

Sarah ~ Wife of Abraham

Much has been said regarding the life and faith of our father Abraham, but what do we know of the woman whom he married? Although Genesis mentions the name of Sarah, or Sarai as she was originally named, how much do we really know about this woman of God and her faith? As the old saying goes, behind every great man is a good woman. To better understand Abraham and who he was, we must look at the life of his wife as well. Who was she? Where did she come from? Why did Abraham choose her and love her so much? More importantly, what might we learn from her life that could enrich our own walk, especially we women of faith?

Sarai first appears in Genesis 11 and is named as the woman that Abram chose for his wife, but we are not told who she is and where she came from, just that Abram chose her. We are not really aware of who Abram is either, so we have to look to other sources for this information, just as we would for Abram. The Book of Jasher (mentioned twice in the Bible) has some information that will enlighten us to who these two people of faith. Since their lives and faith has influenced the entire world, we can only benefit by taking a closer look at their lives.

The Book of Jasher first mentions Sarai in chapter 9.

“And Haran, the son of Terah, Abram’s oldest brother, took a wife in those days. Haran was thirty-nine years old when he took her; and the wife of Haran conceived and bare a son, and he called his name Lot. And she conceived again and bare a daughter, and she called her name Milca; and she again conceived and bare a daughter, and she called her name Sarai. Haran was forty-two years old when he begat Sarai, which was in the tenth year of the life of Abram;” Jasher 9:1-4a

How can this be? Doesn’t Genesis tell us that Lot’s sister’s name was Iscah?

“Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.” Genesis 11:29

Can we reconcile these apparent contradictions? If we look at Smith’s Bible Dictionary we see that this is just a Jewish tradition, and in fact, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia goes on to say that this tradition is “without sufficient reason.” I say that there is sufficient reason, and it can be found easily in the Book of Jasher. In fact, Genesis shows us how people in ancient times could actually be known by more than one name. A good example of this is Moses’ father-in-law. When we are first introduced to him, we are told that his name is Reuel:

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "Why have you come back so soon today?" So they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock." He said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat." Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. Exodus 2:16-21

Yet only a few verses later, at the beginning of chapter three, we are told that his name is Jethro, which is how most students of the word know him as.

Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. Exodus 3:1

Since we now understand that both of these names can apply to the wife of Abraham, let's look at the meaning of these names to see if there is anything in these names that will teach us more about this woman of God. Lot's sister is referred to as Iscah, so let's look at what that name means. Some of the Jewish sages teach that Iscah is a word that means "beautiful" and therefore refers to how beautiful this woman was. Others teach that this refers not to her outer beauty, but her inner beauty; that she was a prophetess of God.

According to Hitchcock's Bible Names, Iscah means, "he that anoints." This is the foundation for the Jewish teaching that she was a prophetess, as the one who anoints would be a prophet. Remember, Moses anointed Aaron as high priest and Samuel anointed kings; both of these men were prophets. The sages go on to say that she was superior to Abraham in the gift of prophecy, and that she was the "crown" of her husband and he obeyed her words because he recognized this superiority on her part.

Hold on just a moment here... this sounds very contradictory to the teachings of Paul regarding the position of women in the household of God. How could this be? This doesn't sound like our idea of a submissive wife, does it? According to those of faith, a wife is supposed to be quiet, unassuming, and simply there to serve her husband as we are here to serve our Lord and Master, the Almighty God. Yet do we really understand what those words mean? What does it mean to be submissive? What does it mean to be "equally yoked"?

If Abram was truly the man of God that we believe him to be, naturally we must understand that he would look for those same qualities in the woman he chose for his helpmate. This woman would have to have a close and personal relationship with God Most High as well or she could never understand her husband, nor be able to support him spiritually as she must. Abram would never stand for any wavering of faith in his own household just as he couldn't stand it in his father's household.

Most translate the name Sarai as meaning "princess" yet Strong's defines it as "dominative". Just what does that mean? According to Merriam-Webster, it means: "to have or exert mastery, control, or preeminence; to occupy a more elevated or superior position." This goes right along with what we learned above regarding what the sages teach about Sarai. She had a superior walk, just like her husband, yet he took her council and held it as dear. And for good reason! She had a prophetic gift and was considered as a princess even before Abram married her, he himself referred to as a prince of the people.

So, this is the sister of Lot... not only a very beautiful woman, but a prophetess of God who was also the granddaughter of the first idol maker to the king of the world, Nimrod. Unlike Abram, she did not grow up in the household of Noah (see Jasher 9:5) but in the world of Nimrod, the first world ruler to be deified by his people. Her neighbors and family literally believed that Nimrod was a god himself yet she had a heart for the true God. When El Shaddai called Abram out of his father's house, she felt the

call too, if not stronger. She was on the same page, so to speak, with her husband, and Abram knew this when he married her.

To better understand how strong her faith must have been, let's look at the world around her, focusing on what she must have known about Abram before she married him. According to both Genesis and Jasher, Abram was ten years older than Sarai, his niece. This is because Haran, Abram's oldest brother, was 32 years older than Abram. On the night of Abram's birth, there were signs and wonders in the heavens, which the wise men of Ur took as a bad sign for the king, so Nimrod wanted him dead. Nimrod demanded the baby from Terah his father, but Terah gave Nimrod the newborn of a slave instead. He then hid his son, wife and a nurse in a cave, providing for them for 10 years (until about the time of Sarai's birth) and then sent Abram off to live with Noah. This is all found in the book of Jasher, in the eighth chapter.

Throughout her life Sarai would have heard stories, tales whispered only within the family home itself, for they could never dare to speak the name of Abram aloud for fear of the king. Yet they would still have spoken of him, quietly, only among the family. This would be the environment that Sarai grew up in. Then, after 40 years of hearing about this man, he suddenly appears back at his father's house. This is when things really begin to get interesting.

I highly recommend getting a copy of the Book of Jasher for yourself so that you can read all about Abram's adventures with his father's idols and his encounter with Nimrod, or you could read my study on the life of Abraham which is available at www.its-time.info. Suffice it to say that as she watched, her uncle stood up first to her grandfather, the idol maker, calling him a fool for believing in false gods, then to the King of the World, calling him a fool as well. For a prophetess of God, this was something to behold! Imagine the joy in her heart when she saw this man stand up for the Creator of all against the lies of the world. Imagine her dismay when he was sentenced to death for living in the first place.

Abram's family, like our own, was not without sin. When his father was faced with killing his own child, he was willing to lie to the king to save his infant son. Now, when faced with death, Terah lies again, telling Nimrod that Haran was the one who gave him such advice. This lie cost Terah his other son's life. Nimrod orders a furnace to be super-heated and then has both Abram and Haran thrown in. Jasher tells us that all of the inhabitants of the land were there, watching over the prisoners... even the little children. Sarai too would have been there, watching these things happening to not only Abram, but her own father as well. You'd better believe that she was praying, interceding on their behalf with the Most High God. Unfortunately, her father didn't share Abram and Sarai's belief, or at least, not fully.

And the king said Who advised thee to this? Tell me, do not hide aught from me, and then thou shalt not die. And Terah was greatly terrified in the king's presence, and he said to the king, It was Haran my eldest son who advised me to this; and Haran was in those days that Abram was born, two and thirty years old. But Haran did not advise his father to anything, for Terah said this to the king in order to deliver his soul from the king, for he feared greatly; and the king said to Terah, Haran thy son who advised thee to this shall die through fire with Abram; for the

sentence of death is upon him for having rebelled against the king's desire in doing this thing.

And Haran at that time felt inclined to follow the ways of Abram, but he kept it within himself. And Haran said in his heart, Behold now the king has seized Abram on account of these things which Abram did, and it shall come to pass, that if Abram prevail over the king I will follow him, but if the king prevail I will go after the king. And when Terah had spoken this to the king concerning Haran his son, the king ordered Haran to be seized with Abram. And they brought them both, Abram and Haran his brother, to cast them into the fire; and all the inhabitants of the land and the king's servants and princes and all the women and little ones were there, standing that day over them.

And the king's servants took Abram and his brother, and they stripped them of all their clothes excepting their lower garments which were upon them. And they bound their hands and feet with linen cords, and the servants of the king lifted them up and cast them both into the furnace.

And the Lord loved Abram and he had compassion over him, and the Lord came down and delivered Abram from the fire and he was not burned. But all the cords with which they bound him were burned, while Abram remained and walked about in the fire. And Haran died when they had cast him into the fire, and he was burned to ashes, for his heart was not perfect with the Lord; and those men who cast him into the fire, the flame of the fire spread over them, and they were burned, and twelve men of them died.

And Abram walked in the midst of the fire three days and three nights, and all the servants of the king saw him walking in the fire, and they came and told the king, saying, Behold we have seen Abram walking about in the midst of the fire, and even the lower garments which are upon him are not burned, but the cord with which he was bound is burned.
Jasher 12:15-27

Let's put ourselves in Sarai's shoes for just a moment. Imagine how she feels, after witnessing all of this, the miraculous salvation of El Shaddai in the life of Abram, and the death of her own father due to his lack of faith. We must remember that she is no young child, but a 40-year-old woman who loves Adonai. I'm sure she had mixed emotions; thrilled to see her God show His hand to the entire world, yet devastated over the loss of her father. As an unmarried woman, she would still be in her father's home, under his protection. Now what would she do? What would her sister and brother do as well?

After Nimrod saw these things, he called for Abram to come out of the furnace and then proceeded to bestow gifts upon him, including the slave Eliezer of Damascus. As would be the custom, Terah now treats his son's children as his own since Haran's name would no longer be spoken. Lot, Milcah and Sarai would be called the children of Terah, just as Abram himself would be called a child of Terah. This is the basis for the statement to Pharaoh, "She is my sister."

Both Abram and his other brother, Nahor, take their nieces as wives, which was also a common practice at the time, especially seeing they've lost their father. For two

years things seem to be going well for Abram and Sarai, and then the king has a dream. This dream reminds him of the prophecies regarding Abram and the fact that he wanted to kill Abram, but before he has the chance, Eliezer tells Abram about the king's plan. Abram immediately leaves for the home of Noah where he stays hidden for about a month. Nimrod searches for Abram, but soon forgets about him again, so Terah goes to get Abram. By this time Abram is feeling God calling him to Canaan, so he, Noah and Shem convince Terah to join his son there.

And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, the wife of his son Abram, and all the souls of his household and went with them from Ur Casdim to go to the land of Canaan. And when they came as far as the land of Haran they remained there, for it was exceedingly good land for pasture, and of sufficient extent for those who accompanied them.

And the people of the land of Haran saw that Abram was good and upright with God and men, and that the Lord his God was with him, and some of the people of the land of Haran came and joined Abram, and he taught them the instruction of the Lord and his ways; and these men remained with Abram in his house and they adhered to him. Jasher 13:1-2

There was something special about Abram that drew others to himself. This special something was the spirit of Adonai El Shaddai dwelling within. Not only did it dwell within Abram, but it dwelt within his tent as well, as both he and Sarai were prophets. The sages teach that while Sarai/Sarah was alive, the Shekinah glory of HaShem dwelt within Abraham's tent, just as it did in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Sarai and her husband both loved Adonai with all their hearts, and He dwelt with them because of it.

When we speak of Sarah's tent, we then speak of a place where all are welcome. We speak of a place where the Lord Most High, Adonai El Shaddai, inhabits every crevice, every tent peg. Because they loved Him with all of their hearts, others were naturally drawn to them. They didn't have to do out somewhere to minister to the children of Noah; the people sought them out. By the time Terah dies and they set out for Canaan, they have already made quite a name for themselves. They have also made quite a household for themselves!

Let's stop for a moment and reflect upon our own households... could we state that our homes are so indwelled by the Spirit of Adonai that folks are drawn there? If not, what could be missing? What did they have that we don't? Could it be that our hearts are not focused on Him as they should be? Could it be that we still have a love for the world around us that they did not? How can we, the children of Abraham and Sarah, be more like our parents?

Sarai was 65 years old when they left Haran for good and began their sojourn in the land of the Canaanites. It didn't take long before they had to leave that land and head down to Egypt because of famine. Many wives would have questioned their husband's decision to move to Canaan because of the famine, but not Sarai. She simply packs up and follows her husband wherever he may go, because she knew that it was HaShem who guided them. When we think of packing up and moving like that, we must realize that they didn't have all of the "stuff" we have today. There were no appliances, no real furniture save a couple of tables and maybe a platform for the bed, so most of what they

had were pillows and kitchenware. As shepherds, they lived the life of nomads anyway, living in tents and able to move on quickly, so it only made sense to go where they would be able to feed themselves, the animals and all of the people who were living with them.

And Abram and Sarai were walking at the border of the brook Mitzraim, and Abram beheld his wife Sarai that she was very beautiful. And Abram said to his wife Sarai, Since God has created thee with such a beautiful countenance, I am afraid of the Egyptians lest they should slay me and take thee away, for the fear of God is not in these places. Surely then thou shalt do this, Say thou art my sister to all that may ask thee, in order that it may be well with me, and that we may live and not be put to death. And Abram commanded the same to all those that came with him to Egypt on account of the famine; also his nephew Lot he commanded, saying, If the Egyptians ask thee concerning Sarai say she is the sister of Abram. And yet with all these orders Abram did not put confidence in them, but he took Sarai and placed her in a chest and concealed it amongst their vessels, for Abram was greatly concerned about Sarai on account of the wickedness of the Egyptians.

And Abram and all belonging to him rose up from the brook Mitzraim and came to Egypt; and they had scarcely entered the gates of the city when the guards stood up to them saying, Give tithe to the king from what you have, and then you may come into the town; and Abram and those that were with him did so. And Abram with the people that were with him came to Egypt, and when they came they brought the chest in which Sarai was concealed and the Egyptians saw the chest. And the king's servants approached Abram, saying, What hast thou here in this chest which we have not seen? Now open thou the chest and give tithe to the king of all that it contains. And Abram said, This chest I will not open, but all you demand upon it I will give. And Pharaoh's officers answered Abram, saying, It is a chest of precious stones, give us the tenth thereof. Abram said, All that you desire I will give, but you must not open the chest. And the king's officers pressed Abram, and they reached the chest and opened it with force, and they saw, and behold a beautiful woman was in the chest.

And when the officers of the king beheld Sarai they were struck with admiration at her beauty, and all the princes and servants of Pharaoh assembled to see Sarai, for she was very beautiful. And the king's officers ran and told Pharaoh all that they had seen, and they praised Sarai to the king; and Pharaoh ordered her to be brought, and the woman came before the king. And Pharaoh beheld Sarai and she pleased him exceedingly, and he was struck with her beauty, and the king rejoiced greatly on her account, and made presents to those who brought him the tidings concerning her. And the woman was then brought to Pharaoh's house, and Abram grieved on account of his wife, and he prayed to the Lord to deliver her from the hands of Pharaoh. Jasher 15:3-16

Because Sarai's beauty came from within, people were naturally drawn to her and Abram knew this. Although Abram and Sarai were not of their world, they did live in that

world so they understood the ways of the world around them. They knew that men would think nothing of taking a woman from her husband if she pleased them, taking her husband's life at the same time (how else could they take this woman?) Even with all the precautions taken, Sarai was indeed taken from Abram and presented to Pharaoh himself. What could Abram do? There was only one thing he could do, and that is exactly what he did do... he prayed, as did Sarai.

And Sarai also prayed at that time and said, O Lord God thou didst tell my Lord Abram to go from his land and from his father's house to the land of Canaan, and thou didst promise to do well with him if he would perform thy commands; now behold we have done that which thou didst command us, and we left our land and our families, and we went to a strange land and to a people whom we have not known before. And we came to this land to avoid the famine, and this evil accident has befallen me; now therefore, O Lord God, deliver us and save us from the hand of this oppressor, and do well with me for the sake of thy mercy. Jasher 15:17-18

Just as Moses taught us through his example, Sarai also teaches us to pray and remind both Adonai and ourselves what He has done in our lives that brought us to the place we now find ourselves in need of His help. Also note that she doesn't ask this for her own sake, or for the sake of her husband, but for His mercy's sake. There is no "I" in her prayer; it's all about Him. Is this because she understands that it's not about us; it is all about Him? Is this something that we ourselves truly believe? Do our prayers reflect that belief?

And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Sarai, and the Lord sent an angel to deliver Sarai from the power of Pharaoh. And the king came and sat before Sarai and behold an angel of the Lord was standing over them, and he appeared to Sarai and said to her, Do not fear, for the Lord has heard thy prayer. And the king approached Sarai and said to her, What is that man to thee who brought thee hither? and she said, He is my brother. And the king said, It is incumbent upon us to make him great, to elevate him and to do unto him all the good which thou shalt command us; and at that time the king sent to Abram silver and gold and precious stones in abundance, together with cattle, men servants and maid servants; and the king ordered Abram to be brought, and he sat in the court of the king's house, and the king greatly exalted Abram on that night.

And the king approached to speak to Sarai, and he reached out his hand to touch her, when the angel smote him heavily, and he was terrified and he refrained from reaching to her. And when the king came near to Sarai, the angel smote him to the ground, and acted thus to him the whole night, and the king was terrified. And the angel on that night smote heavily all the servants of the king, and his whole household, on account of Sarai, and there was a great lamentation that night amongst the people of Pharaoh's house.

And Pharaoh, seeing the evil that befell him, said, Surely on account of this woman has this thing happened to me, and he removed himself at some distance from her and spoke pleasing words to her. And the king

said to Sarai, Tell me I pray thee concerning the man with whom thou camest here; and Sarai said, This man is my husband, and I said to thee that he was my brother for I was afraid, lest thou shouldst put him to death through wickedness. And the king kept away from Sarai, and the plagues of the angel of the Lord ceased from him and his household; and Pharaoh knew that he was smitten on account of Sarai, and the king was greatly astonished at this. Jasher 15:19-28

In her distress, Sarai called out to her God and He answered her and sent His angel to protect her. Notice that when the angel revealed himself to Sarai, the first thing he said was, "Do not fear." This is the same thing that the angels always say right away. The very first thing they do is comfort us, for that is their job. They reveal themselves for that purpose. Sarai knew the angel was watching over her so she knew she was safe and that Adonai was protecting her. I think she would have known that even without seeing the angel because she would have felt His presence all around.

This is the kind of protection offered to any and all who love Adonai their Elohim (God) with all their hearts, souls and strength. Although trouble may come upon us, He will not abandon us; His angels are there to protect us, all we have to do is ask Him for His mercy. He can protect us in ways we never imagined. He can also bless us in ways we never imagined.

And the king took a maiden whom he begat by his concubines, and he gave her to Sarai for a handmaid. And the king said to his daughter, It is better for thee my daughter to be a handmaid in this man's house than to be mistress in my house, after we have beheld the evil that befell us on account of this woman. Jasher 15:31-32

Hagar, the daughter of Pharaoh, was given to Sarai because even Pharaoh could see that the One True God was with this couple. He knew that his daughter would be better off with these folks than if she lived in his palace the rest of her life. This is very similar to something that David tells us:

For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Psalms 84:10

The sages also teach that among the other things, like silver and gold, given to Sarai by Pharaoh was some very good land... the land of Goshen. They explain that this is why Israel and his children chose that land to settle in; it was theirs to begin with.

By the time Abram, Sarai and Lot return to Canaan, they have so many people and animals with them that they can no longer live together in peace. For this reason, they decide to separate and Abram gives Lot first choice. Later, when Abram must go and rescue Lot from Nimrod and the other kings who have taken him captive, he takes over 300 men with him. These were just the men who had decided to remain with Abram and make up the tents of his household. Sarai was the mistress of this rather large household.

Sarai would be the one responsible for the day to day running of the household. She would supervise the other women, making sure that anything that needed to be done was, and that all were provided for. She would be personally attending to all who were sick and helping to fix meals, weave fabric for the tents and clothing, and training up those around her in the ways of El Shaddai.

This is what she did for Hagar, teaching her the ways of Adonai, which were very different from the ways of Pharaoh and his household. In Pharaoh's palace, there were many wives and many children, all vying for Pharaoh's attention, sometimes using despicable means, for they considered Pharaoh to be a god. This was not the way of Abram and Sarai or of the God they served. The average person was to be respected as well as the head of the household. The needs of the stranger were elevated to sometimes even above that of Abram and Sarai themselves. This was the way of El Shaddai, the God of Abram and Sarai. I'm sure this took some getting used to.

The sages teach that when folks would come to visit with Sarai, she would tell them to be sure to step into Hagar's tent and greet her as well... after all, she was an Egyptian princess and should be greeted as well. You see, although Hagar was her maid, her servant, she was still held in high esteem in Sarai's eyes. She treated Hagar as a younger sister, teaching her the ways of HaShem, teaching her to worship the One True God. And apparently Hagar was a fast learner, for she adapted quickly and came to love her new home.

When Lot and Abram separated, Lot went and pitched his tents towards Sodom, and Abram and Sarai returned to Hebron, to the oaks of Mamre. There they pitched their tents right at the crossroads so that any traveler that passed by could stop in and be fed and rested before they continued on their journey. This was their way of life, to bless anyone who crossed their path. This was their witness to the world around them. They touched more lives for the Lord through their actions than they could through any words they could have spoken, for this is the witness. The Holy Spirit within us causes us to care for the hearts of others, regardless of who they are or what their story was. Even when Abram was off tending the flocks, she would still be hosting travelers and telling them about God Most High. As a prophet of God, she couldn't resist!

After some time they sent their head servant, Eliezer, down to Sodom to check on Lot, to see how he was faring. The report that Eliezer returned with was not good at all, for the people of the five cities collectively known as Sodom and Gomorrah were full of wickedness. In the book of Genesis we are given only a slight taste of what these people were like. Jasher tells us that Eliezer himself was hit so hard on the head that he bled, and then had to pay his attacker for the bloodletting service... by law! Sarai must have been very worried about her brother and paying for his deliverance from those people.

It was during this time that Lot was kidnapped by Nimrod, called Amraphel in Genesis chapter 14, and Abram has to go and rescue him. I'm sure that Sarai was at least a little worried about this, as she knew how badly Nimrod wanted to kill her husband. I'm also sure that she spent quite a bit of time praying for their safety and quick return. Abram did succeed in his journey and soon returned with Lot, who then went back down to Sodom. It was at this time that her husband was visited by Adonai again, and this time he was given a promise.

At that time the Lord again appeared to Abram in Hebron, and he said to him, Do not fear, thy reward is very great before me, for I will not leave thee, until I shall have multiplied thee, and blessed thee and made thy seed like the stars in heaven, which cannot be measured nor numbered. And I will give unto thy seed all these lands that thou seest with thine eyes, to them will I give them for an inheritance forever, only be strong and do not fear, walk before me and be perfect. Jasher 16:20-21

One can only imagine the joy that must have filled Abram's tent that evening! This could only mean one thing: a child. That was the one true blessing of God that had thus far eluded them. According to Genesis, this child would be from Abram's own body, not an adopted one. We are also told that Abram believed this promise of God and that was credited to him as righteousness. Sarai too believed the promise making her righteous as well. To the natural eye, this might all seem impossible, but they knew that all things were possible for the God they served.

Sarai couldn't help but look within. Here she and Abram had been married for over 35 years and she was still without children. As it became obvious to her that God intended for Abram to be a father, she couldn't help but think that it was her fault that Abram didn't have children. She loved her husband very much and wanted his happiness above her own. She did the only thing she felt she could do; she followed the law of the land and offered her servant to her husband.

You see, according to the Code of Hammorabi, when a princess cannot provide a child for her husband within a certain amount of time, she was to give a servant to him so that they could have a child through this other womb. Just like the surrogate mother of today, the baby would be considered to be the wife's child, not the servant's. This was the way of the world around her, and Sarai listened to the world and took Hagar, whom she had trained in the ways of the Most High God, and gave her to Abram. She thought she was doing the right thing. She thought she was helping Adonai to accomplish His work in their lives.

When Adonai reveals to us His plan, it is not because He expects us to do anything to make this come to pass. It will come to pass in the natural routine of our lives. He tells us ahead of time to give us hope and so that when it does come to pass we will know it is from Him, because He told us it would happen. Sarai made the same mistake that many of us make... she ran ahead of His timing and tried to make this come to pass in her timing, not His. Unfortunately for us, her decision has had consequences that we, the children of Israel, are paying for to this day.

Abram listened to the voice of his wife because he knew that she was an intelligent woman who loved her God just as much as he did. Sarai must have figured that she could trust Hagar to act as a surrogate for her, but Hagar's attitude changed once she became pregnant. She forgot her position and felt, in her heart, that she must be better than Sarai in God's eyes because of how quickly she conceived. This was not the truth, but Sarai believed it too. Hagar began to act as if she were Sarai's equal, who of course she was not, but this would have affected the entire household. Sarai had no choice but to be harsh with her and put her back in her place before the entire household fell apart. Remember what Yeshua taught: a house divided cannot stand.

Hagar refused to stand for this behavior and ran away. Adonai sent an angel to minister to Hagar in the wilderness, telling her to return to Sarai and to submit herself to her. Hagar was also a smart woman so she did as the angel told her although she wasn't happy about it. Even after Ishmael was born, Hagar still didn't quite understand the concept of a surrogate mother and raised him as her own son, not as Sarai's. Just as the angel warned Hagar, her son grew up to be a wild ass of a man.

Thirteen years passed before Adonai once again appeared to Abram. It was at this time that both Abram's and Sarai's names were changed to Abraham and Sarah. The only change was the addition of the Hebrew letter "Hey". Each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew

alephbet has a meaning. "Hey" means "life" so all that Adonai added to their lives was life. That life came in the form of Isaac. To Sarah, this addition made her entire life complete. It was also at this time that Abraham was given the covenant of circumcision. He immediately circumcised himself, his son Ishmael and every man who was a part of his household. Remember, this was no small number of men and the older one is, the more painful this procedure was. It was up to Sarah and the other women to not only take care of their regular duties, but the duties of the men who were recovering as well.

On the third day visitors arrive. These are not just any visitors, Abraham soon discovers, and are naturally welcomed into the compound and treated with the same respect and kindness that any guest would. Yet these guests were extra special... Abraham called them Adonai, Lord.

And he said to them, If now I have found favor in your sight, turn in and eat a morsel of bread; and he pressed them, and they turned in and he gave them water and they washed their feet, and he placed them under a tree at the door of the tent. And Abraham ran and took a calf, tender and good, and he hastened to kill it, and gave it to his servant Eliezer to dress. And Abraham came to Sarah into the tent, and he said to her, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it and make cakes to cover the pot containing the meat, and she did so. And Abraham hastened and brought before them butter and milk, beef and mutton, and gave it before them to eat before the flesh of the calf was sufficiently done, and they did eat. Jasher 18:5-8

Notice the hospitality shown to these three visitors. First, Abraham begs them to come and have a bite to eat yet the first thing he does is give them water to wash their feet before he attends to their bellies. The tree just outside of the tent would be a favored position for a visitor, giving them shade in the heat of the day. Abraham then knew just what to do, having Eliezer to help Sarah prepare the finest meal they could offer. Sarah didn't even question him regarding these visitors because she knew who they were just as well as Abraham did. Besides, they were weary travelers who needed to rest and be refreshed before they finished their journey.

One can easily imagine Sarah standing just within the tent; out of sight but still able to hear what the men were discussing just outside of the tent. Travelers often passed through with news of Sodom and Gomorrah and perhaps they had news of her brother Lot and his daughters. They had already heard about Lot's daughter Paltith and how the people of Sodom had burned her alive because she dared to offer a stranger some bread to prevent him from starving to death (Jasher 19:24-36). Perhaps these visitors had more news... Sarah would have been careful to hear without disturbing the men's conversation. What she heard would change her life forever.

Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "There, in the tent." He said, "I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?' "Is anything too

difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." Sarah denied it however, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh." Genesis 18:9-15

Naturally these visitors knew exactly where Sarah was; they just wanted to make sure she was listening to what they were about to say to her husband so that there would be no doubt as to Adonai's intentions. At the same time a year hence, she, Sarah, would be blessed with a baby in her old age. In fact, the angel specifically says, "At the appointed time... at this time next year," she would have a son. The sages teach that Abraham was circumcised on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and that Isaac was born on the first day of Sukkot, the Feast of Booths. There are many who believe that Yeshua was also born on the first day of Sukkot, or the Great Day.

Sarah has been waiting her whole life to become a mother. Those around her have spoken badly of her over the years because of her lack of children, especially after Hagar conceived so easily. She had pretty much given up all hope of ever having a child for she had already gone through menopause. When she laughed, I don't think it was because she didn't believe Adonai when He spoke to her. I think she couldn't believe she was hearing them correctly. She probably didn't realize that she had spoken the words aloud for she denied laughing when asked. My children do the same thing when caught doing something they shouldn't be doing. Honestly, it's our basic sin nature that tells us to lie.

Yet Sarah is overjoyed to hear this news. Motherhood was one pleasure that had been denied to her by Adonai. Now she heard for herself that His plan indeed involved her, not any other woman. The promise given to Abraham had been given to her as well; Abraham had told her the truth about what Adonai said to him when He changed their names. It's not that she thought he was lying to her about this; this kind of news is the kind you really need to hear for yourself to truly believe.

In the mean time, these visitors were on their way down to Sodom and Gomorrah and I'm sure that Sarah was praying in her tent while her husband beseeched the Lord on Lot's behalf. Heck, she was probably in her tent worshipping Adonai El Shaddai for what He was doing for her. I'm also sure that the news of the destruction of the five cities by God's mighty hand devastated her heart, which would only be mended by the news that her brother had made it out safely.

It was just after these events that Abraham and Sarah packed up their tents and journeyed to the land of the Philistines, sojourning in Gerar. Once again Abraham told Sarah to simply be his sister again for fear that the Philistines would kill him and take her. We are not surprised when we discover that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, hears of Sarah's great beauty and claims her for himself. Knowing how Adonai protects His own, we are also not surprised when He once again sends an angel to protect her. This time the angel appears to Abimelech, in a dream, and warns him not to touch Sarah for she is the wife of Abraham. What is surprising is that he took her in the first place, for they had already heard about what happened to Pharaoh in Egypt on account of Sarah.

And in the morning Abimelech rose with terror and confusion and with a great dread, and he sent and had his servants called in, and he related his dream to them, and the people were greatly afraid. And one man standing amongst the servants of the king answered the king, saying, O sovereign king, restore this woman to her husband, for he is her

husband, for the like happened to the king of Egypt when this man came to Egypt. And he said concerning his wife, She is my sister, for such is his manner of doing when he cometh to dwell in the land in which he is a stranger.

And Pharaoh sent and took this woman for a wife and the Lord brought upon him grievous plagues until he returned the woman to her husband. Now therefore, O sovereign king, know what happened yesternight to the whole land, for there was a very great consternation and great pain and lamentation, and we know that it was on account of the woman which thou didst take. Now, therefore, restore this woman to her husband, lest it should befall us as it did to Pharaoh king of Egypt and his subjects, and that we may not die; and Abimelech hastened and called and had Sarah called for, and she came before him, and he had Abraham called for, and he came before him.

And Abimelech said to them, What is this work you have been doing in saying you are brother and sister, and I took this woman for a wife? And Abraham said, Because I thought I should suffer death on account of my wife; and Abimelech took flocks and herds, and men servants and maid servants, and a thousand pieces of silver, and he gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah to him. Jasher 20:18-25

Too bad this guy hadn't been around the day before when Abimelech first took Sarah... this whole incident could have been avoided. The Arabs claim that Sarah did not give Abraham a son; they claim that Isaac is really Abimelech's son. Both Genesis and Jasher are very quick to tell us that Abimelech never touched Sarah, so this could not possibly be the case.

Just as the angels had foretold, Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son who Abraham quickly named Isaac, just as he had been instructed. One can only imagine how the word must have spread throughout the land, that Sarah had given birth at the age of 90! I'm sure many did not believe the tales.

And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac at eight days old, as God had commanded Abraham to do unto his seed after him; and Abraham was one hundred, and Sarah ninety years old, when Isaac was born to them. And the child grew up and he was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast upon the day that Isaac was weaned. And Shem and Eber and all the great people of the land, and Abimelech king of the Philistines, and his servants, and Phicol, the captain of his host, came to eat and drink and rejoice at the feast which Abraham made upon the day of his son Isaac's being weaned. Jasher 21:3-5

The sages teach that many women brought their children to Sarah that day and she nursed them all, proving to the women of the land that she really did give birth to Isaac in her old age.

Ishmael was 14 years old when Isaac was born. I'm sure that neither he nor his mother Hagar could have been rejoicing with the birth of this child. Although the first born son, Ishmael was not the child of the promise and therefore would not be receiving the blessing of the first born, nor a double portion of the inheritance, which by this point was quite a large sum. Hagar and Sarah had never really made up after the birth of this

child, and the birth of Isaac only made their relationship more difficult, I'm sure. Sarah had kept her eye on Ishmael and I'm sure she was well aware of the type of young man he was turning out to be. Any good mother would be concerned.

Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. Therefore she said to Abraham, "Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac." Genesis 21:9-10

I'm sure I'm not the only person who has read these verses and has asked, "What is going on here? She wants to send them away because of simple mocking? What am I not getting?" This is one of those incidents that cause many to claim that Sarah was mean to Hagar and Ishmael. This is not the truth if Sarah is the woman of God that we believe her to be, right? So, what might Jasher tell us about this incident?

And Ishmael the son of Abraham was grown up in those days; he was fourteen years old when Sarah bare Isaac to Abraham. And God was with Ishmael the son of Abraham, and he grew up, and he learned to use the bow and became an archer. And when Isaac was five years old he was sitting with Ishmael at the door of the tent. And Ishmael came to Isaac and seated himself opposite to him, and he took the bow and drew it and put the arrow in it, and intended to slay Isaac. And Sarah saw the act which Ishmael desired to do to her son Isaac, and it grieved her exceedingly on account of her son, and she sent for Abraham, and said to him, Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for her son shall not be heir with my son, for thus did he seek to do unto him this day. Jasher 21:11-15

This truly does give us more insight into what was going on within the tents of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. For almost 20 years, Sarah has been patient, trying to show love and hospitality to Hagar and her son, for Ishmael was never considered to be Sarah's child as was originally intended. She saw that this young man had no love in his heart for his brother and did what any good mother would do, faced with a real physical threat to her child. She removed the threat.

Genesis tells us that after Hagar and Ishmael left Abraham's tent they wandered in the wilderness for a time, running out of water and almost perishing. Once again, Adonai sends an angel to comfort them and help them through the wilderness by providing water for them. Genesis actually goes into much more detail regarding this than Jasher does and I believe that is because Adonai wanted us to understand that He never abandoned them but continued to bless them because of Abraham. As we continue reading in Genesis, we can easily believe that Abraham never saw his son again, for the narrative is quiet regarding Ishmael.

Jasher, on the other hand, shows us that Abraham still had contact with his son and even went and visited him from time to time. Even though Sarah was not happy about this, she never told Abraham not to visit or have his son visit him. So many people have made Sarah out to be mean, cruel and hard-hearted because of the way that she sent Hagar and Ishmael away, but if we take the time to read Jasher, we see another dimension to this tale and Sarah continues to be the godly woman we have come to know.

For quite some time life is good in Abraham's tents. Isaac is growing in the knowledge and fear of HaShem, and both Abraham and Sarah are experiencing the joy of raising their son. I guess you could call these the golden years. We don't really know

much about this time, but we know that like all good times, this too must come to an end. Everything changes one day when Adonai calls Abraham once again to test his faith. This test would be bigger than any test before and would forever change all their lives.

Most believers know the story of Abraham's call to sacrifice Isaac... or do we? How well do we know the tale? Do we know how old Isaac was at the time? Most of your children's versions of this story show Isaac to be a child, no older than the age of 12. Yet, according to the book of Jasher, this is not the case. In fact, not only is Isaac a full grown adult, he is well aware of what was going on and was a willing participant. It all starts out pretty much like it starts out in Job; Satan's up to his old tricks again. Actually, let's back up a bit and lay some groundwork.

After marrying an Egyptian woman, which he sent away on advice of his father, Ishmael married a Canaanite woman and eventually moved back to live near his father Abraham. One day he and Isaac were talking and Ishmael started boasting:

And Ishmael boasted of himself to Isaac, saying, I was thirteen years old when the Lord spoke to my father to circumcise us, and I did according to the word of the Lord which he spoke to my father, and I gave my soul unto the Lord, and I did not transgress his word which he commanded my father. And Isaac answered Ishmael, saying, Why dost thou boast to me about this, about a little bit of thy flesh which thou didst take from thy body, concerning which the Lord commanded thee? As the Lord liveth, the God of my father Abraham, if the Lord should say unto my father, Take now thy son Isaac and bring him up an offering before me, I would not refrain but I would joyfully accede to it. And the Lord heard the word that Isaac spoke to Ishmael, and it seemed good in the sight of the Lord, and he thought to try Abraham in this matter. Jasher 22:42-45

If we learn nothing else from this conversation, may we learn to be careful what we say! Talk about a self-fulfilling prophecy! One can't help but see the spirit of one-upmanship here. As we will soon see, Isaac is already 37 years old, which would make Ishmael 51. I know I'm going to sound like a typical woman here when I say this, but I can't help myself... "Guys, grow up!" Enough said. Let's get back to the part that reminds us of Job.

And the day arrived when the sons of God came and placed themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with the sons of God before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? and Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said to Satan, What is thy word to me concerning all the children of the earth? and Satan answered the Lord and said, I have seen all the children of the earth who serve thee and remember thee when they require anything from thee. And when thou givest them the thing which they require from thee, they sit at their ease, and forsake thee and they remember thee no more.

Hast thou seen Abraham the son of Terah, who at first had no children, and he served thee and erected altars to thee wherever he came, and he brought up offerings upon them, and he proclaimed thy name continually to all the children of the earth. And now that his son Isaac is

born to him, he has forsaken thee, he has made a great feast for all the inhabitants of the land, and the Lord he has forgotten. For amidst all that he has done he brought thee no offering; neither burnt offering nor peace offering, neither ox, lamb nor goat of all that he killed on the day that his son was weaned. Even from the time of his son's birth till now, being thirty-seven years, he built no altar before thee, nor brought any offering to thee, for he saw that thou didst give what he requested before thee, and he therefore forsook thee.

And the Lord said to Satan, Hast thou thus considered my servant Abraham? for there is none like him upon earth, a perfect and an upright man before me, one that feareth God and avoideth evil; as I live, were I to say unto him, Bring up Isaac thy son before me, he would not withhold him from me, much more if I told him to bring up a burnt offering before me from his flock or herds. And Satan answered the Lord and said, Speak then now unto Abraham as thou hast said, and thou wilt see whether he will not this day transgress and cast aside thy words. Jasher 22:46-55

Doesn't that sound just like what happened to Job? We need to remember that Satan means "adversary" and it's his job to accuse the saints. His words can bring tests into our lives so we need to always be ready to praise HaShem no matter what might happen, just as Abraham and Sarah did.

When we read the account of the binding of Isaac in Genesis, we are left with more questions than answers. The whole account seems so strange and alien to us that we truly have a hard time comprehending what we've read. Child sacrifice is condemned in Torah (the books of Moses) so how could a righteous God ask such a thing? We've already seen how Jasher adds to our understanding of this event, but what follows brings even more depth to this event, including how it affected Sarah's life.

At that time the word of the Lord came to Abraham, and he said unto him, Abraham, and he said, Here I am. And he said to him, Take now thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which shall be shown to thee, for there wilt thou see a cloud and the glory of the Lord. And Abraham said within himself, How shall I separate my son Isaac from Sarah his mother, in order to bring him up for a burnt offering before the Lord? Jasher 23:1-3

Yes, Abraham loved Isaac, but he loved Sarah even more. He knew what Isaac meant to her and his first thought was of her and how he could separate the two of them without causing too much pain for his dear Sarah. She had waited so long for this child; could 37 years possibly be long enough? Would she be willing to let him go and do what Adonai El Shaddai had commanded? What might she do to prevent them from leaving? I'm sure questions like these were swimming through Abraham's head as he made his way back to Sarah.

And Abraham came into the tent, and he sat before Sarah his wife, and he spoke these words to her, My son Isaac is grown up and he has not for some time studied the service of his God, now tomorrow I will go and bring him to Shem, and Eber his son, and there he will learn the ways of the Lord, for they will teach him to know the Lord as well as to know that

when he prayeth continually before the Lord, he will answer him, therefore there he will know the way of serving the Lord his God. And Sarah said, Thou hast spoken well, go my lord and do unto him as thou hast said, but remove him not at a great distance from me, neither let him remain there too long, for my soul is bound within his soul. And Abraham said unto Sarah, My daughter, let us pray to the Lord our God that he may do good with us. Jasher 23:4-7

Abraham knew exactly what to say to Sarah so that she would allow Isaac to leave. He knew that she truly had a heart for Adonai, as he did, and would want their son to have that same kind of knowledge and fear of Him. Who better to learn from than Shem? This would be good for Isaac so she willingly gives him up for this reason, yet insists on spending some intimate time with her son before he leaves. The turns out to be the last time they will ever see each other.

And Sarah took her son Isaac and he abode all that night with her, and she kissed and embraced him, and gave him instructions till morning. And she said to him, O my son, how can my soul separate itself from thee? And she still kissed him and embraced him, and she gave Abraham instructions concerning him. And Sarah said to Abraham, O my lord, I pray thee take heed of thy son, and place thine eyes over him, for I have no other son nor daughter but him. O forsake him not. If he be hungry give him bread, and if he be thirsty give him water to drink; do not let him go on foot, neither let him sit in the sun. Neither let him go by himself in the road, neither force him from whatever he may desire, but do unto him as he may say to thee.

And Sarah wept bitterly the whole night on account of Isaac, and she gave him instructions till morning. And in the morning Sarah selected a very fine and beautiful garment from those garments which she had in the house, that Abimelech had given to her. And she dressed Isaac her son therewith, and she put a turban upon his head, and she enclosed a precious stone in the top of the turban, and she gave them provision for the road, and they went forth, and Isaac went with his father Abraham, and some of their servants accompanied them to see them off the road. And Sarah went out with them, and she accompanied them upon the road to see them off, and they said to her, Return to the tent.

And when Sarah heard the words of her son Isaac she wept bitterly, and Abraham her husband wept with her, and their son wept with them a great weeping; also those who went with them wept greatly. And Sarah caught hold of her son Isaac, and she held him in her arms, and she embraced him and continued to weep with him, and Sarah said, Who knoweth if after this day I shall ever see thee again? And they still wept together, Abraham, Sarah and Isaac, and all those that accompanied them on the road wept with them, and Sarah afterward turned away from her son, weeping bitterly, and all her men servants and maid servants returned with her to the tent. And Abraham went with Isaac his son to bring him up as an offering before the Lord, as He had commanded him. Jasher 23:8-20

What a heart-wrenching scene! Could you imagine what Sarah would have been like had she known that Isaac was to be a sacrifice? Could she have survived? Would she have allowed them to go had she known the whole story? Was her faith in God's promises as strong as Abraham's, or was it that he simply didn't want to put her love of Isaac to the test as El Shaddai had? One last question, "Do you think Isaac spent the rest of his life thanking God that he had taken that time with his mother before he left?"

Let us pick up the story here, as told in the book of Jasher:

And Abraham went with Isaac his son to bring him up as an offering before the Lord, as He had commanded him. And Abraham took two of his young men with him, Ishmael the son of Hagar and Eliezer his servant, and they went together with them, and whilst they were walking in the road the young men spoke these words to themselves, And Ishmael said to Eliezer, Now my father Abraham is going with Isaac to bring him up for a burnt offering to the Lord, as He commanded him. Now when he returneth he will give unto me all that he possesses, to inherit after him, for I am his first born. Jasher 23:20-23

Although Abraham and Isaac hid from Sarah what their plan really was, it is apparent that these two men, Ishmael and Eliezer, knew exactly what was transpiring that day. Plainly Ishmael is looking ahead to the end of the journey and how it would benefit him. He truly believed that Isaac would be dead by the end of the day and he would be restored to what he believed to be his rightful place in the family, that of first born son. How do you think Eliezer, head of all of Abraham's servants, responds to these remarks?

And Eliezer answered Ishmael and said, Surely Abraham did cast thee away with thy mother, and swear that thou shouldst not inherit any thing of all he possesses, and to whom will he give all that he has, with all his treasures, but unto me his servant, who has been faithful in his house, who has served him night and day, and has done all that he desired me? to me will he bequeath at his death all that he possesses. Jasher 23:24

Sarah was correct to suspect Ishmael of conspiring against her son, but what would she say if she knew that Eliezer felt the same way? Both of these men saw her son as one who prevented them from gaining the honor they both felt they deserved. It would appear that these men don't have the same type of faith, the same strength of belief, which she and Abraham have, although both men were basically raised within their tents. Although self-sacrifice was a way of life for Abraham and Sarah, this lesson had not gotten through to these two men, as we will see soon.

The story goes on to tell us that Satan does every thing he can to prevent Abraham and Isaac from reaching the mountains of Moriah. He first appears to Abraham as an old man and tells Abraham that this could not possibly be from the Lord, for to sacrifice his only son would be an evil thing to do. Abraham immediately recognizes this as Satan and rebukes him. Satan then appears to Isaac as a young man and whispers in his ear that he should not do this thing, and again Abraham rebukes the enemy. The third time Satan appears as a brook of water in their path, which threatens to wash them downstream, yet again Abraham identifies this as an attack of the enemy and rebukes Satan.

And Abraham rebuked him and said unto him, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, begone from us for we go by the commands of God. And Satan was terrified at the voice of Abraham, and he went away from them, and

the place again became dry land as it was at first. And Abraham went with Isaac toward the place that God had told him. Jasher 23:38-40

Notice what Abraham said here: the Lord rebuke you! This is a spiritual lesson that we need to learn. This is something that Abraham understood and is something that we too need to learn. When we are under attack from Satan, we do not rebuke him, Adonai does. Since it takes a witness of two or three to establish a truth, allow me to present my witnesses.

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, "**The LORD rebuke you**, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" Zechariah 3:1-2

But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "**The Lord rebuke you!**" Jude 1:9

Unfortunately for Sarah, she did not recognize Satan when he came to visit her that day, but we will get to that soon enough. There is another scene that I would like to share with you and that is what happened when Abraham and Isaac made it to their destination.

And on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place at a distance which God had told him of. And a pillar of fire appeared to him that reached from the earth to heaven, and a cloud of glory upon the mountain, and the glory of the Lord was seen in the cloud. And Abraham said to Isaac, My son, dost thou see in that mountain, which we perceive at a distance, that which I see upon it? And Isaac answered and said unto his father, I see and lo a pillar of fire and a cloud, and the glory of the Lord is seen upon the cloud. And Abraham knew that his son Isaac was accepted before the Lord for a burnt offering.

And Abraham said unto Eliezer and unto Ishmael his son, Do you also see that which we see upon the mountain which is at a distance? And they answered and said, We see nothing more than like the other mountains of the earth. And Abraham knew that they were not accepted before the Lord to go with them, and Abraham said to them, Abide ye here with the ass whilst I and Isaac my son will go to yonder mount and worship there before the Lord and then return to you. And Eliezer and Ishmael remained in that place, as Abraham had commanded. Jasher 23:41-48

Both Abraham and Isaac saw the pillar of fire upon the mountain. Because of this, Abraham knew that Isaac was right with Adonai and was acceptable to Him. Eliezer and Ishmael did not see the pillar of fire, so Abraham also knew that they were not right with Adonai and should be left behind. What was so different about Isaac that he could see what the others could not? Both he and Ishmael were natural born sons of Abraham, but only one has inherited his spirit and love for Adonai El Shaddai. Eliezer, adopted into the family and treated as if he were natural born, who has witnessed how Abraham's God has saved him and worked in his life, yet he still does not seem to have the same love for God as his master. Why is this? What is so different about Isaac?

Could it be because of Sarah, his mother? Her love of Adonai was so right and true that I'm sure it affected Isaac, even in the womb. More and more we are coming to realize just how important the atmosphere around the mother affects the child she is carrying. Indeed, if the mother truly wants her baby, the child will feel it, and when she really does not want the baby, the child feels that as well. These feelings shape the rest of their lives. Let us keep this in mind, how Sarah's faith affected the faith of her son, as we continue this story.

And Abraham took wood for a burnt offering and placed it upon his son Isaac, and he took the fire and the knife, and they both went to that place. And when they were going along Isaac said to his father, Behold, I see here the fire and wood, and where then is the lamb that is to be the burnt offering before the Lord? And Abraham answered his son Isaac, saying, The Lord has made choice of thee my son, to be a perfect burnt offering instead of the lamb. And Isaac said unto his father, I will do all that the Lord spoke to thee with joy and cheerfulness of heart.

And Abraham again said unto Isaac his son, Is there in thy heart any thought or counsel concerning this, which is not proper? tell me my son, I pray thee, O my son conceal it not from me. And Isaac answered his father Abraham and said unto him, O my father, as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, there is nothing in my heart to cause me to deviate either to the right or to the left from the word that he has spoken to thee. Neither limb nor muscle has moved or stirred at this, nor is there in my heart any thought or evil counsel concerning this. But I am of joyful and cheerful heart in this matter, and I say, Blessed is the Lord who has this day chosen me to be a burnt offering before Him. And Abraham greatly rejoiced at the words of Isaac, and they went on and came together to that place that the Lord had spoken of. Jasher 23:49-57

If we are truly living a life of faith, trusting in Adonai our Elohim (God) in every aspect of our lives, we will see the same kind of faith in our children. Yes, Isaac was his father's son, the only son who loved Adonai in the same manner that he did, but Isaac was also his mother's son. She whispered in his ear as an infant, "El Shaddai loves you," and "Worship Adonai with all of your heart," so that as an adult he knew it to be true. Isaac had no doubt. We will soon see this same kind of faith in Sarah, when Satan goes to visit her, but once again, I'm jumping ahead. Jasher continues to give us more insight into the binding of Isaac:

And Abraham approached to build the altar in that place, and Abraham was weeping, and Isaac took stones and mortar until they had finished building the altar. And Abraham took the wood and placed it in order upon the altar which he had built. And he took his son Isaac and bound him in order to place him upon the wood which was upon the altar, to slay him for a burnt offering before the Lord. And Isaac said to his father, Bind me securely and then place me upon the altar lest I should turn and move, and break loose from the force of the knife upon my flesh and thereof profane the burnt offering; and Abraham did so.

And Isaac still said to his father, O my father, when thou shalt have slain me and burnt me for an offering, take with thee that which shall

remain of my ashes to bring to Sarah my mother, and say to her, This is the sweet smelling savor of Isaac; but do not tell her this if she should sit near a well or upon any high place, lest she should cast her soul after me and die. And Abraham heard the words of Isaac, and he lifted up his voice and wept when Isaac spake these words; and Abraham's tears gushed down upon Isaac his son, and Isaac wept bitterly, and he said to his father, Hasten thou, O my father, and do with me the will of the Lord our God as He has commanded thee. And the hearts of Abraham and Isaac rejoiced at this thing which the Lord had commanded them; but the eye wept bitterly whilst the heart rejoiced. Jasher 23:58-64

Isaac was so afraid that he would squirm, and therefore become unacceptable, that he asks his father to bind him. This information should be freely distributed to all! So many people look at this as "Abraham sacrificed his son!" yet what is actually happening here is that Abraham is helping Isaac to offer himself! Abraham has successfully taught his son to sacrifice whatever it takes to please Adonai, even if that sacrifice is your own life. Sarah too must have taught him this for him to understand it so fully.

I would like to take a moment here to remind us all that there is nothing outside of God's power. Abraham understood this. When they left Ishmael and Eliezer behind, Abraham told them that both he and Isaac would return to them. How could this be if he was off to kill his son? Remember, Abraham believed in the promised son that would bring him descendents who would number like the stars in the heavens. If he truly believed this, then he must have believed that El Shaddai would raise Isaac up again so that he would be able to reproduce and fulfill the promises of God. Abraham believed in the resurrection!

Even faced with his own demise, Isaac's thoughts still turn to the mother who loves him. He wants to make sure that she receives back her son, just as they had promised her upon leaving. Because he understands his place in her heart, he is even concerned with the manner in which she is given the news that Isaac was gone. It seems that Abraham knew something that Isaac did not, because it doesn't seem that he is expecting to be resurrected. He is just willingly doing whatever it is Adonai commanded, without questioning. This truly is the faith of a child, even though Isaac is 37 years old. What a bittersweet moment for these two men, as their hearts rejoice in the keeping of the command, but also weeps at the thought of how this would hurt the one they both love; Sarah.

We all know the story here. Abraham was stopped by Adonai and given a ram to sacrifice in his son's stead. Jasher tells us that Satan also tried to prevent the ram from advancing by holding him so that the ram became tangled in some thorns. This symbol, the ram caught in thorns, is found throughout the world and demonstrates how this story traveled far and wide. This ram was a very special ram, as we shall soon see.

And Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, a ram was caught in a thicket by his horns; that was the ram which the Lord God had created in the earth in the day that he made earth and heaven. For the Lord had prepared this ram from that day, to be a burnt offering instead of Isaac. And this ram was advancing to Abraham when Satan caught hold of him and entangled his horns in the thicket, that he might not advance to Abraham, in order that Abraham might slay his son. And Abraham, seeing

the ram advancing to him and Satan withholding him, fetched him and brought him before the altar, and he loosened his son Isaac from his binding, and he put the ram in his stead, and Abraham killed the ram upon the altar, and brought it up as an offering in the place of his son Isaac.

And Abraham sprinkled some of the blood of the ram upon the altar, and he exclaimed and said, This is in the place of my son, and may this be considered this day as the blood of my son before the Lord. And all that Abraham did on this occasion by the altar, he would exclaim and say, This is in the room of my son, and may it this day be considered before the Lord in the place of my son; and Abraham finished the whole of the service by the altar, and the service was accepted before the Lord, and was accounted as if it had been Isaac; and the Lord blessed Abraham and his seed on that day. Jasher 23:70-75

So, according to the book of Jasher, the very first ram ever created was saved for this day. You see, God knew the end from the beginning, so He knew this day would come and that Abraham would need a ram, so he saved this very special one for Isaac's atoning sacrifice. The sages teach that the first horn from this ram was blown as the Glory of HaShem descended onto Mt. Sinai. They also teach that the second horn will be blown as the "last trump" when the dead will rise. This was one very special ram indeed!

Anyone who has studied the Temple and its sacrifices will notice something very interesting in what Abraham did with the blood of the ram... he sprinkled it upon the altar. This is exactly what the High Priest would do on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. In fact, the sages teach that this all transpired on the tenth of Tishri, otherwise known as the Day of Atonement. This shows that Abraham understood what sacrifices were all about and that the blood of a ram could be used in place of his son's blood.

Naturally, Satan is not happy about how the events have played out. He was truly hoping that Abraham or Isaac would back out, or that Isaac would truly end up dead and therefore the promised Messiah would not be born. He still thinks that he can trick God Almighty! Discouraged, yet not defeated, he turns his attack to another, namely Sarah.

And Satan went to Sarah, and he appeared to her in the figure of an old man very humble and meek, and Abraham was yet engaged in the burnt offering before the Lord. And he said unto her, Dost thou not know all the work that Abraham has made with thine only son this day? for he took Isaac and built an altar, and killed him, and brought him up as a sacrifice upon the altar, and Isaac cried and wept before his father, but he looked not at him, neither did he have compassion over him.

And Satan repeated these words, and he went away from her, and Sarah heard all the words of Satan, and she imagined him to be an old man from amongst the sons of men who had been with her son, and had come and told her these things. And Sarah lifted up her voice and wept and cried out bitterly on account of her son; and she threw herself upon the ground and she cast dust upon her head, and she said, O my son, Isaac my son, O that I had this day died instead of thee. And she continued to weep and said, It grieves me for thee, O my son, my son Isaac, O that I had died this day in thy stead.

And she still continued to weep, and said, It grieves me for thee after that I have reared thee and have brought thee up; now my joy is turned into mourning over thee, I that had a longing for thee, and cried and prayed to God till I bare thee at ninety years old; and now hast thou served this day for the knife and the fire, to be made an offering. But I console myself with thee, my son, in its being the word of the Lord, for thou didst perform the command of thy God; for who can transgress the word of our God, in whose hands is the soul of every living creature? Thou art just, O Lord our God, for all thy works are good and righteous; for I also am rejoiced with thy word which thou didst command, and whilst mine eye weepeth bitterly my heart rejoiceth. And Sarah laid her head upon the bosom of one of her handmaids, and she became as still as a stone. Jasher 23:76-83

Did Satan lie to Sarah? Not entirely. He told just enough of the truth to make the lie believable. The only lie here was that Abraham actually killed Isaac... everything else was truth. This is the way that Satan operates. He comes to destroy, and his goal here was to destroy Sarah. The enemy knew how much she loved her son and was using that to his advantage. He was trying to turn her against her husband, driving a wedge between them.

But Sarah knew her husband all too well. She knew that if Abraham has truly done this, it must be because Adonai El Shaddai told him. There could be no other reason. So, she rejoiced in the knowledge that both her husband and her son had been obedient to the call of God on their lives. And she doesn't get angry with God either. She knows that He is just and good and righteous. Although she couldn't help but weep over the thought of never holding her son again, she can still rejoice in her God because she truly loves Him.

Could we, if faced with the news that our child was dead, find it within ourselves to rejoice in the Lord anyway? I don't think I could. I'm sure the words, "How could you do this to me?" would be heard. Yet, this is not how Sarah responds. Sarah's thoughts are on her Elohim, not herself. That's not to say that she didn't understand the grieving process; she did allow herself to grieve, but she continued to worship the One she serves. But we haven't heard the last from Sarah...

She afterward rose up and went about making inquiries till she came to Hebron, and she inquired of all those whom she met walking in the road, and no one could tell her what had happened to her son. And she came with her maid servants and men servants to Kireath-arba, which is Hebron, and she asked concerning her Son, and she remained there while she sent some of her servants to seek where Abraham had gone with Isaac; they went to seek him in the house of Shem and Eber, and they could not find him, and they sought throughout the land and he was not there. Jasher 23:84-85

All of this was going on at the same time as Abraham and Isaac were offering the ram and were traveling back to Sarah. Sarah, like most of us, just had to see for herself if these things were true. Like Sarah, we too need to check to see if what we've been told is the truth. Because our enemy roams the earth like a lion seeking one who he may devour, we need to be very careful about who and what we believe. Even as we read this account, we must hold it up against Genesis to make sure that we are not straying from His word.

Sarah continued seeking some sort of word regarding her family until she met up with the very same man who told her about the sacrifice in the first place.

And behold, Satan came to Sarah in the shape of an old man, and he came and stood before her, and he said unto her, I spoke falsely unto thee, for Abraham did not kill his son and he is not dead; and when she heard the word her joy was so exceedingly violent on account of her son, that her soul went out through joy; she died and was gathered to her people.
Jasher 23:86

According to the Book of Jasher, Satan has just killed Sarah. Well, not really. Joy killed Sarah. Or should we say that the stress of discovering that Isaac was indeed alive was just more than her heart could handle. Remember, she is 127 years old. She didn't even marry until the age of 40, was 90 by the time Isaac was born, and has just had the greatest shock of her life, and she witnessed the death of her own father! This woman has seen some stuff in her day, yet she was protected from it all, until this. The joy of his salvation was so overwhelming that her heart just couldn't handle it. Think about it... the lesson regarding salvation was clearer to her that day than most of us could learn in a lifetime. She truly understood that when you give unto Adonai, the reward is exceedingly great. That He will provide for our every need, providing a way for us to obey even the most difficult requests. If He asks us to do something, He will provide the way for us to do it, we must just simply believe Him. It is our belief that is credited as righteousness. Do we truly Believe Him?

There are many stories regarding Sarah's life to be found in the rabbinical writings. Each and every one of them speaks of the righteousness of Sarah. When we bless our daughters we say, "May you be like Sarah," but do we really understand just what a blessing that is? May you know Adonai your Elohim as intimately as Sarah did! May we all know Him that well and love Him that much and trust in Him, no matter what, just as Sarah did! May we go out with a smile on our face just as she did.

The Lord God Almighty has a plan for each of our lives. The enemy will do anything and everything he can to thwart those plans. We must not fear the enemy; we must fear the Lord and continue to serve Him regardless of our circumstances, and regardless of the outcome. Just as every other righteous man of God, Sarah's life shows us how we ourselves can walk before Adonai our Elohim and be blameless. It shows us that no matter what might come our way, as long as we keep our eyes on Him, we will be fine.

The Sages say that when Sarah was alive the glory of the Lord resided within their tent. They say that when she was 100 she had the beauty of a 20 year old and the sins of a seven year old. They say that when Sarah died, the glory of Adonai left. She was the high priest of the home, as it were. She made sure that everything was ready for whatever service she might need to perform. There was always an offering for the poor as they were all around her. She reached her hands out to any and all that were in need, clothing the poor and providing for the orphan. Her life was one of generosity and especially hospitality. Her tent was a place of refuge and worship as each part of her life was dedicated to her Lord, the Creator of all, Adonai El Shaddai.

As we look over the life of Sarah and the effect of her life on those around her, we begin to see a clearer picture of this wonderful woman of God. As Abraham's wife, she worked behind the scenes, supporting her husband's ministry to the needy around them

by making sure that he had everything he needed. She taught those around her to love and serve Adonai, making Him the focus of their day just as she did. The love she lived made those around her miss her terribly when she was gone.

And when Abraham had finished his service he returned with his son Isaac to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba, and they came home. And Abraham sought for Sarah, and could not find her, and he made inquiries concerning her, and they said unto him, She went as far as Hebron to seek you both where you had gone, for thus was she informed. And Abraham and Isaac went to her to Hebron, and when they found that she was dead they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly over her; and Isaac fell upon his mother's face and wept over her, and he said, O my mother, my mother, how hast thou left me, and where hast thou gone? O how, how hast thou left me! And Abraham and Isaac wept greatly and all their servants wept with them on account of Sarah, and they mourned over her a great and heavy mourning. Jasher 23:87-90

Some friends were recently discussing the question, "Where does one go right after they die?" It looks to me as if I'm not the only one who doesn't know the answer to that question. It looks to me as if Isaac was wondering that very same thing. The idea of being separated from this woman who cared for him, provided for him and loved him like no other was almost more than Isaac could bear and he was seeking some sort of comfort, some sort of assurance that he would some how see her again. Isn't this what we all seek at the loss of those we love?

Abraham, as we all know, went and purchased the cave at Machpelah in order to have a place to bury Sarah. Although Genesis says nothing more, Jasher does give us a little more detail regarding this part of Abraham's life.

And after this Abraham buried his wife Sarah there, and that place and all its boundary became to Abraham and unto his seed for a possession of a burial place. And Abraham buried Sarah with pomp as observed at the interment of kings, and she was buried in very fine and beautiful garments. And at her bier was Shem, his sons Eber and Abimelech, together with Anar, Ashcol and Mamre, and all the grandes of the land followed her bier.

And the days of Sarah were one hundred and twenty-seven years and she died, and Abraham made a great and heavy mourning, and he performed the rites of mourning for seven days. And all the inhabitants of the land comforted Abraham and Isaac his son on account of Sarah. And when the days of their mourning passed by Abraham sent away his son Isaac, and he went to the house of Shem and Eber, to learn the ways of the Lord and his instructions, and Abraham remained there three years. At that time Abraham rose up with all his servants, and they went and returned homeward to Beersheba, and Abraham and all his servants remained in Beersheba. Jasher 24:12-18

Sarah was given the burial of a queen, because that is exactly what she was. She was the mother of many nations. She was a righteous woman of God. She touched the entire known world in ways few of us can comprehend. Her simple acts of kindness had a profound effect on the world both then and now. If Abraham is the father of our faith,

then Sarah is our mother. She is the one we should look to when learning to be the wives and mothers that our Elohim has called us to be.

I imagine it was hard for Abraham to move away from Sarah, even in death. They had been living in Beersheba when this occurred, but he had the tents brought up to Hebron, to the oaks of Mamre, across from the cave where his beloved wife was buried. He stayed there for three years before moving back down to Beersheba. These two had been made for each other. Only a woman of strong faith, like Sarah, could be a match for a man like Abraham. This was his one true love and he felt her lose greatly. If it hadn't been for Isaac, Abraham might have passed away from the grief as so many spouses do.

Abraham realized that he needed to find a wife for his son so that he could not only be comforted, but so that the promises of Adonai could be fulfilled. But he also knew that not just any girl would do. Having kept in touch with his extended family, he knew that his brother had children and that there might be one for Isaac there. He also knew that he couldn't leave his tents, nor pack them up to go back to Ur to find this wife. So he did the only logical thing; he called his most trusted servant, Eliezer, to handle the job. Knowing the high value placed on hospitality by his master, Eliezer prayed and asked the Lord to show him which girl was the right one by using hospitality as a sign.

The job of watering 10 camels is no easy task so any woman who would willingly offer to do so for a stranger must have the Spirit of Adonai dwelling within, just as it did within Sarah. So it really should be no surprise to us that the girl who does offer this service is Sarah's sister's granddaughter. This family, although caught up in the idol worship of the time, still had a heart for the One True God. Just as Sarai had been a prophetess in her father's house, so too Rebekah had been given this same love of God Almighty. This is evident in her later life when she seeks Adonai concerning the children in her womb. Just as the sages teach that the glory of Adonai left Sarah's tent when she departed, they also teach that His glory returned with Rebekah.

The life of Sarah might not look like much at first glance, but when one digs a little deeper, we see lessons for each and every one of us. For the man of God, Sarah displays the characteristics that one should look for in a wife. Remember, Sarah and Abraham were equally yoked, spiritually speaking; her faith was just as strong as his. For the woman of God, Sarah teaches us what we should be like and how we should run our households. May our households have the Spirit of God, the Ruach HaKodesh, indwelling every nook and cranny! For the parent, we must learn from both Abraham and Sarah how to not only love our children, but how to let them go.

Sarah's life is a shining example of how easy it is to walk out this life of faith when you really do totally trust in Adonai El Shaddai, the Lord God Almighty. Abraham's tent was a very good place to be when Sarah was there. Her simple life of servitude has left its mark on the entire world. Her faith in God was profound yet childlike. Her beauty came from within. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, truly is the mother of our faith.