

Illustration: Meeting with Keith Holloway explanation of why we need to understand the Jewish Context of God’s Message and Redemption of Man.

Meaning of Jew:

Anyone who rejects idolatry is called a *Jew (Yehudi)*.

One who acknowledges G-d's existence and submits to His authority--to the extent that he is willing to sacrifice his life for the sanctification of His name--he is called a *Jew*.

Hence Abraham is commonly referred to as "The First Jew." As the first person to use his own cognitive abilities to discover and recognize the one G-d, reject the idolatrous ways of his ancestors and contemporaries, actively publicized the truth of G-d and was prepared to give his very life for these goals--Abraham epitomized "Jewishness" many centuries before the term came into common use.

The first individual to be called a Jew in the Scriptures was Mordecai, of Purim fame.

The term "Jew" is derived from the name of Jacob's fourth son, Judah--*Yehudah*, in the Hebrew--and may have originally applied only to Judah's descendants, who comprised one of the twelve tribes of Israel. On his deathbed, Jacob assigned Judah the role of leader and king--a prophesy that was fulfilled in 869 BCE when all twelve tribes submitted to the reign of King David of the tribe of Judah.

Romans 2:28-29

²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Last Week’s Reading Review: This Week:

“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Genesis 18:14

VAYERA (And He Appeared) Genesis 18:1–22:24; 2 Kings 4:1–37; Luke 1:26–38, 24:36–53

"The Lord APPEARED to Abraham near the great trees of **Mamre** while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day." **Genesis 18:1**

Circumcision is the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham and His descendants forever.

For instance, when David referred to the giant Goliath, he called him an “uncircumcised Philistine.”

“For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” **1 Samuel 17:26**

David was not announcing the state of Goliath’s physical condition; rather, he was emphasizing the fact that this giant was not in holy covenant with the God of Israel.

In other words, David was proclaiming a message of faith **that God would uphold the covenant and protect Israel**. It might have been challenging not to look on the strength and prowess of his enemy, but David overcame and, instead, looked to the strength and faithfulness of the God of Israel.

Although the commandment to the Jewish People to circumcise their sons on the 8th day still holds true, the Torah tells us that God will circumcise our hearts and those of our descendants — to love and obey Him when we come back into the Land:

“The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.” **Deuteronomy 30:6**

The ancient Hebrew prophet, Jeremiah, also called the Jewish People to circumcise their hearts:

“Circumcise yourselves to the LORD; remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest My wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.” **Jeremiah 4:4**

The issue of circumcision extends far beyond the physical and becomes a crucial matter of the heart.

The circumcision of the heart is not done with human hands (God's Covenant with Abraham was God's alone with no Assistance of Man, as Abraham Slept) but is only accomplished by the faithful working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who follow Jesus.

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Messiah.” **Colossians 2:11**

Deuteronomy 10:12-22

Fear the LORD/ Circumcise Your Heart

¹² And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

¹⁴ To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. ¹⁵ Yet the LORD set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today. ¹⁶ **Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.** ¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes . . . ²⁰ Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. ²¹ He is the one you praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. ²² Your ancestors who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

CIRCUMCISION: a spiritual interpretation was imposed upon the procedure when the Israelites were instructed to circumcise their hearts (**Deuteronomy 10:16** Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.). This demand required them to recognize that, in addition to bearing the physical mark of covenant membership, they were also under obligation to manifest specific spiritual qualities of commitment and obedience to the Lord's will. Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 4:4** Circumcise yourselves to the Lord . . . because of the evil of your deeds.) made precisely the same demands upon his contemporaries because of their evil deeds, which were the very opposite of what God required. For him, circumcision entailed consecration to the Lord and to the high moral ideals of the covenant, of which holiness was representative (**Leviticus 11:44** For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.). A true covenant member would be motivated by love of God (**Deuteronomy 6:5**) and one's neighbor (**Leviticus 19:18**). **A simple definition of the meaning of Circumcision is the emotional, physical, and spiritual separation of this world to God's ways, emotional, physical, and spiritually, or in thought, action, and word:**

Romans 12:1-2

A Living Sacrifice

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a **living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² **Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,** that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Example: This covenant, of circumcision, had not been exercised during the desert wanderings.

“Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that **they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed.** Then the LORD said to Joshua, **“This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.”** (*Joshua 5:7–9*)

This Week:

Week 5 - CHAYEI SARAH (Life of Sarah) **Genesis 23:1–25:18; 1 Kings 1:1–31; Matthew 2:1–23**

Genesis 23:1-2

Sarah's Death and Burial

Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. ² And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

The numerical value of the opening term “*Life of Sarah*” of this Reading adds up to the sum of **37**, which is the same as the difference between the age of Sarah when she gave birth to Isaac at 90 years old and her death at 127.

These 37 years were surely some of the best years of Sarah's life as she raised the child that she and Abraham had hoped and prayed for most of their adult lives.

The Life of Sarah is not about her death, therefore, but about her legacy.

Life's pleasures are many and varied, but they can be divided into two general categories: the satisfaction of a personal need or desire, or the achievement of a certain impact on the lives of others. The first category offers many gratifying moments; but nothing can equal the fulfillment that comes when you make a difference in others' lives, when the world becomes different—better, smarter, holier—because of something you've done.

The first category ceases with the interruption of physical life. Once you're dead and buried, there are no more strolls in the park. But your impact on the world continues. If you taught something to some- one, that person is now teaching it to someone else. If you acted kindly to someone, that person still feels good about it, is a better person for it, and is acting more kindly to others. If you made the world a bet- ter place, that improvement is now being built upon to make the world an even better place.

So does “life as we know it” extend beyond death? That depends on what you know life as. If life, to you, is getting the most you can of its resources for yourself, you have a limited time in which to get as much as you can, and then the fat lady sings and the curtain falls. If life, to you, is making a difference in the lives of others, you’re going to live forever . . .

. . . The true Chayei Sarah comes to light in the events following her death, when the eternity of her life is revealed.

Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, www.therebbe.org; adapted by Yanki Tauber, editor@chabadonline.com

Where did he come from? He came from Mount Moriah, **Sarah having died of grief** over the Binding of Isaac.

(Midrash Rabbah)

Genesis 23:3-20

³ And Abraham rose up from before his dead and said to the Hittites, ⁴ “I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”

The Believer (“Jew” – see meaning of Jew above) is a “resident” in the world, for the Torah instructs him **not escape the physical reality but to inhabit it and elevate it**. Virtually all the divine commandments of the Torah are physical actions involving physical objects, in keeping with the Believer’s (“Jew’s” – see meaning of Jew above) **mission to make a “dwelling for G-d in the material realm” by sanctifying the everyday materials of everyday life**.

At the same time, the Believer (“Jew” – see meaning of Jew above) feels himself a “stranger” in the material world.

His true home is a higher, loftier place the world of spirit, the world of holiness and G-dliness from which his soul has been exiled and to which it yearns to return. Indeed, **it is only because the Believer** (“Jew” – see meaning of Jew above) **feels himself a stranger in the world that he can avoid being wholly consumed and overwhelmed by it, and maintain the spiritual vision and integrity required to elevate it and sanctify it as an abode for the divine presence**.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Trans: no coincidence that the first purchase of God’s land is not a land to build a life on, but an existing grave site that today we know as “*the Apple of God’s Eye*” **Zechariah 2:8**, an “*Everlasting Possession*” **Genesis 17:8** for God’s People, a land that His people will “*never be uprooted out of*” **Amos 9:15**, “*The Promised Land*” **Genesis 12:7**, literally and figuratively, “*A Shadow*” **Colossians 2:16-17** of a Real Thing in Heaven, Everlasting Life (created in the image and likeness of God – **Genesis 1:27**):

Ecclesiastes 12:7

⁷ and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

1 Corinthians 15:12–19

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope² in this life only, ²⁰ we are of all people most to be pitied.

Romans 6:8

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Philippians 1:21

²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Illustration: The story is told of the visitor who, stopping by the home of the great Chassidic master Rabbi DovBer of Mezheritch, was outraged by the poverty he encountered there. Rabbi DovBer’s home was bare of all furnishing, save for an assortment of rough wooden planks and blocks that served as benches for his students during the day and as beds for his family at night. “*How can you live like this?*” demanded the visitor. “*I myself am far from wealthy, but at least in my home you will find, thank G-d, the basic necessities: some chairs, a table, beds...*”

“Indeed?” said Rabbi DovBer. “*But I don’t see any of your furnishings. How do you manage without them?*”

“*What do you mean? Do you think that I schlep all my possessions along with me wherever I go? When I travel, I make do with what’s available. But at home—a person’s home is a different matter altogether!*”

“*Ah, yes,*” said Rabbi DovBer. “*At home, it is a different matter altogether...*”

(Likkutei Dibburim)

Genesis 23:4-16

⁵ The Hittites answered Abraham, ⁶ “Hear us, my lord; you are a prince of God^[b] among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will withhold from you his tomb to hinder you from burying your dead.” ⁷ Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the people of the land. ⁸ And he said to them, “If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat for me Ephron the son of Zohar, ⁹ that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as property for a burying place.”

¹⁰ Now Ephron was sitting among the Hittites, and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, of all who went in at the gate of his city, ¹¹ “No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the sight of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead.” ¹² Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land. ¹³ And he said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, “But if you will, hear me: I give the price of the field. Accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there.” ¹⁴ Ephron answered Abraham, ¹⁵ “My lord, listen to me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels^[c] of silver, what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.” ¹⁶ Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites, four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weights current among the merchants.

This is one of the **three places** regarding which the **nations of the world cannot accuse Israel and say, “You have stolen them.”** The **three places** are: **the Cave of Machpelah**, the site of **the Holy Temple**, and the **tomb of Joseph at Shechem**. The cave of **Machpelah**, as it is written: “*And Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver*” **Genesis 23:16**; **The Temple**: “*So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold*” **1 Chronicles 21:25**. And **Joseph’s tomb**: “*And [Jacob] bought the parcel of land (at Shechem) for a hundred pieces of silver*” **Genesis 33:19**.

(Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 33:19)

As per **Leviticus 27:16**, a field the size of a beit-kur, which is the equivalent of 75,000 square cubits, represents a value of 50 silver shekels. Thus, the size of the field which Abraham purchased for 400 silver shekels was eight kur, or 600,000 square cubits.

A square cubit (approx. 20 inches by 20 inches) is the space occupied by a single person. This means that Abraham purchased a plot of land that provides an individual “space” for each of the 600,000 souls of Israel.

(Paaneach Raza)

Genesis 23:17-20

¹⁷ So the field of Ephron in Machpelah, which was to the east of Mamre, the field with the cave that was in it and all the trees that were in the field, throughout its whole area, was made over ¹⁸ to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the Hittites, before all who went in at the gate of his city. ¹⁹ After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah east of Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. ²⁰ The field and the cave that is in it were made over to Abraham as property for a burying place by the Hittites.

“And the life of Sarah [**Chayei Sarah**] was a hundred and seven and twenty years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.” **Genesis 23:1**

Although the title of this week’s Reading, “Life of Sarah” initially focuses on her death, the Judaic thought is **the awareness of death that gives more meaning to life**.

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible to have a Reading named after her. What an honor! All the other Biblical characters that are named after Torah Readings are named after men: Balak, Pinchas, Korach, Noah and Jethro. This underscores how important the matriarch Sarah is to our faith.

Sarah dies in Kiryat Arba, and her funeral is the first to be recorded in the Torah.

Sarah’s Obedience Is Rewarded

Last week’s Reading (“And He Appeared” - Vayera) ended with Abraham’s ultimate test — the binding and near sacrifice of his beloved son, Isaac (Yitzchak); but God provided the ram for a sacrifice instead. One must wonder what went through the mind of Isaac’s mother, Sarah.

Did she even know for what purpose Abraham departed with their son? Did she worry that her joy — her reason for laughter — **Yitzchak** — may not return home alive to her?

Scripture does not address this; however, in the New Testament, we do read of **Sarah’s radical obedience to her husband as an example of faith and courage that women of God are encouraged to emulate:**

“For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.”
1 Peter 3:5–6

Sarah demonstrated this **radical obedience to her husband** (God) - first by leaving everything behind, including her home and family, to follow Abraham to a new land. She did not know where they were going and had to live inside a tent in the desert like a stranger.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Matthew 22:37-40

³⁷Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹And *the* second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Acts 5:29

“We must obey God rather than men.”

Luke 11:28

“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Luke 14:26

“If any man come to Me and **hate** not his **father** and **mother**, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

Husband:

Isaiah 54:5

“For your **husband** is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.

Hosea 2:16

And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me ‘**My Husband**,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’

Jeremiah 3:14

‘Return, O faithless sons,’ declares the LORD; ‘For I am a **master** to you, And I will take you one from a city and two from a family, And I will bring you to Zion.’

Jeremiah 31:32

not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a **husband** to them,” declares the LORD.

Ezekiel 16:8

“Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness I also swore to you and **entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine**,” declares the Lord GOD.

Isaiah 61:10

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a **bridegroom** decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Isaiah 62:5

For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the **bridegroom** rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

John 3:29

The one who has the bride is the **bridegroom**. The friend of the **bridegroom**, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the **bridegroom's** voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

In order to protect her **husband**, she even agreed twice to enter a foreign king’s harems where she could have potentially been greatly harmed and defiled. Still, even in this, **she obeyed her husband**.

God rewarded Sarah’s obedience and did indeed rescue her from Pharaoh's and King Abimelech’s harems. Clearly it was God who did not allow the King of Gerar to touch Sarah:

“And God said to him in a dream, ‘Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.’” Genesis 20:6

There is only one way that Sarah could have walked in such radical obedience - and that is through absolute faith and trust in God. She may not have trusted her imperfect husband who was willing to sacrifice his wife to save his own skin, but she trusted God to protect and preserve her from all evil.

Many believe that Sarah’s gave her servant Hagar to Abraham in order to raise up children for him because she lacked faith. Jewish tradition, however, holds **that Sarah was convinced that God would be true to His promise to bring forth nations through Abraham, and that she was acting in faith.**

Hagar was not just any servant, either. Sarah personally trained her in faith. Moreover, it is quite possible that she was Pharaoh's daughter.

The fact that Hagar conceived and Sarah did not caused Hagar to think that she was more spiritual and, therefore, more blessed than Sarah. **In her pride, she exalted herself over Sarah.**

When the three angels visited Abraham, Sarah understood that the child of promise would come through her.

Bearing Fruit in Our Latter Years

Psalm 92:12-15

The righteous flourish like the palm tree
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

¹³ They are planted in the house of the Lord;
they flourish in the courts of our God.

¹⁴ **They still bear fruit in old age;**
they are ever full of sap and green,

¹⁵ to declare that the Lord is upright;
he is my rock, and **there is no unrighteousness in him.**

That Sarah gave birth to Isaac in her old age shows us that we are not expected to idly sit in our rocking chairs after we reach our golden years; we can remain vital and active long after "retirement".

Both Abraham and Sarah achieved significant accomplishments, not in their youth, but in the last years of their life.

This is in keeping with an old Jewish saying, **“At 40 one is fit for discernment, at 50 for counsel, at 80 for special strength.”**

Caleb is an example of this. He was one of only two people out of a generation of millions to enter the Promised Land, and **he asked for a mountain to conquer at 85-years-old!**

“And now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; **just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war**, both for going out and for coming in. **Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day.**” Joshua 14:10–12

The Torah shows Sarah as her husband's partner in life and his equal. In Jewish oral tradition, they are both considered to have been excellent teachers in their own right, with Sarah teaching the women and Abraham teaching the men.

She completely shared Abraham's journey with God in a spirit of faith, courage, and if necessary, self-sacrifice.

She endured being uprooted from her native land, being barren (considered a curse in Middle Eastern culture) until the age of 90, being held captive, and being exposed to the advances of foreign kings (twice).

Through it all, she remained faithful to God, to her husband, and to her calling.

Obviously, Sarah was a beautiful woman. So beautiful, in fact, that **Abraham resorted to calling her his sister to protect himself from the gangs of marauding soldiers who might be tempted to kill him in order to take his peerless wife.**

Even though **Sarah was, in fact, his half-sister**, this still did not justify the deception that put his wife's honor at risk.

How did Sarah endure so many difficult trials in her lifetime?

It was through her optimism and inner tranquility that comes only with faith in God that Sarah was able to deal with such adversity. This was likely part of her appeal and power.

The Bible tells us that we have need of endurance also:

Romans 5:3-5

³ Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

James 1:2-4

Testing of Your Faith

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

2 Peter 1:3-9

Confirm Your Calling and Election

³His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹**For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.**

Hebrews 10:36

“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”

Genesis 24:1-25:18

Isaac and Rebekah

Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. ²And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh,³ that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, ⁴but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.” ⁵The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?” ⁶Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there. ⁷The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. ⁸But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.”⁹ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

¹⁰Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia^[d] to the city of Nahor. ¹¹And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. ¹²And he said, “O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. ¹³Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.¹⁴ Let the young woman to whom I shall say, ‘Please let down your jar that I may drink,’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this^[e] I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master.”

¹⁵Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden^[f] whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. ¹⁷Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.” ¹⁸She said, “Drink, my lord.” And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. ¹⁹When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.” ²⁰So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. ²¹The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not.

²²When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel,^[g] and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, ²³and said, “Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?” ²⁴She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.” ²⁵She added, “We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night.” ²⁶The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord ²⁷and said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen.” ²⁸Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things.

²⁹Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring. ³⁰As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, “Thus the man spoke to me,” he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. ³¹He said, “Come in, O blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.” ³²So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, “I will not eat until I have said what I have to say.” He said, “Speak on.”

³⁴So he said, “I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys. ³⁶And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and to him he has given all that he has. ³⁷My master made me swear, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell, ³⁸but you shall go to my father's house and to my clan and take a wife for my son.’ ³⁹I said to my master, ‘Perhaps the woman will not follow me.’ ⁴⁰But he said to me, ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father's house.’ ⁴¹Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my clan. And if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.”

⁴²“I came today to the spring and said, ‘O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you are prospering the way that I go, ⁴³behold, I am standing by the spring of water. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, to whom I shall say, ‘Please give me a little water from your jar to drink,’ ⁴⁴and who will say to me, ‘Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,’ let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son.”

⁴⁵ “Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ ⁴⁶ She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.’ So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also. ⁴⁷ Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. ⁴⁸ Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way^[1] to take the daughter of my master’s kinsman for his son. ⁴⁹ Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.”

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, “The thing has come from the Lord; we cannot speak to you bad or good. ⁵¹ Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has spoken.”

⁵² When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the Lord. ⁵³ And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. ⁵⁴ And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they arose in the morning, he said, “Send me away to my master.” ⁵⁵ Her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go.” ⁵⁶ But he said to them, “Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master.” ⁵⁷ They said, “Let us call the young woman and ask her.” ⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” She said, “I will go.” ⁵⁹ So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

“Our sister, may you become
thousands of ten thousands,
and may your offspring possess
the gate of those who hate him!”^[1]

⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

⁶² Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb. ⁶³ And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming. ⁶⁴ And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel ⁶⁵ and said to the servant, “Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?” The servant said, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

Abraham’s Death and His Descendants

² Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. ² She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. ³ Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. ⁴ The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. ⁵ Abraham gave all he had to Isaac. ⁶ But to the sons of his concubines Abraham gave gifts, and while he was still living he sent them away from his son Isaac, eastward to the east country.

⁷ These are the days of the years of Abraham’s life, 175 years. ⁸ Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. ⁹ Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, ¹⁰ the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with Sarah his wife. ¹¹ After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi.

¹² These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s servant, bore to Abraham. ¹³ These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶ These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes. ¹⁷ (These are the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years. He breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.) ¹⁸ They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria. He settled^[1] over against all his kinsmen.

Abraham ensures that her legacy continues by setting in motion the finding of a wife for Yitzhak (Isaac).

For that reason, as this Reading continues, the story becomes more about Isaac’s life, and less about Abraham.

Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik wrote, “Without Sarah, Abraham takes leave of the world stage.”

A good part of this Reading centers on how Abraham’s servant located a proper wife for Isaac.

He essentially chose a kind-hearted woman who was capable of decisive, compassionate, Godly action.

She was a woman who would take the time to help a stranger and his animals.

She was also the kind of woman who, once she knew God’s purposes, would not hesitate to act immediately. **As soon as she knew that God had selected her to be Isaac’s wife, she did not let another day pass in fulfilling that destiny, though family members sought to give her an excuse to delay her leaving.**

Abraham’s marriage to Sarah and Isaac’s marriage to Rebecca reveal that a partner’s spiritual qualities are far more important than their physical attributes (although beauty and attention to appearance obviously helps).

God worked in the lives of Abraham and Isaac to bring them a suitable partner through whom He would bring forth Israel. This reminds us that God has a grand plan in which the lives of each individual plays a role.

Background: Fall of Jerusalem came nearly 900 years after the original covenant at Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:1-19). Jeremiah was 20 years old when he began his ministry, and served as the Lord’s messenger for 40 years. God chose this man of undeniable courage to speak to the people of Judah on the Lord’s behalf, even though they would not LISTEN.

Jeremiah 1

The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Ana Thoth in the land of Benjamin, ² to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. ³ It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

The Call of Jeremiah

⁴ Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying,
⁵ **“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”**

⁶ Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” ⁷ But the Lord said to me,
“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’;
for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,
and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

⁸ Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
declares the Lord.”

⁹ Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me,
“Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰ See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to break down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.”

¹¹ And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see an almond^[a] branch.” ¹² Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.”

¹³ The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.” ¹⁴ Then the Lord said to me, “Out of the north disaster^[b] shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁵ For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the Lord, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah. ¹⁶ And I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands. ¹⁷ But you, dress yourself for work;^[c] arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. ¹⁸ And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. ¹⁹ They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the Lord, to deliver you.”

Jeremiah 2

Israel Forsakes the Lord

2 The word of the Lord came to me, saying, ² “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the Lord,
“I remember the devotion of your youth,
your love as a bride,

how you followed me in the wilderness,
in a land not sown.

³ Israel was holy to the Lord,
the firstfruits of his harvest.
All who ate of it incurred guilt;
disaster came upon them,
declares the Lord.”

⁴ Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the clans of the house of Israel. ⁵ Thus says the Lord:

“What wrong did your fathers find in me
that they went far from me,
and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?

⁶ They did not say, ‘Where is the Lord
who brought us up from the land of Egypt,

who led us in the wilderness,
in a land of deserts and pits,
in a land of drought and deep darkness,
in a land that none passes through,
where no man dwells?’

⁷ And I brought you into a plentiful land
to enjoy its fruits and its good things.
But when you came in, you defiled my land
and made my heritage an abomination.

⁸ The priests did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’
Those who handle the law did not know me;
the shepherds^[a] transgressed against me;
the prophets prophesied by Baal
and went after things that do not profit.

⁹ “Therefore I still contend with you,
declares the Lord,
and with your children’s children I will contend.

¹⁰ For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see,
or send to Kedar and examine with care;

see if there has been such a thing.
¹¹ Has a nation changed its gods,
even though they are no gods?
But my people have changed their glory
for that which does not profit.
¹² Be appalled, O heavens, at this;
be shocked, be utterly desolate,
declares the Lord,
¹³ for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water.
¹⁴ “Is Israel a slave? Is he a homeborn servant?
Why then has he become a prey?
¹⁵ The lions have roared against him;
they have roared loudly.
They have made his land a waste;
his cities are in ruins, without inhabitant.
¹⁶ Moreover, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes
have shaved^[b] the crown of your head.
¹⁷ Have you not brought this upon yourself
by forsaking the Lord your God,
when he led you in the way?
¹⁸ And now what do you gain by going to Egypt
to drink the waters of the Nile?
Or what do you gain by going to Assyria
to drink the waters of the Euphrates?^[c]
¹⁹ Your evil will chastise you,
and your apostasy will reprove you.
Know and see that it is evil and bitter
for you to forsake the Lord your God;
the fear of me is not in you,
declares the Lord God of hosts.
²⁰ “For long ago I broke your yoke
and burst your bonds;
but you said, ‘I will not serve.’
Yes, on every high hill
and under every green tree
you bowed down like a whore.
²¹ Yet I planted you a choice vine,
wholly of pure seed.
How then have you turned degenerate
and become a wild vine?
²² Though you wash yourself with lye
and use much soap,
the stain of your guilt is still before me,
declares the Lord God.
²³ How can you say, ‘I am not unclean,
I have not gone after the Baals’?
Look at your way in the valley;
know what you have done—
a restless young camel running here and there,
²⁴ a wild donkey used to the wilderness,
in her heat sniffing the wind!
Who can restrain her lust?
None who seek her need weary themselves;
in her month they will find her.

Jeremiah 3

“If^[a] a man divorces his wife
and she goes from him
and becomes another man's wife,
will he return to her?
Would not that land be greatly polluted?
You have played the whore with many lovers;
and **would you return to me?**
declares the Lord.
² Lift up your eyes to the bare heights, and see!
Where have you not been ravished?
By the waysides you have sat awaiting lovers

²⁵ Keep your feet from going unshod
and your throat from thirst.
But you said, ‘It is hopeless,
for I have loved foreigners,
and after them I will go.’
²⁶ “As a thief is shamed when caught,
so the house of Israel shall be shamed:
they, their kings, their officials,
their priests, and their prophets,
²⁷ who say to a tree, ‘You are my father,’
and to a stone, ‘You gave me birth.’
For they have turned their back to me,
and not their face.
But in the time of their trouble they say,
‘Arise and save us!’
²⁸ But where are your gods
that you made for yourself?
Let them arise, if they can save you,
in your time of trouble;
for as many as your cities
are your gods, O Judah.
²⁹ “Why do you contend with me?
You have all transgressed against me,
declares the Lord.
³⁰ In vain have I struck your children;
they took no correction;
your own sword devoured your prophets
like a ravening lion.
³¹ And you, O generation, behold the word of the Lord.
Have I been a wilderness to Israel,
or a land of thick darkness?
Why then do my people say, ‘We are free,
we will come no more to you’?
³² Can a virgin forget her ornaments,
or a bride her attire?
Yet my people have forgotten me
days without number.
³³ “How well you direct your course
to seek love!
So that even to wicked women
you have taught your ways.
³⁴ Also on your skirts is found
the lifeblood of the guiltless poor;
you did not find them breaking in.
Yet in spite of all these things
³⁵ you say, ‘I am innocent;
surely his anger has turned from me.’
Behold, I will bring you to judgment
for saying, ‘I have not sinned.’
³⁶ How much you go about,
changing your way!
You shall be put to shame by Egypt
as you were put to shame by Assyria.
³⁷ From it too you will come away
with your hands on your head,
for the Lord has rejected those in whom you trust,
and you will not prosper by them.

like an Arab in the wilderness.
You have polluted the land
with your vile whoredom.
³Therefore the showers have been withheld,
and the spring rain has not come;
yet you have the forehead of a whore;
you refuse to be ashamed.

What must Israel do to reconcile with her Maker?

⁴Have you not just now called to me,
‘My father, you are the friend of my youth—

Yet how can this be? Will God’s wrath not be kindled forever against His nation? Jeremiah responds with a rhetorical question.

⁵will he be angry forever,
will he be indignant to the end?’
Behold, you have spoken,
but you have done all the evil that you could.”

Faithless Israel Called to Repentance

⁶The Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? ⁷And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. ⁸She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. ⁹Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. ¹⁰Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the Lord.”

¹¹And the Lord said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. ¹²Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say,

“‘Return, faithless Israel,
declares the Lord.
I will not look on you in anger,
for I am merciful,
declares the Lord;

I will not be angry forever.

¹³Only acknowledge your guilt,
that you rebelled against the Lord your God
and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree,
and that you have not obeyed my voice,
declares the Lord.

The Almighty’s answer follows with a comforting oath promising Israel an eternal destiny and permanent union with the Almighty.

¹⁴Return, O faithless children,
declares the Lord;
for I am your **master**;
I will take you, one from a city and two from a family,
and I will bring you to Zion.

The central message of the **third chapter** remains: The fate of disloyal Israel stands in stark contrast to an unfaithful wife.

Whereas the adulterous woman may never return to her former husband, Jeremiah beckons the Jewish people to return to the Almighty, and assures them of their eternal destiny with the Almighty.

Yet, by what means can the Jewish people return to the Almighty?

A few chapters later, Jeremiah answers this question as he outlines for his disobedient nation how restore their relationship with God.

In Jeremiah’s seventh chapter, the prophet warns his people not to place their hopes on blood sacrifices or look to The Temple of the Lord to save them. Jeremiah proclaims that these institutions cannot deliver them from their brazen sins. Rather, they must turn away from idolatry, and return to God by keeping the commandments.

So said the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, “**Improve your ways and your deeds, I then will allow you to dwell in this place.** Do not rely on false words, saying, ‘The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord are they.’ If you improve your ways and your deeds, if you perform judgment between one man and his fellow man, you do not oppress the stranger, an orphan, or a widow, and you do not shed innocent blood in this place, and you do not follow other gods for your detriment. I will then allow you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave your forefathers from days of yore to eternity. . . So says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, “Add your burnt offerings upon your sacrifices and eat flesh; for neither did I speak with your forefathers nor did I command them on the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning a burnt offering or a sacrifice. **This thing did I command them saying, ‘Listen to Me so that I am your God and you are My people, you walk in all the ways that I command you...’**” Jeremiah 7:3-7, 21-23

REPENTANCE REQUIRED FOR SALVATION

Acts 2:37-41

³⁷Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸And Peter said to them, “**Repent and be baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to

himself.”⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

John 4:2

When Jesus realized that the Pharisees were aware that He was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John² (although it was not Jesus who baptized, but His disciples).

Mark 16:16

¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Matthew 7:21-27 16:16

I Never Knew You

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

Build Your House on the Rock

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Jeremiah 3:15

¹⁵ “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶ And when you have multiplied and been fruitful in the land, in those days, declares the Lord, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of the Lord.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. ¹⁷ At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. ¹⁸ In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.

Hosea 2:14-20

The Lord's Mercy on Israel

¹⁴ “Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.

¹⁵ And there I will give her her vineyards
and make the Valley of Achor (**Trouble**) a door of hope.
And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth,
as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁶ “And in that day, declares the Lord, you will call me ‘My Husband,’ and no longer will you call me ‘My Baal.’ ¹⁷ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. ¹⁸ And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. ¹⁹ And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the Lord.

He is still working in the same manner that he was during the time of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Rebecca — not only to accomplish His purposes for the Jewish People, but for each of us.

His eye is on every detail of our lives, and He wants us to partner with Him in His purposes.

Next Week’s Reading & Location:

Week 6 - TOLDOT (Generations)
Genesis 25:19–28:9; Malachi 1:1–2:7; Romans 9:6–29

Upcoming Event:

Hanukkah (Jesus' Conception) 2019
Sunday, December 22nd to Monday, December 30th