

Follow Me Ministries Ex 26. Only the Truly Circumcised Actually Leave Egypt <http://follow-me-ministries.org/archives/3851>

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“Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD WENT OUT FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT.” (Exodus 12:40-41 Emphasis added.)

This reminds us of the deep Covenant relationship that had developed between God and Abraham in Genesis. Centuries later, in Exodus, God continued to honor Abraham by remembering their covenant and keeping the promises He had made to His friend:

“God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.” (Genesis 15:13-14)

*“God said further to Abraham, ‘Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and **it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.** And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.” (Genesis 17:9-14 Emphasis added.)*

Texts like the one above could lead one to assume that physical circumcision is a must for anyone who is to be redeemed by God. But that is not what bonds a person to God. God said the cut on the flesh is the sign that points to something else. And that other thing is what actually does create and maintain the bond.

Through His living Word, God brought Abraham into His Eternal Covenant and promised to deliver his future descendants from bondage. We’ve learned that the Word is Yeshua...humanity’s Eternal Blood Covenant Representative. Through the Word’s Humanity (which would be revealed in due time), God’s Word became ‘Blood Brothers’ with Abraham and his family. But the circumcision of Abraham’s flesh didn’t unite them. Abraham’s wholehearted response of belief, trust and obedience to God’s Word is what united this man to God. The scar on his flesh indicated that Abraham’s heart and mind and will and life belonged exclusively to God. The scar was to remind him each day of his life, of the real Covenant scar that had to be etched into his heart of hearts! The

Covenant only truly exists when that is the case...whether there's a scar cut into the flesh or not. So the scar signifies that this man and his household, are commissioned to be God's priestly attendants – set apart for the exclusive service of the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The scar is like an identifying uniform or badge that identifies a person as a soldier in a particular army. It serves the purpose of a wedding ring, reminding the wearer that he is the perpetual covenant partner of Almighty God. True Israelites are bonded to God in a 'to the death' Blood Covenant union of their wills, minds, affections and priorities. The scar also reminds the wearer that God has united Himself to him...through the humanity of His living Word, who we know to be, Messiah Yeshua.

This is why, when it was time for the Word of God to appear on Earth as our tangible, visible Blood Covenant Representative, God made sure He had the DNA of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He came as 'Abraham's Seed'! And His flesh was circumcised into Abraham's Covenant eight, days after His birth, as a sign of the Covenant Bond He had already made in His heart and will in the Eternal Covenant He made with His Father, before Creation took place.

God brought Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham...and their families into the Covenant. They were chosen to serve, with the Word, as God's human instrument of Redemption for all of His Sin-blasted Creation. Try to grasp the tremendously profound significance and importance of this! The ongoing fulfillment and revelation of the Perfect, All-Sufficient Creation of our Perfect God... and His Perfect Original Blessing... and the Perfect Covering of Adam and Eve's spiritual nakedness are being carried forward and extended to all humans... generation by generation...through this Covenant! The people God chose for His service are not the ones that must fulfill all of this. God, through His living Word, who is their Head and Covenant Representative, is the One who fulfills it... to Perfection...as their long-awaited Messiah! And when He is welcomed and embraced, He lives and works within the innermost being of a person in order to make the Covenant real and fruitful in the person's life.

And so, in Exodus we see God's Word appear. He continues to bring man's Sin-Covering forward as He had been doing since the beginning. The family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob numbered 75 when Jacob first arrived in Egypt. But by the time of the Exodus they numbered approximately two to three million! So now The Covenant was honored, expanded and made real and active for an entire nation...*Israel!* And the meaning and Life-giving effect of this glorious Covenant will continue to deepen and expand, until it includes the countless numbers God promised to Abraham. It will be fulfilled by the time the Last Days have run their course.

“And He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” (Genesis 15:5-6 Emphasis added.)

And so Scripture is the revelation of God's dynamically active living Word, through whom His perfect faithfulness and trustworthiness come to us. And that connection of our heart, will and affections for God is what makes the essential, all-encompassing Covenant connection possible.

Repentance on God's Terms Opens the Way to Salvation

Anyone that *truly* believes God and repents of participating in the Serpent's rebellion and disobedience against God will be grafted into this Covenant and saved from the Serpent's fate! And actual proof that this salvation has taken place comes from the actual demonstration, given when the thrust and direction and behavior of those humans undergo radical change. That demonstrates that God has made new creations of them. Whereas before they were helplessly caught by the power Sin has over fallen flesh, now, from within their invisible spirits, awesome visible, tangible life-transforming results...flow out of their thoughts and words and the actions reactions and interactions. That proves that the invisible work of the Word's Life is present and active within that person. This is the wonderful fruit that this awesome Covenant God produces. It is the Covenant God made with Himself...with His own living Word...who is our Eternal Representative before Him.

The Blood of the Lamb of God (who was slain before the foundation of the world) is revealed prophetically in space and time, through the sacrifice and bloodshed of Israel's Passover lambs. But the Eternal Sacrifice God made of His own Son, the Word, is what made Israel's Passover, Exodus and Liberation from Egypt possible. It was the eternal love and faithfulness of God in action. In this sense, this awesome Exodus is our story too, one way or another. We are either among those who choose to remain in idolatrous Egypt, or we join those that forsake Egypt and its false gods and leave the Darkness of the Serpent's disobedience, behind.

God always intended to save the human race. But He chose one man and his family – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – Israel – to serve His redemptive purpose. And out of loyalty to His Covenant friend Abraham, God sent His Word (through Moses) to lead Abraham's enslaved descendants out of captivity, as promised. And in order to bless 'all the families of the earth', He commissioned His Word to transform that beaten, disenfranchised rabble of people into God's premier priestly nation. They were to serve Him on behalf of all other nations.

So notice that in this original Exodus, God's Word did not free all the slaves that were being held by Egypt. He freed Abraham's family because they were to become *The Instrument* through which God would bless all other peoples. In God's Plan of Salvation, everything must begin with Israel.

“These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: ‘Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’” (Mt. 10:5-6)

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (Romans 1:16 Emphasis added.)

Israel had to leave the realms of the Serpent first. And so, God put the ‘sign of Abraham’ upon the men of this family to mark and set them and their households apart as His own possession. Only men bearing that mark were to be considered part of Israel; and only they were allowed to take part in that initial Exodus:

*“The LORD SAID TO MOSES AND AARON, ‘THIS IS THE ORDINANCE OF THE PASSOVER: **NO FOREIGNER IS TO EAT OF IT; but every man’s slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it. A sojourner or a hired servant shall not eat of it...But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the LORD, LET ALL HIS MALES BE CIRCUMCISED, AND THEN LET HIM COME NEAR TO CELEBRATE IT; AND HE SHALL BE LIKE A NATIVE OF THE LAND. BUT NO UNCIRCUMCISED PERSON MAY EAT OF IT. The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you.” (Exodus 12:40-44; 48-49 Emphasis added.)***

So the first stage of God’s redemptive Exodus dealt only with Abraham’s Family! God had to begin with them...to train them to be a fitting instrument in His Hand (Word). So He prepared a special ‘Disciple Boot Camp’ training facility for them in the wilderness. But notice that throughout the Exodus story, although every Israelite man was circumcised in the flesh, many proved to be disobedient and unfaithful to God. That tells us something about that physical mark in their flesh. That was not the true circumcision. It was only a sign that was to stand for something else that had to be present – the circumcision of the heart.

That mark serves the same purpose as a wedding ring. The ring is not the marriage. It is a sign married people wear that proclaims that a blood covenant bond of love and union exists between a person and his or her spouse. But the ring and the covenant scar do not tell us anything about the reality that abides and works within the people that wear them. Rituals and physical signs do not impart the reality of the power or authority to back up one’s covenant. All power belongs to God’s Holy Spirit and all authority belongs to His living Word! So God must provide us with His authority and impart the power and ability we need to do everything, through His Word, once we embrace and submit to His Authority over us.

“I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5 Emphasis added.)

So, physical circumcision only reminds the one who wears it, that he and his household are the property of Almighty God and have been set aside and reserved for His exclusive service. The truth of this distinction we’re making becomes obvious when we see so many people receiving marriage licenses, going through wedding ceremonies and wearing wedding bands on their fingers. A very large percentage of them prove to be unfaithful. They betray their partners and violate the covenants they promised to honor and uphold. The same happens with those that bear the mark of Abraham.

False vs. True Disciples

The men of the Israelite Exodus all wore the scar of circumcision on their flesh. But many were unfaithful. So obviously God doesn't judge by what is on the outside. He looks at what is really happening in the heart...deep beneath the surface. Redemption from Sin and eternal Salvation are offered to everyone. But before people can be saved, they must truly and demonstrably repent of their share in the Serpent's radical independence from God and by actual obedience to His Word, they must prove to be followers of God's Word wherever He leads...as His true disciples. If they do that, God adopts and brings them into His true Israel. But if they do not truly submit to His Word's authority, they betray their Covenant responsibilities and prove that although their bodies left Egypt, their hearts remained behind. Thus they are still Egyptians at heart, and not true children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

*“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. **Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?** Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.” (Luke 6:45-49 Emphasis added.)*

Lip service and disobedience prove that the Light of God's Word has not yet pierced and penetrated and impregnated a person's heart. So instead of being filled with the Light that comes from the Life of God's Word working within a man, demonic Darkness continues to abide and prevail within. Nevertheless...God required every male who was to be part of the Exodus to have Abraham's circumcision cut into his flesh as an inescapable reminder to each wearer. Like a uniform reminds a warrior, so did the scar remind the Israelite that he and his household was under the Authority and Command of the Captain of the Lord's Host...the living Word of the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

“He (God's living Word) is also Head of the Body, the Church; and He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the Fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” (Colossians 1:18-20 Emphasis added.)

So let's look deeper at what God is revealing about **true** circumcision. Blood covenant terminology uses the term, '*cutting*' a covenant. That's because the covenant ceremony requires each representative to cut himself, usually on an arm or hand. As the blood begins to flow, the two participants put their wounds together and mingle their bloods. This is a public declaration that the union of their lives, and the lives of those they

represent, has now taken place. From now on, they are one life and one blood. And, in God's sight, the blood covenant union must endure to the death. Thus was the blood of the Israelite man (and his household) mingled with the Blood of God's living Word that was shed in Eternity when He became our Eternal Blood Covenant Representative before God (and ratified by the circumcision He underwent as the infant Yeshua). The scars left on the human flesh of the representatives and the mingling of their bloods during the ceremony are outward earthly signs of this Eternal Heavenly Reality. This was expressed and affirmed on the night of the Passover, through the blood covering of the sacrificial lambs.

But since ceremonies and physical scars are not really what unite two covenant parties, that other 'cut' must be taken very seriously. Our focus must remain on the innermost being of anyone that would claim to be 'a child of Abraham. God will look into their minds, wills, priorities, choices, affections and future lives. Only that '*heart cut*' makes the Covenant real and effective. When it is truly present, tremendous changes begin to take place in the outward behavior of the covenant friend. He dies to his former 'singleness' and from that time forward, he or she will give signs of proof of being of one mind and one heart with the beloved covenant friend. The real truth about us flows out from the innermost depths of our hearts. So true loyalty or violation of a blood covenant is determined by what truly goes on in our innermost being.

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man." (Matthew 15:19-20)

The New Covenant God promised to make with Israel (Jeremiah 31:31-34) is God's guarantee to Israel that by the Authority of His Word and the Power of His Holy Spirit, He Himself will truly circumcise them. His Spirit will cut His Covenant into their hearts and His Word's perfect finished work of atonement will reverse and cancel out all their past failures and correct and fulfill His Eternal Covenant with them...in time...just as it already is in eternity. In light of that, notice what God's living Word said to Israel, His Bride (as represented by His disciples with whom He was commemorating the Passover meal), just hours before He poured out His life for us on the Cross:

"And when He had taken some (of the unleavened Passover) bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this (Passover) in remembrance of Me.' And in the same way He took the cup (that was traditionally set aside during Passover Seders for the coming Messiah) after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in My blood. But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table.'" (Luke 22:19-21 Amplification and emphasis added.)

Do you see what He said with that last statement? God's Word was instituting the New Covenant era...but even then, one of His own physically circumcised Jewish disciples was planning to betray Him! Nevertheless, as He later went through His atoning suffering and death in space and time, Yeshua mingled His Eternal Covenant Representative Blood...with the circumcision blood that had been shed by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (and their households and descendants) when they were circumcised into the Eternal

Covenant. So Yeshua ratified and fulfilled and transmitted what He had already accomplished for us in Eternity, into our space and time dimension...through Israel. And we see that Judas, who only had the physical scar, separating himself from the disciples who had both circumcisions. He had the outer, physical covenant scar; but his actions proved that it had not been cut into his heart.

So God's Covenant and Redemption are more than matters of ethnicity, genetic coding and outward religiosity and symbolism. They are more than mere natural birth into a 'Jewish' or 'Christian' community. This Covenant requires more than merely honoring and upholding ethnic and religious Jewish or Christian traditions and customs. Abraham himself was most likely Sumerian or Chaldean in origin. Jewishness did not yet exist! So, obviously that is not the essential factor in anyone's relationship with God. And so we see that right from the beginning, non-Jews being included in God's Eternal Covenant. And there's more to being a True Israelite than what is natural to fallen human flesh.

"A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock." (Exodus 12:38)

"For you are all sons of God through (obedient) faith in Christ Jesus (God's living Word). For all of you who were baptized into Christ (in His death) have clothed yourselves with Christ (in His Resurrection...and therefore...) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (because He is truly your Head and Lord). And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise." (Galatians 3:26-29 Amplification and emphasis added.)

The non-Jewish people of the Exodus believed God and chose to obey His Word also. They wanted to join Israel in her departure from Egypt. But first they had to put on the 'uniform' of God's Word. Their males had to receive the Covenant identification mark of Abraham in their flesh and join ranks with natural Israel.

Apparently, Caleb was one of those non-Jewish 'outsiders.' The Holy Spirit made sure to mention that he came out of a Canaanite tribe. Ponder what God is saying in this text:

"None of the (physically circumcised) men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully. except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD FULLY.' So the LORD'S anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those (physically circumcised Israelites) who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed." (Numbers 32:11-13 Amplification and emphasis added.)

Light vs. Darkness

That Divine separation of Light from Darkness that we saw in Genesis, appears once more. Only this time the separation of Light from Darkness is taking place within Israel itself! God is separating the Israelites into two groups. There's the larger general

population; and there's a smaller Faithful Remnant, made up of Israelites like Joshua and Caleb. They were authentic because they were truly obedient to God's Word. We will see this taking place throughout all of Scripture.

So, God is telling us that physical circumcision is not the true, authentic circumcision. It is not enough to satisfy His criteria. And so He set Joshua (a Jew) and Caleb (a non-Jew) apart from the rest. They proved by their faithful obedience that they had received both circumcisions – that of the flesh and that of the heart. God separated them from those who only had the scar on their flesh because He looks past externals and observes what was really going on in each of our hearts.

*“Hear, O Israel! The LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE! You shall love the LORD your God with **ALL** your heart and with **ALL** your soul and with **ALL** your might!”*
(Deuteronomy 6:4-5 Emphasis added.)

So Samuel did what the LORD SAID, AND CAME TO BETHLEHEM. AND THE ELDERS OF THE CITY CAME TREMBLING TO MEET HIM AND SAID, ‘DO YOU COME IN PEACE?’ He said, ‘In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. CONSECRATE YOURSELVES AND COME WITH ME TO THE SACRIFICE.’ HE ALSO CONSECRATED JESSE AND HIS SONS AND INVITED THEM TO THE SACRIFICE.

*“When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the LORD’S ANOINTED IS BEFORE HIM.’ **But the LORD SAID TO SAMUEL, ‘DO NOT LOOK AT HIS APPEARANCE OR AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS STATURE, BECAUSE I HAVE REJECTED HIM; FOR GOD SEES NOT AS MAN SEES, FOR MAN LOOKS AT THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE, BUT THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART.’** Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, ‘The LORD HAS NOT CHOSEN THIS ONE EITHER.’ Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, ‘The LORD HAS NOT CHOSEN THIS ONE EITHER.’ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, ‘The LORD HAS NOT CHOSEN THESE.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are these all the children?’ And he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest (David), and behold, he is tending the sheep.’ Then Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.’”* (1 Samuel 16:4-11 Amplification and emphasis added.)

God is, by nature, ONE. He is perfectly one with His Word and Holy Spirit. So, to be consistent with His Perfect nature, He must be perfectly one with His human image and likeness as well. In the beginning, by the time God finished training and correcting Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in their respective ‘boot camps,’ their spirits and souls finally became truly one with God! They reflected and mirrored back to God His authentic, wholehearted, ‘no holds barred’ level of commitment. And now, in the New Covenant, thanks to the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, we can all have that. When we believe, trust, obey and become one with our Covenant Representative, Yeshua, He makes us one with Himself. Thus His Perfect human performance and His perfect love, trust and oneness with His Father become ours. God’s Holy Spirit can now transmit all that Yeshua has accomplished, in our name, to us!

“Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in

like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son (living Word) even as they honor the Father. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son (living Word) also gives life to whom He (Father) wishes. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” (John 19b-23 Amplification and emphasis added.)

“Moreover **the LORD YOUR GOD WILL CIRCUMCISE YOUR HEART AND THE HEART OF YOUR DESCENDANTS, TO LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE.**” (DEUTERONOMY 30:6 EMPHASIS ADDED.)

“...this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the LORD, ‘**I will put My Law within them and on their heart I will write it;** and **I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**” (Jeremiah: 31-33 Emphasis added.)

“I have given them Your Word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the Truth; Your Word is Truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. **For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.** I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; **that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me!**” (John 17:14-21 Emphasis added.)

New Creations!

Jewish and non-Jewish people, who believe and become one with God’s Word, as God gives Him to us through Moses and the rest of the prophets and sacred writings, share in the Word’s perfect fulfillment of Abraham’s Covenant as co-disciples! The Spirit causes both groups to forsake and leave behind what they originally were by natural birth. And together, they undergo that total, utterly essential, change of heart and identity and priorities and lifestyle. God makes brand new creations of them all and thus both groups lose their hard rigidity and blend and meld into one New Man under the Headship of their Messiah! Yeshua authorizes this and His Spirit empowers them to forsake their original worldly Adamic identities, priorities, beliefs and lifestyles and identifies them with Him and His perfect performance instead. And because they do not ‘smuggle’ old Egyptian ways out with them in their hearts, they are free and eager to learn the new Heavenly ways and priorities of the God of Abraham.

The Native-born Israelites of the original Exodus didn’t have to choose to become physical children of Abraham. But they did have to repent of all the worldly ‘Egyptian’ perspectives, attitudes, priorities and lifestyles they inherited from Adam and the fallen part of the Serpent-dominated world into which they were born. But if their hearts did not

believe, trust and obey what God's Word required, then their natural ethnicity and the physical circumcision scar cut into their flesh, meant nothing.

So after Israel left Egypt and began to settle into living with God's Perfect Presence in the wilderness, the truth about what was really going on in each heart began to appear. The gut-wrenching refining process they all underwent started to separate the '*wheat from the chaff*.' The stresses and pressures imposed by the wilderness rigors and dangers brought to light which of them still had 'Egyptian hearts' and which had true 'Abrahamic hearts.' Joshua was a natural-born son of Israel who proved to be a true Hebrew Israelite. And Caleb, the man God chose to be Joshua's co-leader over the second generation of Israel's Exodus, although he apparently lacked the DNA of Israel's forefathers, was nevertheless exalted to a top level of leadership in Israel. His Covenant union with God was as true and complete as Joshua's. He proved that at heart, he too was a Hebrew just like Abraham. So God chose him over many natural-born Israelites to co-lead Israel's hosts across the Jordan and into the Land of Promise!

Later in the story, more Gentiles became one with the chosen people, such as Rahab the Canaanite prostitute from Jericho, who married an Israelite and became the mother of Boaz (Matthew 1:5). And there was Ruth, the Moabite woman that Boaz married. Because their hearts were right toward God's Word, God inserted both of these non-Jewish women into David's ancestral lineage from which Messiah Yeshua, God's living Word made flesh, later emerged! So it's clear that God embraces obedient non-Jewish people and bonds them to His Israelite Covenant friends and regards them equally. And this is revelation that every disciple in the New Covenant era, Jewish and non-Jewish, must take to heart as the Final Judgment of The Lamb draws nearer and the last generations of human history begin to appear.

Abraham's family will always be God's chosen instrument of redemption. But they are not its exclusive recipients. The 'Net of Redemption' God casts is meant to include all men! But Israel always serves as the 'hands' by which He casts His net and reaches out to each generation. And from the very beginning, we see that the Torah made it abundantly clear that the authentic, utterly essential circumcision is much deeper and more important than a mark cut into human flesh. It must be cut into our heart!

Before he was physically circumcised, Abraham had already undergone circumcision of the heart! He proved that when God later put him to the supreme test. There was a time when Abraham believed he was being required to sacrifice his beloved Isaac and give him back to God! But even then, he did not balk or turn away. Covenant friends bind themselves by blood oath to give to their covenant friends whatever they may need. The covenant friend only needs to ask...and his covenant partner is bound to fulfill the request with an attitude of wholehearted covenant love. So when Abraham believed that God was asking for his beloved Isaac, Abraham rendered a supernatural, '*to the death*' level of obedient loyalty and faithfulness to His God! That supernatural response came all the way from the depths of his heart...revealing that the Spirit of God was empowering him to be utterly true and loyal to His Lord. And since then, God never stops proclaiming, endorsing, honoring and exalting his true Covenant friend Abraham...and

his household...according to the 'airtight', thoroughly tested Eternal Covenant they truly have with each other.

This Exodus love story about God's liberation of Abraham's Family was glorious. But it was also tragic because circumcised men like Dathan, Korah (See Num. 16, 26) and Achan (Josh. 7), to name just a few, proved by their unbelief and disobedience to God's Word, that they didn't really believe or trust the God of their fathers. His Word was not truly their Lord, Guide and Provider in all things. So, although they were Jewish, and looked and sounded like Israelites on the outside...their hearts violated their Covenant with God...proving they were not true Hebrews that had crossed over from idolatrous, disobedient Egypt to God's faithful, obedient Israel. Their hearts were strangers and aliens to God's Word. The Word had appeared to their Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the beginning... even in human form! (See Genesis 18) But these men did not recognize or accept Him when He appeared to them through Moses. And centuries later, when the Word appeared in the humanity of Yeshua to their descendants, they also failed to recognize and accept Him. In their hearts, they never allowed Him to pierce, penetrate and impregnate their hearts with His Life.

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'" (MATTHEW 7:21-23)

When Yeshua refers to 'Lawlessness' He is really saying, 'Torah-lessness'. In other words, he's indicting those that reject, disbelieve or ignore the foundational revelation He gave to the world about Himself through the Torah of Moses. That includes people of Jewish descent as can be seen in the context of the above text. On the other hand, people of all ethnic backgrounds, cultures, religions and traditional persuasions are grafted into God's Israel if they will repent of that...begin to believe, embrace and obey God's Word, just as His Father gave Him to them. He will include anyone that will truly follow Him out of 'Egypt.' All children of Adam, even if they're born Jewish, begin as 'outsiders,' 'strangers' and 'aliens' to God! And only God knows what is in their hearts. Only He knows whether or not they have true faith and obedience to His Word and whether we're authentic 'Israelites' or not. So He tells us not judge those around us by external appearances. He tells us to judge ourselves, in relation to what God has said to us.

*"Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now **in Christ Jesus (God's living Word made flesh) you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our Peace (Shalom), who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new (heart-circumcised) Man, thus establishing Peace,** and might reconcile them both (Jews and non-Jews under His*

Headship) *in one Body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.*” (Ephesians 2:11-16 Amplification and emphasis added.)

“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.” (Luke 6:41-42)

God’s ‘Firstborn’

The *True Remnant* of Israel, is God’s ‘*Firstborn*.’ The Firstborn holds a unique position in His Covenant Family. The special responsibilities and tasks He gives them are for the benefit of the rest of the Family, and ultimately for that of the rest of the world. The Firstborn receives a double portion of Father’s Inheritance and the position of preeminence and authority that the other children do not have. The Firstborn is responsible for seeing to the entire Family’s spiritual welfare prosperity, safety and eternal well being. No one child is more precious to the Father of the Family than another; but the Firstborn is the authentic priestly representative and intermediary between the Father and the others. He is commissioned to exercise oversight over the rest of the siblings. Eventually, all the children are expected to grow, mature and develop, outgrowing their initial natural stages of ‘bratty’ selfish immaturity, and achieving full-grown supernatural maturity that equips them to serve the Family as responsible adult sons who join their Father in the running of the ‘Family Business’ (revealing and exalting His Word) and caring for their common Heavenly Eternal Estate and Inheritance.

The True Circumcision of the Firstborn’s Heart

Physical circumcision lasts as long as the body lasts. But the circumcision that counts with God must last forever. And only God can apply this true circumcision to the spirit and soul of a person. No human hands can impart it. Nor can anyone gain it because of temporary genetic DNA lineage or racial color, or earn it because of their culture or language, traditions or family affiliation, nationality and religion. Only God’s Spirit can impart it – **with our obedient permission!** Ponder what a New Covenant Jewish apostle writes to New Covenant Jewish and non-Jewish disciples of Yeshua:

*“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure!**”* (Philippians 2:12-13)

This text describes what happens when God is fulfilling His New Covenant with His True Israel by cutting the Eternal Covenant ‘scar’ into their hearts! This is what Jeremiah and Ezekiel (36:22-28) promised that the future New Covenant would do in the heart of God’s True Israel:

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, ‘WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH, not like the covenant which I made with their (physically circumcised but unrepentant) 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.

*“But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the LORD, **‘I WILL PUT MY LAW (TORAH) WITHIN THEM AND ON THEIR HEART I WILL WRITE IT; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.** They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’” (Jeremiah 31:31-34 Amplification and emphasis added.)*

Our Lives Reveal the State of our Heart Commitment to God

What is true of the world has often also been sadly true of Judaism and Christianity. Much of our interaction with God throughout the centuries has remained distant and superficial. We acknowledge God with our mouths...but our hearts are often far from Him. That’s because our fallen flesh glories more in temporal earthy, soulish concerns and priorities rather than eternal Divine mandates. Thus our performance is always a far cry from that close and lovingly intimate union that God promised His Spirit would empower us to have with His living Word in the end.

That’s why our Covenant Representative, and the way we see and regard Him, is so vitally important and essential to us. He is The Fulfillment of all that we lack. But to date, He has not yet been allowed to pierce, penetrate and impregnate our hearts all the way to the core so that He could take over within us completely. Nevertheless, God has promised that His New Covenant with Israel will lead those of us who repent into that glorious Fulfillment. The Ultimate Consummation between God’s Word and His Bride will take place when our story reaches its final crescendo and ultimate climax.

So, the final words of the *Tanach* (Old Testament), written by the prophet Malachi, close with bittersweet reproof and stern warnings for the people of Israel. Through Malachi, the Holy Spirit says:

*“For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,’ says the LORD OF HOSTS, ‘SO THAT IT WILL LEAVE THEM NEITHER ROOT NOR BRANCH. **BUT FOR YOU WHO FEAR MY NAME, THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL RISE WITH HEALING IN ITS WINGS; AND YOU WILL GO FORTH AND SKIP ABOUT LIKE CALVES FROM THE STALL. You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing,**’ says the LORD OF HOSTS.*

“Remember the (Torah revelation, instructions and commandments I gave you through the) Law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb (Sinai) for all Israel.

“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the LORD. He will restore the (truly circumcised obedient) hearts of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) to their (Last Days disobedient Jewish and non-Jewish) children and the (yet to be circumcised) hearts of the (Last Days) children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.” (Malachi 4 Amplification and emphasis added.)

Remember the warnings God gave to Israel through Moses in Deuteronomy 28-30. If we reject the Perfect Presence and absolute Authority of God’s Word in our hearts, no physical mark on our flesh or temporary ties to a religious organization will mean anything. We are created to be God’s own image and likeness! Therefore we are much more than mere farm animals! Ranchers, farmers and shepherds make their ownership of animals legally and publically known by branding their external mark of ownership onto the flesh of their beasts and placing them in separate pens or pastures. Red-hot irons leave ‘brands’ or marks of ownership on flesh. But it takes more than that to make a human being the true, legally reclaimed and restored property of Almighty God! The Covenant Scar that proves we truly belong to God has to be cut for all eternity into our spirit and soul – our heart. Only that mark lasts forever. The Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Truth) is the ‘*Firebrand*’ that marks us as the property of God. And only He can transform us into authentic disciples of His Word.

“...The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become (independently) wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (congregations).’” (Revelation 3:14b-22 Amplification and emphasis added.)

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “IT IS NOT FOR YOUR SAKE, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL, THAT I AM ABOUT TO ACT, BUT FOR MY HOLY NAME, WHICH YOU HAVE PROFANED AMONG THE NATIONS (PAGAN GENTILES) WHERE YOU WENT. I will vindicate the holiness of My great Name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,’ DECLARES THE LORD GOD, ‘WHEN I PROVE MYSELF HOLY AMONG YOU (NEW COVENANT ISRAELITES) IN THEIR SIGHT. For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into

your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and CAUSE you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ezekiel 36:22-27 Amplification and emphasis added.)

The Book of Revelation tells us that the ‘seeds’ originally planted in Genesis and Exodus will finally reach full maturity and fruitfulness by the climax of the story. But if we rely on ourselves and put our faith in mere externals, God’s Truth and final Judgment will confound and expose us as frauds and failures. So God’s Word warns each generation:

“Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...”

*“...For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life (soul), as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns; and yet, your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if (your Perfect All-Sufficient) God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the (worldly idolatrous) Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; **for your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness, and all these things will be added to you!**” (Matthew 6:16-21; 25-33 Amplification and emphasis added.)*

Fallen flesh is not equipped to operate on God’s Heavenly Spirit-transmitted frequency. It is limited to temporary worldly, superficial perspectives, feelings, circumstances and shallow deceptive facades. The world’s false scale of 1 to 10 bestows value and worth based on such futile, empty criteria. But God utterly transforms people who honestly admit their true state of bankruptcy and confess to Him that they are Sin-full and selfish, self-centered, rebellious and manipulative, predatory and self-destructive. God saves and blesses such people, abundantly. And after He bonds Himself to them and fills them with His own Spirit and transmits the blessings of the Eternal Inheritance His Word has earned for them, they can afford to rest and rejoice, knowing that they share in the Perfection of

what God has promised to be to His true Covenant friends through His living Word made flesh:

“...we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

“But we have this Treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the Power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the (Spirit-transmitted Resurrection) Life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” (2 Corinthians 5-11)

So ponder once more this awesome Truth God has revealed:

“... My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so will My Word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:8-11)

And remember what Yeshua said in the presence of some of His ‘heart-circumcised’ Jewish disciples, to a group of His Jewish brothers who were only physically circumcised:

*“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, **‘BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!’**” (MATTHEW 23:37-39 EMPHASIS ADDED.)*

The only thing that makes any of us special is when God’s Word actually lives in and rules over, our hearts. Most humans reject and ignore Him. So they remain spiritually naked and exposed to the curses inflicted by their demonic oppressors. But if we respond to Yeshua in love, trust and obedience...His crucifixion, death and Resurrection become ours. God’s Spirit will circumcise our hearts through the Cross. Then when God looks into our hearts...He sees His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased, abiding and working and producing His Heavenly Fruit from within us.

“For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law (in a way that perfectly meets God’s Perfect Standards); but if you are a (self-reliant) transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So if the uncircumcised man keeps the

*requirements of the Law (because he allowed God to circumcise his heart), will not his (physical) uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law (by the New Covenant Power of the Holy Spirit), will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and (physical) circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.***” (Romans 2:25-29 Amplification and emphasis added.)