
THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM
HaShem's Eternal Faithfulness

To fully appreciate the journey Abraham made... you must take a close look at the interactions between HaShem and Abraham

There were 3 phases...



THE THREE PHASES OF ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY

1. **Lech Lecha -** "Go forth from your home." HaShem first chooses Abraham. *(Gen. 12:1)*

2. **Brit Bein HeBetarim** – Covenant of the Parts. Abraham was 75 years old. *(Gen. 15).*

3. **Brit Milah** – the Covenant of Circumcision that takes place when Abraham is 99 years old (*Gen. 17*)



PHASE ONE:

LECH LECHA:

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

- GENESIS 12

SECTION TOPICS

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

1. The Divine Command
2. The Sevenfold Promise
3. The Birth of the Covenant

THE DIVINE COMMAND



THE DIVINE COMMAND
KEY HEBREW WORDS TO CONSIDER

- **lekh-lekha** = 'go' and 'go for yourself'
- **Artzekha** = Homeland; the place of origin & identity
- **Bracha** = Divine favor and flourishing; in this context, both a gift Abram receives *and* a function he performs for others
- **Bikra b'shem** = Call upon the name;

THE SEVENFOLD PROMISE

HaShem promises to make Abram:

1. A great nation,
2. Bless him,
3. Make his name great,
4. Make him a blessing,
5. Bless those who bless him,
6. Curse those who curse him, and
7. Bless all families of the earth through him

THE SEVENFOLD PROMISE (CONT.)

HaShem promises to make Abram:

1. A great nation, *(singular form)*
2. Bless him, *(many interpret this as wealth)*
3. Make his name great, *(the letter ה is added to his name)*
4. Make him a blessing, *(his actions bring value to his community)*
5. Bless those who bless him, *(recognizing the good in Jews)*
6. Curse those who curse him, *(look at nations who have cursed Jews)*
7. Bless all families of earth through him *(modern Israel technology)*

THE BIRTH OF THE COVENANT

Traditional commentaries note that this initial revelation in the Torah portion *Lech Lecha* (Genesis 12:1–17:27) marks the literal birth and origin of the Jewish people.





AND THE L-RD APPEARED TO ABRAM, AND HE SAID, **"TO YOUR SEED I WILL GIVE THIS LAND,"** AND THERE HE BUILT AN ALTAR TO THE L-RD, WHO HAD APPEARED TO HIM.

- Genesis 12:7

THE ‘TAKE AWAY’

Abram's journey begins **not with a destination map but with a relationship**—a willingness to trust that the One who calls him knows the way forward, even when the path is invisible.

Relationship. Trust. Moving Forward.

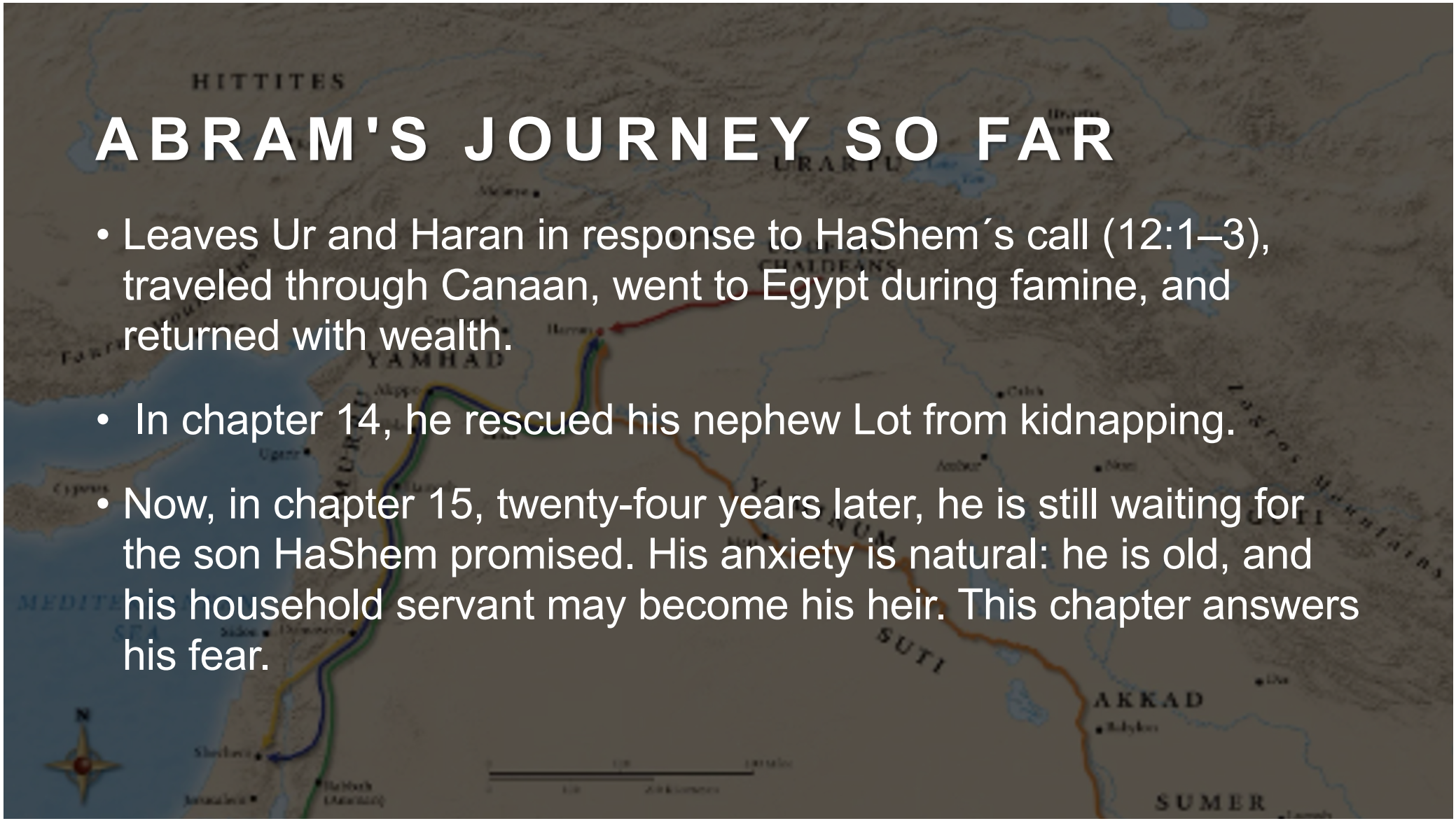
PHASE TWO:



BRIT BEIN HEBETARIM:

Abraham's vision-
the eternal history of the Jewish people

- GENESIS 15



ABRAM'S JOURNEY SO FAR

- Leaves Ur and Haran in response to HaShem´s call (12:1–3), traveled through Canaan, went to Egypt during famine, and returned with wealth.
- In chapter 14, he rescued his nephew Lot from kidnapping.
- Now, in chapter 15, twenty-four years later, he is still waiting for the son HaShem promised. His anxiety is natural: he is old, and his household servant may become his heir. This chapter answers his fear.

FAITH AS RELATIONSHIP, NOT PROOF

- Abram asks, "L-rd G-d, how shall I know that I am to possess it?" (15:8). HaShem does not scold him for doubt; instead, He provides a sign.
- The phrase **"And he believed (*emunah*) in the L-rd"** (15:6) is the Torah's first use of the Hebrew word for faith (emunah).
- **Emunah =** trust or reliance, rooted in confidence in HaShem´s character, not in having all the answers.

WHY IT MATTERS

- This chapter establishes the core promises that shape Israel's identity: the land and the people.
- It also models how the Torah understands covenant: a formal, binding act initiated by HaShem, not negotiated between equals.
- The passage shows Abram as the ancestor whose trust is 'reckoned as righteousness'—a concept central to later Jewish and Christian theology.

GENESIS 15:18

“On that day, the L-rd formed a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt until the great river, the Euphrates river.”



THE "TAKE AWAY"

When circumstances seem impossible, this chapter invites us to voice our questions honestly to HaShem, as Abram does, rather than pretend certainty we don't feel.





PHASE Three:

BRIT MALAH:

Covenant of Circumcision

- GENESIS 17

WHAT WAS HAPPENING

- Abram is 99 and childless. It has been 24 years since Hashem called him.
- Now HaShem appears to him in a vision and announces a covenant so far-reaching it requires Abram to become someone new
- The passage includes
    - The promise of Isaac's birth,
    - The sign of circumcision, and
    - The renaming of both Abraham and Sarah
- This scene concludes a major narrative arc that began when Abraham first left his original home in Ur

WHY IT MATTERS

- Gen. 17 is the formal, legal ratification of HaShem´s promise to Abraham.
- Unlike the earlier covenants (12:2–3, 15:4–21), this one includes a sign (circumcision) and establishes perpetual obligation.
- It transforms Abraham from an aging wanderer into the father of nations and anchors Israel's later claim to Canaan in HaShem´s sworn word.
- Without this chapter, the promise remains just a personal hope; **with it, it becomes covenant law.**

THE SETTING: ABRAHAM'S LONG WAIT

- Abraham has waited 24 years since HaShem first promised him a son (12:4). He is now ninety-nine; Sarah is ninety. In human terms, the promise is dead.
- HaShem´s appearance here breaks the silence and redefines what the promise means—not just one child through Sarah, but nations and kings.
- The covenant shifts **from a personal blessing to corporate destiny**.

NAMES AS NEW REALITY

- Abram becomes Abraham (father of nations)
- Sarai becomes Sarah (princess)
- These names are not decorative but prophetic. They declare who these people will become.
- The renaming seals HaShem´s commitment to remake their identities to match His promises

COVENANT AND LAND

- For the first time, HaShem explicitly grants Abraham the land of Canaan as "an everlasting possession."
- Not a temporary dwelling but an inheritance for Abraham's offspring forever. The covenant binds together three elements:
    - Descendants,
    - Land, and
    - HaShem´ presence ("I will be their G-d").
- All three are sworn to Abraham's seed

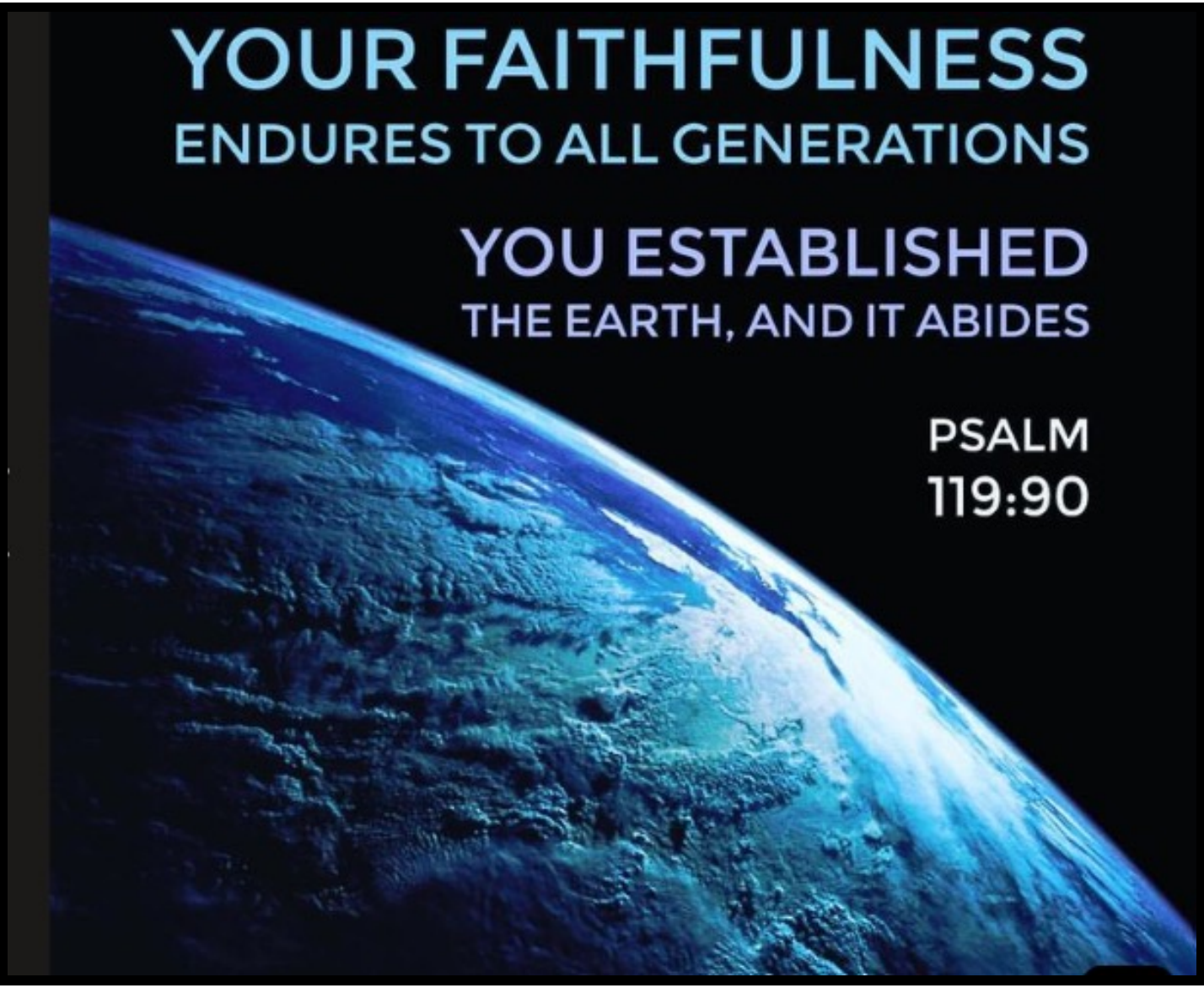
THE SIGN OF CIRCUMCISION

- Circumcision becomes the physical mark of the covenant, inscribed on the body of every male.
- This is not merely a rite of passage but a permanent sign of belonging to HaShem´s people.
- It distinguishes Abraham's household and his descendants and serves as a visible reminder of obligation on both sides of the covenant relationship.

WHAT IT SAYS TODAY

- When HaShem remakes Abraham's identity, He does not erase his past but fulfills it.
- The covenantal relationship asks us to walk before HaShem whole-heartedly (tamim), not perfectly, but with integrity.
- That wholeness matters more than our age, circumstance, or doubt

Feature	Genesis 15: Covenant of the Parts	Genesis 17: Covenant of Circumcision
Primary Focus	Formal promise of physical land and a genetic heir	Formalization of spiritual obligations & eternal lineage
Nature of Agreement	Unilateral (Unconditional): God alone binds Himself to the oath.	Bilateral (Conditional): Abraham and his offspring must actively keep covenant
Visual Sign	Smoking firepot & blazing torch passing between animal pieces.	Circumcision of all males in the household.
Abraham's Identity	Addressed by his original name, Abram.	Name is permanently changed to Abraham.
Expected Heir	Assures a biological child from Abram's own body will inherit.	Specifies line will pass strictly through Isaac (via Sarah)


YOUR FAITHFULNESS
ENDURES TO ALL GENERATIONS
YOU ESTABLISHED
THE EARTH, AND IT ABIDES
PSALM
119:90