

## A Book of Firsts

The first Hebrew word in the Bible is *B<sup>e</sup>reshit* (בְּרֵשִׁית, *ḥaṭrc*), which is also the name of the first book of *Torah*. The second letter of the Hebrew alphabet is *Beth* (ב) or *Beit* (בֵּית, *ḥc*), which means *house*. This word is found in several Hebrew names, such as *Bethlehem*, (בֵּית-לֶחֶם, *ḥc*), lit., 'House of Bread') and *Bethel*, (בֵּית-אֱלֹהִים, *ḥc*), lit., 'House of God'). Even the shape of the letter depicts a floor, ceiling, wall and doorway of a house. Since the name and form of *Beit* represent a house, in several ways it also symbolizes a dwelling place: (1) *Yeshua*, in Whom the fullness of God dwells who dwelt among us, (2) Scripture, in which dwells God's Word to mankind, and (3) creation itself, the present dwelling place of mankind. In the *Torah* scroll we notice how the first letter (*Beit*) is printed oversized – the only oversized letter in the entire *Torah*. It is as if the Almighty states: "*I am housing for you something very special, Torah, the words of life itself.*" Indeed, *Torah is the Tree of Life (Etz Chayim)*.

If we divide the Hebrew word *B<sup>e</sup>reshit* into its root *rosh* (*reshit*) then what is left is the letter/word *Beit*. *Rosh* literally means head and, of course, *Beit* we now know means house. *B<sup>e</sup>reshit* is thus, the House of the Head, or the Head of the House. We know Torah is the House of the Wisdom of God and we also know *Yeshua* is the Head of the House. Do you see the connection? Since *Beit* follows *Aleph* in the Hebrew alphabet, notice the pointed nature of the letter in the *Torah* (ב). One points toward the blank space before the *Torah* starts (and by implication to the letter that precedes it, that is, *Aleph*, and the other points toward heaven. *Beit* is the house of *Aleph*, which is in heaven, the house of *Yeshua*, the Word made flesh.

The literal translation of the Hebrew word *B<sup>e</sup>reshit* means '*in the beginning*' and, thus, indicates to us that the book describes the beginnings of things. Another ancient Hebrew name for the first book of the *Torah* is *Sefer Maaseh Bereshit*, the '*Book of Creation*.' The English name, *Genesis* is derived from the Septuagint (LXX), which is the first known translation of the Hebrew Bible into another language, in this case Greek. It was finished around 250 BCE by a committee of seventy rabbis in Egypt. The LXX employs the Greek word *genesis*, which literally means *origins* as the title for this book. Hence the Greek/English titles also speak of creation or beginnings. The *Torah* is called the *Pentateuch* from *penta* (which is Greek for five) and *teuchos* (which means tools). Moses wrote the *Torah*, *and he took dictation* directly from the Almighty.

Before we begin our study of *Adonai*'s Words, we will notice that there is one thing that separates Isaac from Ishmael and Abraham's other children born after Sarah's death – *Sarah!* Though they were all the seed of Abraham, they were not all the seed of Sarah. God destined the godly seed to come from the covenant union of Abraham and Sarah. Her contribution distinctly set Isaac apart from Abraham's other children as the child of promise. What an incredible truth! It takes the oneness (*echad*) of the marriage covenant (*b'rit*) to bring forth the foundation of the godly generations of the plan of God. Another woman whose seed was terribly important was Mary (*Miryam*); her seed united with the Holy Spirit brought forth Messiah *Yeshua*. Ever since the fall of man in the *Garden of Eden* the enemy has been trying to disqualify the role of women concerning the purposes of God on the earth, but *Adonai* has been confirming their significance over and over and over again.

*What shall we say then? (Ro. 6:1a)* Here are some golden nuggets as we begin this critical year of 5781 by reading from *Adonai*'s *Torah*. (1) Firstly, everyone and everything has a beginning – everyone except God (*Elohim*). *Elohim* (a Hebrew plural masculine word that literally means *unique deities* which is only used in the context of the *Eternal*) did not come from anything. He has always been (John 1:1-2; Gen. 1:1-2). He is completely self-sufficient depending on no one outside of Himself. In His Sovereignty He chose to create the world, and He chose to create us. We did not choose to be born. He gave the command...that is ultimately why we are here! (2) The fifty chapters of Genesis can be divided into *four events* (creation, fall, flood and nations) and *four people* (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph). (3) There are *nine genealogies or historical origins* in Genesis, mainly: the history/origin of the *universe*, the history/origin of *Adam/mankind*, the history/origin of *Noah*, the history/origin of *Noah's sons*, the history/origin of *Shem*, the history/origin of *Terah*, the history/origin of *Ishmael*, the history/origin of *Isaac*, and the history/origin of *Jacob and Esau*. (4) A two-point thematic outline of Genesis is the *beginning of mankind* and the *beginning of the Jewish people*. (5) A basic geographical outline of Genesis is: the Garden of Eden, Mesopotamia, Canaan and Egypt.

The key verse in Genesis 3:15: *“I will put animosity (enmity, KJV) between you and the woman—between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel”* Let me focus on the word enmity. Throughout the history of our Jewish people, *HaSatan* has been warring and resisting dramatically the role of women concerning the promises of God. This warfare goes back to Genesis and the enmity/animosity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent – just as there was enmity between Isaac and Ishmael. This incompatibility between the seed of the woman and seed of the serpent was prophesied over/to *Eve* in the *Garden of Eden*. The Hebrew word used is *eibah*, which is translated *enmity* in the KJV and it means: hostility, hatred, animosity, antagonism, and hate [singular]. Notice that the enemy also has descendants (seed, *zera*). The seed of man and the seed of a woman that are joined (*echad*) together in matrimony provide for the union of these two seeds to make life. This is a new and distinct form of life, taking from both seeds to make a completely unique and distinct individual (one with a new DNA): *“<sup>24</sup>This is why a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife; and they become one flesh (basar echad)”* (Gen 2:24).

God intended His promises to our Jewish people to come from the union of a specific bloodline, the specific union of a man and a woman, and not just any union – a bloodline contributed to by both men and women. It should be noted that not only was Sarah barren, but also Rebekah and Rachel had to confront the same impediment to the promises of God – a barren womb. God’s promises waited on these wombs to open up, and He Himself directed their opening for it is written: *“<sup>3</sup>Behold, children are a heritage of Adonai – the fruit of the womb is a reward”* (Psalm 127:3). In the Messianic bloodline we have the blood of Ruth, a gentile woman, and the great grandmother of *King David*. Messiah’s lineage is notable in that God distinctly include two women of good reputation – Bathsheba and Tamar, and two Gentile women – Rahab and Ruth. Why were these women included unless they had nothing to contribute to the DNA of Messiah? This inclusion of Gentile blood in the lineage of Messiah points to the prophetic joining of Jew and Gentile through the profound and far-reaching sacrifice of the Messiah. Thus, we can sing *“Jew and Gentile, one in Messiah, one in Yeshua, one in the olive tree...”*

Because of the promise of a Messiah who would destroy the enemy of our souls, the enemy has launched an all-out attack on women throughout time, trying to disqualify them as partners of the promises of God. Attacking their fertility, the enemy harassed them, but God has made them overcomers and co-laborers in the perpetuation of His promises on the earth. Ultimately, doctrines and ideas that disqualify the role of women or their essential bestowal of inheritance through the bloodline are doctrines that flow through the anti-Messiah spirit – that spirit which wants to quench the promises of God in the earth and keep God’s purposes from coming forth. But God has great promises for women, for without them, there would be *NO HOLY SEED*.

The key attribute of the *Adonai* in Genesis is that *Adonai* our *Elohim* is *Sovereign*. Does the Almighty really need man? In His own words: *“If I were hungry, I would not tell you—for the world is Mine and all it contains!”* (Ps 50:12) He sovereignly gave us free moral agency, so then what does He expect from us? His answer is: *“<sup>12</sup>So now, O Israel, what does Adonai your God require of you, but to fear Adonai your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>13</sup>to keep the mitzvot of Adonai...”* (Deut. 10:12-13) On the other hand the key attribute of humanity is ruin and rebellion through sin and self-will (iniquity). Was it necessary to disobey and sin? Is it necessary now? Is it necessary for you to ‘experience’ sin in your life? Is man’s curiosity about sin justified? It is clear from the Genesis account that God did not intend (then and now) for man to become *knowledgeable* in **both** good and evil. He only wants us to know good! By the way the word translated *to knowing* in Gen. 3:22 is the Hebrew infinitive verb *LaDa-at*, which means to be intimate or to have sexual relations. So the Lord does not want us to be intimate with Satan or with sin!

We will see numerous examples of the Law of First (and Last) Mention as we read Genesis. For example, in *Gen. 14:18-23* we have the first mention of *Kiddush* and since this is an integral part of *Shabbat*, the beginning of the revelation of *Shabbat*. The first thing that our father Abraham did when he met *Melchizedek* (from *Malchi*- my king and *tzedek* - the righteous) was to tithe and invest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us this year glean from His *Torah* and receive revelation, since *“happy and blessed is he that keeps Torah!”* *Shabbat Shalom!*