from the world, and set them apart unto Him. Second, *karat* is associated with circumcision, and circumcision would become the "sign of the Covenant."

\* \* \*

Unfortunately, Abram was a flawed and impassioned rascal, not unlike most of Yahweh's implements. His impatient nature, and his wife's insistence on self-reliance rather than trusting God, led to an indiscretion with his wife's Egyptian

maid. Thy byproduct of the infidelity ultimately led to Satan's most depraved religion. Ishmael's descendants would create Islam—a religion born out of hatred for Yahweh's Chosen People. But that story is the focus of another book—*Prophet of Doom*.

As this story unfolded, the moment Hagar conceived, Sarai became jealous. She treated her maid so harshly she fled. In the desert, on her way to Shur, one of Yahweh's messengers found her crying beside a spring. **“Then the messenger (*mal'ak*) of Yahweh said to her, ‘Your offspring will be too numerous to count.’”** (Genesis 16:10) And so it would be. Today, Muslims, who claim to be Ishmael's descendants, are growing in number so rapidly, having an average of seven children per father, that an accurate census is impossible. The best guess is that there are one billion, five-hundred million of them, and that as a polygamous society, they are doubling in number every twenty years.

**“And the messenger (*mal'ak*) of Yahuweh said to her, ‘You are pregnant with a son. Call his name Ishmael (*yisma'e'l* – listen and obey, submit and be obedient, i.e., Islam/Submission). Yahuweh has heard of your affliction (*'ani* – distress and suffering, poverty and persecution, misery).”** (Genesis 16:11) He has heard of Islam. In Hebrew, *yismaa'e'l* means “submission,” and in Arabic, *islam* means “submission.” Muhammad was right in claiming that he was a descendant of Ishmael, and that his religion was Ishmael's religion—a dogma responsible for an avalanche of oppression, suffering, poverty, persecution, and misery.

Then this haunting prophecy: **“He shall be a wild ass of a man. His hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand will be against him. And he will live in the presence of desert killers who scream, fiery companions who inflict woe.”** (Genesis 16:12) Islam would also be noted for its animosity toward everyone as well as its violence. The most successful and ruthless barbarians in human history poured out of Arabia following Muhammad's death to savage most of the known world; robbing, enslaving, oppressing, raping, murdering and/or hopelessly indoctrinating everyone in their wake.

So in a prophetic passage, the prototypical Islamic terrorist was described by Yahweh 2,700 years before the first wild ass brayed: “Allahu Akbar!” The very nature of the “iniquity which was not yet complete,” was revealed. But the story was not over. Ishmael's wild asses, today's Islamic Jihadists, will unite during the Tribulation as the Magog Federation, and they will attack Israel in unison. This will in turn ignite World War III, and cause the whole world to rise up against them.

\* \* \*

The story that continues to unfold is the most compelling ever written. It is literally, the greatest story ever told. In their fourth meeting, **“When ‘Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahuweh appeared** (*ra’ah* – revealed himself and was seen) **as God to (‘el) ‘Abram and said, ‘I Am (‘aniy) God (‘el) Almighty** (*shadday* – the most powerful). **Walk** (*halak* – come and go, travel, journey, come to exist, live, and engage) **in My presence** (*paniym* – turning toward and approaching Me, existing by My side, living face to face, paying attention to, considering, and respecting Me). **Exist** (*hayah* – be) **upright in accord with the truth** (*tamiym* – continue into perpetuity showing integrity and truthfulness, be complete, healthy, impeccable and unimpaired by holding fast to Me for support, become innocent). **And I will give as a gift** (*natan* – grant a reward, bestow a present, ascribe, and entrust, devote and dedicate, even pay for and provide) **My Covenant Relationship** (*beriyth* – alliance, agreement, vow of marriage, constitution, compact, treaty, binding oath of friendship, and partnership) **between** (*beyn* – within, among and in the midst of) **Me and you. And I will cause you to increase and to thrive, multiplying your** (*rabah* – making you exceedingly great in) **power and strength** (*ma’od* – energy and force).” (Genesis 17:1-2)

We are reminded that it is never too late. We can come to know Yahweh and serve Him at any point in our human existence. Yahweh was in no hurry. Abraham was a year shy of one-hundred when this conversation occurred.

Yahweh told Abram, and us through him, what the Covenant Relationship was to entail, what He expected, and what He was offering in return. Up to this point, we had learned that Yahweh was insistent that Abram come out of Babylon—the headwaters of the political and religious schemes contrived by man. And while Yahweh had consistently introduced Himself by name, this time He made a special point of confirming that He was and is God—the Almighty. He clearly wanted Abraham to know His name, to use His name, and to know what His name represents. Using “Lord” in place of “Yahweh” not only destroys the intimacy we should have in our relationship with Him, but it also obliterates much of the message, sentiment, and beauty in His Word.

The introduction to the Covenant Relationship depicts “Yahuweh appearing as God,” with our Heavenly Father “revealing Himself” to Abraham so as “to be seen” by him. For this to occur without incinerating His friend, God had to become corporeal—that is to take on human form. The diminished manifestation of God in our time and space is Yahushua. His meetings with Abraham depict His second of seven advents.

But the most important message is what follows. Based upon this instruction, the initial Covenant requirement serves as a confirmation of what we have read before. First and foremost, Yahweh wants us to walk with Him. And there are three aspects to “walking” that I don’t want you to miss. First, those who are walking are standing upright, not bowing down. God wants to be adored as our father, not worshiped as a “lord.” Second, those who are walking are engaged and active, not passive. Relationships are not for spectators. Third, the Covenant is a journey of discovery, a way of life. It is about traveling through space and time with Yahweh.

There is an additional aspect of “walk” that we should contemplate. There are other forms of locomotion our Heavenly Father could have chosen. But you’ll notice that Yahweh did not say “stand at attention.” Rather, He is indicating that we are to be at ease with Him. He did not say “march.” Therefore, we are not following orders. God did not say “run.” He isn’t challenging us to perform. He did not say “fly,” suggesting that He isn’t beyond our reach. He didn’t even say “jump,” because He hasn’t set up any obstacles between us. God did not say “ride,” either. Not only will He be providing the transport to heaven, a relationship requires both parties to actively engage. But He did say “walk,” because He wants us by His side, moving along life’s road together.

It bears repeating: Yahuweh wanted Abraham to be at ease with Him, to walk along side of Him, to be conversant with Him. He did not ask Abraham to praise Him, to bow before His throne, or to put Him on a pedestal. These instructions are the antithesis of that. I dare say, these may be some of the most important words in Scripture. Yahuweh has invited us to have a relationship with Him. He did not establish a religion. Further, this relationship with our Maker is to be on a first-name basis. We are to walk side-by-side, in His presence, conversing with Him. If you get nothing more out of this book than that, my labor and your time will be rewarded in abundance.

Most English translations errantly say that “the LORD” rather than “Yahuweh,” told Abram to be “blameless” or “perfect.” While *tamiym* can mean those things, it is irrational to think that Yahweh would ask a man to do the impossible. So to understand the next item on Yahweh’s list, “existing as upright, sound, complete, unimpaired, and innocent” we must determine if the term is a condition or a benefit. If it is a benefit, there is only one requirement to be included in the Covenant: walking in Yahweh’s presence.

If *hayah tamiym* is a condition, then we mortals have a problem. None of us are “unimpaired or innocent,” nor are we “complete and sound, blameless without defect.” Only Yahweh can renew and restore mortal souls to “an unblemished status, to a guiltless state of perfection.” If we were to soften *hayah tamiym*, however, to be “upright in conduct and sincere in attitude,” then we’d have a

fighting chance. As such, *hayah tamiym* would represent the most appropriate attitude to exhibit in a family setting. So if this softer view is accurate, then Yahweh simply wants us to be sincere, upright, moral, and truthful. We can do those things. We cannot, however, be complete or blameless without His help.

Within the etymology of both words we discover some helpful clues. *Hayah* is the basis of Yahweh's name: "I Was, I Am, and I Will Be." In relation to us, His name infers that "we exist" so that "we can continue to be with Him." Yahweh is the power behind the verb, the force which creates the result.

Likewise, *tamiym* means "to obtain and acquire innocence, to grasp and hold onto perfection for support, to adhere to another so as to be held upright." At the heart of the Covenant is Yahweh's promise to vindicate us, declaring us innocent, saving us, and thereby restoring us to perfection. The message of the Covenant is that Yahweh stood upright for us so that we could stand with Him. And that is what I think these words mean.

Additionally, we are a work in process—a mere shadow of our Creator. But those of us who have chosen to walk with God will be transformed, magnified in energy and dimensions, becoming more like our Maker. That is why the basis of *tamiym* means "to be finished and to be made complete."

At the heart of this passage, the gift promised in Genesis 17:1-2 is *Beriyth*, meaning "Covenant Relationship." It is based upon two Hebrew words: *beiyth*, "home, family, and household," and *barah*, meaning "to nourish, providing that which is needed to live and grow." These things are Yahweh's gifts to those who choose to walk with Him.

Speaking of presents, that's precisely what a *beriyth* is. It was *nathan*—given to us, made for us, applied, appointed, and assigned by Him for our benefit. He bestowed this gift—Abraham did nothing to earn it or deserve it. Abram's only contribution was a willingness to walk out of Babylon and walk with Yahweh. That is all Yahweh requires from us as well.

If we were to boil the whole of Yahweh's witness down to a single term, it would be *beriyth*. God revealed Himself through the inspired writings of prophets, wise men, and scribes in order to form a covenant relationship with mankind. A covenant is a "legally binding and valid agreement between parties to do, or not to do, something which is specified."

A covenant is a compact, a term *Webster* defines as a "joining together, a thing that is firmly built and solid, something that is expressed concisely to form a close union."

*Webster's* definition of "league" is also relevant. It is a "covenant or compact made between persons, parties or states for the promotion or maintenance of

common interests, for mutual assistance and service.” It is the “aggregation or association of persons and parties for a common goal.”

Interestingly, *rabah*, one of the last words used in this passage, is the root of *rabbi*. It is easy to see why men covet the title. In first person, it means “I am great.” While there is the misconception that “rabbi” means “teacher,” that just isn’t so. It is one of man’s most egotistical titles.

In this context, Yahweh is telling Abram, and us through him, that by using *rabah* that He will “rear us, caring for us so that we grow and live forever,” “making us exceedingly greater than we are.” It is part of His gift. Moreover, by analyzing *rabah* and *ma’od* we discover that Yahuweh is not speaking about the quantity of Abram’s descendants, as he has on prior occasion, but instead about demonstrably and substantially increasing Abram’s strength, his energy, his power, and his ability to accomplish things. Since Abram lived the rest of his life as a regular guy, a rather typical human, these promises applied to the eternal and spiritual realm. Therefore, the benefit of the Covenant, its result, is becoming more like God; becoming more powerful and energetic. The beneficiaries of the Covenant will be magnified, inheriting God’s source of energy as they are transformed from mortal to spiritual.

Before we move on to the next verse in Genesis, continuing our review of the discussion between Abram and Yahweh, I’d be remiss if it didn’t affirm once again that God said that He appeared visibly to Abram. The patriarch was able to see and inspect God. This was not the first, nor the last time. Yahushua appeared in person to Adam, Abraham, Ya’aqob, Moses, and Samuel in the Old Covenant. He initiated the Renewed Covenant with His redemptive advent and will close it with His return.

While God manifesting Himself in human form is completely consistent with Scripture, it is completely inconsistent with Rabbinical Judaism. In the opening sentence defining the Covenant, Yahuweh destroyed one of the foundational claims of the Jewish religion. In the third of Thirteen Principles of Faith, that define Judaism, Maimonides wrote: “G-d is incorporeal.” That is to say, according to the rabbi, God cannot manifest Himself as a physical being with a body.

Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides, the Rambam (1135-1204 CE) crafted the most widely accepted listing of Jewish beliefs and laws. Many would consider him the father of modern Judaism—although I think that title belongs to another scumbag, Rabbi Akiba. He’s the fellow responsible for men replacing Yahweh’s authority in the first place, for the Oral Law replacing the Torah, and for Jews being sent into exile for eighteen centuries. But don’t get me started...

Maimonides authored the massive Mishneh, a compilation of 613 manmade Jewish laws arranged by subject. (To “depreciate” these, read Ken Power’s *The Owner’s Manual*, available online at <http://TheOwnersManual.net>.) But as I’ve said, it is Rambam’s Thirteen Principles of Faith that form the most universally accepted manifesto on the Jewish religion. And in them, the rabbi said that God cannot be seen. Therefore, based upon this verse and Maimonides edict, either the rabbi or Yahuweh is lying.

Fortunately, we don’t have to guess who is being deceitful. The sixth of Rambam’s 13 articles of faith says: “The words of the prophets are true.” Moses wrote Genesis 17:1. The Thirteen Principles of Faith agree. “Point 7: Moses’ prophecies are true, and Moses was the greatest of the prophets.” If what Moses said was true, the rabbi is lying. It is as simple as that. There is no other rational option. This is just one of many contradictions in Judaism and Yahweh’s Word that lead to the unavoidable conclusion that Judaism, by its own definition, is false.

Considering the Source, the offer of a Covenant Relationship was very humbling stuff. And that’s probably why Abram reacted the way he did. But pay special attention to God’s reply. **“Then ‘Abram fell (*napal*) in His presence (*panah*), and God (‘*elohym* – the Mighty One) spoke to (*debar* – talked and communed with) him, saying (*amar* – desiring and sharing): ‘Here I Am, look at Me (‘*aniy hineh*). I have a Covenant Relationship (*beriyth* – a familial association and personal partnership) with you. And you shall be (*hayah* – exist as) a father (‘*ab*) of exceedingly rich (*hamon* – abundantly wealthy) Gentiles (*gowym*).”** (Genesis 17:3-4) It’s hard to see up when you are looking down, which is why Yahweh’s directions are the opposite of Islamic prostrations.

The Gowym who have embraced the Covenant Relationship, and who have been adopted into our Heavenly Father’s family, are indeed abundantly rich. As part of our adoption, we inherit Yahweh’s possessions—which includes the entire universe. While I don’t know how many of us there are, there is more than enough to go around to exceed the promise of this verse. In addition, we are given the greatest gift of all—eternal life in the presence of our Creator. During which time, we ourselves are magnified, increased in energy, dimensions, and capability. And though our spiritual inheritance is what is being depicted here, to a lesser degree, the passage could be prophetic of Ishmael’s descendants too—the exceedingly rich Gowym infamously known as “OPECers.”

**“No longer (*lo’ ‘owd*) shall your name be called (*qara’ shem* – preached and proclaimed, read and recited, summoned) ‘Abram, but your proper and personal name (*shem* – designation and position) shall be ‘Abraham (‘*abraham* – a compound of ‘*ab*, father, and *hamon*, of the abundantly wealthy). For I have given (*natan*) you the designation of (*kiy*) father (‘*ab*) of the exceedingly rich**

(*hamon* – abundantly wealthy) **Gentiles** (*gowym*).” (Genesis 17:5) Beyond the fact that the primary meaning of *hamon* and *gowym* are as I’ve rendered them in these passages, the reason I’ve not translated them as “many people” consistent with English bibles, is because it’s irrelevant and inconsistent. If Yahweh were saying that the benefit of the Covenant Relationship was an abundant number of Yahuw-dym, then He would have used *‘am*, the familial term for people which specifically includes Jews as opposed to *gowym*, meaning foreign populations. Moreover, the number of Jews has been and continues to be limited by their religious enemies. And while I understand that there are over a billion Muslims who claim to have descended from Ishmael, they are all adversaries, and thus counterproductive to this partnership. After all, Yahweh dedicated the previous chapter to demeaning Ishmael, so His evaluation of Islam is well attested.

The only meaningful message here, and one in complete harmony with the words themselves, especially the Covenant, is that our Heavenly Father through this familial relationship adopts foreigners into His family, and these spiritual children inherit all that is God’s to give, making them abundantly rich. And since we all begin life, Yahuw-dym and Gowym, outside of God’s family and home, initially, we are all foreigners.

Moving on, according to Yahweh, not only will those He adopts by way of the Covenant be abundantly wealthy, there will be a lot of children to harvest. **“I will make you exceedingly** (*ma’od*) **fruitful** (*parah* – producing an abundant harvest). **And I will entrust you** (*natan* – bestow you) **to** (*la*) **the Gentiles** (*gowym*) **and there will be kingdoms** (*melek*) **produced because of** (*yasa’ min*) **you.”** (Genesis 17:6)

**“I will stand up and establish** (*quwm* – restore and raise up, fulfill and accomplish, ratify and confirm) **My Covenant Relationship** (*beriyth* – personal and familial association) **between** (*bayin* – within) **Me and you, and between Me and your offspring** (*zera’* – seed and descendants, your extended family) **after** (*‘achar*) **you in their dwelling places and generations** (*dowr* – households), **for an eternal and everlasting** (*‘olam* – endless) **Covenant Relationship** (*beriyth* – familial association), **existing yesterday, today, and tomorrow** (*hayah*) **on behalf of and according to** (*la* – in relation to and concerning) **God** (*‘elohiym* – the Mighty One) **and your offspring** (*zera’* – seed and descendants) **after you** (*‘aharon ‘atah* – until the very last of you).” (Genesis 17:7)

Yahuweh is serious about His *beriyth*. He has vouched for it, and He desires it. By saying that He is going to “stand up for and establish” the Covenant Relationship, He is announcing the central plank of the Miqra’ey, predicting the message of the Messiyah, and conveying the means to our salvation. Because God stood up for us, we are restored and established, able to walk with Him in a

familial relationship which leads to being raised up to His heavenly home—living forever.

The *Beriyth* is established on behalf of God, meaning that it was created for His benefit, even though we are the primary beneficiaries. That means that Yahweh gains something from these familial relationships. He receives our love. He enjoys companionship. It is the reason we are here.

In the verses which follow, Yahweh instructs Abraham and his descendants to value the Covenant Relationship and to heed its provisions. Infidelity in this regard would not be tolerated. So, as a sign of the Covenant, Abraham's descendants were to be circumcised. The covering of the business end of the male anatomy responsible for consummating a marriage and producing offspring was to be "cut off and separated"—set apart. The Covenant is about bearing children and building a family by way of a monogamous marriage relationship. Yahweh didn't want anyone to miss this point.

After discussing circumcision, **"God said to Abraham, As for Sarai (*saray* – from *sar* meaning princess), your wife (*'yshsah* – female individual and woman), you shall not call her by the name Sarai, but Sarah (*sarah* – meaning to strive and contend with, to be empowered by, and to persevere) shall be her name."** (Genesis 17:15) Names are important to Yahweh. They all tell us something. For example, Sarah, who serves as the mother of Yahuwdym, was named "to strive, to be empowered, and to persevere"—each of which is a Covenant benefit. Her name forms the middle portion of Yisra'el, a compound term comprised of *'ysh*, individual who *sarah*, strives with, is empowered by, and perseveres because of and alongside, *'el*, God.

Speaking of the greater good that would come from Sarah, namely the Messiyah, Yahweh said: **"I will kneel down and bless (*barak*) her. Moreover, I will give you a son from her."** (Genesis 17:16)

At this point, we find absolute confirmation that the Covenant Relationship was a relaxed affair. **"Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed (*sahaq* - mockingly) muttering to himself, 'A son born to a man who is a hundred? Sarah, a woman who is ninety years old shall have a child?'"** (Genesis 17:17) Yahweh, who incidentally is God, and thus the Creator of the universe and the architect of life, made a prophetic promise and Abraham doubled over and fell down in laughter.

To add insult to injury, after mocking the Almighty, the old guy started negotiating with God. **"Then Abraham said to God, 'What about Ishmael (*yishma'e'l* – submission, individual who hears and obeys)? Could he exist in your presence?"** (Genesis 17:18) **"God said, 'No.'"**

Yahweh customarily layers His responses with multiple levels of potential meanings. He often laces them with prophetic and Messianic references. He answers questions with analogies, using beautiful mental imagery. He does these things to get us thinking, and so that we will engage more deeply in the process and get to know Him better, growing to trust Him through an appreciation of the unending brilliance and intricacies in His Word. So, when Yah's answer is nothing more than "No," it's pretty darn obvious that He's making sure there is no mistaking His feelings on the matter. Abraham had to take from this the same message that we do; that Yahweh was saying more on this matter by using one simple word than could be communicated with any other amount or combination of words.

This little exchange is as important as any we've considered thus far. By Yahweh's standard, Ishmael was a colossal mistake. First, by fathering a child outside of the marriage covenant, Abram's example was in complete conflict with the nature of *the* Covenant. The *beriyth* is about marriage (in the sense of commitment); it's about faithfulness (in the sense of monogamy); it's about unity (in the sense of a father and mother becoming one to produce children); it's about family (in the sense of nurturing, protecting, working together, and sharing); and it's about love (in the sense of genuine passion and sacrificial devotion). That was all torn asunder when Abram, who was married to Sarai, impregnated a slave girl. That was not acceptable, so Yahweh said "No."

Second, by giving up, and having a child through the younger woman, Abram was demonstrating that he did not trust God to deliver on His promises. As such, Sarai's alternative plan (the self-reliant solution), with which Abram agreed, violated the primary principle of the Covenant Relationship. God commits to bestowing the following: salvation by way of redemption and vindication, an overwhelming increase in power and energy, eternal life with Him in the Promised Realm, adoption into his family, and the inheritance of all that is His. To receive these gifts man must seek to know Yahweh and come to trust Him; man must choose to walk with Yahweh and come to love Him; and man must come to rely upon Yahweh's plan—His solution (not ours). Abram chose his way over God's way. That was not acceptable, so Yahweh said "No."

Third, Abraham was asking Yahweh to compromise on His core values. Abraham knew, as do I, that God is negotiable. In fact, He loves to engage in give-and-take discussions because they are essential ingredients to a partnership, of an agreement, of a reciprocal relationship, of a marriage, and of a family. Give and take is what the Covenant is all about. God gives us something and takes something from us in return. We give God something and we take something from Him in the exchange. But, and this is a hell of a but, if you want God to work with you on something, if you want Him to acquiesce to something you

want, then don't ask for something in conflict with His nature or plan. Abram's proposal was inconsistent with the Covenant Relationship. That was not acceptable, so Yahweh said "No."

While Abraham was positioning Ishmael to be the beneficiary of the Covenant, all he asked Yahweh to consider was allowing the bastard child to "exist in His presence." "No," was the answer. It wasn't: "Let me think about it." It wasn't: "Maybe." It wasn't: "Let's discuss it further." It wasn't, "In consideration of this change of events, perhaps we could..." It was: "No." Ishmael could not exist in Yahweh's presence. Why?

Ishmael wasn't adopted into Yahweh's family. He didn't get to know Yahweh or choose to walk with Him. He didn't love God or rely upon Him. Ishmael hightailed it toward Babylon and away from the Promised Land. He would spend his life in league with Lord Ba'al.

When it comes to adoption in Yah's family, there are no exceptions. Just because he was Abraham's son, just because he was born in the right place and at the right time, just because he was rich, just because he was handsome and handy, just because his dad was connected, and just because he pleaded with God, it didn't matter. When it comes to admission into His presence, God will not compromise. He can't. If He did, His Word, and therefore He Himself, would be inconsistent, untrustworthy, and imperfect. And that's something a perfect being cannot do. There is one way, and only one way. Nothing else counts. There are no exceptions. Period. End of conversation. "No."

If you've got a problem with that, if you think it's unloving and intolerant, too bad. Don't bother complaining to me or Him. It's His house. You don't have to go there if you don't like Him or his rules.

God did not however, treat Ishmael poorly. The "wild ass" came to father twelve sons, and he became rich and powerful. And in keeping with the prophecy, Ishmael became the patriarch of a vast nation—Islam. Billions would become "wild asses, raising their hands in hostility."

What's interesting at this point, is that God did not give up on Abraham or on His plan. He simply got back to business. This tells us that Yahweh is willing to accept and work with flawed implements. (Thank goodness, or I'd be unemployed.) **"Sarah, your wife, shall have a child, bearing your son, and you shall call his name: 'Yishaq (yishaq – laughter).' I will stand up and establish (quwm quwm – restore and raise up, fulfill and accomplish, ratify and confirm) My Covenant Relationship (beriyth – familial association) with him—an eternal and everlasting family relationship (beriyth – personal partnership) with his offspring after him."** (Genesis 17:19)

“Laughter!” The first child accepted into the Covenant was named for its purpose. We entertain Yahweh; we amuse Him. We bring a smile to His face. We make Yah happy. He enjoys getting to know us. We cause God to laugh and have a good time. The Covenant is for “Laughter!”