

Parasha Lech Lecha

- Genesis 12:1-17:27
- Isaiah 54:1-55:5
- Romans 4:1-25

The Torah Portion at a Glance

YHWH calls Abram, commanding him to "go from your land, from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you." There, YHWH says, he will be made into a great nation. Abram and his wife Sarai, accompanied by his nephew Lot, journey to the Land of Canaan, where Abram builds an altar and continues to spread the message of One Elohim.

A famine forces the first Hebrew/Ivrim to depart for Egypt, where beautiful Sarai is taken to Pharaoh's palace; Abram escapes death because they present themselves as brother and sister. A plague prevents the Egyptian king from touching her and convinces him to return her to Abram and compensate the brother-revealed-as-husband with gold, silver and cattle.

Back in the Land of Canaan, Lot separates from Abram and settles in the evil city of Sodom, where he falls captive when the mighty armies conquer the five cities of the Sodom Valley. Abram sets out with a small band to rescue his nephew, defeats the four kings, and is blessed by Malki-Zedek the king of Salem (Jerusalem).

YHWH seals the Covenant between the parts with Abram, in which the exile and persecution of the people of Israel is foretold and the Holy Land is bequeathed to them as their eternal heritage

Still childless ten years after their arrival in the Land, Sarai tells Abram to marry her maidservant. Hagar conceives, becomes insolent toward her mistress, and then flees when Sarai treats her harshly; an angel convinces her to return and tells her that her son will father a populous nation. Ishmael is born in Abram's 86th year.

Years later, YHWH changes Abram's name to Avraham ("father of multitudes") and Sarai's to Sarah ("princess"), and promises that a son will be born to them; from this child, whom they should call Yitzcha'ak / Isaac ("will laugh"), will stem the great nation with which Elohim will establish His special bond. Abraham is commanded to circumcise himself and his descendants as a "sign of the covenant between Me and you."

(adapted from chabad.org)



The Messiah in the Torah Portion

The idea of a pre-incarnate Messiah posits that Y'shua appeared in flesh and bones before the virgin birth in Bethlehem. (Think of the fourth man in the fiery furnace of the book of Daniel who "looked like the son of YHWH." This teaching verifies that Messiah is the eternal Savior who was, and is and is to come.

In this week's Torah portion, the Moshiach mysteriously appears to Abraham, not once but several times. First the Bible speaks of an unknown King of Salem named Melchizedek that visits with Abraham. This king is also a priest. "And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought forth bread and wine. And he was the priest of the most high Elohim. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of El Elyon, possessor of Heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high Elohim, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he gave him tithes of all," Genesis 14:18-20.

Who would deserve Abraham's tithe more than holy and righteous Elohim, Himself? Indeed, Melchizedek could very well be Y'shua before the incarnation. (Some suggest Melchizedek was Shem or the angel Michael or some other figure.) The English name Melchizedek is a transliteration of two Hebrew words, melek and tzedek." The Hebrew term "melek" means "king" and the word "tzedek" is translated "righteous." Who is the king of righteousness but Y'shua HaMoshiach?

Melchizedek is mentioned in the book of Psalms, Hebrews and even the Dead Sea Scrolls. Melchizedek is a priest forever according to Hebrews 7:3 as is Messiah. Also see Hebrews 7:17 and 5:6. It is also interesting that Melchizedek was without descent. The Bible gives no records of his ancestors or descendants. "Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of YHWH he remains a priest forever," Hebrews 7:3. Of Y'shua it says that He was of ancient times. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times," Micah 5:2. In 1947, scrolls from the Jewish Essenes were discovered which affirmed that they believed Melchizedek would return as the Messiah. Melchizedek was/is a righteous priest in whose lineage Y'shua ministered as seen in Psalm 110:1-4.

Another clear reference to Y'shua is made in Genesis 15:1, "after this, the word of YHWH appeared to Abram in a vision: 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.'" A casual reading of this verse would miss the literal Hebrew word picture. "The word of YHWH" doesn't normally appear to; words are usually heard. Yet, to Abraham the devar YHWH appeared! "The word became flesh and dwelt among us," John 1:14. The Hebrew and Aramaic rendering of this passage in Genesis makes such an appearance of Y'shua believable.

During the times of Y'shua the Old Testament was translated into the Hebrew dialect Aramaic so most of the Jewish population could read the text. These translations are called "targums." In the Aramaic Targum, the term for "word" is "memra." The term "memra" is found throughout the Old Testament as a character in the Bible. Before the book of John was written, the Jewish people were familiar with the Almighty being the "memra" or "word." The "memra" appeared to Abraham in a vision. After the "memra" appeared to

Abraham, the Scriptures declare that “Abraham believed the WORD of YHWH.” The Aramaic Targum reads, “And Abraham trusted in the Memra of YHWH, and He counted it to him for righteousness.” Y’shua is the “memra” – the Word made flesh. Y’shua is the priest, the King of Righteousness.

Finally, consider these words from Y’shua in John 8:54-59, “Y’shua answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your Elohim: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Y’shua said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

Applying the Portion to Life Today

“If you belong to Christ/Messiah you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise,” Galatians _____. This verse from the book of Galatians shows us that all who are born again are of the very seed of Abraham. The word “seed” in this verse is “sperma.” Believers are physically descended from the sperm of Abraham and part of the commonwealth of Israel. This is the seed of the righteous that has inherited the covenants of blessing made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

YHWH has promised to give us the Land of Israel. YHWH has promised to make us innumerable. YHWH has promised to bless those that bless us and curse those that curse us. YHWH has promised and YHWH keeps His promises.

As descendants of Abraham; as bondservants of Messiah we have a duty to make a difference in our world. Everywhere Abraham went; his life shared the message that the Almighty blesses those that seek Him in faith. Abraham’s life was an example of how a person lives through faith in YHWH. He wasn’t perfect, but he prevailed through the tests and trials he faced. It was in Ur of Chaldeas, or Babylon, that Abraham was living when he heard the still small voice of YHWH calling him out. Our father left the comfort zone of his father’s home without any true knowledge of where he was going or what would come of his journey. He survived famine, made peace with those at odds with him, and even obeyed when he was told to cut the skin of his own body.

Y’shua said in John 8:39 that “if you are the children of Abraham then you should do the things Abraham did.” This call was to the religious crowds who kept the minutia of Torah and yet lacked true faith in YHWH. It is our trust; our belief; our faith in YHWH that moves mountains and sets us apart from others who simply go through the religious motions. “By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is YHWH,” Hebrews 11:8-10.

The pattern in the patriarch's life is very similar to how YHWH works today. First, Abraham heard the call of YHWH while in the land of sin and the bondage of Babylon. Then Abraham made a confession of faith and began his journey towards the Promised Land. When he arrived in Canaan he built an altar to YHWH and YHWH blessed him saying, "to your offspring I will give this land." As his sojourn continued the blessing grew. First he was promised the Land and a blessing. Then he was promised multiplicity and the "length and breadth" of the ground that he walked. As Abraham walked faithfully with YHWH he would continually build altars and would continually receive additional blessings. When Abraham's faith was exhibited through continual obedience he continued to experience the presence of YHWH. The faith of Abraham was powerful to sustain him through the trials of his life. Do you have such trust? Would you leave your home, job, and comforts to travel to a place you have never seen? Abraham did and in the end was blessed for his faithful obedience.

Portion Points to Ponder

1. From what land was Abram called from? Where is this located today? Why is this significant?
2. Is the blessing and curses given to Abram still applicable today?
3. How old was Abram when he left the land of his fathers? Why do people give or retire when they reach 60 or 70? Should a person's ministry end when they reach a certain age?
4. What does it mean that the "word of YHWH appeared to Abram?" Who or what was this referencing?
5. The famine caused Abram to journey to Egypt. How is this similar to Joseph's family that would later go to Egypt and endure a famine?
6. Did Abram sin when he told Sarai to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister? Did Sarai sin by obeying Abram?
7. When Abram left Egypt did he leave empty handed or did he take with him the best of Egypt? How was this similar to Exodus 12:36?
8. Why did Lot and Abram part ways? Is such a break sometimes necessary for people today?
9. Lot chose a land that was well watered like Sodom and Egypt. What is significant about how these areas watered their land? Did these lands have to depend upon the early and the later rains?
10. Abram is promised descendents as numerous as the stars and the sand. His seed will be so great that it can not be counted. Is this just the Jewish people? Why or why not?
11. What can be learned from the battles of war between the kings in Genesis 14?
12. Melkizadek appears to Abram with bread and wine. Who is/was Melkizadek?
13. What does the bread and wine symbolize? How has this tradition been repeated by mainstream Judaism?
14. Before the Law was given from Mt Sinai we read of Abraham tithing to Melkizadek. Should believers follow this example and give a 10% tithe to the local priest or teacher?

15. In Genesis 15 YHWH makes it clear that Isaac is the heir of Abram. What about Elizier's son? What about Ishmael?
16. Genesis 15:3 says that Abram believed the word of YHWH and it was accounted to him as righteousness." Was it solely belief that blessed Abram or did works play a part? What does "righteous" mean?
17. The cutting of the sacrifices in Genesis 15 is a puzzling event. Reread this section and then discuss the sacrifice, horror of Abram, prophecy of exile, return from Egypt, judgment of plagues, and death of Abram.
18. A "smoking furnace and burning lap" passed between the sacrifices in Genesis 15. Is this is the same cloud by day and fire by night that led the Israelites in the wilderness?
19. Abram had sexual relations with a woman that was not his wife in Genesis 16. Was this sin? Did it end in a blessing or a curse?
20. "The angel of YHWH' met Hagar to encourage her. Who is this messenger? Is there a difference between "AN angel of YHWH" and "THE angel of YHWH?"
21. In Genesis 16 the angel of YHWH prophecies about the descendants of Ishmael. Who are these people?
22. Ishmael's seed is prophesied to be a "wild man whose hand is against everyman." How is this true today?
23. YHWH commanded Abram to "walk before me and be perfect" in Genesis 17. Is such a walk possible? How does this walk of holiness connect to Genesis 15:3?
24. Abram's name is changed to "Abraham." Sari's name is changed to "Sarah." What do these changes mean? Why would YHWH make such changes?
25. The command of circumcision or "brit milah" is given in this week's Torah portion. Is brit milah necessary for salvation today? Was brit milah ever required for salvation?
26. What does brit milah symbolize? Do you think the procedure of circumcision is the same today as it was thousands of years ago?
27. What does it mean that the uncircumcised person "will be cut off" from among the people?
28. Genesis 17 shows an amazing confession about Ishmael. Did Abram want Ishmael to be the son of promise?

The Open Bible is a teaching series written by Daniel Rendelman of Emet Ministries. Find more teachings, audio messages, videos, and music at www.emetministries.com. Daniel Rendelman is the found and leader of Emet Ministries and the author of the book "Finding the Truth." He, his wife, and five children live in Newberry, South Carolina. He can be reached at emetministries@gmail.com.